



Colonialism, Slave Populations, and the Racial Structure in Brazil and the United States

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Abstract: The present piece of research aims to examine the similarities and differences in the role of slavery and colonization in the United States and Brazil between roughly 1530 and 1850. The current project also explores differences in the slave populations in each country, as well as the development of the racial structure as it relates to the evolution of slavery and the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Lastly, a discussion of the historical legacy of the slave trade and impact of slavery on modernity in both countries is assessed.

Keywords: Racialization, Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, Brazil, United States, plantation conomy

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A number of similarities and differences exist between the role and evolution of the slave trade in Brazil and the United States of America. The process of colonization, the role of slaves and slave labor, the total number of slaves imported, the duration of slavery, and the lasting effects of the slave trade on both countries share many important differences. The demand for labor, the complex relationship with (and extermination of) the indigenous population, and the slave trade itself share many similarities. These multifaceted relationships will be assessed. As will be explored in this paper, the colonization and establishment of both Brazil and the United States is a process intricately intertwined with the trans-Atlantic slave trade. To begin this historical assessment, a brief overview of the roots of the Portuguese, and the Dutch to a much lesser extent, involvement in the slave trade and colonization of Brazil will be assessed and then compared to the role of Great Britain, and also the French and Spanish to a lesser extent, and the colonization of Northern America.

COLONIZATION AND SLAVERY

Brazil

While not directly concerned with the present body of analysis, it is important to briefly note that the Portuguese have historically been a nation built on maritime activity, especially when concerned with early economic trade and naval trade routes (Dantas, 2009; Klein & Luna, 2010). By the thirteenth century, the Portuguese had established multiple commercial trade routes though the Mediterranean with Islamic peoples in the Middle East (Bergad, 2007; Klein, 1986). Due to the vast amount of trade the Portuguese were involved in between the thirteenth and eighteenth

centuries, it comes as no surprise that the story of the Portuguese colonization of Brazil actually begins in the late fifteenth century in western Africa (Bergad, 2007; Davidson, 1980; Klein & Luna, 2010).

While the Portuguese did not truly penetrate the interior land of the African continent, by 1487, they had reached the Cape of Good Hope in their efforts to extend Portuguese trade routes for sugar, spice, ivory, and gold (Bergad, 2007). In the late fifteenth century, the Portuguese began aggressive campaigns to extend their trade routes from the middle and near east, westward to the "New World" across the Atlantic Ocean (though the "discovery of Brazil was not the goal of the expansion, in stark contrast, it was coincidence). During this time, the introduction of factories to the coastal areas of Africa began as a way to mediate the trade for gold, ivory and slaves (Davis, 2006). As the travel routes expanded, and ocean faring technology increased, the Portuguese continued further and further westward. This continual expansion westward often lead to the discovery, conquest, and ultimately settlement, of groups of islands and island chains in the Atlantic Ocean including Madeira, Cape Verde and Azores (Bergad, 2007).

In 1500, a fleet commanded by Pedro Alvares Cabral landed in Northeastern Brazil (Dantas, 2009). However, during this time Portugal made very little effort to colonize their new discovery. Instead, they continued to focus on the expansion of their current trade routes and trade economies in the Mediterranean. Bergad (2007) finds that during the initial contact with Brazil, the Portuguese were mainly concerned with the plants which could produce purple and red dyes and supply lucrative business for the

Portuguese traders with the rise of textile mills in Europe during this time period.

Though the Spanish also began to explore some areas of mainland Brazil, Bergad (2007) asserts that the Spanish were less concerned with Portuguese Brazil because Brazil lacked the large civilizations found in Central Mexico which supplied ample opportunities for looting. During this time, the indigenous population of Brazil was diffused and diverse, lacking a centrally-located large population. Only the French traders had interest in Brazil similar to the Portuguese for the dyewoods. As such, the French established some small townships (like modern-day Rio de Janeiro) and outposts to aid in facilitating the trade of the natural resources of Brazil (Klein & Luna, 2010).

