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THE COLORED FREEDMEN IN BRAZILIAN SLAVE SOCIETY

In attempting to analyze the structure of Negro slavery and the development of race relations in any New World society, it is essential to understand the condition of the free colored class. For the occupations, status, and degree of acceptance of the freedmen during slavery foreshadow the pattern of postemancipation assimilation for the entire slave class. Even more crucially, the role of the free colored is an important indicator of the closed or open nature of a given slave regime. For the colored masses, freedmen offer alternative models to the slave role, and as a group they can also serve as intermediaries between the extremes of freedom and slavery and provide opportunities for nonmaster contact for the colored slaves.

To understand what role the freedmen play in any particular slave society it is essential to determine their numbers, rates of growth, occupational mobility, life styles, and degree of integration into the white society. To date, only the free colored of North America have been adequately studied, and detailed analyses of this group in the slave south and free northern states have provided significant insights into the origins of North American race relations.¹ The lack of detailed studies in other major slave societies is particularly unfortunate in the case of the very largest of the New World free colored classes, that of Brazil. It is therefore necessary in dealing with this class to start with the fundamental questions of numbers, distribution, composition, social condition, and occupational structure.

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¹ Among the best of these studies are Luther P. Jackson, *Free Negro Labor and Property Holding in Virginia, 1830-1860* (New York, 1942) and John Hope Franklin, *The Free Negro in North Carolina, 1790-1860* (Chapel Hill, 1943). Also see the bibliographical survey on this subject by Franklin in *From Slavery to Freedom* (3rd ed.; New York, 1967), pp. 666-667.

But even beginning with such fundamental questions is a difficult task because of the lack of adequate materials. No national census was taken for Brazil until 1872, nor have all the scattered regional censuses of the preceding period been organized or published. Also much of this pre-1872 manuscript and printed demographic data is itself quite fragmentary in terms of age, color, condition, and sexual divisions or even completeness and comparability for a given region or time period.² The following study is therefore an initial attempt at ordering this disparate material to determine the general characteristics of the free colored strata under Brazilian slavery.

Prior to the first preserved manuscript censuses of the mid-eighteenth century, there are only minor references to the free colored class in Brazil in travelers' accounts, governors' reports, and other scattered documents. Though the freedman class, like that of the mixed Indian-white grouping, known in Brazil as *caboclos*, was obviously slow to develop in the sixteenth century, by the early part of the seventeenth century the freedmen were numerous enough to be recorded as separate fighting units in the colonial militia volunteer armies. In the wars against the Dutch in Brazil's Northeast in the first half of the century, one of the leading armies was made up of freedmen and runaway slaves under the leadership of the free Negro Henrique Dias. So important was Dias and his *terço* (a unit consisting of several companies) in the ensuing reconquest of Dutch territories, that he and several of his Negro captains were rewarded with titles of nobility and admittance into Iberian military orders.³

By the eighteenth century, the number and size of these free

² For an analysis of the materials on colonial demography see the study by Dauril Alden, "The Population of Brazil in the Late Eighteenth Century: A Preliminary Survey," *Hispanic American Historical Review*, XLIII (1963), 173-205; for a review of the Imperial and Republican periods see Giorgio Mortara, "Demographic Studies in Brazil," in Philip M. Hauser and Otis Dudley Duncan, eds., *The Study of Population, An Inventory and Appraisal* (Chicago, 1959), pp. 235-248. The best survey of the pre-1872 published materials was made by the government official who was preparing that census—see [Joaquim Norberto de Souza e Silva], *Investigações sobre os recenseamentos da população geral do império* (Documentos Censitários, Serie B, No. 1, Serviço Nacional de Recenseamento; Rio de Janeiro, 1951). This is a reprint of a work originally published by the government in 1870.

³ Dias was admitted to the exclusive Order of Santiago. See Antonio Gonsales de Mello, *Henrique Dias, governador dos pretos, crioulos e mulatos* (Recife, 1954).

colored units had increased to such an extent that they were being assigned to specialized military functions and at the same time were being strictly divided into all Negro and all mulatto units. They had also spread to almost all areas of the colony, so that from the first extant military census of the middle and late eighteenth century their presence is constantly recorded. Thus in the *capitania*, or province, of Pernambuco, for example, in 1759, out of a total of 18,026 paid and voluntary troops, 2723 (or 15 percent) were free colored militiamen. There was one Terço de Henrique, like all such free Negro units named after the famous Henrique Dias, with fifteen companies making up 1323 men, and one regiment of free mulattoes with 1400.⁴ In the city of Bahia in a 1774 census, there was an artillery unit whose soldiers and officers were free mulattoes.⁵ Nor were such units confined to the major cities, for the town of Jaquaripe in 1792 was not atypical in having a Terço de Henrique of free Negro troops. This unit was composed of sixty-six men, of whom seven were born in Guinea in Africa and the rest were native born to the village. The occupations of these free colored militiamen were primarily fishing (some 56 percent of the total), the next leading occupation being farming, while about a dozen men were listed as artisans.⁶

These provincial, city, and town militia units, both of whites and colored freedmen, played an important role in colonial society in maintaining order, countering foreign invasions, and in hunting down recalcitrant Indians and fugitive slaves. Though often onerous and time consuming, enrollment in these militia units, at least for the free colored, provided an important means of social mobility for outstanding individuals. Able colored soldiers could rise to be officers, with corresponding rights being bestowed upon them. As officers, they could exercise a powerful voice in colonial govern-

⁴ I[nstituto] H[istórico] e G[eográfico] B[rasileiro] (Rio de Janeiro), Arquivo C[onselho] U[ltramarino], Arq. 1-1-14, folio 108, Recife, Feb. 22, 1759 (hereafter abbreviated as IHGB/CU). These troops were even sent for duty in distant provinces. Thus a regiment of some 600 free colored troops from Pernambuco served on the island of Santa Catarina in 1777 (Fernando Henrique Cardoso and Octávio Ianni, *Côr e mobilidade social em Florianópolis* [São Paulo, 1960], p. 21).

⁵ IHGB/CU, Arq. 1-1-19, folios 226-227, letter of Dom Joaquim, Arcebispo de Bahia, June 20, 1774.

