

## SLAVERY, FREEDOM, AND SEN

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### ABSTRACT

Amartya Sen's *Development as Freedom* argues that the ability to make choices is fundamental to economic development, and that the evaluation of outcomes can provide misleading answers. He uses the example of the high material consumption of US slaves relative to some free whites to illustrate this contrast. This paper discusses some of the implications of such comparisons and the problem of evaluating what might be regarded as favorable outcomes which come from unfavorable institutions (e.g., slavery). It appears that all good things do not necessarily go together. The past relation of enslavement to the need for subsistence is discussed. Differences in gender roles under slavery and after emancipation are also examined.

### KEYWORDS

Slavery, freedom, emancipation, subsistence, females

### INTRODUCTION

Economic historians have long wrestled with the tensions between useful and measurable economic perspectives on changes in welfare associated with development, such as that denoted by *the standard of living*, and a broader, less tangible, approach summarized as *the quality of life*.<sup>1</sup> In *Development as Freedom*, Amartya Sen summarizes his recent thinking on the meaning of development, returning with new insight to this tension in evaluating economic changes.

Sen has long rejected more conventional economic interpretations of the standard of living in terms of *opulence* based solely on material conditions and suggested instead an interpretation in terms of people's *capabilities and functionings*. Functionings are the various things that a person may value doing or being. For example, not being enslaved is a valuable functioning, just as is living a life of normal length (or longer) or being healthy. A person's *capability* refers to the feasible set or sets of functionings that circumstances allow him or her to achieve.<sup>2</sup> As Amartya Sen (1999: 75) says, "capability is thus a kind of freedom: the substantive freedom to achieve

alternative functioning combinations (or less formally put, the freedom to achieve various lifestyles)".<sup>3</sup> When the concern is with capabilities that allow a person to achieve a minimum level of well-being (i.e., to escape poverty), Sen discusses *basic capabilities*.

Sen does not discuss *tradeoffs* among these basic capabilities, although he does give one reference as that between the level of living under slavery and freedom in the antebellum US South. Other writers in this tradition follow Sen's lead. Martha Nussbaum, for example, after presenting her list of *Basic Human Functional Capabilities*, says that, "[T]he list is, emphatically, a list of separate components. We cannot satisfy the need for one of them by giving a larger amount of another. All are of central importance and all are distinct in quality."<sup>4</sup> The issue of possible tradeoffs between economic need and political or social freedoms is, however, of critical importance.<sup>5</sup> Sen holds not only that political and economic freedoms are both important but that political freedom is often necessary for satisfying economic needs. He focuses mainly on the complementarity rather than the tradeoffs between freedoms, a relationship that is doubtful not only at low levels of development but also exists at higher levels of income.

The need to deal with tradeoffs among basic rights and the importance of ordering the "good things" cannot be ignored. Culturally and temporally specific standards may mean that we disapprove of choices that have been made, but, nonetheless, they may have seemed necessary to those involved. Slavery, voluntary and otherwise, has been a frequent occurrence in human societies, generally reflecting dire circumstances faced by persons at the lowest income levels. Even in discussing Sen's "goods," tradeoffs exist regarding costs, resources, and expenditure allocations. This paper shows that for people living at the level of subsistence, important tradeoffs are made between different basic capabilities. The paper is located empirically in the context of slavery, a context which Sen himself has explored. The literature on slavery shows that, at times, people have been forced to make tradeoffs between basic capabilities. Slavery, therefore, is sometimes the outcome of people having to make choices between different aspects of freedom, such as between the freedom to be liberated and set free and the freedom to survive and be healthy.

Sen's conceptualization of freedom in terms of expanding capabilities has to confront the issue that people, past and present, have had to make tradeoffs between different basic freedoms or capabilities. Examining slavery can give us some insights into the dynamics of those tradeoffs. Finally, and again consistent with Sen's interests, this paper discusses a gender perspective on the nature of the tradeoffs explored. The freedoms of male and female slaves were violated and curbed in different ways and to different extents, and the nature of new freedoms and the choices that

followed emancipation were likewise gendered. This paper emphasizes the harsh tradeoffs between freedoms that slaves faced and suggests that they are echoed in the bitter choices that continue to confront many disadvantaged peoples today, especially women and children.

## I. SLAVERY AND FREEDOM

Slavery has taken many different forms; it has been among the most frequent of human institutions, existing in almost all societies in the past and in most parts of the world. Slaves have experienced different work regimes and differences in physical and material treatment, depending on various economic, political, cultural, and ideological circumstances. Nevertheless, the coercion permitted slaveowners was almost universal with the basic absence of choice allowed to slaves who were always subject to the master's control. Lost liberties were often the outcome of involuntary acts; however, in societies with low and/or highly variable levels of income, people have been willing to sacrifice their liberties and those of their family members in exchange for the ability to survive.

At the lowest levels of income, where slavery becomes a preferred alternative to weakness or death, the conditions of the free were often similarly dire, and moving out of slavery did not mean any material benefits to the newly freed. "Voluntary" slavery has a long and geographically dispersed history, but there is only very limited literature on the topic since societies with voluntary slavery, as all poor societies, seem to have lacked the dynamic and wealth characteristics of some of the large societies based on involuntary slavery (see, e.g., H. J. Nieboer 1910: 428–30, 437–40). Voluntary slavery was the result of an agreement between purchasers and sellers in which both agreed to specific terms. While the existence of severe constraints may mean that the "voluntary" choice reflects an absence of opportunities and might be regarded as nonvoluntary due to the limited choices available, there are similar difficulties in describing arrangements made between legally free people where differences in wealth and opportunities exist.

One important aspect of slavery, a word which seems without any favorable connotations, is that societies reserve the slave status for outsiders, not members of their own society (see, e.g., Orlando Patterson 1982: 7). What societies have considered the definition of the outsider has varied over time; religion, nationality, ethnicity, and race have been utilized. In some cases the outsider characteristic has been socially fabricated, and the discrimination underlying the definition of an enslaveable outsider persists even when slavery has ended. The fact that the modern New World slavery was based on race has meant a continuation of racial beliefs after emancipation, serving to limit the gains from the transition from slavery to freedom. While the pre-existence of slavery is not necessary for racial,

religious, or ethnic prejudice, the contemporary role of racism has certainly meant a significant difference for ex-slaves between legal freedom and the achievement of equality.

A frequent source of contention is whether it is possible to compare slave and free societies, or if these statuses are so distinct that any attempts to look at them together can only be misleading. In order to determine how feasible such comparisons might be it is best to focus upon specific questions. To a fundamentalist Marxist, slavery represents a separate mode of production, different from what comes before and after. Forms of institutions and organizations, the nature of decision-making, and the role of technology differ among modes of production, and for some purposes it may be desirable to treat each mode separately. For other questions, however, certain commonalities can make comparisons between modes of production very important. Thus, based on their common humanity, comparing living standards and aspects of the quality of life between slave and free should provide useful information. Descriptions of relative mortality, life expectation, health, consumption, and related aspects of the quality of life may serve to cast light on modes of production based on free or slave labor and may help answer questions as to why individuals might choose to move between these situations.

