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| **Dossiê:** Novas perspectivas na história da escravidão

Africans and "nations" in the slave trade through parish registers: preliminary notes for comparative perspectives on Brazil and Cuba in the seventeenth century

Flavio Gomes[1]

Abstract
In this paper, we compare classification patterns for African "nations" in some parts of Brazil and Cuba. Taking into consideration some montage areas of the slave economy in the seventeenth century, we evaluate how African "nations" could appear in demographic contexts and their relationships with the slave trade and connections with Africa. Following some perspectives of Atlantic history, the main idea is take a comparative approach to the formation of Africans' identities, classifications and social structures in the Americas.
Keywords: Cuba; Brazil; parish registers; Africans; 17th century.

Africanos e "nações" do tráfico de escravos através de registros paroquiais: notas preliminares de perspectivas comparativas entre Brasil e Cuba no século XVII

Resumo
Neste artigo analisamos as possibilidades analíticas de pensar as identidades dos africanos numa perspectiva de história atlântica. A partir de registros paroquiais - para Brasil e Cuba - no século XVII consideramos as nomenclaturas e classificações das origens dos africanos. Como as nomenclaturas apareceriam em diferentes áreas da escravidão africana no atlântico operada pelos traficantes de escravos, comerciantes, autoridades alfandegárias e senhores considerando percepções diversas sobre as margens africanas do atlântico.
Palavras-chave: Cuba; Brasil; registros paroquiais; africanos; século XVII.

Africanos y "naciones" de la trata de esclavos a través de los registros parroquiales: notas preliminares de perspectivas comparativas entre Brasil y Cuba en el siglo XVII

Resumen
En este artículo abordamos las posibilidades analíticas de las nomenclaturas y formas de registrar las naciones africanas en las fuentes eclesiásticas de Brasil y Cuba en el siglo XVII. Aún sabemos poco, historiográficamente hablando, sobre estas clasificaciones, pero la perspectiva comparada permite descartar generalizaciones y profundizar el conocimiento de las prácticas locales. El artículo convida a estar atentos para los puntos de vista de los agentes coloniales tanto cuanto a las autorepresentaciones africanas y afrodescentientes.
Palabras-clave: Cuba; Brasil; registros parroquiales; africanos; siglo XVII.

Les Africains et les « nations » de la traite négrière à travers les registres paroissiaux : notes préliminaires à des perspectives comparatives entre le Brésil et Cuba au XVIIème siècle

Résumé
Nous examinons dans cet article les possibilités analytiques de penser les identités des Africains sous une perspective d'histoire atlantique. À partir de registres paroissiaux du XVIIème siècle - pour le Brésil comme pour Cuba -, nous envisageons les nomenclatures et les classements des origines des Africains. Et comment ces nomenclatures se manifesteraient dans différentes zones de l›esclavage opéré sur l›Atlantique par des négriers, des commerçants, des autorités douanières et des maîtres, en tenant compte des diverses perceptions sur les rives africaines de l›Atlantique.
Mots-clés : Cuba, Brésil, registres paroissiaux, Africains, XVIIème siècle.

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Different "Africas" have also been invented in the diaspora in various contexts and with specific developments. Not only from the perspective of politics and economic logic but basically through the investigation of the formation of identities, several authors have studied multiple aspects of African Atlantic slavery in various parts of Latin America, the USA and the Caribbean. More recently, a fundamental approach has involved analyzing the intellectual movement of the production of narratives on these encounters, dimensions and connections (Yelvington, 2006, p. 35-82). Images of *Atlantic cultures* have been retrieved in various ways, but it is still necessary to expand the analysis in view of the Spanish and Portuguese colonial worlds, in addition to the South-South dimensions (Alencastro, 2000; Bennett, 2000, p. 101-124; Gilroy, 1993). This means creating opportunities to sail on different *seas* and land on *shores* that are often still little known in terms of studies, topics, sources, methods and theoretical foundations. Despite relations of power, domination and oppression, the Atlantic borders are believed to be blurred, combining and recreating political, social, cultural, linguistic, economic and other experiences.

The main purpose of this brief paper is engaging in an initial methodological exercise to verify — through parish registers — questions about the classifications and forms of African "nations" in the trans-Atlantic slave trade, testing a comparative perspective on parish registers for Brazil and Cuba.[2] More than being empirical proof, these sources suggest the existence of classifying mechanisms that are constantly changing, considering the variables of the Atlantic slave trade and the European presence in Africa as local forms of classification, including specific colonial sectors and policies regarding trade and control, local experiences of African agency and related sectors. Therefore, this is an experiment that seeks to test methods for establishing dialogues with studies on the identities of Africans in the Americas. Several issues and questions regarding African identities and the history of the slave trade will not be dealt with here. The main idea is to test the methodological possibilities of the statistical use of ecclesiastical sources — parish registers — to think about the classifications and names used to identify Africans in a context prior to the formation of plantations in these colonial areas (Klein, 2009, p. 111-133; Soares, Landers, Lovejoy and Mcmichael, 2006, p. 337-346).

