RICE UNIVERSITY

A Malungo Community within the Brazilian Internal Slave Trade, 1850–1888

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AN ARTICLE SUMMARY OF THE THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

Doctor of Philosophy

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September 2019
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A “Black Wave” in the Coffee regions of São Paulo

On Friday, June 8, 1860, in the town of Itu, located in the province of São Paulo, people awoke to enormous confusion. Two corpses had been found in the woods near the Santa Barbara road. They belonged to the slave trader José Rodrigues Teixeira Nunes and his overseer Manoel, who were traveling through the region driving a coffle of enslaved people. Immediately upon discovery of the bodies, the enslaved migrants became the suspects for the double murder. Faced with the horrific find that morning, the sheriff Domingos Ferreira Alves ordered the town searched for the escaped enslaved people that José Rodrigues and Manoel were transporting. The search began at the property of Dona Maria Alice Amaral and moved swiftly to her sugarcane fields and garden plots. If they were not found there, the police planned to rigorously inspect the city's houses even by breaking down doors. It was deemed necessary to fully sweep the area before they escaped.¹ When a group of 18 enslaved men and women were arrested and interrogated for the murder of their master near Campinas Brazil in 1860, one might not expect that the internal Brazilian slave trade—rather than the violent conditions of the plantation—played a role. The murder trial revealed not only details about the crime itself, but also the slaves’ experiences in the internal slave trade. Contained in the trial records is evidence of the temporary bonds created by enslaved people, their shared fears about their destination, their discussions about what was considered fair and just treatment, and the day to day struggles to survive the long forced marches by land and the voyage by sea along the Brazilian coast. The depostions of the enslaved participants in the murder highlight the hardships, formation of bonds, creation of a new community - even if it was itinerant, fluid and temporary - and intricacies of human bondage experienced by enslaved peoples in the internal Brazilian slave trade.

¹ Documento Avulso, 1860. Arquivo Nacional do Brasil, GIFI 6D-121. All subsequent quotations and references to this case are from this document, which consist of approximately 260 pages in handwritten manuscript form.
The murder occurred on June 1, 1860, a week before the corpses were found, when the group was proceeding on the road that linked Itu to Campinas. The enslaved suspects came from various provinces, but mostly from the Northeast of Brazil, and after being bought by the firm of José Francisco and José Rodrigues Teixeira Nunes based in Rio de Janeiro, they were taken by ship to the city of Santos, on the coast of the province of São Paulo. From there hence they were taken overland through the interior, stopping when it best suited the trader Nunes who would accompany them, until they reached the city of Campinas where they would be sold and, probably, destined to a life of work coffee growing estates, which were expanding rapidly in the west of São Paulo at the time.

The growth of coffee plantations in Brazil gained momentum in the first decades of the nineteenth century. After 1830, coffee planters of the Paraíba Valley, who bought most of the enslaved Africans illegally trafficked to the Center-South regions of Brazil, surpassed coffee producers in Jamaica, Suriname, and Cuba. Brazil came to dominate the international coffee market in the middle and second half of the nineteenth century. According to Rafael Marquese, the massive coffee production in the Paraíba Valley in the 1840s and 1850s “put in check the Cuban coffee plantation whose areas in the west of the island ended up reverting to sugar production.” The rapid growth of Cuba’s sugar industry had had a devastating effect on sugar producers in the Brazilian “sugar quadrilateral”—composed of the cities of Jundiaí, Campinas, Piracicaba, and Itu—that since the Revolution in Saint Domingue had tried to insert themselves in the international sugar market. The impossibility of competing with Cuba over sugar pushed those planters to direct their investments towards coffee plantations, where they secured substantial returns from the price increases in the international coffee market, a movement that was part of the appreciation of tropical commodities throughout the 1850s.²

Accordingly, planters in the west of the state of São Paulo became major producers of coffee, which required growers to turn to the internal slave market in search of enslaved workers for their fields. According to Robert Slenes, an internal slave trade can be defined as a "system of commerce in human beings that is relatively autonomous (with primarily endogenous determinants of prices and other characteristics) and that integrates local buyers and sellers within a region, colony, or nation, or even within an area that overlaps political boundaries, into a common market." As defined here, an internal slave trade emerged in Brazil after the definitive end of the legal Atlantic slave

trade in 1850, when two strong Brazilian export complexes, one in the North-Northeast and another in the Center-South, emerged and competed for enslaved people in the internal market. Slenes estimates that the "total net interregional transfers between mid-1850 and mid-1881 were in the neighborhood of 222,500, or about 7,200 per year for the whole period" and that number enslaved people could have reached 400,000, considering *intra*-regional transactions.5

During the 1850s and 1860s, *intra*-regional trade in Brazil was significantly higher, and in the 1870s, with the low profitability of sugar and cotton production as compared to coffee, there was a significant transfer of enslaved people from the North-Northeast to the Center-South. Robert Slenes argues that slave prices in each Brazilian region were directly related to the price of the main export produced in that region. Given the growth of coffee production in the Center-South, slave prices significantly increased, while in the North-Northeast, with the decrease in the prices of sugar and cotton, the price fell also for enslaved people in that region. This is not to say that the large sugar-producers necessarily had to sell enslaved people to the Center-South, only that northeastern sugar producers were not able to compete favorably with coffee planters in the Center-South who would pay more for enslaved people. Through this internal market, enslaved people were forced to migrate from small and medium northeastern slave owners to larger slaveowners of the coffee plantations of the Center-South.4

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4 Slenes, “The Brazilian Internal Slave Trade.”
The city of Campinas occupied a central place at this juncture; in 1854 its agricultural production was mainly focused on coffee plantations that in that year it produced 336,000 arrobas (around 10.8 million pounds) on 177 different estates, and its slave population totaled, according to the census, 8,190 enslaved people. According to Renato Marcondes, in less than two decades, coffee production in Campinas had multiplied more than 40 times, which was only possible due to the massive importation

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of enslaved people. In 1872, the year in which the first national slave matrícula, or registry of slaves was held, the municipality of Campinas tallied the largest enslaved population of the province of São Paulo, at 14,028 people. Based on the payments of the tax on the sale of slaves called the meia sisa, notes of sale and purchase, and the power of attorneys registered in Campinas in the second half of the nineteenth century, Rafael Scheffer attributes this growth in the enslaved population to the vast expansion of the Brazilian internal slave market. According to the author, the transactions took place at the local, intra, and interregional levels, and the number of people entering enslavement in Campinas was always higher than the number of people leaving. The interregional trade was mostly responsible for the importation of enslaved people, from 71.8% of the negotiations in the 1860s to 80.4% in the following decade, when the internal slave trade peaked in the region. Regarding the origin of these subjects, Scheffer states that from the data collected in the transfer notes, 51.8% of the enslaved came from the Northeast, 20.2% from the South, and only 8.9% were from other Southeastern provinces.