In explaining his preference for “a freedom-based perspective on development” (Sen 1999: 28) in *Development as Freedom*, Amartya Sen raises the example of the high material standard of living of US slaves to contrast the value of freedom with the judgments made from “an evaluative system that focuses only on culmination outcomes” (Sen 1999: 28, citing Robert Fogel and Stanley Engerman 1974). Freedom implies the ability to make choices, which may include earning less in return for more leisure, less intensity of work, more time with family, more desired geographic location, etc.<sup>6</sup> From this perspective it appears clear that measured income is not to be regarded as an accurate measure of welfare if the achievement of high levels of material consumption is at the cost of actions that can limit individual and family choice. Several questions may be raised about Sen’s argument on this point. Freedom is not easy to define, since it may relate to individual rights or to group freedoms. Even what many consider to be freedom (in contrast with slavery) includes a number of legal and social constraints which, while perhaps less limiting than systems based on absolute government fiat, mean that individuals do not have unlimited choice or are always treated equally. The possibility of freedom will vary with the level of living standards and the income of the population (see Nieboer 1910: 292–6). While slavery has never been seen as a desirable condition, the frequency of what can be described as “voluntary” slavery makes it useful to reconsider the conditions under which forms of slavery rather than freedom existed in the past.<sup>7</sup>

## II. CHOICES AND FREEDOM

All people make choices from among available opportunities but under constraints, whether imposed by nature, by other people, or by the self. This choice process is examined in the basic economic model of consumer behavior. Individuals do not all choose the same alternative, reflecting differences in tastes, differences in incomes, and differences in the nature of the constraints faced. Changing constraints with unchanged tastes will generally lead to the selection of different alternatives, as will changing tastes with unchanged constraints. The constraints may be natural, as in the Malthusian limit on the capacity of land to provide adequate food, or they may be social, either deriving from the power of certain groups or individuals or else by some apparently agreed upon set of enforced codes, legal or otherwise. The market imposes constraints even though people may be legally free to make choices, as long as prices and incomes limit opportunities (Robert Hale 1952; Robert Steinfeld 2001).<sup>8</sup> The more limiting the constraints and the fewer the alternatives available, the less free we consider individuals, as Sen's discussion of capabilities would suggest. The fewer the constraints and the greater the choices (even if limits and deprivation remain), the more free we generally regard people. Since all people face constraints regarding choices, we cannot describe individuals as entirely autonomous. And freedom does not always protect individuals since it may mean freedom to starve, freedom to be beaten by someone else, or freedom to enter uneven exchange. Freedom to choose, with the ability to exchange and transact, and the capacity to behave in accord with one's chosen values seems preferable to situations devoid of the ability to make choices. Even if freedom is not legally limited, it may be limited based upon restricted alternatives.

In *Development as Freedom* Sen has emphasized the opportunities to choose and to exchange and transact with others as essential aspects of human freedom. The broader the choices that can be made and the less that individuals are coerced and controlled by the state or by other parties, the more freedom exists. The enhancement of choice may reflect either broadened political rights or economic improvement, yielding a larger potential flow of goods and services or of capabilities from which to choose. It has long been argued that freedom is not only a good in itself, but that its occurrence would lead to other benefits, such as greater life expectation, more and better food, and a higher rate of economic growth with benefits for all, than could be achieved by societies with coercion and limited choices. Much of the recent scholarly work on slavery and serfdom has questioned this contention that "all good things come together."<sup>9</sup> This scholarship poses some difficult problems for economic and political theory taken up below.

Most economic examinations of the nature of freedom and its benefits presume that incomes are above subsistence (however defined, whether based on physiological or cultural factors) and therefore no consideration need be given to the problem of survival. Even if incomes were above subsistence, the possibility of nonfreedom providing a higher living standard than freedom could present individuals with difficult choices. Yet in many societies, past and present, some individuals have had very low incomes, either permanently or for shorter periods due to famines or natural disasters. Their incomes were too low for their survival, so that the opportunity to exchange freedom for subsistence, whether for the individuals, their children, or other family members, would be considered essential. In that case they were required to make choices among what could be considered basic capabilities—rights which are generally held to be compatible, not conflicting. It may be that short-term losses in welfare will lead to long-term gains, thus providing some intertemporal, or, for parent–children actions, intergenerational complications concerning the appropriate scheme of investment in human capital. Indeed, to the extent that survival is the major goal, no real choice may exist under these circumstances except, of course, that of life or death.

If survival is seen as a basic desire and people can (despite the prohibitions advocated by Hobbes, Locke, Condorcet, and other philosophers and political theorists) sell themselves or their family members into slavery to ensure survival, the importance of ranking the “good things,” and dealing with tradeoffs among basic rights, arises. This problem has been a frequent concern historically.<sup>10</sup>

In the long discussions concerning the relations between persons, three major types have been discussed: master–servant; parent–child; and man–woman.<sup>11</sup> The first two clearly represent dependent relations resting on coercive relationships which are intended to restrict choice, if presumably for the benefit of the coerced. The distinctions drawn between the choices open for men and for women suggest a similar lack of equality and the relative absence of a decision-making capability granted women. The difficulties of defining freedoms within a social group or a family group still remain, as illustrated by recent debates on such issues as the acceptability of the long-term practice of female genital mutilation in some cultures, defining of the rights of children, and the ability of women to redefine the terms of the marriage contract.

Gender, age, and legal status define some of the groups that have confronted limitations on their freedoms. Children are traditionally treated as incapable of making rational choices up to some specified age (the age itself being a major source of disagreement) at which time they become adults able to make their own choices. Women were long regarded as not fully capable of making choices, accounting for their special treatment in legislation. This sometimes meant their being given more favorable

treatment than men, although this often meant limitations on their rights to freely choose living and working conditions. Similar types of controls, limiting freedom of action, have been applied to the aged, the mentally disabled, the physically disabled, and convicts and felons among other groups.<sup>12</sup> The most extreme case of constraints on personal freedom is slavery.

### III. SLAVERY

Slavery and its relation to freedom have long been difficult issues for political theory as well as political life. Slavery entails the right of ownership in another person, including the ability to buy and sell that individual as well as the power to determine where and how the slave will live and work. Slavery generates numerous questions for defining the meaning of freedom as well as for other important social issues. The attacks on slavery in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, principally on moral grounds, first arose during the period of the Enlightenment, and the arguments made were premised on the proposition that there were no necessary tradeoffs among various “goods,” certainly none between economic gains and individual liberties. An interesting aspect of tradeoffs was suggested by H. J. Nieboer in his classic early twentieth-century study (1910) of worldwide slavery. Among the causes of slavery pointed to was “the condition of women. There is no use for slaves where all disagreeable work can be, and is performed by the weaker sex” (p. 423). Correspondingly Nieboer states that, “Where the women hold a high position, and men are desirous of relieving them of a part of their task, slavery is likely to arise sooner than otherwise would be the case” (p. 423).