Furthermore, in the early sixteenth century, Portugal lacked the resources to control and colonize Brazil in any meaningful manner (Bergad, 2007; Horne, 2007). This did not, however, stop the Portuguese from exploring the Brazilian landside for precious minerals, such as gold or precious stones, or other materials which could contribute to increase trade like silver or other metals. Though, during this time period of initial contact, no gold was discovered and thus, trade focused primarily on dyewoods, sugar and other exotic spices. However, this would change in the near future.

In 1532, the Portuguese officially established the first settlement at Sao Vicente (Horne, 2007). However, this form of colony was very different than the type established by the Spanish or French. The Portuguese settled on large plots of land (called *capitanias*) and gave them to wealthy individuals (known as *donatarios*) who became the overseers and controllers of the lands and properties bequest to them by the crown of Portugal. Bergad (2007) finds that this form of colonization was rarely

successful and only the settlements in modern day Sao Vicente and Pernambuco had a real impact on trade due to the trade of sugar with Europe. In order to more completely colonize Brazil, this type of settlement eventually shifted into a plantation economy, which will be discussed in detail later.

The initial slaves in Brazil were the indigenous population (Klein & Luna, 2010). African slaves played a very minor role in the early and middle part of the sixteenth century (Alden & Miller, 1987). However, due to the high rates of death suffered by the indigenous populations caused by European disease, more and more African slaves were imported to account for the increase demand in sugar and the sugar trade in Europe (Alden & Miller, 1987). By the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the demand for slave labor increased drastically as the Portuguese began an effort to directly control the now emerging Brazilian colony in 1549 (Bergad, 2007). This process initiated when it became apparent the *capitanias* form of colonization was a failure, so in 1549, Tome de Souza was appointed governor of Brazil. Coinciding with the appointment of an official government, religious officials also moved into Brazil to aid in maintaining order and control of the now emerging colony along the Brazilian coast. During this time, the Portuguese also successfully forced the French out of Brazil in the mid 1560s.

This process of colonization has been referred to as segmented colonization (Horne, 2007). And scholars have compared this colonization process as an opposite process to the more war-like and conflicted colonization as characterized by the Spanish empire (Horne, 2007). This can be attributed to two main factors: the lack of precious metals and minerals in Brazil, and the lack of any large-scale, centrally-located

or united population of indigenous peoples. The machines of war were not needed to enslave and colonize the diffused and culturally distinct indigenous populations in sixteenth century Brazil. This type of gradual colonization is very similar to the British colonization of North America, which will be discussed in more detail later on.

While sugar and the sugar industry/trade with the European markets became an important economic activity in Brazil, in the early seventeenth century this trade was mainly relegated to the large colonial cities around the coast of Brazil (Eltis, Lewis, & Sokoloff, 2004; Shwartz, 1985). Most of the Portuguese ancestors and slave labor lived and worked in these cities. The indigenous population (including those decedents of African and Indigenous mix) worked primarily as subsistence farmers or ranchers in smaller and geographically dispersed communities. By the start of the seventeenth century, most scholars estimate the total population of Brazil to be around 100,000 people, with 30,000 of them having European or African ancestry (Bergad, 2004).

From 1580-1640, Portugal and Spain were a united front, this allowed the Portuguese to break into the Spanish trade economy. However, during this time, the Dutch launched many successful campaigns to disrupt Portuguese/Spanish trade, of both sugar and slave trade (Bergad, 2007). In 1630, the Dutch successfully occupied the most important and successful area of the sugar economy in northern Bahia, Brazil. In order to maintain a supply of African slaves to work the newly occupied sugar lands, the Dutch also conquered some of Portugal's slave trading posts in Luana, Angola and Benguela (Klein & Luna, 2010).

In 1654, the Portuguese reclaimed the areas lost to the Dutch and began campaigns to enter the interior of mainland Brazil in

search for precious metals, gems, and ivory (Bergad, 2007). In the 1690s, gold was found in the interior mountainous regions of Brazil which incited a gold rush during this time period. As word of the discovery spread, the Portuguese now turned their colonization inward. Up to this time, the sugar export and slave trades which had dominated all of the colonial efforts made by the Portuguese now turned toward finding and exporting gold (Dantas, 2009). With this transition, came a focus on the interior of Brazil (as opposed to mainly coastal colonization for sugar and slavery). It is estimated that by 1700, roughly the start of the gold rush, there were between 200,000-300,000 people living in Brazil; a third native population a third European, and a third African. Between 1700 and 1800, it is estimated that around 1.7 million Africans were brought to Brazil as slaves (Bergad, 2004). With the finding of gold, the demand for slave labor increased dramatically, as such, the slave trade also increased.