In this scenario, the group transported by José Rodrigues Teixeira Nunes and his overseer Manoel were part of a wave of enslaved outsiders who flooded the coffee plantations that generated the wealth of São Paulo’s slaveowners. However, sometimes those outsiders also resisted the commercialization of their lives, ruining the plans of traders and masters, and undoing the knots of the internal slave trade by destroying the tangle of threads that bound them to slavery—as did the eighteen enslaved people that José Rodrigues and Manoel were transporting in 1860. The subsequent investigation of the murders and the trial of the defendants produced valuable historical sources about the last stages the forced migration of these eighteen people. The bondspeople depositions registered in the criminal proceedings of the murders are the main sources explored in the present study. On the one hand, the task of constructing an entire narrative based on one set of sources can be challenging. On the other hand, the enslaved migrants’ testimonies are very detailed and provide multiple perspectives of the same episode. Thus, cross-referencing the several versions of this history, this article demonstrates the formation of bonds among those enslaved migrants. Despite being strangers and remaining together

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7 Slenes, Na Senzala, Uma Flor.
only for a transitional period, the enslaved eighteen migrants shared the experiences of being separated from their families, the daily life during the forced migration, the fear of the unknown future, as well as the need to create new bonds with their fellows in order to survive and resist the violence of enslavement.

Bonds in the Atlantic and Internal Slave Trades

In The Birth of African-American Culture, Sidney W. Mintz and Richard Price investigate the process of the installation of Africans in the New World and their interpenetrations in European communities, forming the basis of what would later be "African-American communities." According to the authors, even before creating viable institutions, men and women enslaved on the African continent and transported to plantations in the Americas had to deal with the traumas of initial capture, enslavement, and the middle passage. Mintz and Price claim that despite the brutality of breaking family and social ties and the fears of a violent present and a completely unknown future, enslaved people found ways to relate to their suffering companions and to develop collective efforts of resistance. There is even evidence that early social ties were still forming in coffles, factories, and especially on slave ships, where they established the relationship of the "shipmate" who, according to the authors, "became a fundamental principle of social organization, and for decades or even centuries, has continued to shape current social relations."

The relationship of the "shipmate" and the formation of bonds of solidarity that extended beyond the period of the Atlantic crossing can be observed in several slave societies, such as in Jamaica where the term “shipmate” is still used; malongue in Trinidad; mati in Suriname; batiment in Haiti; and malungo in Brazil. According to Marcus Rediker, in some parts of the Caribbean, enslaved Africans who faced the Middle Passage together and ended up being sailed to the same plantations could extend the kinship of “shipmate” and instruct their children to call their shipmates “uncle” or “aunt.”

In investigating the origin and meaning of the term malungo among bondspeople in Brazil, Robert Slenes identifies its origins and meanings among the speakers of the Umbundu, Kimbundu, and Kikongo languages of West Central Africa.

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Slenes explains that *malungo* derived from either the junction between *m’ulungu* (Kimbundu) and *m’alungu* (Kikongo), both meaning "in the canoe," or the *Malungu* word, meaning "fellow" in both languages: Kimbundu and Umbundu. Moreover, in Umbundu, *Malungu* often has the meaning, not only of "companions," but of "companions of suffering." Turning his attention to the other side of the Atlantic, Slenes examined the incorporation of this word into Portuguese vocabulary. He speculates that the word *Malungu* may have gained a new meaning among the speakers of those three languages who arrived in Brazil. Enslaved people from the Luanda and Benguela regions of Angola would call their enslaved fellows *Malungu*, that is, those who have suffered the same traumas of the Atlantic Slave trade. In a recent study, Slenes carries his argument further by examining the canoe metaphor in the stories of forced migration in Central Africa. He argues that this metaphor was related to "kinship; initiates" who passed through dire trials, akin to "death," but yet could hope (if properly prepared spiritually) to make the liminal passage to fulfillment in a new life marked by a new sense of community." This led Slenes to question "[c]ould enslaved Central Africans in the Atlantic Ma-lungú Passage have understood their experience in the same way?" Based on primary sources from the provinces of Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Minas Gerais, and Espírito Santo, Slenes noted the presence of this metaphor among enslaved people who shared the same worldviews during the Atlantic Passage and how they transferred the metaphors of shipmates from the suffering inside of slave ships to the violence of slavery in Brazil.

In her study of nineteenth-century Bahia, Lucilene Reginaldo found the term *malungo* being applied by enslaved people to designate bonds between fellow speakers of *Kicongo* (from the Congo nation) and argues that apparently the word *malungo* could be used to translate the connections between enslaved people from the same nation. Aldair Rodrigues describes an unpublished document found among the records and complaints of the Inquisition, preserved in the Torre do Tombo, archive in Lisbon. The source was registered as "Sumário contra os pretos de Angola do continente de Pernambuco," and identifies the emergence of the *malungo* within the lexicon of

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eighteenth-century Brazilian Portuguese. Rodrígues argues that the word *malungo* was related to a broader set of social, religious, and cultural practices of peoples who shared a cultural background whose common features emerged in the diaspora, overlapping contrasts that were prominent on the African continent in the same period. Furthermore, in the *Sumário*, *malungo* is used to designate members of a community who gathered to perform certain religious practices of the peoples of West Central Africa, revealing that "[t]he social micro-cosmos of the slave ship was certainly an important locus of these rituals, but the principal organizers of African communities in the diaspora went back to the African continent."\(^\text{15}\)

Not only enslaved people from West Central Africa created new ties with their shipmates, but Africans from West Africa (especially those from the ports of the Bight of Benin) also forged identities from their experiences of the Atlantic. Walter Hawthorne studies the experience of enslaved Africans who embarked on the slave ship, *Emilia*, coming from the Bight of Benin and who were captured by a British fleet and taken to Rio de Janeiro in 1821. There, they were considered freed slaves who nevertheless had to work for fourteen years, during which many of them kept the bonds created during the passage across the Atlantic creating a shipmates’ community. Hawthorne argues that despite all the horrors inside of the slave ship: the “slave ship was more than a place of suffering.” On their oceanic journey, the enslaved aboard the *Emilia*—like others aboard countless other ships—formed a community of shipmates. The author states that by analyzing the relationships between fellow travelers, it is possible to observe that they reestablished their personal bonds, tried to reconstruct their lives from the most varied types of relationships, and formed new ties of kinship and community.\(^\text{16}\)

In order to survive the Middle Passage and the subsequent incorporation into new territories, enslaved Africans formed bonds of suffering with their companions, and these same types of bonds could occur between men and women who were traded internally within a region in the Americas. Studying the internal slave market in New Orleans, Walter Johnson notes that "[i]n the weeks and sometimes months between sale

\(^{14}\)"Sentence against the blacks of Angola of the continent of Pernambuco"


into the trade and resale by a trader, slaves built the broken pieces of old communities and identities into new ones."\textsuperscript{17} Despite the hostile environment controlled by traders, owners, and the state, shared experiences and meals, intimacy, and many other everyday interactions promoted connections that were strengthened in spiritual, biographical, cultural, moral, and sexual identifications. Johnson explains that this identity and community formation was a complicated process and that relationships were not always harmonious. Divergences and conflicts between enslaved migrants were a structuring part of communities in the internal trade, just as they were on plantations. Enslaved subjects were also "suffused with the same tensions and prejudices of gender, race, and sexuality that characterize many groups of people."\textsuperscript{18} The creation of bonds of solidarity could


\textsuperscript{18} Johnson, \textit{Soul by Soul}, 70.
overcome the difficulties of trusting people of different origins, appearances, and cultures. However, for Johnson, through cooperation or enmity, enslaved people established communal identities from shared lives. The author further explains that revolts and escapes were examples of subversive connections that were rooted in the middle of the internal slave trade. However, for acts of resistance to take place, there had to be trust among enslaved migrants, as can be shown by the nineteen individuals aboard the ship Creole, which sailed from Norfolk, Virginia to New Orleans, Louisiana in 1841. Although the enslaved people on board belonged to five different trades and were together for only a week prior to embarkation, they were able to bond, rebel, take control of the ship, and sail it to the British Bahamas, where slavery had been abolished and freedom could be found.