Slavery has never been considered a desirable state for one’s own people, although it was often regarded as acceptable for others. The basic characteristic of the enslaved in most societies was that the slaves were to be considered “outsiders” to the enslaving society, whereas other groups were considered to be insiders, possible members of society and, therefore nonenslavable. The definition of outsiders could, however, vary over time and place and has been based, in various circumstances, on nationality, ethnicity, religion, or race.

Slaveowners, even when given total power legally, were expected by the society to treat slaves reasonably and possibly to provide them with opportunities to acquire freedom (Eugene Genovese 1974: 3–7, 75–97, 123–33). These policies were not intended to end the system of slavery but rather to define the relations of masters to slaves as individuals and also to legitimate who was to be a slave.<sup>13</sup> An attack on slavery as a system, calling for its abolition and the freeing of all the enslaved, immediately or at some time in the future, awaited ideological and other changes in late eighteenth-century Europe, particularly in Britain and France.

The most-studied slave societies have been those in the Americas between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries.<sup>14</sup> This slavery began with involuntary capture, usually in warfare, in Africa. Whether the wars that generated slaves changed dramatically in magnitude after European penetration remains debated, since less is known about the demand for slaves within Africa and the Islamic slave trade than about the transatlantic trade. After enslavement the choice of sale or not and with whom to deal was made by the African captors. Pro-slavery advocates argued that enslavement was justified, and led to a beneficial outcome since, in its absence, war captives and criminals would have been killed. This contention, as also the argument by anti-slavery, pro-black advocates that slavery in Africa was not as harsh, socially or physically, as slavery in the New World, helped to maintain slavery and the slave trade in Africa and in other parts of the world into the twentieth century. With the closing of the transatlantic slave trade in the second half of the nineteenth century, continued profitability meant that slavery within Africa persisted until it was ended in the twentieth century by colonial governmental decrees.<sup>15</sup>

Once enslaved in Africa, the captives could be used as slaves by the captors, sold as slaves within Africa, or sold for sale in the Americas. Each of these options was utilized, but once the prospect of a large surplus above subsistence existed for New World purchasers, long-distance transportation became profitable and shipment to the Americas probably became the most frequently used policy over the period when it was legally permitted (Paul Lovejoy 1983).

The transatlantic slave trade was generally male-dominated, in part because of a preference for males in the transatlantic slave trade, in part because of a preference for females in the internal slave trade in Africa. The importance of males in African warfare, leading to more male deaths there, also influenced the sex ratio within Africa and, perhaps, in the slave trade. Females in Africa were more frequently involved in heavy agricultural labor than were free white women in Europe and the Americas, and polygamy was also more prevalent in Africa. Both factors raised the demand for females in Africa and help to explain the higher female than male slave prices within Africa, a pattern quite different from that throughout the Americas.<sup>16</sup> The differential types of use of female slaves from Africa and of white European settlers has been seen as one important factor in the rise of slave agriculture in the Americas (David Eltis 2000: 85–113; see also Edmund Morgan 1975). Over 60 percent of the slaves carried across the Atlantic were generally male, a ratio roughly similar over time and across African ports (David Eltis and Stanley Engerman 1992). It has long been argued that this disproportionate sex ratio, with fewer females, had negative long-term demographic effects in the New World, particularly in lowering the population's birth rate. The sex ratio in the slave trade, however, was relatively more balanced than in many migrations of free populations and



considerably more equal than for most movements of indentured servants. Indeed, in the second half of the nineteenth century the British often imposed a minimum requirement on the ratio of female indentured servants or contract laborers compared to males (David Northrup 1995: 74–8).<sup>17</sup>

Whereas we generally regard slavery as a condition based on compulsion and coercion, in many societies in Asia, Africa, and in premodern Europe, slavery was voluntarily entered into. Because of the low levels of income in these societies, sales of children and adults to the wealthy were seen as the only way for individuals to survive. Asian and African societies, as well as medieval Russia, often solved their perceived problems of overpopulation by permitting voluntary slavery for adults as well as children (see, e.g., Frederick Cooper 1977: 122–30). For Western Europe, however, where enslavement of Europeans had been ended, excess births meant abandonment, giving children to the church, or infanticide. Abandonment, at times, was based on a socially accepted pattern involving the expected retrieval of the child by members of the church or by other individuals who would provide permanent arrangements, thus being in effect a transfer of the rights to the child and its labor at a low cost.<sup>18</sup>

Many of the early modern European advocates of liberty, including Samuel Pufendorf and Hugo Grotius, accepted adult and child slavery, but only if this was the best way to maintain alive individuals who were in poverty or disabled or otherwise incapable of earning a living.<sup>19</sup> In sixteenth-century Russia, voluntary slavery was generally entered into in a response to crop failures or crop destruction that caused food shortages and famines.<sup>20</sup> Voluntary slavery declined when incomes rose, as starvation became a more limited threat, and when more successful relief and welfare institutions by the state, the church, or by individuals were devised.<sup>21</sup> It is clear, however, that under certain conditions the loss of freedom could be permanent and was considered acceptable not only to the enslavers, but also the enslaved.<sup>22</sup>

The need (and desire) for survival led to sacrifices of freedom, whether by sales of children by parents, sales of adults by family members, self-sale, or by volunteering to accept enslavement without any payments. In these cases, presumably freedom would have meant being free to starve rather than free to choose. Similarly, late nineteenth-century movements of indentured labor from India to sugar plantations in the West Indies and elsewhere apparently were influenced by the extent of famine and poverty in India (Stanley Engerman 1983).<sup>23</sup>

Although serfdom in Europe was frequently the result of power and coercion, there were conditions under which serfdom could be regarded as voluntary.<sup>24</sup> For those already resident in the area, serfdom could be a preferred option, as a means of acquiring protection and defense in times

of political disorder or else as a means of guaranteeing subsistence in low-income societies.

A frequent prediction that allowed for the ending of slavery by a voluntary act of the master class was that given enough time and limited amounts of land, the excess of the value of slave production above necessary subsistence would fall to zero and there would be no surplus to be gained by slaveowners. At such time slaveowners would be indifferent between slave labor and free labor, since neither would yield any surplus. The only economic benefit to owners, no matter which labor form, would then be the rent on the land used with labor, although the amount of rent would be influenced by the magnitude of labor input. The grant of freedom under these conditions would mean that each person would have the same amount of consumption, whether previously slave or free. The incomes of free laborers would be equal to those of the slaves. No material economic gain would accrue to laborers from the freedom under these conditions (Evsey Domar 1970; Moses Finley 1998: 207–17). However correct this theoretical argument, it does not explain the ending of slavery in the New World and might apply only to the long, drawn-out end of slavery in the Roman world.