By the mid 1700s, the gold rush had subsided as gold deposits in the mountainous regions of Brazil had quickly been depleted. Additionally, with competition from other colonies, the demand for sugar had also waned. To account for this decrease in economic productivity, more attention was given to farming and ranching; during this time, textile and manufacturing also emerged as important economic activities (Bergad, 2007). The time period between 1750 and 1840 was a time of political unrest and upheaval in Brazil. With the Napoleonic wars, Portugal lost control of Brazil and between 1780 and 1815, there was a widespread movement for Brazilian independence. Dependence was officially declared in 1822, and Dom Pedro II became Emperor of Brazil in 1840 when Brazil officially gained its independence from Portuguese control (Klein & Luna, 2010). In 1816, an informal census was conducted

that found Brazil had a population of approximately 3.6 million people. About one third of this population was ancestors of African slaves (Bergad, 2007; Berlin, 1998).

Sugar remained an important export until 1830, when coffee became a major economic crop (Luna & Klein, 2004). In the 1830s and 1840s, the slave trade in Brazil increased drastically to account for the now booming demand for coffee beans. During this time, the British empire officially outlawed slavery in Brazil, though Brazil did nothing to enforce the new theoretical law. In the 1850s, the British began a campaign with war ships to disrupt the transatlantic slave trade to Brazil, and indeed the trans-Atlantic slave trade was ultimately ended in 1855 (Bethell, 1970). To account for this change, a heavy internal north-south slave trade emerged in Brazil (Klein & Luna, 2010). This slowly gave way to a system based upon immigrant labor, and the Brazilian system of slavery was ultimately ended shortly thereafter in 1888.

United States

The Spanish, French, and British began exploring and establishing settlements in North America in the late 1400s and early 1500s. The first permanent British settlement was established in Jamestown in 1607 (Bergad, 2007). During this time, tobacco crops were an important export to the European markets and the need for labor was great. The first record of the import of African slaves to this region was in 1619 when Africans were imported to the Chesapeake region of the British colonies for the purpose of labor on tobacco farms in rural areas (Eltis, Lewis, & Sokoloff, 2004).

Slavery also affected the economies of larger cities along the coast of northeastern North America including New York, Philadelphia and Boston (Bergad, 2007; Davis, 2006). Large ship building

companies emerged to craft the large wooded ships used to make the trans-Atlantic journey from North America to the Caribbean, Africa, and Europe. Wealthy merchants were drawn to these port cities in order to become involved in the emerging economic prosperity. It would be undue to overlook the impact slavery had not just on goods and services performed by slaves (tobacco or sugar cultivation), but also other areas which were indirectly impacted by the slave trade (like ship builders). As such, it can be observed that not only did the members and to of the institution of farming and planting benefit from slavery, but many other businesses benefitted as well (Davis, 2006).

By 1700, it is estimated that there were some 250,000 people living in the eastern British colonies in North America, and approximately 90 percent of those were free peoples from European countries (Bergad, 2004). However, over the next century, these numbers changed drastically. Scholars find that between 1700 and 1775, some 150,000 Europeans migrated to North America. During this same time period, some 275,000 Africans were brought to North America through the slave trade (Berlin, 1998; Horne, 2007). In 1770, nearly 50 percent of the population living in the Chesapeake region was of African descent. All of this was to account for the rising demand for labor coinciding with the rising demand for tobacco in the European markets. Similarly to the Chesapeake region, slave labor was needed in the south to account for rice cultivation (Bergad, 2007).

By 1790, the now independent United States had around 3.8 million people living in its territories of which around 700,000 were enslaved people of African descent. Of the 700,000 slaves, around 600,000 were in the southern states (Bergad, 2007, p. 25). By 1860, just before the Civil War, there

were around 31 million people living in the United States, of whom around 4 million were enslaved. Important to note here is that the increase in the number of enslaved peoples in the United States can be attributed to natural reproduction (Eltis et al., 2004), which will be explored in the subsequent sections.