African identities (singular and plural): limitations and possibilities

Scholars of slave societies in various parts of the Americas have focused on the issue of the identities of Africans and their descendants. For Brazil and Cuba, further perspectives provided by several more recent studies have also addressed

[2] The data (parish registers) used for the seventeenth century Brazil also appear analyzed Gomes (2012).

the topics of slave families, everyday life and cultures.[3] One of these issues, which have been the subject of debate and controversy for many researchers, involves analyzing the meanings of ethnic classifications and articulations in several African societies within the logic of the slave trade, and especially the experiences of slavery.[4] Several meanings have been forged within dimensions of the diaspora — a concept that sometimes retrieves a supposed homogeneity — and *creolization*, which overemphasizes difference and change vis-à-vis Africans. The basic issue is to reflect on the cultural dimensions and connections circulating in the Atlantic worlds.[5] Can the process be diluted in the formation of diasporas, or did important contexts of creolization exist in which the differences between disparate colonial contexts should be considered?[6] New studies on the dimensions and connections of Atlantic history may offer more insights into the meanings of African experiences of transformation, in which the process in the diaspora did not result in rupture but continuities. The ethnic, religious and cultural transformations that Africans underwent did not start on the slave ship or merely on plantations in the Americas. Thus, the reflexes on times and spaces of change and the surrounding microsocieties should be linked with the socioeconomic formation of plantation areas.[7] In the case of African "nations" and their classifications, several studies have attempted to analyze how well they represented the transformation of identities that began in Africa, continued in the diaspora and were often carried on by returnees.[8]

In Cuba and Brazil, two societies that experienced the growth and power of Atlantic slavery throughout the nineteenth century, Africans reinvented the worlds around them in the plantation areas (and a pre-plantation period) as well as in urban settings, the *senzalas* and *barracones* (slave quarters), *engenhos* and *fincas* (plantations), *quilombos* and *cimarrones* (maroon settlements), including confraternities and town councils. The constant introduction of enslaved Africans not only maintained the levels of conflict among slaves in the work units but also redefined the logic of domination, as well as identity and the construction of complex communities.[9] Spaces appeared in the diaspora in rural and urban areas involving Africans with various identities, in addition to those created in the very context of work and sociability.

Terminologies and classifications used in the Atlantic slave trade and slave societies to identify, locate and indicate Africans' origins have mobilized several studies and scholars. These definitions may be suggested by the slave trade, including names of ports and places in Africa. Others are provided by

[3] See, among others: Parés (2005, p. 87-132), Reis (1997, p. 7-33), Slenes (1999) and Slenes (1992, p. 48-67). For Cuba, in addition to several works by Alejandro de La Fuente and others, see recent studies: Barcia (2008), Childs (2006) and Días & Fuentes (2006).

[4] A classic debate appears in: Mintz (1976) and Mintz (1992).

[5] Matory (1999, p. 72-103). See: Karasch (2000), Vainfas (2000), Souza (2002) and Parés (2006).

[6] The studies that emphasize the possibilities and limitations of "following" African ethnic groups' migrations include: Gomêz (1998), Hall (2005), Chambers (1997, p. 73-97), Caron (1997, p. 98-121) and Northrup (2000, p. 1-20).

[7] See: Mann (2001, p. 3-21).

[8] Lovejoy (2001, p. 1-29), Northrup (2000, p. 1-20) and Thornton (1992).

[9] See: Slenes (1992, p. 48-67).