Individual purchases of themselves by slaves, leading to the granting of their freedom by their owners (manumission), were often based on the amounts that the slave could pay for manumission out of accumulated savings from earnings and gifts. In most societies the more frequent means of manumission was to permit slaves to pay for their own freedom at something close to the slave's market value. Manumission by grant of freedom by the master was much less common. It is striking that in most slave societies, manumission was more frequently of females (often ranging from 60 percent to over 80 percent), whether for social, economic, or, because of the access of the male slaveowners to female slaves, sexual reasons (Ronald Findlay 1975; Frank McGlynn 1989). Manumission was not generally regarded as a threat to an ongoing slave system but functioned more as a safety-valve to maintain the system or as an incentive to slave productivity and good behavior. Most slave societies allowed for manumissions of the enslaved, and their populations included freedmen or free blacks, albeit at times with limited rights compared to other free citizens. The ability to be manumitted generally depended on the actions of specific individuals, slaveowners or slaves, and served both as a reward to individuals and an incentive for them or for other slaves.<sup>25</sup>

#### IV. SLAVERY, FREEDOM, AND LIVING CONDITIONS

The complexities of contrasting slavery and freedom often arise from the expectation that “all good things go together,” and that freedom necessarily entails better living conditions and more rapid economic

growth than does slavery. Amartya Sen (1999: 29) notes that while it is possible that slaves did have higher material living standards than did free workers, nevertheless “slaves did run away, and there were excellent reasons for presuming that the interests of the slaves were not well served by the system of slavery.” Nevertheless, the low rates of runaways in most slave societies suggest that various means of maintaining the system were used, including force as well as rewards, in the short and long run. The desire to avoid enslavement seems obvious, and the flight of southern US slaves when northern armies moved into the South was not surprising, but under customary conditions in the US South, as in most slave societies, the system of controls and compromises, of power and accumulation, was such that runaways as a share of the total slave population were small in number. Unbalanced powers meant a curtailment of the slaves’ ability to leave the plantation and the system. In some societies, although the slaves were freed by law, they had to leave the slaveowner on their own volition. The long periods in which people chose not to leave, and to remain slaves, indicates the complexities of low-income societies.

Runaways in the US and elsewhere were predominantly male, few leaving with women and young children (Gad Heuman 1985; John Hope Franklin and Loren Schweninger 1999: 210–13). The low runaway rate for women no doubt reflected physical and cultural factors, particularly the difficulties of leaving with children or an unwillingness to leave children behind, and not to any difference in women’s willingness to accept enslavement.<sup>26</sup> There were some southern petitions to courts by free blacks to be returned to slavery, usually petitions made by older free blacks, and by women with young children, but these were few in number. An interesting case was recorded in Virginia regarding the petition of a woman to be re-enslaved to the master of her slave husband, “from whom the benefits and privileges of freedom, dear and flattering as they are, could not induce her to be separated” (Ulrich Phillips 1918: 446). Such requests existed also in other slave societies. In some cases, such as colonial Africa, legal abolition meant only the ending of the state’s willingness to enforce the return of runaways. Since many slaves did not leave their places of residence, *de facto* slavery persisted.

The desire to be re-enslaved or the refusal to accept freedom, while rare in the American South, was generally based on considerations of the benefits and costs of freedom with those of remaining in the slave status. Relevant factors included the desire to remain with family members (since the freed often had to move to another state); the belief that better physical treatment remained possible as a slave, particularly for the elderly or mothers with children; and the feeling that, given the conditions in the South, the position of a free person of color was “more degrading and involves more suffering in this State, than that of a slave who is under the

care, protection and ownership of a kind and good master.” The freed colored on the other hand, “lives a thousand times harder, and in more destitution, than the slaves of many planters.” In addition without the protection of a “trusted white man” the ex-slaves were fearful of kidnapping or violence.<sup>27</sup>

Recent studies of slave societies have shown that slave economies were capable of experiencing rapid economic growth using a production system of gang labor and had an ability to adjust to changes in world demand for export commodities by changing crop patterns and geographic locations to achieve growth (Robert Fogel 1989: 17–113). It has also been shown that some slaves were provided with consumption levels in excess of those of some members of the free populations in the same country and, as was the case for US slaves, most populations elsewhere in the world (Fogel 1989: 132–47). Such higher standards of living may have reflected the master’s perceptions of what was needed to secure a greater intensity of work. That skilled slaves were granted higher material compensation while their prices were above those of other slaves indicates that the returns to skilled human capital were divided in some uncertain proportion between slaves and masters. In many cases there was a surplus above subsistence to be fought over, and negotiated divisions between masters and slaves were the outcome. There is a difference, in some important regards, between legal status and economic status. Slaveowners did not always do what they were legally permitted to do (which included rather complete control over the slave’s life and body), although at times they exceeded their rights.

This distinction between legal status and economic status, as well as between slave and free, was a central element in several of the debates on slavery in the British colonies in the early nineteenth century. It was claimed by pro-slavery advocates as well as by British workers, whatever their stance on slavery, that employers were able to force workers to endure harsher working conditions, earn less income, and work longer hours than did the West Indian slaves (David Brion Davis 1975: 453–68; Seymour Drescher 1999: 57–86; 399–443). And when it was argued that the British should encourage the use of free laborers in India in the production of sugar replacing the use of slave labor in the West Indies, the benefits of free labor were questioned by pointing to the extremely low agricultural wages in India, compared to the consumption allowed slaves in the West Indies and elsewhere (David Brion Davis 1984: 180–91). It was not argued, of course, that all slaves had high standards of living or that free workers should become slaves in order to benefit from improved living standards, but these cases do indicate that under certain important historical conditions slaves may have been better off materially than some free workers, even though the slaves had more limited freedom of choice.

## V. MANUMISSIONS AND EMANCIPATIONS

The process of manumission provided individual slaves with freedom and gave them certain other rights (but not always all those granted citizens), yet without affecting the status of those still enslaved. Newcomers to a nation or newly freed ex-slaves may not be given the full set of rights that belong to the “established” members of society. Those considered, for whatever reasons, to be outsiders may lack key rights and therefore suffer limitations in their freedom. In some cases, freedom can be regarded as a zero-sum game, gains for some coming only at the expense of others, so that measures to increase the freedom of everyone are not possible. While freedom refers to self-ownership by individuals, legal and other constraints may limit the choices open to nominally free individuals.

Slaves were generally given quite limited legal rights relative to the rights that slave ownership gave the masters or that non-slave, non-slaveholders had, and these slave rights were often not enforceable by law and were subject to the master’s tolerance. Slaves did not, however, lack all ability to bargain and negotiate terms of living and working, and thus were able to influence their living and working conditions, either within or outside of the legal framework. Their bargaining power, however, was quite limited relative to that of most free workers. Serfs also had limited rights, but there were more limitations on the lords’ controls over serfs than of the slaveowners’ control over slaves. In most societies, even today, there is a period during which rights of newcomers (immigrants) are limited, particularly those regarding suffrage. Such restrictions can impact on income levels, job opportunities, and the choices available to newcomers in the period before they can become citizens with identical rights to the native born.