The slave trade officially ended in 1808, but natural reproduction led to an increase in slave populations. By this time, most of the northern United States had abolished slavery, but the plantation economies of the southern United States continued to rely on an extensive market of slave labor (Bergad, 2007). Slavery became a major issue eventually culminating in the Civil War; more specifically, the issue of westward expansion and the role of slavery and slave trade became a debate between the northern states and the southern slave states. In essence, the southern elite slave owners viewed slaves as property, constitutionally protected. The northern view was that slavery was inhuman. Thus, the new land acquired after the Louisiana Purchase posed an issue to law makers; would the new land be slave states or not? This was a major catalyst which led to the Civil War (Horne, 2007)

The major themes discussed and analyzed herein contain many differences and similarities. An historical comparison will help to elucidate the major commonalities between the role and impact of slavery and colonization in the United States and Brazil.

Similarities and Differences in Colonization and Slavery

Both Brazil and the United States turned to African slaves because the indigenous populations in each country were not sufficient in number to support the ever growing sugar cane cultivation and exportation (Brazil) and the growing

tobacco economy (United States). Moreover, the diseases brought over by the Europeans (especially, the French, Portuguese, and Spanish), caused an extremely high death rate among the native populations of both countries as they lacked the autoimmune systems to fight the spread of these diseases (Davis, 2006).

Many factors played a role in the decision of the Portuguese to turn to African slave labor. First, the Portuguese had a lot of experience with the African cost since the fifteenth century, and their trade routes with Europe, the middle east, and the near east were well established (Klein & Luna, 2010). Because of their extensive trade routes throughout Europe and the Mediterranean, the Portuguese already had a market which would pay astronomical prices for sugar cane. Therefore, at the turn of the sixteenth century, the decision to focus on large scale sugar cane cultivation and trade was made (Horne, 2007; Schwartz, 1985). With this decision came the order to capture, transport, and enslave millions of Africans. In fact, this decision led Brazil to have the biggest slave importer in the Americas between 1600 and 1850. By 1600, some 50,000 African slaves had been imported to Northeastern Brazil to account for the rising demand for sugar in the European markets (Klein, 1986).

Finley (1980) asserts that throughout this process, Brazil became the first true slavery society in the New World. Slave societies are characterized by a complete dependency on slave labor for nearly all forms of production, and the elite (slave owners) depend on the exploited profit and revenue for their livelihood. This is in contrast to societies with slaves, where slavery is a supplement to other forms of coerced labor. From this perspective, both the United States and Brazil are characterized as slave societies during this time period. There are also a number of

differences and similarities to the impact and evolution of slavery and the slave trade in the United States of America during this time. In order to explore this issue further, a brief overview of the relationship between colonization and the slave trade in the United States is explored and assessed.

Both the United States and Brazil experienced segmented colonization, or colonization that accorded in “spurts” (Bergad, 2007). The Portuguese did not, initially, aim to establish a permanent colony in Brazil; rather, they were interested in the wood dyes found in Brazil to import to the European textile mills. Similarly, the British did not look to immediately colonize Northern America. Instead, a large number of “temporary” settlements/townships were established prior to Jamestown (the very first permanent British establishment in the future United States). Similarly, both the French and the Spanish had rather extensive contact with both countries, though eventually both countries claims to large areas of geography in both Northern America and Brazil were eradicated, though certainly their influences were not eradicated completely (Davis, 2006).

Slavery began to play a very large role in Brazil coinciding with the rise in demand for sugar (Dantas, 2009; Solow, 1991; Toplin, 1981). This is also similar to the increase in the import of slaves to North America to account for tobacco and rice production. In both ways, the needs of the economy dictated the number of African slaves imported and the geographic location in which the slaves were delivered and utilized. There also occurred a similar shift in the needs of the economies in both countries. Eventually, the demand for sugar in Brazil was outpaced by the demand for coffee beans (Horne, 2007). While the crop changed, the basic need for slave labor remained, and, in the case of Brazil, actually coincided with an increase in slave trade and

slave importation. This can be attributed to the internal slave trade that occurred in Brazil (i.e. slaves were traded from the northeastern area of Brazil where sugar was cultivated, to the inner areas of Brazil where coffee beans were cultivated and produced). In the United States, the focus shifted from tobacco farming in the Chesapeake area to the southern cotton-focused plantation economy (Davis, 2006). While northern states in the United States mostly outlawed slavery, the continued expansion of southern plantations meant there was a continued need for slaves and the slave trade in the emerging new country.