⁶ B[iblioteca] N[acional] (R[io] de J[aneiro]), Secção de Manuscritos, I-33, 21, 58, "Ofício de Antonio José Calmon de Sousa e Eça, Cap.-mor das Ordenanças de Vila de Jaquaripe" (hereafter abbreviated as BN).

ment. Aside from Henrique Dias, one of the most outstanding of these free colored officers was the mulatto Vicente Ferreira de Guedez, who was *Mestre de Campo* of a *terço* of white militia troops in Maranhão in 1783. A close associate of several governors, Guedez evoked a storm of protest because of his unique appointment to leadership of the white troops, his special connections with the reform-minded Maranhão governors of the period, and his zealous antiestablishment activities in many previous government posts. He was a leading opponent of the entrenched oligarchy of the town council of São Luis de Maranhão, with whom he fought a number of major legal battles. In the bitter and voluminous correspondence which was sent by his opponents to the Crown, constant reference was made to the fact that he was the first mulatto ever to be appointed head of a white voluntary militia group, though innumerable mulatto *mestres de terços* had been made heads of colored militia companies, and his opponents charged him with everything from outright rebellion to being a runaway slave in disguise.⁷ As the Englishman Henry Koster, a resident of Recife in the 1810's, noted of the mulatto militia regiments of that city, "the officers are men of property, and the colonel, like the commander of any other regiment, is only amenable to the governor of the province." In fact, "the late colonel of the mulatto regiment of Recife, by name Nogueira, went to Lisbon, and returned to Pernambuco with the Order of Christ, which the Queen had conferred upon him" and added that this man's son was a priest. Koster noted that even in the white militia companies, light mulattoes, or as he put it, "reputed white men" often became officers, since "very little pains are taken to prove that there is no mixture of blood," while "great numbers of the soldiers belonging to the regiments which are officered by white men, are mulattoes, and other persons of colour." Along with their service even in white militia companies, mulattoes, though not Negroes, were to be found at all ranks of the royal line regiments maintained in the city.⁸

⁷ See, e.g., several reports and letters sent to the Crown from private individuals as well as the Câmara of São Luis in 1783, in IHGB/CU, Arq. 1-1-5, folios 197-200.

⁸ *Travels in Brazil* (London, 1816), p. 392. For mulattoes in a white elite regiment of Minas Gerais in the 1820's, see Auguste de Saint-Hilaire, *Voyage dans les provinces de Rio de Janeiro et de Minas Geraes* (Paris, 1830), I, 380.

Throughout the last years of the colonial period, the free colored class continued to grow rapidly, despite the ever-increasing tempo of slave importations which were beginning to run close to 16,000 per year by the last years of the eighteenth century.⁹ In the first manuscript censuses available in the Rio archives, which come from the late 1790's and early 1800's, the free colored class is consistently and unusually important. In the frontier region of Mato Grosso, for example, in a census taken in 1797, 47 percent of the total colored class are listed as freedmen, and these freedmen made up 65 percent of the total free class, while the southern and still relatively backward capitania of São Paulo a year later listed 43 percent of its colored population as free, with the freedmen being 26 percent of the total free class. Even in the thriving slave state of Maranhão, which undoubtedly had the highest slave importations in the last years of the eighteenth century, the free colored accounted for 27 percent of the colored population and a high 36 percent of the total free inhabitants. The rough pattern which emerges from these early census materials is the high percentage of freedmen in the peripheral regions, running close to half the colored population, and a sizeable free colored minority of 20 to 30 percent in the major slave-plantation regions, that is, Maranhão, Bahia-Pernambuco, Minas Gerais, and Rio de Janeiro (see Table I).

As the centers of vigorous plantation slavery moved south in the nineteenth century, the northeastern regions registered a constantly increasing free colored population, but even in the new coffee regions of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro the free colored population maintained a vigorous growth, actually increasing more rapidly than the white population. Thus between 1800 and 1872 the free colored population of São Paulo increased by almost twice the rate of the white population.

Though no single national census was carried out prior to 1872, a crude estimate of the importance of the free colored population out of the total colored population for all Brazil would run between 40 to 60 percent by the middle decades of the century, a figure which would rise steadily to some 74 percent by the census of 1872. By any standards of New World slavery, these figures are unusually high and reveal the great role which the free colored pop-

⁹ Affonso de E. Tauney, "Subsidios para a historia de trafico africano no Brasil," *Anais do Museu Paulista*, I, Part 2 (1941), 305.

TABLE I.—The Colored Population in Late Colonial and Imperial Brazil to the Census of 1872

	Date of census	Free Colored	Slave Colored	Whites	Free Colored as percent of total Colored
North					
Amazonas	1840	1,980	940	14,325*	67.8%
	1872	8,592	979	11,211	89.7
Pará	1819	unknown	33,000	unknown	
	1872	110,556	138,014 27,485	92,634	80.1 24.9
Northeast					
Maranhão	1789	13,606	36,887	24,273	26.1
	1872	169,645	74,939	103,513	69.3
Piauí	1819	unknown	12,405	unknown	
	1872	121,527	23,795	43,447	83.6
Ceará	1819	unknown	55,439	unknown	
	1872	368,100	31,913	268,836	92.0
Rio Grande do Norte	1839	39,600	10,189	27,638	79.5
	1845	75,977	18,153	48,157	80.7
	1872	107,455	13,020	102,465	89.1
Paraíba	1798	8,897	15,852	12,328	35.9
	1804	11,926	5,926	16,012	66.8
	1811	56,161	17,633	45,208	76.6
	1872	200,412	21,526	144,721	90.3
Pernambuco	1829	126,813	68,458	88,593	64.9
	1872	449,547	89,028	291,159	83.4
Alagoas	1849	104,576	39,790	56,797	72.4
	1872	217,106	35,741	88,798	85.8
East					
Sergipe	1849/51†	92,716	56,564	43,542	62.1
	1872	100,755	22,623	49,778	81.6
Bahia	1819	unknown	147,263	unknown	
	1872	830,431	167,824	331,479	83.1