In the major slave societies of the New World, freedom for all slaves did not occur until the nineteenth century, taking over one century from the first emancipations in the northern states of the United States. The key dates of the abolition of slavery in the Americas were 1834 for the British colonies; 1848 for the French (besides Haiti) and Danish colonies; 1863 for the Dutch; 1865 for the United States; 1873 for Puerto Rico and 1886 for Cuba, both Spanish colonies; and 1888 for Brazil. Abolishing slavery usually took place twenty-five to fifty years after the ending of the international slave trade. The forms of emancipation differed, some being immediate, some requiring considerable periods of time, some freeing all slaves, some freeing only those born after a certain date, and some requiring a period of continued plantation labor by the slaves. In all cases, except the United States, there was some compensation paid to the slaveowners in cash, bonds, or labor time, and in no case was any form of compensation ever paid to slaves (or, in Europe, where the serfs were freed at roughly the same time, to the serfs).<sup>28</sup>

An understanding of what freedom meant to those enslaved can be seen from observing the patterns of changes in societies after slaves were emancipated. Emancipation usually entailed changes in the institutional structure under which the economy and society operated and also shifts in political and economic power. Legal freedom did not, however, guarantee equality. Central issues such as the need to produce goods, to maintain a family life, and to relate to other members of society existed both under slavery and under freedom, but the changing rules of society with emancipation meant that they could be resolved in rather different ways. The legacy of the past was present but the availability of new opportunities permitted different outcomes even if some things, such as the allocation of land ownership, did not often change (Stanley Engerman 2000).<sup>29</sup>

A general pattern in most New World slave emancipations was the decline of the plantation system.<sup>30</sup> The desire of ex-slaves was to move to smaller agricultural units, whether owned, rented, or labored on resembling in size and structure the farms of those yeomen who had always been free. These, however, were often less productive than were the plantations, so that the end of slavery usually meant a decline in output, and in some cases it took societies several decades to reach the level of per capita output achieved under slavery. The archetypical case here was Haiti, where emancipation, despite some attempts of the new rulers to bring back a sugar plantation system, ultimately meant the development of an economy based on small farms, producing primarily foodstuff for local markets and with a substantial decline in labor productivity. Wherever small farms replaced plantations, the economic benefits of gang labor were lost. Haiti, once possibly the world's richest area, today has a measured level of per capita output possibly below the level at the end of the eighteenth century, and is the one country in the Western Hemisphere to have an income at sub-Saharan levels.<sup>31</sup> Ironically, given the successful end of the plantation system, in the twentieth century Haitian migrants produced sugar on plantations in the Dominican Republic and Cuba.

There were exceptions to this general pattern, reflecting differences in natural and/or political constraints in different areas. On Barbados and Antigua, for example, the population density was so high that ex-slaves had nowhere to go and remained on the plantations at least until their external migration increased in the late nineteenth century. In areas such as Trinidad, Jamaica, and British Guiana, British colonial policy was initially the same since there were large expanses of unsettled land. Although many of the ex-slaves were able to leave the plantations and establish small farms in the interior, not all were able to do so. In those areas where sugar cultivation remained highly productive, such as Trinidad and British Guiana, the plantation system was restored within decades, worked not by ex-slaves, but with a plantation labor force consisting primarily of contract labor, for limited periods, drawn primarily from the Portuguese islands,

India, and China. Even with contract labor, however, Jamaica was unable to successfully compete in the world sugar market.

The decline of the plantation system meant a prolonged decline in measured output as the ex-slaves chose to move to smaller units to produce mainly foodstuffs and not export staples. Presumably if ex-slaves had been willing to remain at work full-time on plantations as perhaps they might have if they were given higher wages and if they had maintained both the same amount of leisure and labor intensity as prior to emancipation, the problem of falling output in these ex-slave societies could have been avoided. Then it would have to be asked what ending slavery had meant for the enslaved. The maintenance of plantation labor had been the goal of planters wishing to maintain profits. It was also the desired policy of many of those in the anti-slavery movement, who wished to demonstrate that ending slavery and shifting to free labor had no significant negative economic or social impacts and would possibly even result in increased production. In this sense, emancipation would be relatively costless or even beneficial to planters and the other free people in society. Emancipation did have significant legal impacts upon ex-slaves, who were now subject to the same laws as whites. What is less clear in most cases is the impact of emancipation on the material conditions of the ex-slaves, although there are indications that in the US South some material conditions initially deteriorated. Clearly, the ex-slaves gained from being free of slavery and of the plantation system, and, where possible, moving to their own small, family-sized, producing units and avoiding the gang labor routines of sugar and cotton production. In avoiding gang labor they made a choice paralleled by that of free whites and free blacks who, centuries earlier at the time of settlement, had chosen to avoid plantation labor as distasteful and to work instead on smaller units. It was the free population's desire to avoid plantation labor that explained the initial demand for slaves in the Americas.

As elsewhere, the ending of slavery in the southern United States meant the decline of the plantation as a producing unit and an expansion of small farms for the ex-slaves who were still primarily producing cotton. There was, however, a decline in productive efficiency compared to the period prior to emancipation. Indicative of the impact of the efficiency decline in the US South was the increased production of cotton on small farms by the white population, previously unable to compete with the more efficient slave plantation. The end of slavery thus increased the production choices of the white population in the South; it also led to greater degrees of occupational divergence between black men and black women than had existed under slavery, as discussed below.

The ending of slavery and the freeing of the labor force had a substantial impact in reducing overall output, particularly the output of plantation export crops, in most societies formerly based on slavery. Where it has been

possible to prepare estimates, there have been declines in per capita income of significant magnitudes for several decades. Thus the free labor argument of higher outputs in the aftermath of slavery did not occur quickly, and in several cases it required the importation either of contract labor from India and China or of free European labor from Spain or Italy. What is more difficult to analyze is the effect of emancipation on the consumption level of ex-slaves to determine this aspect of the benefits of emancipation beyond freedom. While the initial changes may not have led to dramatically higher income, freedom permitted the ex-slaves to reap benefits from increased productivity in future years.<sup>32</sup> In the US South the first decades of freedom did see increased mortality for ex-slaves, and there was an overall decline in southern production of foodstuffs. In the West Indies there were declines in food imports, suggesting a lessened availability of foodstuffs there. The estimates of food consumption needed to firmly establish the impact of emancipation upon living standards are still not conclusive, but declines in the initial years would not be implausible given estimates of overall production, and the important fact that redistribution of land ownership did not generally take place, so that some return to landowners continued. Whatever redistribution did occur did not mean that ex-slaves would gain their entire product after the end of slavery.