A similar situation occurred in a Brazilian case studied by Sidney Chalhoub. On March 17, 1872, a group of enslaved men attacked the slaveholder José Moreira Veludo in his own yard. According to Chalhoub, "[e]verything was well thought out and many slaves were involved, but secrecy could be maintained, and the trader was surprised by the aggression." After living together in Veludo’s trading house, the enslaved men established bonds of trust and united together to avenge the mistreatment that they suffered. Chalhoub emphasizes that "there is not in the episode; however, an automatic alignment or solidarity of slaves against the merchant," but that "the movement was patiently woven among slaves." Although the author does not argue whether there was a sense of community involved, he demonstrates that coexistence generated a series of shared identities and interests that motivated the rebellion.19

The joint trajectory of Nunes' eighteen enslaved men and women, who became companions by boat and by road during their forced migration, reveals the formation of bonds of solidarity and trust that were the basis for a temporary and itinerant slave community. In considering the formation of a community at the heart of the internal slave trade, I am seeking to expand the concept of the "slave community" that has dominated historiographical debates in recent years.20 In most current scholarship, the

20 Since this historiographical turn in the studies of slavery in the Americas, the existence and importance of slave communities has become an important subject of debate. In the early 1970s, John Blassingame published The Slave Community, a book that would become a watershed in the historiography of slavery. He investigated the formation of communities based on family ties and solidarity, religious beliefs, and cultural identity. Blassingame demonstrated how those relationships were essential for the survival of enslaved people. However, his analysis has been revised by scholars who have pointed to some romanticizing in the way the relationships between enslaved people were described, so that conflicts in
slave community is mainly analyzed around the places of residence and it is understood through fundamental aspects, such as the spaces in which communities were formed, the ties that constituted them, the complexity of their compositions, and their conflicts. I seek to shift our attention from slave ship and the plantations and towns in order to investigate the formation of an itinerant slave community that developed within the ship’s hold and continued on the roads to the interior of the Brazilian Empire. From this viewpoint, the enslaved community was constituted based on the relations between enslaved men and women, united through the suffering of having their familial and social ties broken. They were outsiders who, during those days and nights, shared the material and emotional difficulties and became more than fellow travelers, they became suffering companions, they became *malungos*.

*The Eighteen Malungos*

Between the years 1857-1860, drought severely affected the province of Bahia in Northeastern Brazil. In the region of the *Recôncavo baiano* (the hinterland of the Bay of All Saints), it was possible to walk along long paths without seeing green pastures or water supplies. Gradually, smallholders lost their crops and livelihoods. In his testimony to the court, the young enslaved man, José Crioulo, recalled the arrival of the drought when he lived in the city of Cachoeira. He explained that his owner had financial problems and, to settle his debts, he first resorted to bank loans, then sold some farm animals, until finally, it was necessary to sell enslaved people. The bondsman José Crioulo was sold and shipped to Rio de Janeiro, where he ended up in the hands of the trader José Rodrigues Teixeira Nunes. Like José Crioulo, all the members of the group of eighteen were outsiders in the Center-South. Most of them came from the distant Northeast, while some came from the province of Rio de Janeiro. Some were young, and others had already faced slavery for decades. Several of them were field hands, and others

human interactions were minimized, resulting in an overly harmonious community. Peter Kolchin, for example, stated that community formation was (and remains) a complex process, which depended on how the enslaved faced a variety of obstacles: such as disproportionate numbers of men and women, ethnic rivalries, as well as material and spatial limitations. This debate opened up new avenues for research, which have focused on both the bonds that formed and sustained slave communities, as well as their fissures. Thus, it has been possible to identify individual interests and daily disagreements, undoing the exaggerated image of a consistently cohesive community. John W. Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979); Peter Kolchin, “Reevaluating the Antebellum Slave Community: A Comparative Perspective,” *Journal of American History* 70, no. 3 (December 1983): 579–601.
probably had never taken up a hoe. Most were single, but at least one of them had his marriage destroyed by his sale. Undoubtedly, the eighteen bondspeople had to endure the destruction of their social and family ties by the traders' sales and purchases and the various stages of the forced migration journey and all of its difficulties.

From looking at the case file of the criminal case, it becomes clear that both the planning and execution of the crime against Nunes and his overseer emerged from collective acts, which leads us to ask: What united those enslaved men and women? From their experiences, what constituted a common bond? How did they come to trust each other? This joint history of eighteen enslaved people began in the city of Rio de Janeiro, where they were organized by the slave-dealing firm of José Francisco and José Rodrigues Teixeira Nunes. Each individual of the coffle of eighteen brought their own understandings and knowledge about enslavement to their impending travels. In order to better understand the unfolding of events leading up to the murder in Itu, it is crucial to take a step back and investigate the previous lives of the bondspeople who composed the coffle of the eighteen slave migrants. Although it is difficult to determine who the enslaved people were or precisely how many left the port of Rio de Janeiro under José Rodrigues Teixeira Nunes' control, it is possible to determine the group of eighteen's configurations at the moment of the crime due to the subsequent legal documentation.

Even at first glance, the slave coffle's composition described in Table 1 provides a better understanding of the unique profiles of these victims of the internal slave trade. As can be observed, the enslaved group on the Santa Barbara road at the moment of the crime was diverse in terms of sex, age, origin, profession, and civil status. Among all these variables: sex, age, and origin probably had the most impact on enslaved people's experiences during this stage of the forced migration.21

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21 By studying the experience of enslaved Africans inside slave ships, Mustakeem argues that although young men were the majority of those trafficked, there was great diversity on slave ships, such as “girls, boys, nursing mothers, infants, teenagers, elderly males, and females as well as disabled slaves [were] similarly purchased and boarded on ships alongside healthy adult males.” One can observe the same situation in the internal slave trade, enslaved men and women from different age groups were submitted to forced-migration both in Brazil and in the United States. Sowande M. Mustakeem, Slavery at Sea: Terror, Sex, and Sickness in the Middle Passage (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2016) 8.
Table 1: Composition of malungos community.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Origin</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Civil status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manoel</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Bahia</td>
<td>Carpenter</td>
<td>Single</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herculano</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Maranhão</td>
<td>Field Hand</td>
<td>Single</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benedito</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Bahia</td>
<td>Servant</td>
<td>Single</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>André</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Bahia</td>
<td>Field Hand</td>
<td>Single</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>João Mulato</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Sergipe</td>
<td>Field Hand</td>
<td>Single</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felipe</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Bahia</td>
<td>Field Hand</td>
<td>Single</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luiz</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Bahia</td>
<td>Carpenter</td>
<td>Married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>João Crioulo</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Bahia</td>
<td>Field Hand</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>João</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Rio de Janeiro</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adriana</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Maranhão</td>
<td>Cook</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maria crioula</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Rio de Janeiro</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cipriana</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Bahia</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gregório</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Bahia</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>José</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Pernambuco</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brigida</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Unknow</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Widow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vitória</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Unknow</td>
<td>Laundress</td>
<td>Single</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mônica</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Unknow</td>
<td>Seamstress</td>
<td>Single</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leoncio</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Unknow</td>
<td>Unknow</td>
<td>Unknow</td>
<td>Unknow</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As was common in interregional trade, women were the minority of the group: totaling six. We know little about Adriana, Maria, Cipriana, Brigida, Vitória, and Monica, their lives before their sale, experiences along the way, and possible participation in the crime. The reason is that the authorities appear to have assumed that the enslaved women had no participation in the plan or the crime. The authorities did not put much pressure on the women in their depositions. The enslaved women were questioned only once, and their depositions did not produce the same number of pages as those of the enslaved men. Contrarily, most of the enslaved men were interrogated several times – four times for each of the defendants - and their depositions cover many pages. In an examination of the 1763 slave uprising in Dutch Berbice, Marjoleine Kars points out that despite all the knowledge produced on enslaved women in the Atlantic world, "we know surprisingly little about their experiences in collective resistance."22 She observes that interrogators