newspaper reports on slaves for hire and runaway slaves, whether in parish registers, deeds of sale and inventory listings, as well as the classifications of African returnees, and those who remained in Sierra Leone, Benin and Ghana. Using all these sources, many researchers have been addressing the methodological possibilities of using such materials and descriptions to understand the formation of identities and identification of enslaved Africans. In this article, we are focusing on statistical approaches and assessing patterns of comparative classifications of the "nations" of Africans and slaves in colonial Brazil and Cuba in the seventeenth century. We have chosen to use parish registers of baptisms, marriages and deaths. What do they reveal? When and how were baptisms carried out? Some were immediate and compulsory, performed soon after the slave ships arrived at their destinations; others were conducted collectively in the African barracoons and entrepôts before their departure. The records of local baptisms, and especially the records of marriages and deaths analyzed here, suggest the arrival and sale of Africans to certain owners and the beginning of their process of resocialization in units of production. At any rate, in terms of power dynamics and colonial rule, the act of baptizing slaves — and especially celebrating their marriages and recording their deaths — had several meanings for everyone involved, from the ecclesiastical authorities (pastors and missionaries) to slave owners and colonial sectors and including the slaves themselves. For example, some African regions connected with the slave trade had already been in contact with Catholicism, and the act of baptism was recognized and gained new meanings on different ideological bases (see: Thornton, 2004 [1992]). There is also some justification for a comparative analysis of Brazil and Cuba in the seventeenth century — first, to determine the Atlantic dimension of standards for classifying "nations", while testing the similarities between their parish registers. Since studies on the Atlantic slave trade and African Atlantic slavery mainly concentrate on the initial decades of the nineteenth century, it has become increasingly important to investigate historic records for the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. Some areas of Cuba and Brazil were still emerging in terms of agricultural production and trade in those periods. Although there are sufficient studies on the initial socioeconomic formations in various slave-owning regions, we know little about the intensity and origins of the slave trade in the early centuries (see: Elbl, 1997, p. 31-75).

Classifications, "nations" and intersections in the Atlantic

As an initial attempt to explore the applications of this method, we have chosen specific regions dating from the seventeenth century, prior to the formation of large plantations in the nineteenth century, particularly in Cuba and Rio de Janeiro. Analyzing parish registers of baptisms, marriages and deaths, we have found patterns of classifications for African-born slaves and those born in the colony, especially the early generations.[10] These records show different patterns

[10] Regarding digital archives on ecclesiastical sources in Brazil and Cuba, see: Soares, Landers, Lovejoy & McMichael (2006, p. 337-346).

of classification for Africans that suggest other paths for analysis — going beyond the slave trade routes and patterns of arrivals and departures based on ship's records. For southeastern colonial Brazil, we have chosen seventeenth-century Rio de Janeiro, especially parishes in the Guanabara bay area. We have collected about 2,200 records of baptisms, marriages and deaths for the parishes of Candelária, Sé, Cabo Frio, Irajá, Jacutinga, Magé, São João Batista de Niterói, Bonsucesso de Piratininga, Maricá, Itaboraí, Suruí and Engenho Velho. For Cuba, we have analyzed about 900 more records of baptisms and marriages from the parishes of Guanabacoa and Santo Angel Custodio.[11]

These ecclesiastical records furnish data on the first generations of Africans and "nationals" baptized, buried and married in these regions, which experienced the first wave of economic expansion and the growth of African slave labor, going beyond indigenous slavery. Where Rio de Janeiro is concerned, we are referring to the distant sugar-growing regions of Pernambuco and Bahia in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. These were areas of initial occupation surrounded by improvised plantations, large and small, associated with cattle ranches and diversified farm production. In some areas, such as Engenho Velho and Irajá, in the outskirts of the city of Rio de Janeiro, we are dealing with colonial areas previously occupied by Jesuit farms; others, such as Cabo Frio, experienced an economic boom in the late sixteenth century thanks to trading posts, in addition to areas such as the parishes of Candelária and Sé, whose colonial seats were semi-urbanized towns.[12]

Some areas of Cuba and parts of Rio de Janeiro could offer important points of comparison. In the mid-eighteenth century, both societies would experience the *montage* of powerful slave-owning and sugar-producing structures. However, in the seventeenth century, there still prevailed incipient slave-owning societies whose workforce included enslaved Africans and indigenous peoples, as well as free labor. In any case, for the seventeenth century, it would be interesting to verify the links between these areas and the Atlantic slave trade and the names of the "nations" of the Africans who disembarked in those places.

For Cuba, we have chosen the parishes of Guanabacoa and Santo Angel Custodio, also in the seventeenth century. These were areas of initial settlement located near Havana, where the expansion of the plantation economy and the massive importation of Africans were still in a fledgling state.[13] For Rio de Janeiro, baptismal records for adult Africans are scarce in at least nine parishes: Candelária (1638-1709), Cabo Frio (1675-1700), Irajá (1677-1693), Jacutinga (1686-1690, 1691-1695 and 1696-1700), Magé (1677-1693), Nossa Senhora do Bonsucesso de Piratininga (1680-1700), São João Batista de Niterói (1671-1675, 1666-1670 and 1676-1680) and Sé (1700).[14] Even when taking into

[11] For Brazil, we have studied the parish records in the archives of the Metropolitan Curia of Rio de Janeiro, the Curia of Niterói and the Curia of Nova Iguaçu. For Cuba, we have studied parish records digitalized and published online through Jane Landers' project (Vanderbilt University). Available in: <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/esss/cuba/documents/documents.php>. Access date: 20 Jul. 2016.