Sources: Paraíba, 1798: IHGB/CU, Arq. 1-1-13, fols. 148v-149; 1804, fol. 204. São Paulo, 1800: A[rquivo] N[acional] (R[io] de J[aneiro]), cod. 808, IV, fol. 255; 1803: fol. 256; 1822: fol. 262; 1811, 1815, and 1826: Roger Bastide and Florestan Fernandes, *Branços e negros em São Paulo* (São Paulo, 1959), p. 26. Maranhão, 1798: IHGB/CU, Arq. 1-1-6, fol. 92. Santa Catarina, 1811: ANRJ, cod. 808, III, fol. 75; 1828, fol. 93; 1831: fol. 84; 1838: fol. 86; 1860: Cardoso and Ianni, *Côr e mobilidade social*, p. 86. Rio Grande do Sul, 1807: ANRJ, cod. 808, III, fol. 147. Mato Grosso, 1797: R[evista] do I[nstituto] H[istorico] e G[eografico] B[rasileiro] (Rio de Janeiro), XX (1857), 281; 1815: p. 292; 1828: ANRJ, cod. 808, III, fols. 38-39. Minas Gerais, 1814: ANRJ, cod. 808, I, fols. 130-132. Espírito Santo, 1839: ANRJ, cod. 808, I, fol. 35. Goiás, 1824: Auguste de Saint-Hilaire, *Viagem as nascentes do Rio S. Francisco e pela provincia de Goyaz*, trans. C. Ribeiro de Lessa (São Paulo, 1937), I, 296-297; 1832: ANRJ, cod. 808, I, fol. 96. Rio de Janeiro, 1844: ANRJ, cod. 808, II, fol. 62. Paraná, 1854: Octávio Ianni, *As metamorfoses do escravo, apogeu e crise da escravatura no Brasil Meridional* (São Paulo, 1962), p. 104. City of Bahia, 1775: IHGB/CU, Arq. 1-1-9, fol. 230. Brazil, 1872: Directoria Geral de Estadística, *Recenseamento da população do Imperio do Brazil a que se procedeu no dia 1° de agosto de 1872* (21 vols.; Rio de Janeiro, 1872-76).

All other census data: [Joaquim Norberto de Souza e Silva], *Investigações sôbre os recenseamentos*.

* In all the following statistics, the category of *caboclo* has been omitted. In only one province, or *capitania*, did they have a preponderance in numbers, and that is in Amazonas. In the 1840 census the Indian-white mixture of caboclos and Indians together numbered 34,210 persons. In 1872 the caboclos alone numbered 36,828. In the entire nation in 1872 the caboclos numbered 386,955 persons.

† The 1849-51 census for Sergipe is a compilation of the free colored estimate of 1849 with the slave estimate of 1851.

TABLE I.—The Colored Population in Late Colonial and Imperial Brazil to the Census of 1872 (*cont.*)

	Date of census	Free Colored	Slave Colored	Whites	Free Colored as percent of total Colored
City of Bahia	1775	7,943	6,692	5,021	54.2
Espirito Santo	1839	6,599	9,233	6,730	41.6
	1857	16,451	11,819	14,311	57.2
	1872	27,367	22,659	26,582	54.7
Rio de Janeiro	1840	64,592	224,012	112,973	28.2
(excluding city of Rio)	1844	69,719	239,557	122,152	22.5
	1850	96,629	293,554	160,945	24.7
	1872	178,960	292,637	303,275	37.9
City of Rio de Janeiro	1799	8,812	14,896	19,578	37.0
(= Corte after 1808)	1872	73,311	48,939	151,799	59.9
Minas Gerais	1814	143,080	150,489	83,671	48.7
	1872	805,967	370,459	830,987	68.5
South					
São Paulo	1800	32,086	42,209	95,349	43.1
	1803	46,913	44,131	112,965	51.5
	1811	48,004	48,150	127,888	49.9
	1815	49,225	51,272	115,203	48.9
	1822	52,850	63,697	127,888	45.3
	1836	66,265	86,933	172,879	38.3
	1872	207,845	156,612	433,432	57.0
Paraná	1811	9,760	6,840	18,340	58.7
	1836	11,037	7,153	23,895	58.3
	1854	13,300	10,189	33,633	56.6
	1872	37,377	10,560	69,698	77.9
Santa Catarina	1811	580	7,417	23,753	7.2
	1828	1,615	12,250	37,470	11.6
	1831	2,241	11,988	35,214	15.7
	1838	4,236	13,658	43,573	23.6
	1860	10,336	16,316	87,945	38.7
	1872	15,984	14,984	125,942	51.6
Rio Grande do Sul	1807	2,758	13,469	27,107	16.9
	1858	5,413	70,880	206,254	7.0
	1872	82,938	67,791	258,367	55.0
Center-West					
Goiás	1824	37,985	13,375	10,535	73.9
	1832	47,481	13,261	11,761	78.1
	1872	103,564	10,652	41,929	90.6
Mato Grosso	1797	9,669	11,910	5,257	44.8
	1815	10,564	10,898	5,812	49.2
	1828	15,532	10,122	4,278	60.5
	1872	27,989	6,667	17,237	80.7
Brazil	1872	4,245,428	1,510,810	3,787,289	73.7% ‡

‡ There is a possibility of error of 3 to 4 percent in the figure because of the nonrecording of slave children under 11 months of age as a result of the Law of Free Birth of Sept. 28, 1871. The three to four percent figure is a rough estimate based on the percentage importance of the below-11 months category in the Indian, free colored, and white populations. There are no instructions available in the U.S. Library of Congress edition of the 1872 census which I used, nor do the free colored have an inordinately high number of infants under 11 months, which renders it virtually impossible without the birth and death rates to tell whether these slave infants (now officially considered apprentices) were included in the free colored class or not.

ulation played in Brazilian society long before an abolition movement appeared. To give some kind of comparative idea of the importance of the free colored population of Brazil, it is estimated that the Cuban figure for 1861 was just 35 percent,¹⁰ and the figure for all states in the United States, that is both slave and free, was only 11 percent in 1860.¹¹

As for the cause of this very rapid growth of the free colored class, only some tentative ideas can be proposed. There is little question that this was the fastest growing class in nineteenth-century Brazilian society. Thus of the seventeen provinces where data are available, eleven had more rapid growth rates for the freedmen than for the whites. Yet from some extremely fragmentary available evidence (see Table II), it appears that the free colored did not have a natural increase as rapid as the whites, largely because of higher mortality.

TABLE II.—Crude Birth and Death Rates by Color and Condition in Minas Gerais in 1814 (per 1,000 persons)

	Total Numbers	Birth Rate	Death Rate	Natural Increase
Whites	83,671	36.6	27.4	9.2
Free Colored	143,080	41.7	34.3	7.4
Slave Colored	150,489	33.4	32.9	0.5
Totals	377,240	37.3	32.3	5.0

Source: Same as Table I.