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did not insist on questioning women, because they likely believed they were not part of, or did not know about, the plans to revolt. That seems to have happened in this case as well because the enslaved women of the eighteen were hardly questioned about the events. It is only possible to know about the presences of Mônica and Cipriana at the crime scene through the testimony of the enslaved men. Nonetheless, we can conjecture about their days of travel between Rio de Janeiro and the scene of the murders. It is likely, that for them the journey would be even more dangerous. Along with facing the difficulties that were common to all enslaved, enslaved women could still be subjected to the sexual violence committed by traders, other individuals who eventually crossed their paths, or even by their fellow enslaved travelers. Therefore, sticking together could have been the only way to protect themselves.23

According to Table 1, the average age of the slave coffle was twenty years, and the presence of two boys merits attention. They were the nine-year-old José and thirteen-year-old Gregório. It is not possible to be sure if they were traveling alone or if accompanied by one of their parents, but seemingly, they were alone. At that time, there was no legislation that regulated which enslaved people could be sold. Only in 1869 did the Empire prohibit the separation of spouses or of children under the age fifteen from their parents.24 Through a sale, children experienced being torn from home and separated

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23 The internal slave trade shows the same patterns as the Atlantic slave trade, that is a predominance of the enslaved being young and healthy men. Robert Conrad, for instance, speculates that within the Brazilian internal slave trade as well as in the Middle Passage, enslaved males—including enslaved boys—transferred within Brazil after 1850 probably outnumbered women by at least two to one. Examining records of enslaved people arriving in the port of Rio de Janeiro by the 1870s, Richard Graham argues that “if the proportion set in 1852 continued to hold (35 percent female), that would mean that thirty-five hundred slave women were arriving annually in Rio by the 1870s.” Richard Graham, “Another Middle Passage? The Internal Slave Trade in Brazil,” in The Chattel Principle: Internal Slave Trades in the Americas (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 291–324, 300.
In a similar way that the numbers of men and women subjected to the internal trade was significantly disproportionate, the attention that historians have paid to the study of enslaved men and women has also been uneven. Bondswomen are largely absent, especially when regarding studies on enslaved people’s experiences through forced migrations. To counter that gap, Edward Baptist examines enslaved women’s lives, focusing on the internal trade in the southern United States. He argues that over their entire lives, both in and outside of the plantation, women were subjected to masters’ desires and sexual exploitation: “From sugar to investment in planter-dominated banks, to, of course, the trade in slaves itself, the whole plantation complex stank of the arousal of rape.” Moreover, Baptist investigates how traders’ power intensified the “violent eroticism fetishized commodity fetishism, making all commodities taste a bit of the social and sexual relationships of slavery and the slave trade.” Edward E. Baptist, “‘Cuffy,’ ‘Fancy Maids,’ and ‘One-Eyed Men’: Rape, Commodification, and the Domestic Slave Trade in the United States,” The American Historical Review 106, no. 5 (2001): 1650. Damian Pargas also argues that many women were sexually abused during forced migrations in the southern United States, and despite widespread condemnation of interracial sex, captive women lived in a society where their bodies belonged to white men and the rape of an enslaved woman was not recognized by law. Pargas. Slavery and Forced Migration in the Antebellum South, 210.

24 Article 2 of Decree 1.695 of 15 September 1869. Two years later, the law was revised and the minimum age for selling children was raised to 12 years: § 7º and 8º of the Law of 28 September 1871.
from family members which was an extremely traumatic experience that could represent a watershed between childhood and adulthood—when the commodification of their bodies was almost inescapable. It is difficult to imagine how children could walk hundreds of miles, exposed to the elements, with limited food—unless they were under the care of the women in the group.25

Finally, enslaved people’s origins had a crucial impact on their experience of the internal slave trade for two main reasons. First, the economic and geographical characteristics of the places where enslaved people previously lived shaped their adaptations to their new destinations. Given that most of the enslaved eighteen had initially resided on small and medium-sized properties or even in urban centers, they would have faced great difficulty in adapting to a coffee plantation—the most common final destination in the Brazilian internal slave trade - where they would labor intensely under the rigid watchfulness of masters and overseers. The second reason concerns the type of trade to which they were subjected, that is interstate, intrastate, or local. The type of trade and the distance to be traveled determined how long and difficult the journey would be. Walter Johnson investigates the transportation of American slaves from the Upper South to the Lower South and points out that, despite the most advanced technology, the hardship of the “carceral space” of the Cotton Kingdom is linked with distance. He claims that “distance in slavery was measured not simply in miles, but also in suffering: in wounding and exposure, in the fearful nausea of a human being hunted like an animal, the mind-shattering loneliness of a person starving to death somewhere


25 Scholars have shown the difference in the way that enslaved children experienced forced-migrations, and more specifically throughout the journey. In her study of enslaved individuals separated from their families by the slave trade before the American Civil War, who spent part of their lives trying to find their lost relatives, Heather Andrea Williams explains that at the moment of the sale, enslaved children were confronted with the “reality of [the] powerlessness of their parents to protect them [and] the sudden awareness that they were helpless and that even their parents could not prevent their removal caused many to become angry and depressed.” Heather Andrea Williams, Help Me to Find My People: The African American Search for Family Lost in Slavery (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012). In analyzing the narratives of former captives who were sold as children in the southern United States, Daina Berry, in turn, notes that they maintained vivid memories of the selling experiences. She claims that: “The sounds, sights, and smells of slave auctions contributed to the horror of enslaved children’s lives. Loud, rhythmic bid calls echoing from the mouths of auctioneers competed with chatter from potential buyers, the rattling of chains, and the everyday noises of a town center. Joining these audible oddities was another unpleasant sound that could be heard above all other at the end of a sale: the cries of wailing mothers, overcome with grief after being separated from their children.” Daina Ramey Berry, The Price for Their Pound of Flesh: The Value of the Enslaved, from Womb to Grave, in the Building of a Nation (Boston: Beacon Press, 2017) 43. Concerning the sale of enslaved children in the Brazilian internal slave trade see: José Flávio Motta, “crianças no apogeu do tráfico interno de escravos (Piracicaba, província de São Paulo, 1874-1880),” história econômica & história de empresas 18, no. 2 (2015): 291-322.
on an unknown map.” In this sense, historians agree that in the internal trade, interregional travel was more painful for enslaved people because they needed to endure longer walks across unknown and inhospitable landscapes. The slave migrants also knew that the possibility of making their way back and meeting their relatives was practically nonexistent.