[12] For the agrarian ane mercantile elites of Rio de Janeiro in the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries, see: Fragoso (2001, p. 29-71). Sampaio (2003).

[13] See: Monzote (2008).

[14] For the case of Candelária, we have added baptismal records dated up to 1709 to the seventeenth-century data.

consideration the scant and sporadic settlements, the presence of indigenous slavery and the limited supply of African labor, the number of baptized African adults was very small. There are just 97 records of baptisms for adults slaves.[15] Considering baptisms of children and taking into account the origins and classifications attributed to their mothers, that number jumps to 1,200 records. In Rio de Janeiro during that period of the colonial era, the low number of baptized adults suggests that recently disembarked Africans may have been baptized beforehand, at trading posts on the African coast. Of the 92 Africans baptized, 13 percent are designated as Gentio *da Guiné/Guiné,* and 87 percent as Minas.[16] Considering the origins of the mothers of the baptized children, there is a growing pattern of classification as Gentio da Guiné/Guiné, not to mention the high incidence of unknown origins for baptized children and daughters of slaves, where no mention is given of the mother's place of birth.

Table 1. Origins of baptized adults and mothers of baptized children in Rio de Janeiro, 17th century

Origin	Men	Women	Mothers
Angola	-	-	01
Carijó	-	-	02
Ganguela	-	-	01
Gentio da Guiné	-	-	161
Gentio da Terra (Native Brazilian)	-	01	06
Guiné	05	07	684
Mina	42	38	05
Mulata (Mulatto)	-	01	12
Pardo (Brown or Mixed)	-	-	01
Total	49	48	1,200

Source: (Various) Parish registers found in the archives of the Metropolitan Curia of Rio de Janeiro, the Curia of Niterói and the Curia of Nova Iguaçu.

Even this level of undetermined origins could suggest both the number of children born to African slaves as well as those of indigenous slaves who were also baptized. Mothers classified as Guiné/Gentio da Guiné and those of unknown origin respectively represented 72 percent and 28 percent. The colonial classifications of Índio, Carijó and Gentio da Terra were found in a total of 20 records, at most. There were also few baptisms of enslaved adult Amerindians, given the context of stricter prohibitions and controls on the roving bands set out to capture Amerindians in those parts, and even the fact that indigenous slaves were sent to that part of Brazil after being captured and

[15] See: Morgan (1997, p. 122-143). Available in: <www.slavevoyages.org>. Access date: 20 Jul. 2016.
[16] [Gentio da Guiné translates literally as Heathens from Guinea – TN]. In a recent study that used parish records for colonial Puerto Rico (1672-1727) David Stark also observes the low rate of baptisms for adult Africans and suggests that they may have been baptised before their arrival in Puerto Rico. See: Stark (2009, p. 497-520).

baptized in the Northeast. Therefore, a large number of Amerindians who were born into slavery during the colonial period could have been baptized without any mention of their mother's origin. This is just a theory. Another argument that could be raised would be that baptizing enslaved children without specifying their mothers' origins could have obscured the initial process of enslaving children who were the daughters of African women born within the colonial sphere. This argument is countered by the fact that a large number of mothers were classified as Guiné/Gentio da Guiné. When considering this generic term, we could ask why some enslaved children's mothers were identified as African (albeit generically) and others were not (Lara, 1997, p. 205-224). In the case of mothers identified as African, just a few are classified as Minas and two as Angola and Ganguela, respectively generic terms for West and Central African. The question is to determine which Africans — from which regions, territories and/or origins — would be classified as Guiné/Gentio da Guiné in the seventeenth century. Finally, it should be noted that, until the mid-eighteenth century, the term Guiné/ Gentio da Guiné was completely generic in Brazil, referring to Africans of all origins and ports of embarkation.

Table 2. Origins of adults and mothers buried in Rio de Janeiro, 17th century

Origins	Men	Women	Mothers
Congo	-	-	03
Creole	-	03	-
Gentio da Guiné	30	12	145
Mina	-	-	04
Monjolo	-	-	01
Total	30	15	153

Source: Parish registers found in the archives of the Metropolitan Curia of Rio de Janeiro, the Curia of Niterói and the Curia of Nova Iguaçu.

