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The Theater of Elections

AT THE LOCAL LEVEL the electoral process in nineteenth-century Brazil presented a dramatically layered social system and instructed the people on its appropriateness, propriety, and value. In this way elections worked to ends entirely congruent with the needs and desires of the propertied and imperceptibly meshed with society's structure. It was partly their unremitting concern with social ranking that made elections so important to most of the participants, whether patrons or clients. Satisfying an almost unconscious need, elections worked to solidify among a mobile population the clearly ranked hierarchical order. This is one of the least recognized uses of elections, and yet it is the one most deeply rooted in Brazil's social structure. A broad suffrage made it possible.

Law

Nationwide elections began in Brazil in 1821 after the liberal revolutionaries in Portugal called for an elected Cortes to draft a constitution. Just as Portugal had provisionally adopted the Spanish Constitution of 1812, so it drew from Spain the instructions for this first electoral act. These instructions, with additional comments or amendments inserted where applicable to Brazil, instituted a three-tiered indirect election that took place in the various provinces of Brazil between May and September, resulting in the choice of representatives who went off to Lisbon. Once Pedro decided, in 1822, to cease obeying the Cortes, he determined to sum-

mon a meeting of delegates to draft laws just for Brazil. His chief adviser, José Bonifácio de Andrada e Silva, wished to limit participation by simply summoning representatives from the existing County Councils of the capital cities of each province; but these men had no sooner arrived in Rio de Janeiro than more radical leaders, impelled by notions of representative government new to Brazil, succeeded in obtaining from Pedro I a Constituent Convention with popularly elected delegates instead. But José Bonifácio at least managed to avoid direct elections; copying some features of the Portuguese instructions, he determined that voters in each parish would choose electors, who would in turn designate their representatives or, as they were called, Deputies. The instructions further specified that an elector must not only be a "virtuous and reputable person of understanding and of unquestionable loyalty to the Brazilian cause," but also be "of means appropriate to his position."¹

Not surprisingly, those elected indirectly to a Constituent Convention called for indirect elections in the Constitution they drafted. They also specified property qualifications for voters, with still higher ones for electors. The Constitution Pedro I actually issued by fiat in 1824 kept these provisions, though with some modifications of detail. Executive decrees then set out specific rules for the conduct of elections. From 1824 to 1842 elected county councilmen acted as chairmen of electoral assemblies in the various parishes of their counties. The parish priest drew up the list of certified voters and assisted the councilman in the work of the election. The other members of the electoral boards were chosen by acclamation, a procedure that soon resulted in violently disorderly scenes. Ostensibly to counter this tendency, the Conservative Cabinet in 1842 decided that the centrally appointed delegados should preside over elections, along with one elected justice of the peace and the parish priest.²

All electoral rules up to this point resulted from instructions or decrees issued by the Cabinet, and not from a law debated by the Deputies. In 1845, however, once the Liberals again controlled the Parliament, they set out to draw up a comprehensive and minutely specific electoral law that attempted to provide for every contingency. The resulting law of 1846 remained the basic one until 1881, although some details were altered.³ It was within the terms of this

law that elections took on their full meaning and purpose within a precisely ranked society and a polity articulated through patronage.

Elections could well occupy the attention of local communities almost all the time. They occurred frequently, for one post or another, and the process of drawing up the list of registered voters, often a long-drawn-out business in itself, ushered in each New Year. Voters directly elected justices of the peace and county councilmen every four years. At least that often, and more frequently if Parliament were dissolved, they chose the electors who would, a month later, name the Deputies to the national chamber. In the same way every two years voters selected provincial assemblymen. After 1860 voters also (still indirectly) elected Deputies whenever one died, resigned, chose to represent another district where he had also been elected, became a lifetime Senator, or accepted a Cabinet position. Every election could be disputed, and annulled elections meant conducting new ones. Elections, repeated so often, became a constant preoccupation in local life, and few could remain aloof from the process.⁴

Historians, like contemporaries, confront a tangle of ambiguity in determining who could legally vote. The 1824 Constitution had extended the vote to "the mass of active citizens,"⁵ and by its terms certainly took in far more people than the electorate for county councilmen in colonial times—even going beyond the practice of most contemporary European countries. To be sure, in a taken-for-granted way it excluded slaves and women without even mentioning them, although it opened the polls to freedmen and illiterates and voiced no distinctions based on race. As I have noted, the law did exclude sons who lived with their fathers. Exceptions to that rule allowed public employees to vote even if they still lived at home, presumably because that employment signaled a countervailing allegiance. Although the normal voting age was twenty-five, a man could vote as early as age twenty-one if he had married, taken holy orders, or accepted a commission as a military officer.