Most of the group of eighteen came from provinces in economic decline in the Northeast. From Bahia, for example, departed José Crioulo and six other enslaved migrants. In his testimony, Benedito stated that in his hometown, he was a domestic worker and that his torment began when his owner contracted many debts and decided to sell him. Upon discovering that he would be sent out of the province, he tried to flee, but was arrested and remained behind bars for two weeks until he was transported to Rio de Janeiro. The enslaved Manoel, in turn, lived in Salvador, the capital of Bahia, and was arrested on two separate occasions, both for fighting; one instance with a boy who owed him money and the other with his brother, conflicts that resulted in a month in prison. Although he did not mention the reasons for his sale, one can suppose that the prison sentences motivated the slaveowner to negotiate the sale of a troubled slave. In his deposition, Manoel stated that he met Benedito while still in Bahia and that “he was never [reported] to be arrested for any crime,” which leads us to believe that it was not in prison that they first met, perhaps the meeting occurred on the ship that transported them to Rio de Janeiro.

Also from the Recôncavo baiano left André—a native of Cachoeira, 22 years old and a field hand—he was kept for three months in a prison in Salvador until he was shipped to Rio de Janeiro; Felipe, born in Santo Amaro, 25 years old and a farm worker; the boy Gregório, 13 years old, born in Cachoeira; and the only woman among the baianos (people from Bahia), Cipriana, 16 years old and a seamstress. Except for the previous link between Manoel and Benedito, it is impossible to know if the other enslaved people already knew each other. However, one can suppose that they originally belonged

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27 Damian Alan Pargas, “Disposing of Human Property: American Slave Families and Forced Separation in Comparative Perspective,” Journal of Family History 34, no. 3 (July, 2009): 251–74. Damian Pargas provides a comparative analysis of the experience of captives born in the U.S., juxtaposing the trajectory of those who faced long-distance trade with those whom experienced local and urban commerce. He argues that the long-distance migrations were the most emotional and physically difficult, because it caused the separation of families and loved ones and subjected the slaves to a painful journey through the interior of the country.
to smaller slaveowners, who found in the sums offered by the traders the best way out of their financial problems during the drought. In addition to their common origin, some shared experiences of the brutality of the intra-regional slave trade. For example, João Crioulo, André, Felipe, Gregório and Cipriana survived the drought and traveled similar paths through Bahia to the provincial capital, and Manoel, Benedito and André, who served their imprisonment in a Salvador Prison before embarking for Rio de Janeiro.

As for the cook Adriana, we only know that she was from Maranhão and was 24 years old at the time of the crime. Perhaps her cooking ability granted her some privileges in the group, and she may have been treated differently by her peers and even the trader, who probably assigned her the task of feeding the rest of the group. From the city of Laranjeiras, in the province of Sergipe, came João Mulato, a 30-year-old field hand and Luiz, a carpenter and the only individual who declared himself married. Was Luiz's wife also a slave? Had she remained in the North or been sold elsewhere? What we do know is that she was not in the group and, despite being apart from his wife, Luiz made a point of declaring to the judge that he was a married man.

Just like the boy José, from the province of Pernambuco, Adriana, Luiz, and João Mulato were sold to traders in Rio de Janeiro by way of Bahia. For them the interregional trade began even earlier than for the baianos, considering that they probably faced days of travel in cabotage along the coast and/or land travel to the port of Salvador. From there, the North-Northeast bondspeople experienced a collective trauma of staying days on the ship that drove them to the Empire's main entrepot, the city of Rio de Janeiro. In the slave yard of the partners José Rodrigues Teixeira Nunes and José Francisco, they became part of the group with Maria Crioula and João, both residents of Rio de Janeiro and Brigida, Vitória, Monica, and Leôncio about whom we do not know their origins. For the enslaved northerners, the further embarkation from the port of Rio de Janeiro to the province of São Paulo meant the continuation of an already exhausting and uncertain journey. They had been away from home for a long time, and they shared in common not only their homesickness and the trauma of the separation from their loved ones, but also a certain knowledge about the operation of the internal trade and traders' actions, specifically about the network that negotiated and transported them violently from one corner of Brazil to another. This experience the enslaved people from Rio would soon discover themselves.

Fear of an unknown future was a unifying element for the group. For those enslaved men and women, being traded to a distant place and consequently becoming an
outsider meant not only the destruction of their family and community networks but also the end of acquired rights and the dream of freedom. In a study on the adaptations of newly arrived enslaved people on estates in Rio de Janeiro, Hebe Mattos compares the opportunities offered to *crioulos* and *ladino* (acculturated) as opposed to newly arrived Africans. According to the author, there was a distinct difference in the treatment of these two groups: while creoles and *ladino* benefited from paternalistic agreements and enjoyed greater access to specialized work, crop cultivation, and even manumission—newly arrived Africans were discriminated against by their slavers and their new fellow bondspeople. However, the end of the Atlantic slave trade and the growth of the internal slave trade had significantly transformed the conditions for *crioulos* and *ladinos*, especially those living in labor exporting regions.28

Robert Slenes observed the application of the same discipline strategy established during the Atlantic slave trade period, which was responsible for the distinctions between *crioulos* and Africans, in his study of the city of Campinas during the second half of the nineteenth century. By that time, many born in Campinas- *crioulos* - had better treatment from their owners as compared to *forasteiros* - those from other regions: who were, in turn, treated as foreigners, similar to new Africans. In addition, the possibilities for adapting and rebuilding kinship ties to an outsider were conditional on the characteristics of the property to which they were sold. For example, in newly formed or long-established estates, slave communities had a higher degree of consolidation of kinship and solidarity networks. In the second case, the chances of the acceptance of an outsider could be limited by the resistance of the community members who did not wish to bond with strangers. With regard to the newly formed properties, where there were few families and most of the slaves were single adult men, the chances of starting families and creating a kinship network could be even smaller.29

The time and space shared in Salvador, on the steamer that transported the eighteen outsiders to Santos, and on the roads to the interior of Sao Paulo allowed these initial strangers to share some of their lives, trajectories, traumas, and fears. Little by little, they formed new social bonds of friendship, love, and animosity, which were fundamental for the creation of a community and the collective exercise of resistance to the network of the internal trade in human beings. Despite how strenuous the road between Rio de

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29 Slenes, *Na Senzala, Uma Flor.*
Janeiro and the city of Campinas was, enslaved migrants knew that the final stage of the internal trade would end when they arrived at Campinas.

But for the enslaved Herculano it was different, this was just one more trip of many he had already made and one of many he had yet to make in his life. He was born in the province of Maranhão, in the city of São Luís, where he took care of his master's cattle. There he lived until 1857 when he was sold to pay the debts of his former owner. From the port of São Luís, he was taken to Rio de Janeiro to a prison in the region known as Caxias, where he remained until he was delivered to his buyer, probably José Rodrigues Teixeira Nunes. In Caxias, Herculano worked in a bakery for some time, but later he took care of his master, accompanying him during his domestic travels. Unlike his companions, Herculano was not to be sold upon arrival in Campinas, but in fact, his job was to watch over the other enslaved people in route. He knew that at the end of the road, all his companions would be sold, and that he would return to Rio de Janeiro, where a new journey would begin. When Herculano left Maranhão, his family and social ties were broken. He lived on the road with his master, and, he was not given even the chance to rebuild his own life. With each new journey, he could bond with fellow enslaved people, but this would be temporary, and these ties would soon be broken again. Also, he probably had difficulty creating bonds between himself and other bondspeople because he had to assume a repressive role against those he helped to transport. Although he was also a victim of the internal trade, he was probably not seen as part of the group. Because he was employed to watch and punish the other enslaved migrants, he most likely did not fear an uncertain future on an estate in the west of São Paulo as did those he helped transport.