In most places the gang system no longer existed after slavery, and it is probable that the hours and/or intensity of labor fell with freedom. However, even as freedom broadened the options for mobility and labor choice among ex-slaves, the pattern of the US South, where life expectation declined for several decades, food consumption in rural areas was probably lowered, and dietary diseases became more frequent, suggests significant negative material effects. The relative impact on males and females of the changing life expectation and magnitudes of consumption are not clear, but the nature of living arrangements and provision of consumption goods did change dramatically with the move from plantations and white-owned small units to small farms operated by blacks. Female farm labor was more seasonal after emancipation and took place without a gang system. Presumably the black male was now a stronger family leader, and some have argued that for black females all emancipation meant was a change in who controlled them.<sup>33</sup>

Accompanying emancipation was a southern black striving for education, particularly for children; a desire to purchase and own the farms on which they worked; and a demand for the right to obtain and use the ballot in order to vote for elected officials and to obtain benefits from state and municipal expenditures. The ability to purchase farms and urban dwellings out of accumulated savings after emancipation is one indication of the commitment to labor of ex-slaves, since it is doubtful that they were able to acquire very much low-cost credit in southern postbellum capital markets (Sharon Holt 2000: 52–99). Black women were frequently recorded in the



census as unpaid family labor, although some worked as paid field hands, so their major contribution to land purchases was indirect. The racist response due to the decline in the cotton market in the 1890s in the US South did reduce the benefits initially gained with emancipation, including education, landownership, income, and wealth. The behavior and achievements of southern ex-slaves between 1865 and the 1890s suggest what many hoped would be the benefits of freedom. But this phase was ended by the dramatic changes in laws and in education, voting, lynching, transportation segregation, and occupational opportunities.<sup>34</sup>

For freed black females in the United States, the two key occupations were agricultural work and labor, often in white households, as domestic servants. Down to World War II about 90 percent of black women in the labor force were either laborers in agriculture or domestic servants, with the share of domestic servants rising over time, and accounting for over three-fourths of black female employment in 1930 (Claudia Goldin 1990: 74–5). These were low-income occupations, and it was not until after World War I's movement north by blacks, and then World War II, that a broader range of occupational choices became available for black females. Domestic service often required living with whites rather than with blacks and imposed some limitations on marriage and fertility. Prior to emancipation United States slave fertility was unusually high, both for a slave and a free population. After 1880 there was a decline in black fertility, roughly in tandem with the decline in white fertility (Stanley Engerman 1977). There was probably some decline in the percentage of black females married, an increase in the age of first birth, and an increase in the number of black childless women (Engerman 1983). Whether this reflected an increased control of birth and marriage patterns by black females, or as has been argued, an increase in diseases is not clear, but for United States blacks the end of slavery meant declining fertility, whereas in other parts of the Americas there may have initially been some increased fertility after emancipation (see, e.g., George Roberts 1957: 216–72; and Higman 1984: 347–73).

In the US South, as elsewhere where slave emancipation occurred, there were significant changes in family arrangements and gender relations resulting from the shift from plantations of several families to residence on small farms operated by individual families.<sup>35</sup> There were declines in fertility after emancipation, in part because of the increase in the free family's costs of raising children to adulthood with the ending of the plantation's collective childcare arrangement and also the loss of the implicit subsidy to child-raising costs made by plantation owners. In most slave societies females were valued at about 80 to 90 percent that of same-aged males in the same work category, although, until age 15 females were equal in price to males (Manuel Moreno Fraginals, Herbert Klein, and Stanley Engerman 1983). The wage differentials by sex among freed people

were often larger than the price and hiring rate differentials had been under slavery. Much of the domestic work, such as food preparation and cleaning, was undertaken during slavery by a limited number of specialized slaves, and a large portion of slave females specialized in field work. After emancipation household work was done in one-family households by women allocating their time among several different functions. Black women now had work patterns that, for whatever reason, resembled those of white females, particularly those of the working class. They spent more time outside the labor force, working in the home, and less in the field than when enslaved, and female wage-earners most frequently worked as domestic servants.

After emancipation in the United States South, ex-slave families frequently followed the pattern of two-parent households (whether co-resident or in separate residence) which had existed under slavery, a pattern which was to change dramatically in the last half of the twentieth century, when the proportion of female-headed households particularly in urban areas increased. Whatever the explanation for this recent rise in the proportion of black female-headed households, it is of interest to note that these current levels did not occur until much later than emancipation.

In recent years there have been some re-interpretations of the role of black women under slavery and afterwards. The labor force participation of slave women in plantation societies was greatly in excess of that of free white women and this high participation may have reflected patterns of agricultural production in Africa (see, e.g., Robertson and Klein 1983). While the basic family pattern that emerged was structurally similar to that of white families—predominantly nuclear households—the nature of slavery and production patterns led to significant differences in actual arrangements in regard to food provision, childcare, and power relations in slave families from those of whites. The relative equality in “earnings” of males and females under slavery suggested a more independent role for slave women than for free women, who were dependent upon the incomes of males. After emancipation there was some carryover of this labor force pattern, with significantly higher labor force participation for black than for white women and a higher proportion of unmarried black women, with or without children. To the extent that there was greater financial independence, black family relations, even with a predominantly nuclear household structure, need not have been identical to that of whites.

The discussion among historians and other scholars of the nature of power relations between males and females in the black family and society has recently re-emerged, regarding both what did happen and what would have been desirable. The black slave female would have been subject to the power of her white master and possibly also by her husband in those slave families with a dominant male role. Ending slavery, which weakened white controls, need not have meant a shift in the power balance vis-à-vis male

heads of households (Jacqueline Jones 1985; White 1985). The normative debates relate to the degree to which females should support males in order to improve black living conditions and to what extent females should take advantage of their relative financial independence to exercise power in their own interests, rather than to let themselves be dominated by males. This dilemma is, of course, similar to that confronted by many whites, but the background of lower incomes and the history of discrimination make this problem more acute among blacks.