Table 2 shows the records for deceased Africans and the African mothers of dead children. Therefore, there is a concentration of African mothers, because each one of them could have lost two, three or several children. In any event, the death records confirm some of these theories. The problem is that the sample available to us contains records for just three parishes: Cabo Frio (1695-1716 and 1678-1729), Jacutinga (1689-1721) and N.S. do Bonsucesso de Piratininga (1692-1700).[17] Regarding adults listed in the death records, we have found 47 burials, including 32 men and 15 women. The largest number continues to be Africans classified as Gentio da Guiné, at 89.4 percent, of whom 71.4 percent were men. These figures reflect the logic of the slave trade, with resulted in an influx of men at a ratio of 3 women for every 10 men. The fact that more African men entered is reflected by the fact that most of those buried were adult males. As for children's burials, we have found a concentration of Africans, with a low

[17] We have also added some eighteenth-century data (12 records) to the seventeenth-century samples.

incidence of Creole, Amerindian and *mestiça* mothers. The records show that 153 children were buried, all the daughters of African women, revealing a pattern of 94.8 percent Gentio da Guiné, 2.6 percent from West Africa (all called Minas) and 2.6 percent from Central African (Congo and Monjolo).

Table 3. Origins of Spouses in Slave Marriages in Rio de Janeiro, 17th century

Origins	Men	Women
Creole	05	01
Congo	01	-
Ganguela	01	-
Gentio da Guiné	251	262
Gentio da Terra	04	01
Guiné	-	02
Unknown	49	38
Indian	04	02
Luanda	-	02
Mameluco	01	-
Mulatto	01	01
Pardo	05	07
Total	399	399

Source: Parish registers found in the archives of the Metropolitan Curia of Rio de Janeiro, the Curia of Niterói and the Curia of Nova Iguaçu.

Data on marriages are more extensive, including six parishes: Cabo Frio (1676-1700), Engenho Velho (1642-1700), Itaboraí (1683-1738), Jacutinga (1686-1721, 1686-1690, 1691-1692, 1699-1700), Maricá (1648-1725) and Suruí (1687-1713). We have found 399 marriages, locating 798 slaves. The percentage of spouses of unknown origins was 11 percent. Africans amounted to 95.6 percent, with 99.27 percent classified as Gentio da Guiné/Guiné. The rest are described as Congo, Ganguela and Luanda. Of the 31 spouses born in Brazil that are classified, we find Gentio da Terra, Indian, Mameluco, Mulatto and Pardo. More than 90 percent of marriages involve slaves of the same masters, a pattern that is different from Cuba, as we will see. There was a pattern of endogamy in terms of people with the same African origins (Gentio da Guiné and Guiné) intermarrying.

Although the rate of Africans generically classified as Guiné/Gentio da Guiné remains the same, the marriage and death records show lower rates of people of unknown origins. In baptisms, they represent 25.4 percent, but in death records they are just 1 percent, and in marriages they are 10.9 percent. Here we can also posit some theories regarding the formation of African identities that could appear more clearly in records of deaths and marriages of Africans who had spent more time in the diaspora than the baptismal records of newly arrived Africans. At any rate, we must not overlook the variations in

our sample, considering several parishes and records scattered in books from fragmented periods. Due to the number of parishes involved, the sample for baptisms is much broader than that for deaths. In addition to spatial variations, there are also temporal changes related to the parish priests involved in these notations. Periods of standard classifications, changes, underreporting, etc. can also be linked to certain priests and specific ecclesiastical concerns, contexts that interfere in the process of evaluating changes in the ways of classifying Africans and Creoles in these parish registers. In terms of characteristics, we have not found many differences between the more central parishes of the city of Rio de Janeiro, suburban parishes and those in the Guanabara bay area and more remote parishes such as Cabo Frio and Maricá.

In terms of patterns of identities and African "nations," the data for Rio de Janeiro suggest few definite conclusions. Following current demographic patterns for Colonial Brazil, the terms Gentio da Guiné/Guiné — particularly in the seventeenth century and the first decades of the eighteenth century — were used generically in parish registers to indicate Africans of any and all origins. According to Mariza Soares, the seventeenth-century records for Rio de Janeiro show that they could have originated from West Africa but they could also just as well be from Upper Guinea (see: Soares, 2000). Finally, while indicating the preeminence of Central Africans due to the Luanda slave trade, the theories that we could posit also include the presence of West Africans from Upper Guinea, Senegambia and Cape Verde due to the slave trade systems that existed there as early as the first half of the seventeenth century to supply the sugar planting regions of Pernambuco and Bahia, the River Plate areas and those which could also supply the Southeast and the emerging economic structure in the Guanabara bay area and the suburbs of Rio de Janeiro at the dawn of the seventeenth century. The high incidence of unknown origins must also lead us to consider the presence of a second-generation indigenous population born into slavery and working alongside the Africans on the plantations, ranches and farms that grew foodstuffs. Further research on the slave trade at the turn of the seventeenth to eighteenth centuries could confirm or refute these indications.[18]