On the other hand, his position made Herculano potentially valuable to his companions, as he not only knew the trader's temperament, but he was more familiar with the geography of the road to be traveled and the dynamics of the internal trade. He could help them to survive Nunes's violence and the difficulties of days on the march. Herculano was, therefore, a kind of go-between, forced to move in two opposing worlds: the traders' world and the enslaved’s world. In this ambiguous position, he gained both the trust of his master as well as of his companions, and, he used his knowledge and mobility to try to escape definitively from what bound him to slavery.\(^{30}\)

\(^{30}\) In a study on go-betweens in colonial Brazil, Alida Metcalf notes that “The complexities of go-betweens have fascinated novelists, who use fiction to explore the social tensions, the psychological dramas, and the power shifts that surround them. In fiction, go-betweens are individuals of in-between social status who are
The making of the slave community

The joint trajectory of those eighteen malungos involved in the double murder began in Rio de Janeiro, in the slave yard of the partners José Rodrigues Teixeira Nunes and José Francisco de Souza. During their later depositions, those enslaved migrants did not inform how long and under what conditions they remained in that place. Based on the date when the crime occurred and an estimate of how many days were necessary to travel from Rio de Janeiro to Itu via Santos, one can suppose that they headed toward Campinas in mid-May 1860. After leaving Rio de Janeiro, the first stopping point was the city of Santos. Although none of the enslaved people talked about this stage of the journey, it probably occurred by sea, that is, by cabotage, because the railway that connects Rio de Janeiro to the provinces of São Paulo and Minas Gerais was still under construction. The ocean passage from Rio de Janeiro to Santos lasted about two days and had lower risks and costs, which was good business for the traders.

According to the enslaved man Felipe, his companions were very agitated when disembarking in the port of Santos. Even though he does not explain the reasons, one can presume the period of confinement and the continued vigilance on board the ship affected them. From the port, they headed to a house where they rested, and it appears that during this interval, Nunes and his overseer lessened their surveillance. In his deposition, Manoel declared that Herculano took advantage of this moment and unveiled what he had in mind since his last trip to Campinas—murdering José Rodrigues Teixeira Nunes. Herculano knew the most opportune moments and places to communicate away from the watchful eyes of the trader and his overseer, and, he waited for the overland route to address his fellows. Herculano revealed that on previous journeys, Nunes was extremely violent and harmed the enslaved migrants, while also not offering enough food or rest. Manoel stated further that Herculano was willing to attack Nunes and the overseer and that he had stolen a knife. Herculano tried to gain the support of the others by claiming that the master's death would benefit all of them and that they should act to ensure the well-being and the future of the group. However, these arguments were not sufficient to convince the other enslaved migrants.

About 120 miles separate Santos to Campinas. While Nunes, his overseer, and Herculano traveled on horses and a mule, the rest of the group had to walk while carrying bags of food, utensils, and clothing. They hardly advanced more than 15 miles per day. Overland, the first challenge was to overcome the tortuous path of the Estrada Caminho do Mar, about 45 miles of steep ascent from Santos on the coast over the Serra do Mar to the plateau of São Paulo. The period on this road was very stressful, and the obstacles posed by the geographical conditions were aggravated by the abuses of the trader, who—according to Felipe—was "very bad, did not give them enough food, punished them severely and forced them to walk day and night."31

After overcoming the Serra do Mar, the eighteen enslaved had another pause, this time in the cold and rainy city of São Paulo. Referring to this moment, the enslaved man Benedito testified that upon arrival in the capital of the province, some enslaved men—including Leoncio, Benedito, André, Manoel, João Mulato, João Crioulo, and Felipe—decided to join Herculano’s plan. After sharing the pain of walking under sun and rain, the scarce food, the few blankets to protect themselves from the cold weather, and the precarious sleeping spaces, they decided to join Herculano and rebel against the trader. It seems that the suffering experienced in the early days of their journey united them. In addition to the physical hardships, feelings of homesickness and fear bonded those eighteen enslaved.

Leaving the city of Sao Paulo, the enslaved migrants were probably driven on the Romeiros road close to the banks of the Tietê River, which served as a guide for travelers who traveled inland, stopping by villages and towns that grew along its shores. At this point, there had developed among the malungos, mainly the enslaved men, the trust to discuss the possibility of committing a murder. However, not everyone was willing to risk everything, after all, if something went wrong, Nunes' retaliation could be atrocious. Moreover, the consequences for murder of a master at this time could be the death penalty.32 As they approached Campinas, their imminent sale terrified the enslaved migrants. This is because, according to the enslaved man Benedito, Campinas was a

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31 Nineteenth-century travelers who traveled the Caminho do Mar Road recorded the terrible conditions of this trip, see Tathiane Gerbovis, O olhar estrangeiro em São Paulo até meados dos oitocentos: relatos de viajantes ingleses e norte-americanos. (master's thesis, Universidade de São Paulo, 2010).
“place where none of them wanted to go," because "from there, they did not have good information." From whom did they hear this information? Possibly from Herculano or other enslaved migrants with whom they crossed paths on the roads and stopovers during the forced migration. The panic of the enslaved people was probably based on the intensity of the work regime on coffee plantations as well as stories of the evil cruelty of many planters. On coffee plantations work began before sunrise, enslaved people were required to plant, harvest, and process coffee bushes, besides performing tasks such as building and maintaining farm buildings, taking care of animals, growing their own plots for subsistence, and working inside the master's house. Enslaved migrants from small properties and urban centers in the North and Northeast —as most of them were— would have been unused to the intensive work done on plantations. The plantation work regime would have been a drastic change, especially for those who performed specialized occupations, such as the washerwoman Victoria, the cook Adriana, and the carpenters Manoel and Luiz. There was no guarantee that they would continue to be employed in those specialized occupations; on the contrary, they were more likely to end up as field hands.

In his deposition, Herculano stated that everyone knew about murdering the trader, "except the enslaved women who marched separately." Along the journey, the men walked under Nunes's supervision, while enslaved women, children, and the sick traveled a few meters behind with his overseer. Possibly, Nunes tried to keep the pace with this division, ensuring that the children and the sick received care from the women as well as to prevent love or sexual relationships and sexual violence within the group. However, his strategy does not seem to have worked completely, given that Leoncio and Cipriana became lovers. Their relationship represents not only a link between enslaved men and women, which allowed the circulation of information between them despite the separation of men and women but also demonstrated the ability of those enslaved migrants to build new bonds, even loving ones, along the way. Moreover, it is hard to believe that the men's whispers did not reach the women's ears at some point. Even though they walked separately, they probably shared some moments, such as when they rested or during

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33 It is difficult to state how long these malungos remained together, first because one cannot affirm how many days, they stayed in the slave yard in Rio de Janeiro before heading to Santos and second because it is impossible to know how many miles they walked per day. However, one can estimate that the trip from Rio de Janeiro to the crime scene, including the journey by sea and land, lasted about ten days, considering three days to cross the coast from Rio to Santos and one week by land if they walked around 20 miles per day.
meals, when they gathered to eat manioc flour and perhaps some other food prepared by the cook Adriana.