The study of the link between the black family under slavery and its contemporary circumstance is somewhat puzzling. Abolitionists and proslavery defenders had both believed that the slave family was weak, whether because it consisted of slaves or of Africans (Fogel 1989: 162–86). The post-Moynihan Report arguments about female-headed households and the number of illegitimate births after emancipation drew upon these earlier debates, even though it took almost one century after emancipation before the current rates of female single-headed households began to appear. It is the dramatic change with such a long lag after slavery that makes positing the usual links uncertain. That the recent sharp increases in single-parent households occurred in a time of economic improvement is also puzzling. Works such as Herbert Gutman's (1976) (discussed in Stanley Engerman 1978) point to the existence of a two-parent household under slavery, a point made earlier by the sociologist E. Franklin Frazier before he became influenced by the economic and family difficulties of the 1930s. There were other arguments about the impact of slavery on males and females such as those of W.E. Burghardt Du Bois (1909). Du Bois contended that the so-called "absent father" of the slave family need not have been physically absent, but he was forced to play a much weaker role in the family than did white fathers because of the controls imposed by masters. With the probable psychological costs to female slaves from forced sexual accessibility by their masters, the two-parent slave household did not function in the same manner as did the free household. In the West Indies the single-parent household was more important in magnitude even at the time of emancipation, and its levels have long exceeded those in the United States, as has the share of illegitimate births (Roberts 1957: 263–306). In neither the United States nor the West Indies did the pattern of black family and gender relations both during and after slavery mirror the patterns in Africa prior to the transatlantic movement.<sup>36</sup> Thus freedom, leading to variations in constraints, did have significant effects, but not all its effects were evaluated positively by contemporaries and by subsequent scholars.<sup>37</sup>

## VI. CONCLUSION

This essay has used the systems of slavery and the transition from slavery to legal freedom of the previously enslaved to examine some of the

issues raised about capabilities and freedom in Amartya Sen's *Development as Freedom*. The discussion of slavery reminds us that over the past two centuries human capabilities, as described by Sen, have increased in large measure because of the worldwide ending of slavery as a legal institution. While there is a broad range over which the different types of freedoms discussed are complements and mutually supportive, there are conditions, generally at low levels of income, where tradeoffs between such freedoms might become necessary. The existence of voluntary slavery illustrates this. In some cases, freedom meant a lowering of the material well-being, health, and living conditions of ex-slaves. Current-day cases, where women remain in abusive marriages to obtain material consumption for themselves and their children have been argued to demonstrate the operation of an analogous form of tradeoff.

A world which requires tradeoffs is a rather difficult one for individuals, families, and society, and may require extensive state intervention to correct these adverse outcomes. Ensuring increases in the capabilities of those at low levels of income, whether by influencing the market process or outcome by using government funds or power to support activities such as resources to the poor can permit positive social benefits. Legislation ending labor coercion, as well as laws permitting interference within parent–child, husband–wife, and master–servant (labor) relations, might also be regarded as necessary. The need for societies to choose between the rights of individuals and longstanding cultural practices raises a fundamental problem about which disagreements still persist. In *Development as Freedom*, Sen has raised these and other issues of importance for consideration and for resolution. In going beyond the use of income as a primary measure of welfare, Sen has broadened our concerns with social betterment and with the policies necessary to achieve that goal.

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## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> For a survey of the earlier debate on the British standard of living in the Industrial Revolution and some proposed expansions of the concept, see Stanley Engerman (1994).
- <sup>2</sup> See, for earlier discussions of these concepts, Amartya Sen (1980, 1993).
- <sup>3</sup> Sen (1999, 87–110) points to certain important deprivations of individual capacities related to, but not conceptually the same as, low incomes, premature mortality, undernourishment, persistent morbidity, widespread illiteracy, and missing women. All but the last have been considered to be major problems by more conventional measures of welfare, and presumably similar issues of desired lifetime vs. desired healthy lifetime (not just a recent problem as seen in the Greek myth of the difficulties of Tithonus, promised by the gods an eternal life but not an eternal youth); of choices of consumption patterns that yield utility to individuals but at costs in terms of health and life expectation; of group vs. individual decision-making; and of allocations of resources within the family remain to be analyzed under any of the welfare criteria noted.
- <sup>4</sup> Martha Nussbaum (1995: 85). Why this “listing limits the trade-offs it will be reasonable to make, and thus limits the applicability of quantitative cost–benefit analysis” is not clear (pp. 85–6).
- <sup>5</sup> The relationship between political freedom and economic growth has been frequently discussed. Is political freedom a necessary prerequisite for economic development, or, alternatively, does economic growth lead to political freedom? Henry Sumner Maine (1885: 112) poses the problem of whether with an extended franchise of working-class voters would have permitted the introduction of labor-saving innovations in England. There are more general problems of majority rule that he points to, which can lead to loss of minority rights and the refusal to provide rights, including that of immigration, to noncitizens.
- Another type of tradeoff was described by Orson Welles in the classic movie, *The Third Man* (1949). Justifying his illegal activities in post-World War II Vienna, he points out that the bloodshed, murder, etc., of the Italian states under the Borgias led to Michelangelo, da Vinci, and the Renaissance, while all the Swiss had to show for 500 years of democracy was the cuckoo clock. Welles claims that this elicited a letter from a Swiss official claiming that, contrary to general opinion, the Swiss have never produced cuckoo clocks. See Frank Brady (1990: 450–1).
- <sup>6</sup> The dilemma was, of course, well-known, and goes back a very long time. The Greek atomist Democritus wrote, apparently some time in the middle of the fifth century BC, “poverty in a democracy is preferable to so-called prosperity among dictators to the same extent as freedom is to slavery.” On the gender issue, Democritus claimed (as have many others in later years), that “some men rule cities but are slaves to women.” See Paul Cartledge (1998: 35, 38).
- <sup>7</sup> For John Locke, and other moral philosophers, individual freedoms did not include the right to sell oneself into slavery (1963: 324–9, 402–3). The prohibition on self-enslavement was often considered similar to the restrictions on suicide. Individuals did not have the freedom to choose either course of action which presumably would end their freedom. For a discussion of the debate on the enslavement of English workers, presumably in their own interests, see Michael Rozbicki (2001).
- <sup>8</sup> For a comparison of labor coercion under slavery and freedom, see O. Nigel Bolland (2002).
- <sup>9</sup> See, e.g., Sen (1999: Ch. 6), and numerous recent World Bank publications. Sen does point to some “dissonances” in outcome, but more frequently argues that there is a