In both countries, the wealthy elite employed “domestic slaves,” or those slaves who worked in the house or place of business as servants in addition to the slaves who provided the physical labor for economic production (Horne, 2007). This shows that slaves not only provided an ample workforce in both countries, but were also tools for the wealthy to afford an indulgent lifestyle--slaves were found in all areas of economic and domestic servitude. Because of this, both countries are characterized as slave societies, not simply societies existing with slaves. Though this idea has been previously mentioned, this is the tenant that slavery posed as *the* major form of labor in at least one of the primary areas of settlement in each country. As has been previously outlined, slave labor provided the necessary means of workforce to produce sugar (Brazil) and tobacco (United States) and allowed each colony, and later country, to grow, expand and prosper economically (Finlay, 1980).

Indeed, the very settlement of Brazil and North America is similar. Private companies and wealthy individuals were given grants and charters by the government (Portugal in Brazil, and Britain in North America) in order to explore and conquer the new worlds. And perhaps the most

important similarity of both countries as it is concerned with the trans-Atlantic slave trade, is that both countries lacked a great indigenous population like the Aztecs of Incans (Bergad, 2007; Davis, 2006). Because there was no large and centrally-located population to be exploited for slave labor, both the Portuguese and Great Britain colonizers were forced to rely primarily on the African slave trade to account for the demand in labor. It is possible (and has been suggested by a number of academic scholars) that a large civilization that had an immunity to European disease may have meant the trans-Atlantic slave trade might not have been necessary because the slave labor could have been exploited from the native populations of Brazil and the native populations of the United States (Klein, 1986; Davis, 2006)

One stark difference is that the plantations took time to be established in the United States, as opposed to Brazil in which the plantation system was quickly implemented to account for the demand in sugar (Bergad, 2007; Davis, 2006). Taking this idea even further is that in North America, most rights to land were given to *most* free settlers. The opposite is true in Brazil where during colonization, land was given only to the elite individuals representing Portugal. This should not be overplayed however, as rights were only conferred to land-owning, white males in North America.

The established townships and settlements were isolated by both colonizers in each country. The towns established in Northeast Brazil were diffuse in a similar manner as to the towns in Northeastern North America. This is important because coupled with the fact that there was no large indigenous population, settlers in both Brazil and North America were forced to become self sufficient--that is to say that each individual township needed to find a way to

sustain itself whether through trade or, more commonly, self production (Toplin, 1981), though that statement is ironic in the sense that the self sufficiency eventually became a near complete reliance on chattel slavery.

SLAVE POPULATIONS

Similarities

Beyond slavery as purely a means of labor, there are a number of similarities between Brazil and the United States concerned with population and family. Firstly, is that though there were more males imported in the slave trade, there were enough females that marriages between slaves could occur (though this was often problematic in the southern area of the United States). In both places, Bergad (2007) finds that marriages between slaves were often encouraged to create a social cohesion. Ties to other slaves via marriage and children were believed to serve to prevent slaves from trying to escape as they would have ties to family which would preclude them from leaving.

Slave families were also used as a way to quell efforts to rebel and maintain morale among slaves (Gutman, 1976). This is not to say that it made the institution slavery any better, but rather to draw a comparison between countries that similar techniques were utilized to maintain slavery. At the same time, the resiliency of the Africans and decedents of Africans should be noted here as slave marriages can also be viewed as a way in which slaves created and shaped their own identity. However, slave families were also characterized by a lack of control and power over their children and many families were often separated through the slave trade (see, for instance, Bibb, 1849; Said, 1831; Drew, 1856). Additionally, slave owners could use the threat of selling family members to stop slaves from thinking of escape.