If this Minas Gerais data are accurate and representative,¹² it would support the thesis that natural reproduction alone could not

¹⁰ *My Slavery in the Americas, A Comparative Study of Cuba and Virginia* (Chicago, 1967), p. 236.

¹¹ U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1957* (Washington, 1960), p. 9.

¹² To give some comparative idea of birth and death rates at this time in the rest of Brazil, the city of Rio de Janeiro as a whole (totals undifferentiated by color) had a birth rate of 35.5 per thousand and a death rate of 39.4 per thousand in 1880 (Directoria Geral de Estadística, *Recenseamento geral da República dos Estados Unidos do Brazil em 31 de dezembro de 1890, Distrito Federal* [Rio de Janeiro, 1895], p. xx). During the last half of the nineteenth century, Spain's birth rate fluctuated from a low of 33.2 per thousand to a high of 39.8 per thousand, while the corresponding death figures were a low of 26.7 and a high of 37.9 per thousand (Jorge Nadal, *Historia de la población española* [Barcelona, 1966], cuadro 15). These crude birth rate figures are also comparable to the general rates published for Europe in the nineteenth century, which run from mid to upper 30's per thousand (see Michael G. Mulhall, *The Dictionary of Statistics* (London, 1892), pp. 91ff.). While this data would seem to suggest

account for the rapid growth of the freedmen. It is evident that only a constant process of emancipation could have kept the free colored strata expanding so rapidly. At the same time, the excessively high birth rate among the free colored would seem to indicate that this category was increasing through accessions from another class, most specifically from the slave group, which could also account for the very low rate of slave births. If such a thesis is correct, then it could be assumed that there might be a disproportionate male to female ratio in both the slave and free colored group, since such distortions would produce an unnatural birth pattern. This, in fact, is the case with the 1814 Minas Gerais data. Among the whites there were 101.6 males born for 100 female births, whereas the free colored had a low ratio of 98.7 males per 100 females, and the colored slaves a high 103.3 ratio. These ratios seem to suggest that large numbers of female infants of slave birth were being freed at birth.

If these Minas figures reflected national trends, it could be argued that the national sexual breakdowns of the 1872 census tend to support the hypothesis of disproportionate female to male ratios among the free colored. Though clearly there seems to have been underenumeration of the entire female population, if this underenumeration can be considered to have been random throughout all groups, then it is evident that the free mulatto strata had the highest percentage of females of any group in the entire population (see Table III).

Though material is quite scarce on the family background of freedmen, one of the few breakdowns of the condition of freedmen at birth was made in the southern province of Santa Catarina in the census of 1828. This census listed some 708 freedmen as *libertos*,

that the Minas Gerais vital ratios are compatible with other nineteenth century estimates, recent demographic studies imply that these recorded nineteenth century birth rates for Latin America were probably too low, given the patterns of more recent trends. Though no national vital statistics seem to have been taken for Brazil until the mid twentieth century, one demographer has estimated that given the similarities in the changes in their age distributions over time, the Brazilian vital rates probably most resembled those of Colombia, which had a crude birth rate of 43 per thousand in 1900. In the 1860's both Argentina and Chile had crude birth rates of 46 per thousand, which fell to 41 and 44 per thousand respectively by 1900 (O. Andrew Collver, *Birth Rates in Latin America: New Estimates of Historical Trends and Fluctuations*, Institute of International Studies, Research Series, No. 7 [Univ. of California, Berkeley, 1965], p. 25 and table 5).

TABLE III.—Sex Ratio of the Brazilian Population by Color and Condition in 1872

	Males per 100 Females
Whites	108.6
Free Mulattoes	101.4
Free Negroes	105.0
Slave Mulattoes	112.5
Slave Negroes	114.8
Caboclos	108.0
National Total	106.6

or liberated slaves, as opposed to 907 *ingenuos*, or those born of free parents, which means that some 44 percent of the free colored entered the class after birth. In the Goiás census of 1824, the number of freedmen born of slave parents was only 8 percent of the total free population. This discrepancy probably reflects the very high and low numbers of slaves, respectively, in the two provinces. Whereas Santa Catarina listed 88 percent of its colored population as slaves in 1828, only 36 percent were slaves in Goiás in 1824.

Even more decisive evidence of the origins of this class occurs when color breakdown is examined. Whereas slaves were primarily Negroes, freedmen were overwhelmingly mulattoes, making up over two-thirds of the total number of freedmen in any given area.

TABLE IV.—Percentage of Mulattoes among the Freedmen and Slave Populations in Selected Provinces of Brazil

Province	Date of census	Percent mulatto among freedmen	Percent mulatto among slaves
Mato Grosso	1828	79%	16%
Goiás	1832	79	13
Paraná	1836	92	26
São Paulo	1836	89	16
Rio de Janeiro	1840	79	6
Brazil	1872	78%	32%

Source: Same as Table I.

Given the mulatto domination of the free colored class, it is obvious that the African-born Negroes were only moderately represented among the free colored.

TABLE V.—African-Born Colored as a Percentage of Free and Slave Population in Selected Provinces

Province	Date of census	African-born as a percent of free colored	African-born as a percent of slaves
Paraná	1836	8.1%	31.2%
Goiás	1836	1.0	14.5
São Paulo	1836	3.5	44.9
Espirito Santo	1839	.8	30.6
Rio de Janeiro	1850	—	40.2
Brazil	1872	1.0%	9.1%

Source: Same as Table I.