Table 4. Major African regions represented in the names used to identify Africans in seventeenth-century parish registers for Rio de Janeiro

African Regions	Number
Central Africa	10
West Africa	89
Gentio da Guiné/Guiné (generic terms for Africans)	1,719
Total	1,818

Source: Parish registers found in the archives of the Metropolitan Curia of Rio de Janeiro, the Curia of Niterói and the Curia of Nova Iguaçu.

[18] For the eighteenth-century Atlantic slave trade to Rio de Janeiro, see: Cavalcanti (2005, p. 15-77). Florentino (1997). Klein (1978, p. 181-212).

We must consider that the regions analyzed for Rio de Janeiro in the seventeenth century were located in agrarian areas of the city's bay area. Therefore, they were not the points of disembarkation for enslaved African slaves brought to Brazil by Atlantic slave trade. They disembarked in the central parishes of the port of Rio de Janeiro (particularly Sé, São José and Candelária), where the commercial area and main entrepôts were located, after which they were sold and sent on to the suburbs and parishes in the interior of the captaincy (see: Soares, 2000). Even so, in the seventeenth century, some Africans — particularly those from Central Africa — could have been converted to Christianity in Africa and baptized there. These factors could explain the small number of Africans in Rio's baptismal registers for that period. Even so, Table 4 shows that, considering the Africans from specifically stated areas and origins, West Africans stand out at 90 percent. The percentage of Central Africans is much smaller — just 10 percent in seventeenth-century Rio de Janeiro. However, the indications of the origins of Africans are considerably vague and generalized, because in about 95 percent of African records they appear as Guiné/Gentio da Guiné, which was used generically in seventeenth-century parish registers. While West Africans are all classified as Minas, we have also found different classifications — always in reduced numbers — including Angola, Congo, Ganguela, Luanda and Monjolo for Central Africans. Classifications for the colonial population include Carijó, Gentio da Terra, Indian, Mameluco, Mulatto and Pardo. The indigenous population represented 34.5 percent, whereas the percentage of mestizos reached 50 percent.

Despite the small sample, analyses of parish registers in Cuba may be more indicative. First, we will discuss the baptismal records for Guanabacoa. For the period between 1681 and 1699, there are 198 records of adult baptisms and 66 for children in which the mothers' origins are given. The rate of unknown origins in seventeenth-century Cuban records is much smaller compared with Brazil. In the total records for baptized adults and children (considering the mothers in the latter case), individuals with unknown origins represent just 12.9 percent. Unlike Brazil, we have also found more records of baptized adult Africans, generally suggesting a move to introduce slave labor, and the baptisms took place in Cuban parishes, rather than at trading posts or aboard slave ships. In Cuba, seven out of ten were West African adults. Also keeping pace with the averages for the Atlantic slave trade, there is a larger proportion of baptized adult African men (87 percent) which is even higher than that found in the Brazilian case. We have seen that it was not possible to obtain these statistics for Rio de Janeiro due to the small number of adult baptisms.

Table 5. African regions of origin for slaves in colonial Cuba (17th century)

African regions	Number/percent
Central Africa	49 (26.7%)
West Africa	134 (72.8%)
East Africa	01 (0.5%)
Total	184 (100%)

Source: Parish registers of Guanabacoa. See: http://sitemason.vanderbilt.edu/ecclesiasticalsources/home

Seventeenth-century Cuban records not only show a reduced percentage of Africans of unknown origins but a large number of names and classifications of African "nations". For Rio de Janeiro the incidence of such classifications for Africa reaches a maximum of 8 different names, but for Cuba this figure rises to 17. One reason — though not the only one — may be the more generic naming standard in Brazil (Gentio da Guiné/Guiné, including several West African ethnic groups, but primarily Central African), whereas in Cuba, records for West Africans include both baptized Africans and a large number of different names. Central Africans appear in Cuba as Angola, Luango and Congo, while West Africans are Arara, Carabali, Mandinga, Lucumi, Mina, Popo, Banon, and Fulupo among others. Considering the records of baptized children with African and Creole mothers, we have noticed the strong presence of the latter, indicating that the first generation of Creole children of Africans who arrived in the sixteenth century may have already begun having children of their own in Guanabacoa. Creoles make up a total of the 46 records showing the origins of mothers, at a rate of 58.7 percent. Central Africans (the only names found are Congo and Luango) and West Africans (predominantly Arara and Mines) are evenly divided in the remaining percentage.