The law's provisions on age and residence were clear-cut and little argued. Debate focused interminably, however, on the constitutional requirement that every voter must have at least 100 milreis in annual "net income," raised to 200 milreis in 1846 (roughly U.S. \$100).⁶ After the middle of the century, commentators agreed that the amount specified was so low that almost anyone could earn that

much except "beggars" and "vagabonds."⁷ One political essayist remarked that the law excluded only "women, children, and the village idiot." A Conservative member of Parliament said with some distaste, "We have . . . universal suffrage; everyone can register"; and though a Liberal counterpart did not go so far, he acknowledged that "he who has [only] 200 milreis in income is a poor man in Brazil."⁸ Indeed, at the rate of at least two milreis a day reported by a foreign observer in the 1880s, free workers on coffee plantations could earn the required amount in just 100 days. Even domestic servants, had they not been excluded by other provisions of the law, could have earned enough to have qualified, or at least this would have been true for those in special demand, such as cooks and wet nurses.⁹

But whether just any income could be considered "net" income was an important sticking point. In the case of income from real property or from commerce, the significance of the constitutional phrase could be easily fathomed, but when the law used the same phrase to refer to income from employment, doubts arose. One advocate of restricting suffrage argued that it should be extended only to those whose annual salary if invested at 5 percent would return 200 milreis. An opposing view held that "the simple wage-worker . . . employs the capital of his physical effort"; thus all his salary should be considered net earnings on his investment.¹⁰ The question was never legally resolved.

A further complication emerged from the provision that *criados de servir*, or servants, would be excluded. Who were they? The Constitution specifically stated who was not to be considered a servant: bookkeepers and "head cashiers of commercial establishments, administrators of plantations and factories," and servants in the imperial household above a certain rank. All other employees, these provisions implied, could be considered servants. Yet the first electoral law drawn up specifically for Brazil and antedating the Constitution had excluded not *criados de servir* as such, but "all those who receive salaries or wages [*salarios ou soldadas*] in any way whatever." The projected—but never promulgated—Constitution of 1823 had also excluded "day laborers [*jornaleiros*]." Jurists reasonably argued that the obvious omission of such language from the Constitution meant that the exclusion of ser-

vants did not extend to most employees. Their interpretation might at first sight seem certain in light of the constitutional provision that the required annual income must derive from "real property, industry, commerce, or *employment*."¹¹ In nineteenth-century usage, however, employment customarily referred only to public employment; since such positions were thought of as a form of property from which income derived as from an investment, the inclusion of employment there made sense.¹²

A moderate reformer acknowledged that the true spirit of the law had been to exclude anyone who depended on another for his "daily bread," thus losing his "independence," and a legal glossarist explained that servants "are totally dependent people, even more so than sons-at-home"; to grant them the vote would be to give it to the masters "whom they serve." But whether those who received salaries or wages had surrendered their independent civil identity remained an open question. One critic blamed the alleged vulgarity of the voters on registration boards, the bulk of which were inclined to place primary emphasis on income without considering its source, so that the majority of voters "have no property and live from their wages [*soldada*] on the land of others." Another observer insisted that "in our elections the vagabond without a skill or means of livelihood, the obvious indigent, even servants transformed into 'companions' [*camaradas*], have the vote." A petitioner protesting the exclusion of some would-be voters argued that of course they all had sufficient net annual income, "since some are businessmen, and others husbandmen, farmers, or day laborers [*huns são negociantes, outros criadores, outros agricultores, e outros jornaleiros*]." He took it for granted that wages would meet the requirement.¹³