From this evidence it can be inferred that the free colored class heavily originated from native born children of white fathers and slave mothers. Though older persons were being freed and a steady stream of artisan slaves were purchasing their liberty, the primary source for new freedmen was most probably free fathers emancipating their offspring. That this was a common occurrence is accepted by all the published and unpublished sources available. Though obviously not all fathers freed their children, society's mores considered such behavior a virtuous act. So strong were church and customary attitudes on this practice that the free white father had innumerable and simple ways to free his children. The white father could simply declare, usually when the child was baptized, that he freed his child, or if he himself did not wish to be compromised, he could arrange for the child's godparents to pay for the child's freedom at baptism. Should this prove too embarrassing for a man's family relations, he could simply provide for his child to become a foundling, arranging with friends to have the child so declared and baptized as such. Since the law presumed all foundlings free, he thus freed his child but removed himself from suspicion of paternity.¹³

But the need to protect the identity of the father seems to have varied considerably from family to family and region to region. From all the evidence it seems that the frontier areas, or regions where sudden wealth was being created (above all in the gold min-

¹³ Ianni, *As metamorfoses do escravo*, pp. 173-174, 192-193. On the numerous ways of freeing slaves (e.g., self-purchase, voluntary manumission, purchase at baptism) and the frequency of their occurrence, see the excellent first-hand description by the long-term resident of Pernambuco, Koster (pp. 404-407).

ing zone of Minas Gerais), allowed much freer recognition of such progeny than the more established centers did, though everywhere it was freely practiced. The open quality of the boom towns of Minas Gerais seem to have been an ideal framework for this to occur, to such an extent that the Provincial Governor in 1723, at the height of the gold rush, felt threatened enough to complain bitterly to the Crown on this issue. On April 20, 1723, he wrote to the Overseas Council (Conselho Ultramarino) "of the great ruin which is threatening these mines, because of the poor quality of the people who are swelling its population, by this I refer to the mulatto class, whose growth is caused by the lack of any but Negro women. . . ." He charged that white men were leaving their families in Europe or on the coast to work in the mines and were living in open concubinage with Negro slave women and in turn were bequeathing all their holdings to their mulatto children. To prevent the mulattoes from gaining complete domination over all the mines of the region he went so far as to ask the Crown to deny mulattoes, even if they were exclusive heirs, the right to inherit property, an act which the Crown held to be completely against all the laws of the Kingdom.¹⁴

Freed by their fathers or by masters for valiant service or simply old age or having purchased their freedom, the free colored population was constantly on the increase throughout the era of heaviest slave importation which ended in 1850. Following the effective termination of the slave trade in 1850, their numbers rose rapidly. Thus by the time of the first national census in 1872, the free class

TABLE VI.—Population in 1872 by Color, Condition and Sex

	Males	Females	Total
Whites	1,971,772	1,815,517	3,787,289
Free mulattoes	1,673,971	1,650,307	3,324,278
Free negroes	472,008	449,142	921,150
Slave mulattoes	252,824	224,680	477,504
Slave negroes	552,346	480,956	1,033,302
Caboclos	200,948	186,007	386,955
Total	5,123,869	4,806,609	9,930,478

Source: Same as Table I.

¹⁴ IHGB/CU, Arq. 1-1-21, folios 208-214v, "Consultas de Rio de Janeiro," report dated August 6, 1723.

had come decisively to outweigh the slave population, and in fact was the largest single group in the nation. Of the 5.7 million (or 58 percent) of the population who were colored, some 4.2 million (or over 70 percent) were freedmen, and this freedmen group was some 43 percent of the total population in Brazilian Imperial Society, while the slaves were only 15 percent. And this was fully sixteen years before complete emancipation was enacted.

As for the social condition of the free colored class, it appears that well before the end of slavery they had achieved an important style of life intermediate between the white master and colored slave classes. If crude marital and legitimacy rates are any indication of such status, then it appears from the fragmentary available evidence that the freedmen were midway between the two classes in terms of marriages and numbers of legitimate children. In the colonial capitania of São Paulo in 1800, for example, marriage rates of the free colored fall intermediately between the slave and free white class. Some seventy-two years later, this pattern, which had been evident in the frontier capitania of São Paulo, prevailed

TABLE VII.—Marital Status of the Population of the Capitania of São Paulo in 1800 (by percentage)*

	Single	Married	Widowed	Total population
White				
Men	64.7%	30.9%	4.2%	47,198
Women	64.2	30.4	5.2	48,151
Free Mulatto				
Men	71.8	24.2	3.8	14,393
Women	70.3	23.1	6.5	14,554
Free Negroes				
Men	68.6	27.5	3.8	1,596
Women	66.4	24.4	9.0	1,543
Slave Mulattos				
Men	82.1	16.3	1.5	5,235
Women	79.9	17.4	2.6	5,702
Slave Negroes				
Men	81.1	16.8	2.0	17,661
Women	74.1	22.1	3.6	13,511

Source: Same as Table I.

* In this and the following tables, I have not rounded off percentages, thus totals do not add up to 100.0%.

TABLE VIII.—Marital Status by Sex, Color and Condition
in Brazil, 1872 (by percentage)

	Single	Married	Widowed	Total number
Whites				
Men	65.4%	29.9%	4.5%	1,822,224
Women	63.1	30.2	6.5	1,751,373
Free Mulattoes				
Men	70.6	26.0	3.2	1,673,971
Women	69.0	26.3	4.5	1,650,307
Free Negroes				
Men	75.2	19.8	4.9	442,219
Women	74.5	20.7	4.6	449,142
Caboclos				
Men	77.2	18.8	3.8	200,948
Women	74.5	20.8	4.6	186,007
Slave Mulattoes				
Men	88.6	8.5	2.8	252,824
Women	89.0	7.8	3.1	224,680
Slave Negroes				
Men	89.4	8.3	3.8	466,806
Women	89.1	8.5	4.6	427,936

Source: Same as Table I.

in the entire national population, as can be seen in Table VIII. Here again, the free colored, especially the mulattoes who formed over two-thirds of the free colored class, are close to the white population in rates of marriage. And comparison of both the free Negroes and the free mulattoes with the mestizo caboclo group reveals that the latter had the least stable family arrangements among the free population.

If to the marriage rate we add the fragmentary data available on illegitimacy, then the socio-legal status differentiation between free and slave colored is even more evident. Though not so high as the whites in legitimate births, the free colored are even more strongly marked off from the slaves in that over half of the latter's births were recorded as illegitimate, just the opposite of the free colored pattern.

If legitimate birth and marriage are accepted as indicators of

TABLE IX.—Legitimacy of Birth by Sex, Color and Condition in Minas Gerais, 1844* (by percentage)

	Legitimate	Illegitimate	Foundlings	Total number
Whites				
Men	87.8%	9.5%	2.5%	2,461
Women	84.5	13.3	2.0	2,442
Free Mulattoes				
Men	69.5	28.8	1.6	3,641
Women	66.4	32.5	1.0	3,784
Free Negroes				
Men	61.7	37.7	0.4	839
Women	60.4	39.4	0.1	763
Slave Mulattoes				
Men	41.1	58.8	—	471
Women	38.7	61.2	—	490
Slave Negroes				
Men	48.0	51.7	0.1	1,840
Women	40.8	59.1	—	1,860
Totals	66.1%	32.6%	1.1%	18,571

* These figures represent birth statistics for 110 parishes, out of a total provincial number of 173, for the entire calendar year of 1844.