Table 6. Main West African "nations" baptized in Cuba (1681-1699)

Arara	65 (54.65%)
Carabali	8 (6.7%)
Mandinga	18 (15.1%)
Mina	28 (23.55%)
Total	119 (100%)

Source: Parish registers of Guanabacoa. See: http://sitemason.vanderbilt.edu/ecclesiasticalsources/home

In the parish registers for seventeenth-century Cuba, we have found that West Africans represented 88.8 percent of Africans baptized in Guanabacoa, particularly those classified as Arara and Mina, with fewer described as Mandinga and Carabali (Table 6). In the late seventeenth century, the largest number of Africans recorded were called Araras, and were Ewe-Fon speakers who embarked in several different ports. Considering recent studies by Mariza Soares and Luis Nicolau Parés in Rio de Janeiro and Salvador, these West Africans probably belonged to the same groups that entered Brazil in the final decades of the seventeenth century and the first half of the eighteenth century. In Cuba, they were given the extended name of Arada, which was, however, less generic and differed from those who appeared in Rio de Janeiro baptismal records as Minas. In Bahia, and only there, many were called Jejê in the parish registers.[19] In Cuba, the individuals identified as Minas were more likely to be Africans embarked on the Gold Coast (Fuente, 1990, p. 135-160). There is also a considerable number of Africans identified as Mandinga embarked in Sierra Leone/Senegambia.

[19] See the discussion on this ethnic classification and its invention Matory (1999, p. 57-80).

At any rate, the terminology for West Africans embarked on the Slave Coast or the Gold Coast was often generalized in several parts of the Americas. Like Brazil, in Cuba in this context in the seventeenth century, we find respectively few Lucumis and Nagos — Africans embarked in the Bight of Benin, originating from the Oyo Empire and the surrounding region, who would be found in abundance on Cuban plantations and in the ports of Salvador and Pernambuco in the second half of the eighteenth century. There are even fewer Africans identified as Carabali in these Cuban records. They embarked in the Bight of Biafra through the ports of Bonny, and Old and New Calabar, and would be in the majority on Cuban plantations in the late eighteenth century and the first decades of the nineteenth (Begard, 2007, p. 96-131). In comparative terms, it would be interesting to discuss and analyze the (similar, different and/or changing) use of the classification "Mina," which could have been utilized both in Cuba and Brazil (Law, 1997, p. 191-205).

Despite the high rate of unknown origins, but basically due to the low rate of generalization for African "nations," the marriage records for slaves in Guanabacoa (1670-1700) and Santo Angel Custodio (1693-1700) are even more indicative, and suggest both patterns of African "nations" as well as possible arrangements on the plantations. For Guanabacoa, we have found records of 290 marriages, the equivalent of an average of about 10 marriages per year. Of the 596 slaves involved, 226 are registered as being of unknown origin but 26 have the generic classifications of *negro* and *moreno*, and are not identified as African- or Cuban-born. Thus we have 328 Africans and Creoles getting married and representing 56.5 percent of all married couples. This high rate of unknown origins in Cuba suggests the presence of a considerable slave population — possibly of colonial original that was not yet classifiable — in terms of specific names describing their origins. The theory of under-reporting in the parishes where the marriages were held has not been discarded. Questions about the identity of that population of unknown origin in the marriage records increase even further when we add the number of marriages involving Creoles, in cases where they are identified as being born in Cuba. Creoles represented 90.85 percent of married slaves. This might mean that there was a second-generation slave population in Cuba, born of Africans, and marrying at a higher rate.

The low number of Africans involved in marriages in this context in Guanabacoa may not just reflect the demographic logic of their low representation in the slave population but, theoretically, the willingness (or lack thereof) of these Africans and their masters to hold weddings (Norman, 2005, p. 177-207). Among the 30 Africans who married, 90 percent were men and 10 percent, women, repeating the impact of quantitative logic the slave trade on the profile of Africans involved in marriages. The largest groups of Africans — just as in the baptisms — were Minas (30 percent), Araras (26.6 percent) and Congos (13.3 percent). Of the Africans who married, 73.3 percent wed a member of the same African "nation". Only one in three Africans married a Creole or an African from a different "nation". A small sample of marriages from the

parish of Santo Angel Custodio confirms these patterns. For the period between 1693 and 1700 we have 33 weddings, including 26 marriages involving spouses from the same ethnic group and 7 with different origins. For those of the same origin, we have identified 36 slaves among African and Creoles, 55 percent of whom (20) were African. About 70 percent of the marriages of members of the same African "nation" involved Minas (8) and the Araras (6). Slaves born in the colony who intermarried, especially those classified as *pardos*, represent 62.5 percent. For marriages involving spouses of different origins, we have identified 88.8 percent (8), including Carabalis, Congos, Lucumi, Arara and Minas who intermarried.