Moreover, constant vigilance by the trader and overseer was not always possible, especially during stopovers. On May 31, 1860, after walking about 25 miles, José Rodrigues Teixeira Nunes decided to stop, this time at the estate of Manoel Borges de Almeida in the village of São João de Capivary. Despite the declining sugar industry in the region, it appears that Almeida's property still produced sugar cane and served as an accommodation for traders and their enslaved people. These pauses were crucial both for the trader and the enslaved eighteen; the stops provided the chance to rest, bathe, and eat. Although there is no more information about the places Nunes stopped, we can suppose that he had made previous arrangements with some, if not all, of the planters. For Nunes, these stops on the journey were essential, because it was impractical to carry enough food for twenty people for days. However, what did those planters gain by welcoming the trader and a group of outsiders? After all, receiving strangers could compromise the routine and safety of the property. Perhaps they received some money, or more likely enslaved migrants were forced to work on-site to pay for the accommodation, which would be especially worthwhile for smallholders, for whom the extra labor would be welcome.

The time on Almeida's estate was a crucial moment in that community's journey. Primarily, because it was an opportunity for the malungos to talk away from the eyes of the trader and the overseer; secondly, they had to work on the mill alongside the enslaved residents, and for the majority, it was their first experience under a plantation work regime. Thus, this contact with the other enslaved residents of the sugar plantation may have provided a sense of what would await them in Campinas and further heightened their anguish. The atmosphere was tense and became even worse because of the trader's punishments. In her deposition, Maria Crioula recalled that an agitation took hold of her companions during that afternoon: while part of the eighteen enslaved worked on the mill, Nunes punished Adriana severely, for some reason unknown to the deponent. What was the reason for the penalty? Was the cook having a hard time doing the work on the mill? Had she irritated the trader? Or had she disobeyed one of his orders?

As night fell, it was Herculano's turn. He and Benedito received an order to take the animals to the pasture and feed them, preparing them for the next day's journey. Upon returning to the shelter, Herculano was beaten by Nunes who accused him of taking too long. As mentioned earlier, Herculano accompanied Nunes on his domestic travels,
and was responsible for some supervisory tasks in the transport group. He had the confidence of the trader, who even allowed him to be absent without his or the overseer's supervision. Moreover, the fact that Herculano was the only one to be punished may indicate that the trader held him responsible for Benedito's actions.

The punishments were the catalyst for the reaction of the group. About 7 pm, after Nunes retired to his room, the men, who were locked in a separate room but adjacent to the women, began a heated discussion. According to Manoel's account, Herculano and Benedito insisted that it was time to flee, but Leoncio disagreed and argued that if they fled, Nunes would find them and punish them even more severely. Thus, the best way out of their current condition was to stay and attack. Leôncio proposed to call the trader to the bedroom under the pretext of seeing Joao Crioulo, who was sick and would "pretend to be sicker than he was." According to Herculano, some of his companions believed that this plan could work, because Nunes was very careful with the sick captives, probably fearing their deaths and the resulting financial loss. However, other captives were not convinced that Nunes would meet João Crioulo and argued that attacking him would be a bad idea, as they had nowhere to run. In his statement, Felipe claimed that he tried to dissuade his comrades, explaining that nothing would change with Nunes's death and warned them that before acting, they should think about the fate of the women and children of the group, who with the death of the trader, would be helpless.

The various versions of this discussion provided in the testimonials reveal that this was a crucial moment for the community. Although the malungos had a common purpose, which was to escape the trader's abuses and their sale in the city of Campinas, they disagreed about how to act. While some sought to escape as a more individual solution, others claimed to worry about the fate of the group. However, the planning and discussions about the murder in and of themselves shows that the malungos trusted each other. The malungos had reached a point where they understood they were a collective, bonds of trust had to exist because none of the enslaved informed on the group or fled individually. Furthermore, based on their knowledge of the dealer's temperament and the geographical conditions of their location, they hesitated, discussed, and planned their next steps.
Figure 2: Map of the Province of São Paulo, 1886.


Figure 3: Malungo Community Stops

The Crime

On the morning of Friday, June 1, 1860, the *malungos* woke up early, gathered their bundles of clothes and food bags, pocked the loads on the backs of the animals, and prepared for another day of walking. At this point in the journey, it was a short distance to reach their destination—only about 40 miles to Campinas. Herculano and Adriana were still bitter from the punishments of the night before, and the rest of the group felt the tension hovering over them. According to Felipe, they left the Almeida's property around 10:00 AM and followed the Água Choca road. The mood among them seemed to be one of apprehension and animosity, while some members of the group wanted to attack, others hesitated, fearful of the consequences of such an act. On the one hand, if the crime was successful, they would have to flee and face an unknown territory and fate, on the other hand, if the plan did not work, they would be punished by Nunes, who according to Benedito, was "a very evil man."

Nunes and nine other enslaved men walked about 640 meters in front of the overseer Manoel - who followed with the six women, the two children and the sick men. One could consider it imprudent that only two free men were in control of so many enslaved migrants. However, they relied on the guns they carried and, especially, the fear that Nunes had instilled in the group through this treat of punishments. Also, Nunes likely expected he could count on Herculano if it was necessary, overestimating Herculano's loyalty and underestimating the bondspeople' ability to react. It is possible, that he hardly believed that a group of strangers could act collectively in the way they did. What he certainly did not expect was that the suffering and the desire to escape would create bonds strong enough between those *malungos* that they rebeled.

In his deposition, the enslaved man Manoel described what happened at the time of the murder. According to him, Herculano began hitting his mule to drop the bags and call the trader's attention. The strategy worked. Seeing the load coming loose, Nunes ordered Herculano to stop, and Nunes got off his horse, and crouched down to fix the bags. At this moment, Leoncio attacked Nunes and summoned his companions to help him. Luiz and Felipe stated that they ran to warn the enslaved women and tried to convince the overseer to flee. However, he did not believe their claims and followed in search of Master Nunes. He walked a few meters and came across the group of the armed enslaved men who beat him to death. Felipe stated that the crime occurred at a time of
conflict among his companions and that Leoncio, for example, pointed a gun at him, forcing him to hit the overseer. It is important to emphasize, that these malungos especially the defendants (Manuel, André, Herculano, João Mulato, João Crioulo, Felipe, and Benedito), may have shaped their narratives seeking to escape from conviction so that they may have invented and omitted facts or sought to cast blame upon others. However, cross-referencing the different versions of this history reveals the various arrangements and conflicts that marked their relationships and that can be seen at the time of the crime.

Throughout their depositions, the defendants disagreed about who was the leader of the plan and who were the offenders. Despite these discrepancies, their justifications for the murders were unanimous. When asked why they murdered the trader and the overseer, they claimed that Nunes was very violent and punished them regularly. In his study about two cases of slave murders against masters, Ricardo Pirola notes that "physical punishment had become one of the most recurring allegations given by slaves to justify crimes against production agents (overseers and administrators) and family members." Furthermore, among the reasons for the crime against Nunes, the enslaved migrants pointed to the terrible conditions to which they were subjected during the trip: mainly the lack of food and rest.