Source: Quintanilla José de Silva, *Falla dirigida à assembléa legislativa provincial de Minas Gerais . . . no anno de 1846* (Ouro Preto, 1846), mappa no. 18.

some social mobility, it seems evident that free colored, and especially the two-thirds who were mulattoes, did have a far better position in Brazilian society than did the slaves. One other possible indicator of such mobility is the number of interracial marriages. Though obviously such legal unions were quite rare, the fact that they occurred at all suggests some basic attitudes of acceptance on the part of white society.¹⁵ While scattered references to such unions existed before slavery was abolished, one of the first systematic studies of the racial composition of married couples occurred just two years after final abolition, in the city of Rio de Janeiro. A detailed survey of over 40,000 married couples revealed the follow-

¹⁵ It has recently been pointed out that the Latin American slave societies were sharply differentiated from the other New World slave regimes by their willingness to accept "intimate social relations based on social equality" between the races. For a full development of this thesis see H. Hoetink, *The Two Variants in Caribbean Race Relations* (London, 1967).

TABLE X.—Racial Composition of Married Couples in the City of Rio de Janeiro in 1890

Race and Sex		Number		Percentage
Males	Females			
White	Mulatto	1,799	} 2,521	5.9%
Mulatto	White	368		
White	Negro	334		
Negro	White	20		
Mulatto	Negro	313	} 586	1.3
Negro	Mulatto	273		
Same	Race	38,644		91.3
Others*		558		1.3
Totals		42,309		100.0%

* This category includes caboclos and their inter-marriage with the other three racial categories.

Source: Directoria Geral de Estadistica, *Recenseamento geral de Republica . . . de 1890, Districto Federal* (Rio de Janeiro, 1895), pp. 258-259.

ing results. While interracial marriage was clearly not a mass phenomenon, that it occurred in about 5000 of 80,000 cases, or in 6 percent of the total marriages recorded, is some indication that tolerance was giving way to full acceptance, at least to the point of permitting a significant minority of interracial marriages, some 15 percent of which had white female partners.

If through marriage and birth records one can obtain some idea of the social position of the free colored in white society, the material on occupational mobility is so fragmentary and unorganized that only tentative hypotheses can be proposed. While national industrial surveys are lacking there are some materials on scattered trades and regions. Thus, for example, the Governor of Bahia reported to Portugal in 1775 that of the 1267 free fishermen in the port, less than 100 were whites, the rest being mulattoes and Negroes.¹⁶ By 1861 the free colored seem to have controlled the local seafaring trades of Bahia and to have been important as well in maintaining deep-sea transatlantic ships. Thus the census of seamen of that year listed some 11 percent of the sailors engaged in long-distance shipping on Bahian ships as free colored. About 50 percent of the crews on the ships in the interprovincial trade were free colored, while freedmen accounted for 70 percent of the free

¹⁶ IHGB/CU, Arq. 1-1-19, folio 230. Letter dated July 3, 1775.

seamen in intraprovincial sea and internal river traffic.¹⁷ In the whole province, figures in 1856 on fishermen and seamen in all trades listed 2634 free mulattoes and 1787 free Negroes who together made up 51 percent of the total number of seamen.¹⁸

From the material I have collected to date, I cannot tell how representative fishing and seafaring were of all industries, but it seems clear that free colored represented a vital part of the artisanal element of Brazilian society. Almost all commentators, whether government officials or foreign travelers, stressed the dominance of colored laborers in all the skilled trades in Brazil. They also noted the common practice of apprenticing slave artisans, either by white master craftsmen themselves, who owned their own slaves, or by other masters who paid artisans to teach craft skills to their slaves. As the Governor of Pernambuco noted in a letter to the Overseas Council in 1772, "it is the usual custom in Brazil to send one's slaves to learn all types of skills, the result of which is that white artisans give up their trades and lead lazy and libertine lives."¹⁹ This same pattern was noted by two German travelers in the late 1810's on their visit to Brazil. On commenting about the artisanal laborers in Rio de Janeiro they noted that "artisans work with their own Negro slaves, [and teach them] . . . an ability and aptitude in the arts." They also noted that "the freedom which the masters of slaves have for utilizing them in any skilled trade which they determine, prevents the formation of European style artisanal associations. . . ."²⁰

¹⁷ José Augusto Chaves, *Falla que recitou na abertura da assembléa legislativa da Bahia, o vice-presidente da provincia . . . no dia 1 de setembro de 1861* (Bahia, 1861), "Mappa demonstrativo das embarcações do longo curso . . . no corrente anno" (no page or "mappa" number).

¹⁸ João Mauricio Wanderley, *Falla recitada na abertura da assembléa legislativa da Bahia . . . no 1 de março de 1854* (Bahia, 1854), mappa no. 36.

¹⁹ IHGB/CU, Arq. 1-1-15, folios 20v-21, dated Recife, March 23, 1772.

²⁰ J. B. von Spix and C. F. P. von Martius, *Viagem pelo Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro, 1938), I, 123-124. This is a translation of the 1823 German edition. Also see Fernando H. Cardoso, *Capitalismo e escravidão, no Brasil Meridional* (São Paulo, 1962), pp. 76-79. The Englishman John Luccock also commented on this training of slave artisans and wrote that "where many [slaves] belong to one master, it is usual here [in Rio Grande do Sul], as in Rio de Janeiro, to have one of them instructed in the part of carpenter, another taught to make and mend shoes and the rest qualified for some useful occupation; and by hiring them out to those who may need their services, to make them advantageously repay the cost bestowed upon them" (*Notes on Rio de Janeiro, and the Southern Parts of Brazil; Taken During a Residence of Ten Years in that Country, From 1808 to 1818* (1820), p. 201).