When investigating slaves and slave families, one popular area of inquiry is

concerned with the demand for slaves monetarily. Here, important similarities can be observed. Both Brazil and the United States experienced value increases in slaves in the early to mid 1800s, in part due to the end of the trans-Atlantic slave trade in the United States (1808), and the mounting pressure placed on Brazil and Portuguese traders by Great Britain, and later the United States. While official sale records are difficult to assess as few exist; overall, the important connection is slave traders had little trouble finding a market for their slaves in both countries (Franklin & Schwninger, 1999).

Differences

A key difference between the two nations has to do with slave families and natural reproduction. In the early to mid 1600s, the sugar boom in northeast Brazil meant that labor for the sugar cane fields was sorely needed (Davis, 2006). The Portuguese settlers of the sugar plantations required males for the physical labor and thus, the importation of males vastly exceeded the importation of females (Davis, 2006; Hawthorne, 2010; Klein, 1986). This directly affected slave marriages as the ratio between males and females was extremely unbalanced. Therefore, northeast Brazil (where the sugar was mostly cultivated during this time period) began a legacy of vastly disproportionate sex ratios and thus a small number of slave families.³ This imbalance becomes even more problematic as it has been found that during the sugar production boom in the mid seventeenth century, the death rate for slaves in northeast Brazil was exceptionally high. Therefore, the number of natural births in Brazil was minimal for a large part of the early and mid

³ This is in addition to the natural barrier the institution of slavery played in the formation of slave families.

boom in sugar production, and because of this, Brazil had to continue to rely on the importation of African slaves via the trans-Atlantic triangle trade.

The United States is the only slave society where the slave population actually increased through natural reproduction (Bergad, 2007, p.96). In fact, some scholars find the rate at which the enslaved black population in the United States reproduced to be truly remarkable. Current findings suggest that the black population increased by natural means around 2 percent each year in nearly all regions (Morgan, 2004, p.302). All other societies, including Brazil, had to continue to rely on the trans-Atlantic slave trade. See Table 1 for an analysis on population changes in Brazil and the United States.

As shown in Table 1, a number of academic scholars generally estimate that some 360,000 African slaves were imported to the United States prior to the abolishment of the trans-Atlantic slave trade in 1808 (Bergad, 2007).⁴ By 1860, the slave population had risen to around four million slaves in the United States. At the risk of oversimplification, this number can be attributed to an increase in natural births coinciding with fewer deaths. Contrastingly, by the mid 1850's, around 4 million slaves had been imported to Brazil via the trans-Atlantic slave trade (Eltis et al., 2004). However, by 1872, the slave population had dwindled to around 1.5 million enslaved peoples.

⁴ These statistics do not include illegally imported or smuggled Africans. Some scholars find that thousands of Africans a year were smuggled into North America from the Caribbean, including Cuba, and South America in the first half of the 19th century after slave was made illegal in the United States (Horne, 2007: 19).

Table 1: Slave Populations: imported via slave trade vs. natural reproduction*

	Number of Slaves Imported ¹	Percent of all Slaves in Americas ¹	Slave Population (1860 US/1872 BR) ²	Change in Population by mid 1800s
United States	360,000	4%	3,950,000	+3,590,000
Brazil	4,000,000	40%	1,500,000	-2,500,000

References: ¹Bergad (2007); ²Curtin (1969)

*These numbers also coincide with other paramount works: Eltis (2001) and Eltis et al., (2004: 186-189)

Part of this fluctuation can be attributed to the fact that some slaves found themselves able to buy their freedom, but a more direct cause can be attributed to the lack of natural births combined with a higher rate of mortality. These numbers reflected a very stark difference in the infrastructure of the institution of slavery in the United States compared to Brazil.

Some work suggests that birthrates between Brazil and the United States may have been similar following the shift from sugar plantations to coffee plantations as the ratio between male and female slaves became similar during the time period (Eltis et al., 2004). Scholars, however, overwhelmingly conclude that the death rate for slaves was significantly higher in the tropical regions of the Caribbean and America and differentially impacted pregnant women, infants and children (Higman, 1984). This was not the case in the United States. Therefore, Brazil had to continue to rely on the Atlantic-slave trade to feed its need for slave labor, while the United States saw a rise in slaves who were born in America.