The patterns found in seventeenth-century colonial Cuba suggest the formation of the first generation of Africans and the possibilities for interethnic arrangements. The data for the end of the sixteenth century in a recent study by David Wheat already suggest this. Africans made up 38.6 percent of the total of 1,223 baptisms carried out in Havana from 1590 to 1600. Furthermore, we have found that ethnic arrangements and interactions occurred, since Africans from given "nations" were more likely to stand as godparents for the same "nation," as in the case of Africans classified as "Angolas" (Wheat, 2009, p. 234, 244 and 259). It is interesting to observe how the term "Angola" identified in sixteenth-century baptisms in Havana is rarely found in our seventeenth-century samples of baptisms and marriages for Guanabacoa and Santo Angel Custodio. This is further evidence of the variations in the names and classifications of Africans found in parish registers.

Conclusions

We still know little about how the standards for classifying "nations" in parish registers — and their variations in different places and times — can inform, reveal, hide or simply help explain African origins and identities in the Atlantic. However, further research and a comparative approach to the literature on the history of specific slave regions in the Americas could be an interesting way forward, as long as generalizations (with regard to all areas and topics) are discarded.

Several subjects must be considered from a comparative and Atlantic perspective, going beyond the comparison of landscapes and demographics. One in particular is the varying religious practices of both societies, in terms of written records and parish registers. Different standards, going beyond identity and connections with the slave trade, can also represent meanings and lessons learned in the Americas by parish priests and slave owners who classified enslaved Africans and their "nations". An important inquiry would look into the religious training of parish priests and the colonial perspective (legislation, local regulations and supervision) to assess absences, silences and scarcity of information about the identities of the Africans in the parish registers. These perspectives may also have changed over time, particularly in the eighteenth

century, when these societies experienced periods of more intense and systematic of Atlantic links (including the type of slave trade). In any event, the first generations of Africans and those who were transformed into Creoles played different roles at various junctures in the Atlantic slave trade and the *montage* of economies and social structures in the Americas. Local perspectives, combining policies of control, slave owners' perceptions and demographic contexts must also be taken into account. The increased "visibility" of a given "nation" and its classifications were associated with the structures of power and the varied meanings of slave agency, which was in a state of constant flux.

Despite the difficulties involved — fragmented and non-standardized sources — parish registers and the ethnonyms suggested, including classifications indicating Africans' origins could be useful tools for understanding both European views on Africa and Africans and the processes of transformation underway in the diaspora involving several colonial agents, including the Africans themselves. Varying scenarios, such as the imposition of classifications and self-identification, could involve protagonists and changes of Atlantic dimensions.[20] Comparative perspectives, considering not only the plantation areas and the period of reduced demand, could be tested in methodological terms (Begard, 2007, p. 96-131). Without overlooking the African aspects of the slave trade, areas of capture, the local logics of micro-societies involved in the slave trade or the target of enslavement, it is essential to analyze specific social and demographic contexts.[21]

From this Atlantic perspective, it is fundamental to capture the movement that suggests the changes that took place in all these *Africas*, which includes considering the issue of transatlantic identities and protagonists. Due to the unknowns, generalizations and varying standards involved in classifying "nations," we should not draw conclusions regarding the patterns of slavery in Brazil and Cuba from the parishes of the Guanabara Bay area and those near Havana, which we have analyzed on the basis of samples of seventeenth-century ecclesiastical records. Instead of developing models, local contexts viewed from a comparative perspective might suggest a chronology of changes in the adaptations and sociability of Africans and their surrounding worlds in the Americas. Thus, Atlantic boundaries were not isolated and never were, in terms of the restrictive processes of the logic of the slave trade, which was not always as inexorable as some studies would have it, despite its impact and importance.

[20] See, among others, Hall (2005) and Sweet (2003).
[21] For different perspectives, see: Gomêz (1999, p. 116). Heywood (1999, p. 9-23). Lovejoy (2001, p. 1-29).

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