Given this common training of slaves in artisan skills, the high wages and unusual freedom enjoyed by such slave laborers, and their right to purchase their freedom, it was inevitable that large numbers of them would become freedmen. And as freedmen, Negroes and mulattoes dominated almost all the skilled trades. This dominance of colored freedmen even extended to trades that were specifically prohibited to them in law. Thus the *Juiz de Fora* (Crown Judge) of the capitania of Pernambuco wrote to the Crown on April 25, 1732, complaining of "the excessive number of artisan goldsmiths and silversmiths who exist in Olinda, Recife and other places, the majority of them being mulattoes and Negroes, and even some being slaves, which is against the law and results in great damage to the republic. . . ." ²¹ And these sensitive trades, which involved a large number of illicit gold operations and were zealously overseen by government officials, proved quite lucrative professions for the colored artisans. Thus in 1803 when the Governor of Bahia was canvassing for the Coloneley of the Fourth Regiment of Militia "dos homens pardos" of the city of Bahia, a silversmith and a goldsmith presented themselves as two of the several contenders. One was Capitão de granadeiros, Miguel Rodrigues de Deus Sequeira, and the other, Captain of the Seventh Company, João Machado Peçanha, both of whom owned their own shops. ²²

Though all the Portuguese and European visitors bitterly complained about the lack of standards, the poor apprenticeship training and the generally lower quality of the final goods produced by these slave and free colored artisans, in one area they far excelled all others: painting, sculpture, and the other plastic arts. As the Germans von Spix and von Martius noted, "among the native Brazilians, the mulattoes are the ones who manifest the greatest capacity and diligence for the mechanic arts, having noted among them an extraordinary talent for painting." ²³

This vital role of free and slave mulatto and Negro artists is evident in the innumerable great works of Brazilian Rococo which were created, especially in Minas Gerais, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. It is universally agreed that the greatest

²¹ Quoted in Leonídio Ribeiro, ed., *As artes plasticas no Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro, 1952), I, 213. As this standard work notes, "colonial Brazilian silversmiths and goldsmiths were in the large majority, mulattoes and pretos."

²² *As artes*, I, 220.

²³ I, 123.

of Brazil's colonial architects and sculptors was Antonio Francisco Lisboa, otherwise known by the name of Aleijadinho, whose churches and statues are masterpieces of Brazilian colonial art.²⁴ A free mulatto, he was son of a Negro slave mother and a white artisan father. Nor was Aleijadinho unique, for others such as Valentim da Fonseca e Silva, another leading Minas sculptor, were of the same background, and many of their assistants were free Negroes and mulattoes.²⁵

The unusually important role of the free and slave Negro and above all mulatto craftsmen in Minas Gerais is a reflection of the open nature of Minas society. With miners overwhelmingly single and living in concubinage with slave women, a free mulatto class rapidly arose and itself became an important economic element not only through its own skills but through inheritance as well. Equally important, almost all the churches and chapels of the capitania were built by religious brotherhoods, many of whom were made up of free and slave colored men exclusively. From their own ranks often came the artisans and architects as well as the builders of the churches, while at the same time the white *Irmandades* had no inhibitions about hiring colored workmen.²⁶ This patronage and the wealth of the region also led to the development of one of the most flourishing schools of original church music in all of colonial Latin America, which owed almost all of its importance to free mulatto composers.²⁷ Mulatto professors taught composition and harmony by the last half of the century, while mulatto composers almost exclusively dominated the entire field of musical composition in Minas, which was richly supported by commissions from all the white and colored fraternities in honor of holidays, festivals, and other ceremonial occasions. So

²⁴ P. Kelemen, *Baroque and Rococo in Latin America* (New York, 1951), pp. 248-249; George Kubler and Martin Soria, *Art and Architecture in Spain and Portugal and Their American Dominions, 1500-1800* (Baltimore, 1959), pp. 194-196.

²⁵ Nair Batista, "Valentim da Fonseca e Silva," *Revista do Serviço do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico Nacional*, IV (1940), 271-330.

²⁶ Francisco Curt Lange, "A música barroca," in *História geral da civilização brasileira*, ed. Sergio Buarque de Holanda (São Paulo, 1960), I, Part 2, 124ff.

²⁷ In Ouro Preto, or Vila Rica, as it was called in the eighteenth century, there were five religious fraternities made up of free and slave colored men, each with its own church (Lange, I, 129). The town of Bahia in the same period had eleven colored brotherhoods, each with its own separate cult of the Virgin (A. J. R. Russel-Wood, "Class, Creed and Color in Colonial Brazil: A Study in Prejudice," *Race*, IX [1967], 153).

important were the mulattoes in this profession and so large were their numbers, that the royal judge (or *Desembargador*) of Minas Gerais complained to the Crown in 1780: "that those few mulattoes who are not completely lazy, are employed as musicians, of which there are so many in Minas, that they certainly exceed the number of these in all of the Kingdom of Portugal."²⁸

Aside from their importance in the arts and skilled trades of the major urban centers, free colored persons seem to have had an extraordinarily important role in medicine. Since no medical faculties were ever established in colonial Brazil, trained professional doctors were extremely rare. As the Governor of Bahia noted in 1787, the majority of the barber-surgeons in the capital city of Bahia were either Negroes or mulattoes who had learned their trade through apprenticeship and were the most important elements in the Bahian medical profession. The Governor, in fact, claimed that these colored barber-surgeons, though not meeting the official Portuguese standards for the medical professions, were of a far superior quality than the so-called Coimbra trained doctors and surgeons coming to the colony and he strongly pleaded with the Crown to allow these men to continue to practice in their accustomed manner.²⁹

Finally, colored freedmen rapidly advanced in arts, letters, and the liberal professions under the Empire. As the simple Brazilian society turned into the complex stratified society of the nineteenth-century imperial organization, colored freedmen, like other elements in the society, began to fill the professional middle classes. With the establishment of law and medical faculties, free colored persons attended Brazilian universities and it was from this elite that much of the abolitionist movement took its force.³⁰

But their total numerical importance in the liberal professions, or for that matter, the role they played in agriculture, mining,

²⁸ Quoted in Lange, I, 131. Lange cites as the most exceptional of these late eighteenth-century composers, the free mulatto José Joaquim Lobo de Mesquita (I, 140-142).

²⁹ IHGB/CU, Arq. 1-1-20, folios 28v-30, letter dated Bahia, May 21, 1787, from Governor Rodrigo José de Menezes.