There are a number of reasons these patterns and stark differences emerged, but arguably the most important is access to quality food and a healthy diet. Studies have found that slaves in the United States generally had better diets than slaves in

Brazil (Kiple and King, 1981; Bergad, 2007: 98), though slave diets in the United States were certainly not the same as the diets of free whites. Women who are in their child-bearing years and have access to relatively decent diets will have a better chance of bearing healthy infants. One very interesting study concluded that African-descended slaves in the United States were generally taller in stature than African-descended slaves in Brazil which has been linked to the diet because body size has been found to correlate positively with a healthy diet (Kiple & King, 1981). In fact, it has been found that black male slaves born in the early United States had an average height of 67.2 inches, which is nearly identical to white males in the early United States whose average height was found to be 68 inches, and also two inches taller than the average height of a white male in Britain.

Closely related to the current assessment of slave populations is the United States and Brazil is that there is a wealth of research which concludes that white male, slave owners often had forced or coerced sexual relations with female slaves, though it is hard to compare how these patterns may have differed between the United States and Brazil as it was a common practice in each country (Davis, 2006; Toplin, 1981). Toplin (1981) finds that sexual relations between slave master and

slave operated similarly in both nations insofar that they were a much more common occurrence than previously thought in each country.

Slave populations were also vastly different between Brazil and the United States due to the prevalence of diseases. While slaves in Brazil and the United States were at risk for nearly the same primary diseases (cholera, tuberculosis and typhoid, to name some of the more common ailments), due to the poorer diets of slaves in Brazil and the fact that disease generally spreads faster in tropical regions, disease had a greater impact on the death rates of slaves in Brazil than it did on slaves in the United States (Alden & Miller, 1987). Lastly, another factor which may explain the higher rates of death found in Brazil may be attributed to the explosion of the sugar economy.

Due to the fact that sugar was in such high demand and the importation of slaves to Brazil was equally high in number, it may have been economically viable to the slave owner to work the slave to death and simply buy more slaves due to the high short term profits (Bergad, 2007). Because the slave trade to the United States involved a substantially fewer slaves, it seems less economically savory to literally work a slave to death. Because of this, slave owners and traders in the United States *may* have been more invested in keeping their slaves relatively healthy, or, at the risk of oversimplification, at least relatively healthy enough to a) continue to live and b) provide exploited slave labor. In order to ensure that these criteria were met, it is important to explore the development of the racial structure as it played an extremely important role in both societies.

THE RACIAL STRUCTURE

“Race” operated in very similar form within both countries. Race was employed

as a means to dehumanize, degrade, and ultimately destroy peoples of African-descent into tools for labor in the fledgling plantation economies of both countries (Davis, 2006). One need only look so far as the social structure in both societies in order to view the true nature of race. As such, it can be concluded that both the United States and Brazil formed as colonies of exploitation which was justified through the process of racial differentiation (Best, 1968). While some scholars have explored why race differentiation occurred between white and nonwhite and not between the working class and the plantation owners (see Thompson, 1975), others assert that this process was intertwined with the nature of racial differentiation because plantation economies effectively established a racialized structure from the very inception of each country (Talley, 2009).

Prior research on the plantation economy and race finds that the nature of the plantation economy is entirely constrained with the need for labor (Franklin, 1947). Looking historically, it can be observed that imperial colonies like North America, the Caribbean, and South America lacked the indigenous populations to supply for this demand (Davis, 2006). This presents a troublesome contradiction for production; while the land is available, the labor source is not. The solution to this issue is to employ a large body of unskilled labor via importation, or more precisely, it involves the trans-Atlantic movement of African peoples under slavery. As the primary goal of the colonies of North America and Brazil was production, the plantation economy effectively became the preeminent institution and functioned to produce the entire social structure, and therefore society. As these societies were created on the basis of the structure of the plantation economy, the racial system utilized to supply the labor in these colonies

becomes the template for all other institutions which develop out of it (Talley, 2009). Therefore, the racial hierarchy of the plantation economy becomes the racial hierarchy of society.