- “remarkable empirical connection that links freedoms of different kinds with one another” (Sen 1999: 11).
- <sup>10</sup> See, e.g., Hugo Grotius (1925: 231–59) and Samuel Pufendorf (1934: 936–7).
- <sup>11</sup> See, for this breakdown, Grotius (1925: 231–59), Pufendorf (1934: 839–946), and William Blackstone (1979: 410–54).
- <sup>12</sup> Debates, similar for all these groups, relate to the questions whether appropriate policies to offset inequality are affirmative action programs, cash grants, or provision of more education, and also concerning the tradeoff between short-run and long-run benefits.
- <sup>13</sup> According to Barbara Bush (1990: 28–30) there were few differences in the slave laws in the Caribbean regarding men and women, at least until late eighteenth-century concerns with amelioration and childbearing.
- <sup>14</sup> New World slavery differed from ancient slavery and modern slavery elsewhere, being more productive in large-scale agriculture and very commercial in its trading arrangements. In Brazil and the US South slaves account for about 30 percent of the population (as they had also in ancient Greece and Rome), while in the British, French, and Dutch West Indies the slave share was 90 percent. In most other slave societies, slaves accounted for a smaller share of the population, worked on smaller units, and were less frequently involved in agricultural production. In these societies the relative unimportance of the legal and economic impact of slavery has meant less attention given to that institution.
- <sup>15</sup> For the ending of slavery in Africa, see the studies in Suzanne Miers and Richard Roberts (1988).
- <sup>16</sup> See Claire Robertson and Martin Klein (1983) for a survey of the literature and citations to relevant sources on women and slavery in Africa.
- <sup>17</sup> The ratio was generally 30 or 40 females per 100 males.
- <sup>18</sup> There are few usable data that I have seen concerning the sex of children abandoned or killed in slave societies. Based on a frequent historical pattern it would be expected that more females than males would be killed or abandoned (Susan Scrimshaw 1983; John Boswell 1984).
- <sup>19</sup> Novak describes the nineteenth-century American jurist, Thomas Rutherford, as arguing “like Grotius and Pufendorf.” “Rutherford contended that an extreme want of food or clothing justified theft,” since, according to Rutherford, “necessity sets property aside” (William Novak 1996: 72).
- <sup>20</sup> The sex breakdown of voluntary enslavement in Russia, according to Hellie, was about two-thirds male, with infanticide, predominantly of females, serving to generate a more equal sex ratio (Richard Hellie 1982: 442–59).
- <sup>21</sup> Another acceptable form of aid to the poor was suggested in 1572 by Thomas Wilson (1925: 258, 288), in *A Discourse Upon Usury*, with the provision of money to those suffering “famine in time of extreme death,” “to relieve the poor and afflicted in every town and parish that be not able to help themselves.” The ability of individuals and of the state to provide financial help, long-term or short-term, with little expectation of direct returns would make enslavement unnecessary as a solution to the survival problem, and this became the dominant solution once national income increased.
- <sup>22</sup> Alternatively, geographic movement often took place in response to income declines leading to external migrations. The Irish movement to the United States and Canada as a result of the Irish Famine was not the only migration to the United States that was influenced by European economic conditions, and many similar famine-related movements have taken place in Asia and Africa.
- <sup>23</sup> Indentured labor represented a payment in terms of labor time for the costs of transportation to a new nation, during which time the indentured laborer could be

brought and sold and had few rights in regard to labor conditions. Servants complained that the limited time period meant that they were treated worse than were slaves, who had a longer period to labor for owners. The two major streams of modern indentured labor migration were those from the British Isles to the British colonies in the first three-quarters of the eighteenth century, and that from India, China, and elsewhere primarily to the Caribbean, Fiji, and Australia, between 1850 and 1917. See David Galenson (1981) and Northrup (1995). On the conditions leading to acceptance of indenture, see the wistful comments of the Trinidad Government Emigration Agent in Calcutta: "Recruiting conditions and prospects at present are abnormally bad in almost every district. The recent good harvest had done away with the chief inducement of laboring classes to emigrate and recruits are almost unobtainable" (CO 295/430, letter of March 10, 1904). The minutes of December 22, 1904, noted that: "It is unfortunate that the Emigration Agencies must view with alarm a good harvest in India." For an earlier comment on this pattern, see G. A. Grierson (1883).

- <sup>24</sup> See, e.g., Douglass North and Robert Thomas (1973: 19–32). Serfdom differed from slavery in that laborers could not be sold apart from the land on which they lived and worked. Slaves were not tied to the land. In general, slavery was more frequent where long-distance movement of labor was required, and was of peoples regarded as outsiders. Serfdom occurred where the population was already in site, and movement to new areas was not necessary. Unlike modern slavery, where ethnicity of the enslaved and enslavers differed, in most cases of serfdom the ethnicities of landlords and serfs were the same.
- <sup>25</sup> Aristotle (1962: 335–9), for example, pointed to the value of manumission as an incentive and means of control, while for Jamaica, Michael Craton (1978: 222) points to the use of manumission as an incentive for labor productivity. Charles Price, the owner of Worthy Park, personally manumitted each year that slave who had distinguished himself "by hard work and fidelity." While the frequency of manumissions was often limited in the New World, those nations with low rates of manumissions (the United States and the British West Indies) ended slavery before those countries with higher rates of manumission (Cuba and Brazil).
- <sup>26</sup> In most New World slave societies, as in much of the world today, slave men apparently had a different tradeoff between individual freedom and maintenance of the family than did women. Men have apparently been more willing to leave families and children behind than have women.
- <sup>27</sup> See Ulrich Phillips (1909, II: 161–4; 1918: 446–7); Kenneth Stampf (1956: 92–3); Genovese (1974: 399–401); Deborah White (1985: 117–8); and Patterson (1982: 297).
- <sup>28</sup> See Stanley Engerman (1995), which also includes dates for the former Spanish colonies in South America and Central America.
- <sup>29</sup> The one area with a dramatic change in land ownership patterns was Haiti, where the slaves freed themselves in a revolt and drove out their former owners.
- <sup>30</sup> Exceptions, in the British Caribbean, were Barbados and Antigua, where land shortages meant the workers had limited opportunities, and Trinidad and British Guiana, which attracted indentured laborers to work on their plantations. Later Cuba attracted immigrants to help maintain the plantation system.
- <sup>31</sup> Haiti's difficulties were due, in part, to external interferences, such as the lack of desire on the part of most countries to trade with it, and a need to pay an indemnity to France in exchange for the opening of trade, but it was politically and economically unstable.
- <sup>32</sup> Food for slaves could be obtained either by master purchase and provision or by the slaves growing their own food on master-provided plots of land. For a discussion of food provisioning in the British West Indies, see B. W. Higman (1984: 204–18). Under the system of master provision by purchase of foodstuffs females could spend

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- more time in field labor and presumably learn less about small-scale production of foodstuffs, due to the shift from food production to staple production.
- <sup>33</sup> For a discussion of the role of slave women in the antebellum South, see White (1985). On the changing role of women with emancipation in the British West Indies, see Bridget Brereton (1999).
- <sup>34</sup> Lynchings, as a form of social control, were almost exclusively limited to males. Stewart Tolnay and E. M. Beck (1995: 269) estimate that only 3 percent of all lynchings of freed blacks were of females.
- <sup>35</sup> The precise effects on fertility of the antebellum pattern of some slave couples living on different farms, or with separate residences on fertility were, however, unclear. Under slavery, particularly in Virginia, there were cross-unit marriages with visiting, etc. Yet the areas in which these occurred seem to have been regions of high fertility.
- <sup>36</sup> The effect of planter policy on fertility is difficult to resolve. There were apparently more pro-natalist measures in the British West Indies than in the United States, possibly because they were thought more necessary there, given the lower fertility. Second, the decisions of women in one-parent vs. two-parent households may lead to differences in fertility, whether in slavery or in freedom.
- <sup>37</sup> Thus it is debated whether the prevalence of the mother-headed household reflects a desired outcome or rather is the outcome of various forms of social problems.

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