³⁰ Luis Viana Filho, *O Negro na Bahia* (Rio de Janeiro, 1946), pp. 113-114; Oliveira Lima, *O movimento da independência: O Império Brasileiro (1821-1889)* (3rd ed.; São Paulo, n.d.), pp. 409-410; Sud Mennucci, *O precursor do abolicionismo no Brasil (Luiz Gama)* (São Paulo, 1938). For a listing of free colored professionals under the empire, see Luiz Luna, *O negro na luta contra a escravidão* (Rio de Janeiro, 1968), pp. 232-233.

communications, and unskilled urban occupations are difficult to estimate on the basis of the present available evidence. The high figures of free colored in Mato Grosso and the Northeast reflect the fact that the bulk of the populations in these areas were free colored by the end of the slave period and were likely therefore to be engaged in all the major economic activities of these regions. In the city of Rio de Janeiro, there does exist direct evidence (see Table XI) to show that the colored were represented in all the major industries of this primary urban center just two years after abolition.

As was to be expected, colored persons were overrepresented in such classically slave occupations as agriculture and domestic service. But even in these areas, there was heavy representation of whites, and in each case the Negroes are far more disproportionately represented than the mulattoes. Given the disproportionate numbers of mulattoes who were freedmen, it could be argued that the comparatively more even distribution of mulattoes reflects the comparatively better occupational distribution of free colored before slavery was abolished in 1888.

TABLE XI.—Color Breakdown of Employees by Industry in the City of Rio de Janeiro in 1890

Industry	Percents			Total number
	Whites	Mulatto	Negro	
Extractive	55.4	25.3	6.4*	703
Pastoral	56.0	14.6	24.3	41
Agriculture	39.6	26.1	21.7	12,485
Manufacturing	75.9	19.7	8.9	48,661
Crafts (artisans)	53.0	22.5	5.5	5,859
Land transport	75.0	14.4	8.8	9,470
Commerce	90.7	5.7	3.0	48,048
Domestic service	44.7	28.6	24.0	74,785
Profession undeclared	70.5	15.4	11.6	48,100
Percentage of total fixed population	62.5%	21.7%	12.4%*	

* Percentages do not add up to 100% across because of the caboclo category, which has not been included.

Source: Directoria Geral de Estadística, *Recenseamento geral . . . de 1890, Distrito Federal* (Rio de Janeiro, 1895), pp. 416-421.

But what role the colored played in each industry, in terms of skilled and unskilled labor, cannot be determined on the basis of the published national census data.³¹ All that can be said is that

³¹ In no national Brazilian census are occupational categories broken down by color as they were in the United States census. In the census of 1872 and

the colored population of Rio de Janeiro in 1890 could be found in every one of the major urban occupations listed in the census, and were neither totally excluded nor totally included in any single occupation.

In other areas of Brazil, primarily the south, such occupational diversity does not seem to have prevailed. In the southern pastoral regions where the colored populations as a whole were much smaller than elsewhere in Brazil, the free colored seem to have occupied a much more dependent role. In the southern grazing regions of Paraná, for example, the free colored were primarily important as retainers in the large households of white ranchers.³² Freedmen also seem to have fared poorly in the coffee zones of São Paulo because of the thriving nature of plantation slavery and the early competition of immigrant labor. The city of São Paulo itself probably saw downward mobility of freedmen in the last quarter of the nineteenth century because of its late industrial and urban growth, which coincided with the massive arrival of competitive European immigration after 1880.³³

But the southern zone held only 16 percent of the national population in 1872 and its pattern of occupational mobility for freedmen does not seem to have been the dominant one for Brazil. The major cities of Rio de Janeiro, Recife, and Bahia all absorbed enormous numbers of free colored long before the arrival of competitive European immigration and at a time of their own rapid industrial and urban expansion.³⁴ Moreover, as Table I clearly demonstrates, large numbers of colored persons, possibly as many as half to two-thirds, had already experienced freedom for one or more generations prior to abolition. Thus they had already entered the free labor market well before the advent of massive European

1890 color breakdown was only given for a branch of industry. In the 1900 and 1920 censuses, no color breakdowns whatsoever are provided, while in the three censuses after 1940, color and occupational data was improved only to the extent of indicating color and its relationship to self-employed, employee, employer, or member of family unit by industry. The employee class, e.g., is never broken down by types of occupations, skills, etc. Until unpublished primary census materials can be studied, it is difficult to analyze the problem of color mobility in postemancipation society and virtually impossible to compare it with color mobility data in other New World societies.

³² Ianni, *As metamorfoses do escravo*, pp. 91ff.

³³ Florestan Fernandes, *A integração do negro na sociedade de classes* (2 vols.; São Paulo, 1965), I, chaps. 1 and 2; Roger Bastide and Florestan Fernandes, *Branços e negros em São Paulo* (2d ed.; São Paulo, 1959), chap. 1.

³⁴ For the comparative urban growth of Brazil in the 19th century, see Pedro Pinchas Geiger, *Evolução da rede urbana brasileira* (Rio de Janeiro, 1963).

immigration, which did not begin until the decade of final abolition in the 1880's, and must surely have developed competitive skills which enabled them to retain their advantage in the face of this competition.

Though the question of occupational mobility is still an unresolved one, that of the social mobility of the freedmen seems to be reasonably supported. It is evident from the marriage and legitimacy materials that freedmen had a more nearly normal style of family life, in terms of white society, than did slaves. It is also evident that large numbers of freedmen were being recognized by their white fathers, at least to the point of being granted their freedom. Finally, the fact that so many freedmen were being manumitted at such a constant and rapid rate in the nineteenth century, during the greatest expansion of the plantation economy, suggests the fundamental acceptance by white Brazilians of the possibility of a functioning interracial free labor society well before the institution of slavery itself was seriously challenged.

Comments on Books Received

Education and Social Change in Ghana. By PHILIP FOSTER. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965. \$7.50)

The thesis of this book is that Western schooling has been one of the outstanding factors in the transformation of European colonies into African nations. Foster's impressive case study of Ghanaian educational development assesses the impact of Western education upon the traditional social groups which now comprise Ghana. From the methodological viewpoint of structural-functional integration, the major historical trends are examined in the first part of the book, and a convincing explanation is given for the failure of British educational policies. The second section contains an analysis of contemporary Ghanaian schools; of their relationship to the social, political, and economic situation; and of some characteristics of secondary school students. Foster predicts, finally, that the future educational system of Ghana will change most drastically in its expansion of higher education while concomitantly de-emphasizing European standards of achievement and student selection.