Though the concept of "race" operated in similar fashion in both countries, there are a few key differences in the racial structure between the United States and Brazil to be briefly assessed. In pre-revolution, colonial America, there were a large number of free immigrants from Western Europe in the 1600s (though, there were also a large number of white indentured servants). Even the indentured servants, who certainly had a number of things in common with slaves, could at least become free after serving their time. Additionally, white males who had previously been servants had some level of access to land and some resources to begin life on their own. Because of this indentured servant system, by 1700, it is generally estimated that around 10 percent of Virginia's population was of African descent; therefore, whites vastly outnumbered blacks (Bergad, 2004). This is nearly the opposite of the trend found in Brazil, especially northeastern Brazil, during this time as a major part of the population was comprised of slaves of African descent.

By 1700, comparatively, individuals of African-descent began to outnumber those of European descent in Northeast Brazil due to the need of labor for the sugar plantations and sugar trade. Thus, slavery as a labor system was different between these two countries as slavery quickly became the most highly employed labor system in all of Brazil, as opposed to the indentured servant system utilized in the emerging United States. Brazil lacked the large population of European immigrants and made up for it utilizing the trans-Atlantic slave trade on a much larger scale than the United States.

Moreover, the political structure was also racialized differently in each country, in

part, due to the differing structure of power. It would be undue to place imminent importance on this, but in the United States some level of power was given to the common (white) man insofar that land owning (white) men were able to participate in politics like town hall meetings. This is something that was not done in Brazil as the power was continually held by the elite. The commonality between these two systems is that both excluded blacks from participating in politics in any conventional way; though, of course, individuals of African descent worked to abolish the trans-Atlantic slave trade and slavery via less conventional means.

It can also be observed that the racialized structure performed a function to stratify individuals based upon sex. Because the nature of a plantation economy is to produce, both Brazilian and United States elite preferred male workers. Here, it can be observed that the preferred sex, at least during the times of economic growth, was placed on men. Due to this, the racialized structure also became sexualized. Interestingly enough too, is the fact that in urban areas, female slaves were more numerous than male slaves in both Brazil and the United States. Bergad (2007) asserts that this is due to the demand for domestic servants and nannies. This may, of course, play into the stereotype of the "mammy," a large black woman who receives great happiness to care for the white family. This stereotype continues to permeate the United States in some fashion (see, for instance Beauboef-Lafontant, 2003). Overall, the emergence of this racialized plantation-based economy planted the seed for the modern racial structure.

DISSCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

It is not within the scope of the current project to assess which country was "worse" for a slave. It is the entire institution of

slavery that is the problem, not the minor difference in labor or duties as a slave. Therefore, an attempt to quantify which country treated slaves worse is not an exercise that can be undertaken, nor is it an exercise that would be fruitful. However, it can be said that Brazil imported the most slaves, and slavery lasted longer in Brazil, but general statements about condition cannot be made as it depended very heavily on the individual and the location/duties of the slave.

When exploring the historical process and impact of slavery and the legacy of the racial structure, one cannot help but to draw comparisons to modernity. Individuals of African-descent (and indeed, most other minorities) lack equal access to resources like education and wealth, health care, political power, and income that whites in both Brazil and the United States do have access to (Toplin, 1981). Though autonomy and agency exists within the African-American and African-Brazilian community, one cannot help but see the historical legacy the institution of slavery has left in both countries. While many differences (and similarities) existed between each country in the amount of slaves imported (Berlin, 1998; Davis, 2006), the extent of slavery (Bergad, 2007), and the specific roles the institution played in the colonization and formation of each country (Horne, 2007), the outcome and implications for modernity are strikingly similar: those individuals of African descent are at a marked social disadvantaged.

Overall, the role and processes of the trans-Atlantic slave trade was very similar insofar that the trade in both countries coincided with a rise in the demand for labor, and only through extreme pressure did each country end the slave trade and slavery (Deyle, 2009). Perhaps the most important, and also the most devastating, aspect these two countries have in common is the continued legacy of oppression the system

of slavery has left on individuals of African descent (Cowling, 2010), and, indeed, other minority groups. But that is a conversation for another time.

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