It is important to note that in any case Brazilians did not consider an *agregado* a servant or employee. Though some considered the *agregados'* right to vote a flaw in the system, few questioned their legal prerogative to do so. Indeed in the extended household of the political chiefs, the *agregados* were crucial to electoral success. As the son of Lacerda Werneck put it, "The large landowners consent to have *agregados* because our electoral system demands it." A rancher in Ceará with holdings measuring sixteen square leagues had "settled on his land 360 *moradores* who pay no rent, but he

says that when he needs workers they tend to lend a hand for free, only being given food, and that occasionally he gathers 200 or 300 men. At election time he delivers a load of 400 voters to [the town of] Icó." One coffee planter in the province of Rio de Janeiro assured a friend that he had "come to an understanding with the visconde de Baependy [another planter] to send ten voters that I have on my lands to go there for the struggle. . . . So you can rest easy, for every effort will be made for you not to be defeated." Participants in the Agricultural Congress of 1878, representing principally the interests of coffee planters, discussed the electoral role of *agregados* at some length. If proposed new voting rules became law, claimed two delegates, "planters will cease to maintain and feed on their lands innumerable *agregados* who do not bother to work, counting on the plantations' granaries in exchange for their votes"; some planters had effectively turned their plantations into "chicken coops of voters." Still another planter stated that "on the great properties . . . the free population consists almost entirely of what are called *agregados* or, better, electoral bullies for hire." In speaking of what they knew firsthand, these men vented their understandable frustration at finding themselves dependent on their own clients. Clearly, the law did not exclude the *agregado* per se from the polls, although the amount or source of his annual income could be raised as an objection to his admission to them.¹⁴

Another and very different question is, who did vote? Or more precisely, who actually appeared on the list of registered voters? Theorists could argue at length about the true meaning of constitutional provisions, the right of employees to vote, or the advisability of changing the law to exclude *agregados*, but the actual practice of registration depended on the dominant local faction. The justice of the peace who had won a plurality of votes in the last election presided over the five-member board (*junta de qualificação*), thus becoming "the key to the election." The electors in the parish, that is, the winners of the last general election, chose the other four board members, although the law sought to assure minority representation through procedures that varied over time.¹⁵ Usually at least two of them would be friends or allies of the chairman, even his relatives. As one coffee planter confidently wrote:

I wish to form the registration board before mass on the 17th, and so I will go early, inviting you and your brother to be at the main church before ten o'clock in the morning. . . . If you would care to give us the pleasure of coming here to dinner on Saturday the 16th, we would much appreciate it, and please say the same to your brother. It is my daughter Rosa's birthday, but we are not inviting many people who are not of the family.¹⁶

The planter and chairman thus purchased loyalty with an irresistible display of intimacy. In short a narrow coterie of the locally powerful decided who could vote.

In compiling the list of voters, the registration board either worked from new lists supplied by the justices of the peace in each district, victors in the last election, or used the previous list, simply deleting or adding names. Since the law did not specify what documents would prove whether a voter had sufficient income, was or was not a servant, or had the other requisite qualifications, in case of dispute the board relied on sworn statements from witnesses. Because some would swear yea and others nay, the registration board remained legally free to decide, and did so according to its own political preference. In the end, then, the official qualifications for voting—income, occupation, residence, and even age—had very little to do with who voted.¹⁷ As one politician perceived, "In the present system, who is a voter? He is a man who, registered today, is tomorrow unregistered by a contrary board."¹⁸

It is impossible to determine exactly what proportion of adult free males actually made it onto the list of registered voters. In 1870 the Ministry of Empire published a list of all the country's parishes that indicates the number registered in each. Two years later Brazil began a census of the national population summarized by parish; I say began because in 1876, when the results were sent to press, not all returns were in. In the intervening years some parishes had doubtless been expanded, others split, and still others done away with altogether. The census names several parishes that do not appear in the 1870 list, and vice versa. The population in the meanwhile had grown and shifted. Finally, since the census itself had a decided effect on the number of electors allowed each parish (although practically none on the number of Deputies from each province), a possible political purpose makes its figures suspect. For all these reasons, not to mention electoral fraud, one finds several

gross anomalies when comparing the two sources, and many parishes had more registered voters than free adult males.¹⁹

Still, by calculating the median participation rate for all the 1,157 parishes found in both lists, the historian can establish some general notion of the expectations that characterized the registration process. For Brazil as a whole, 50.6 percent of all free males twenty-one years of age or older, regardless of race or literacy, appeared on the rolls of registered voters.* Half of all parishes allowed between a third and three-quarters of their adult males to register. There are no figures for the number of registered voters who actually voted, but the boards drew up the lists specifically so the registrants could be called on to support their chiefs. Parish leaders in nineteenth-century Brazil, who could exclude as easily as include, evidently wanted a large number of the men to participate in the electoral process.²⁰ Still, as can be seen from Table 2, there were significant regional variations. Parish bosses in the East, São Paulo, and provinces further south either held a large sector of the free population in lower regard or had less confidence in their own ability to control voting behavior than did their counterparts elsewhere: at least they registered a smaller proportion, although still a large one.