On the one hand, one can speculate that during the depositions, enslaved migrants tried to convince the judge that Nunes had somehow provoked their reaction. Moreover, they used rhetorical elements to shape the narrative, such as saying that Nunes was evil. On the other hand, when investigating cases of enslaved people who murdered their masters and overseers on Campinas coffee estates, I found similar arguments. By analyzing the crimes committed by enslaved people against masters and overseers throughout the nineteenth century, Maria Helena Machado argues that through criminal acts, enslaved people attempted to impose limits on the disciplinary systems of the plantations by defending some margin of their autonomy, those conditions they considered fair, and their acquired rights.34 Whether enslaved migrants or residents, they

had a set of expectations of what was fair and expected, despite their condition of enslavement. The enslaved in transit also expected minimal living conditions, such as the right to adequate food and rest, as noted above. However, in addition to decent treatment they further demanded that their acquired rights—such as the right to rest on Sundays, grow crops, and raise animals and, after the 1871 law, buy their manumission—be respected. There was also a concern to create justifications that would make sense to fellow enslaved people, the masters, and the authorities who judged them, meaning there was a desire not only to defend themselves against an accusation but also to report abuses by masters.

After the murders, the enslaved men involved directly in the crime buried the two bodies in the woods. They then took the slave owner's bag and distributed his clothes and goods. Leoncio and Herculano also found a considerable amount of gold and twenty thousand réis which came into the possession of Leoncio and his lover Cipriana. Among their master's possessions, they also found a series of documents. According to Maria Crioula, her companions recognized that those papers were their passports: documents proving that Nunes owned them and that allowed them to travel from one province to another. Immediately, they burnt them and celebrated, saying that they would return to their homes and that they were now free. That is not what happened. As we shall see, to escape the difficulties of the internal trade, they ended up in perhaps even more serious trouble. They had managed to get rid of the merchant and the threat of being sold in Campinas, but what would they do next? How would they survive in an unknown region? How would they get back home? The way out was to stay together and to trust the bonds that they had created so far.

The community breaks down

After the murder the enslaved group remained in the vicinity of the crime scene. As stated at to the beginning of this article, one can remember that the sheriff ordered the search of the farms and houses of the whole neighborhood of Itu, where the formerly enslaved migrants had been seen days later. The witness, Manuel Borges de Almeida, said that on June 8, he saw a group of bondspeople hiding in Guedes' cane field. He soon recognized them. These were the same enslaved men and women who had spent the night on his property on the eve of the crime, May 31. Further, Guedes said he saw those slaves again on June 12th, walking through the farms of the area. Like Guedes, other planters testified to having seen the group wandering around the neighborhood. José Pinto Leite,
for instance, recalled that on June 10th, he saw three unknown enslaved men around his property. He remembered that one of them was carrying a pistol and another a knife. Leite questioned them about where they came from and where they were going, one of the men replied saying they came from São João [de Capivary] and were heading on to Campinas. According to Leite, those three enslaved men were not alone, but in fact, they were hiding with other people and stayed there for a few more days.

Some aspects of these planters’ testimonies deserve closer inspection, and despite the several temporal and spatial gaps, one can craft some assumptions. First, it seems that the group remained united and from the moment of the crime, the community which had been built along the way and under the master’s surveillance, began to deal with a completely new and scary situation: they found themselves in the middle of an unknown region, far away from their hometowns, without food and shelter and being sought by the police. Second, it is striking that after the crime the enslaved group remained in the region, even at the risk of being caught by the authorities. It is likely that the initial plan did not have an escape plan after the crime and that the three enslaved men mentioned by Jose Pinto Leite were at the head of the group trying to find a solution. Third, perhaps this was the moment when the sense of community and the bonds of solidarity that had developed during the forced migration were most necessary. From then on, they shared complicity in a crime and needed to trust and watch each other so no one would report the crime. In addition, they needed to organize their community and distribute functions that would guarantee the survival of the group, such as providing food and shelter. Finally, it is curious that the enslaved men said that they were heading to Campinas, given that one of the justifications for the crime was precisely that they did not want to go to that city. Perhaps they were just trying to mislead Jose Pinto Leite and said the name of the city they had heard throughout the route.

In fact, the final destination was not Campinas. They went to Piracicaba, driven perhaps by the discovery of the corpses and fear of being captured by the authorities. There, they were located by the police. In the confrontation with the guards, Leoncio was killed and the others were taken to a prison in Itú. Cipriana tried to get out of jail by using the money that she had taken from her master’s bag to bribe a Piracicaba prison guard. Unfortunatley for her, she lost the money and did not achieve her freedom; instead she was sent to the Itu police station along with her companions. At the end of the first round of depositions, Benedito, Herculano, André, Manoel, João Mulato, João Crioulo, and Felipe were indicted and subsequently convicted of the murders.
The seven defendants were imprisoned in the same cell until the trial. They were questioned four times and their versions of the story changed according to events inside the cell. It is remarkable that in the first deposition to the Judge of the province, the enslaved defendants tried to blame the deceased Leoncio. Probably, this was a strategy developed by their attorney Antonio de Queiros Telles Junior, who was attempting to avoid the maximum sentence for the defendants, that is, the death penalty. Nevertheless, the mood among the enslaved defendants changed and was reflected in their narratives. In his very last deposition, Herculano unhesitatingly accused Manoel and Benedito, then the judge asked him whether he had anything against those enslaved men, Herculano replied that both were his enemies. The judge continued and asked when Manoel and Benedito became his enemies, Herculano then explained that one day in the prison, he and his companions wanted to smoke a cigarette and asked for matches from the guards. Manoel and Benedito were bothered by this and began to yell for the guards to deny the request. The discussion heated up and Manoel and Benedito began accusing Herculano of the murders. They claimed that Herculano was responsible for the crimes, given that he had organized everything since they had been in the city of Santos. Manuel and Benedito ended the discussion swearing to tell the whole truth to the judge.

Although, at first glance, this episode may seem like a meaningless disagreement among the enslaved men, in fact, it reflected the breaking of bonds of complicity and solidarity among the enslaved. Under the pressure of the authorities, the malungo community to which they belonged had been broken and once again they were pulled apart from those, they considered friends and even family, in ways similar to what occurred in the first stage of their forced migration. Thus, the prison became the ultimate space of conflict where the remnant community made and unmade their ties.

In the end the sentences came down: André, Benedito, and Herculano were sentenced to death; Manoel and João Mulato to life imprisonment; Felipe was sentenced to three hundred lashes; and João Criolo to two hundred lashes. We do not know what fate came to the other enslaved migrants, but we can assume that they were claimed by Nunes’s partner, who probably sold them in the internal market, as was the initial plan. Although, we do know the fate of one of the convicts: Manoel. After being sentenced to life imprisonment, Manoel remained in prison for twenty-five years. During that time, he asked for clemency from the Brazilian Emperor Dom Pedro II three times.35 His main

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35 Ricardo Pirola provides a detailed study of cases of enslaved people who asked clemency to and from the Emperor Dom Pedro II. Pirola, *Escravos e Rebeldes nos Tribunais do Império.*
arguments rested on the fact that he was under 21 years of age when convicted, and that according to the penal code, in such cases, the sentence should have been more lenient. All three of Manoel’s requests were denied. On June 29, 1885 he died in the penitentiary of the city of São Paulo just a few years before the abolition of slavery.

Conclusion

Following the trajectory of the eighteen enslaved men and women shows how they experienced the uprooting and breaking of their family and social ties and became malungos during their forced migration. Bonded by suffering and the difficulties of the journey, the traders' violence, and fears of the future, the enslaved people traded through Brazilian internal trade built relationships based on common experiences and interests, as well as through diversity and conflict. The malungos formed a heterogeneous, itinerant, and temporary community, that despite its ephemerality, was essential to ensure survival as well as to promote resistance. Ultimately, this case study sheds light on the dynamics of the Brazilian internal slave trade and the creation of an enslaved community within that trade.