This inclusiveness contrasts markedly with the situation at later times. Until 1881, when a changed electoral law drastically reduced the number of voters, the property qualification had relatively little impact. Age and sex alone disqualified the bulk of the free, not the property requirement.²¹ Historians, by failing to calculate contemporary earning power, have unduly elevated the significance of that restriction; one even claims that it limited political participation to the "dominant class."²² An examination of electoral records would be enough to dispel such a notion, for the polls, although closed against those who supported the wrong candidate or depended on the wrong patron, were open in another sense to almost all free adult males, regardless of class or race.²³

A broad suffrage did not signify a democratic polity, but it did make possible one important purpose of elections: they served as

* For those 25 and older, the proportion registered would be even higher, but since some voters aged 21 could legally vote, and since the census data permit calculations only for the 26-and-older group, and since I wish to allow myself the smallest possible ground on which to argue for widespread electoral participation, I have decided to use the lower age.

TABLE 2
*Percentage of 21-Year-Old Free Males Registered to Vote
 by Region and Province, Early 1870s*
 (Median of all parishes)

Region and province	Registrants	Region and province	Registrants
North	66.0%	East	38.2%
Amazonas	41.5%	Espírito Santo	54.0%
Pará	62.7	Rio de Janeiro	52.6
Maranhão	82.5	Minas Gerais	32.7
Piauí	57.7	São Paulo and South	39.0
Northeast	64.1	São Paulo	35.5
Ceará	49.5	Paraná	40.0
Rio Grande do Norte	47.5	Santa Catarina	— ^a
Paraíba	73.5	Rio Grande do Sul	43.0
Pernambuco	64.5	West	60.4
Alagoas	86.5	Goiás	61.5
Sergipe	46.0	Mato Grosso	56.0
Bahia	68.5	All Brazil	50.6%

SOURCES: Brazil, Ministerio do Imperio, *Relatorio*, 1870, Anexo C; Brazil, Directoria Geral de Estatistica, *Recenseamento da população do imperio do Brazil a que se procedeu no dia 1º de agosto de 1872* (Rio de Janeiro, 1873-76).

NOTE: The total number of registered voters was 1,039,659, or 44.1% of all free men 21 years of age or older.

^aThe report of the Ministry of Empire allows one to calculate that 48.6% were registered in the province of Santa Catarina as a whole; but the report does not break the figures down by parish, so it is impossible to calculate the parish median. Accordingly, the regional and national totals do not include this province.

dramas in which participants used the language of social rank to distinguish among voters rather than to exclude them. And the gentry defined that ranking. The geographical mobility of so many Brazilians required that the "lesser" learn their place below the "greater." And because rival patrons rose and fell, they needed a stage from which to declare their present place.

Theater

There could be no doubt of his authority when the justice of the peace strode into the church of a remote village on the morning of election day and boldly took his place "at the head of the table," with two members of the board on each side and "me, the scribe, immediately to his left." Because as planter, rancher, or man of other property he had additional sources of authority, the chair-

man's position at the table displayed and affirmed the proper arrangement of society, and other actors thus received instruction on the patronizing or deferential stances appropriate to their respective places. As witnessed and acted, the hierarchical nature of society here played itself out again and again.²⁴

For such a drama to succeed, not only must there be many participants, but all electoral operations must be insistently public. "In those times an election meant . . . a lot of people, a lot of excitement," a judge later reminisced. They began on Sundays, a day when most people could attend. They took place in the parish churches, central and well known to all. A reference to an election taking place "with doors wide open" dates from the earliest voting in independent Brazil, and the law of 1846 specifically required open doors. The law also insisted that elections be announced by "proclamations [*editais*] posted at public places and published in the newspapers where there is one." The list of registered voters had to be affixed "in the main church in an appropriate spot and within sight of all." And voters did receive word, for they traveled from afar, as in Bahia, "covering themselves with dust." Nothing was to be done at night; elections were a daytime affair. Proceedings began at 9:00 A.M. and concluded "at sunset." Sometimes an electoral board, like one in São Paulo, rushed to finish, "the sun being almost set." Another, in Minas Gerais, considered but discarded the alternative of working at night: "And it being 2 in the afternoon, the work of the parish assembly was interrupted at the request of the board members so they could go eat dinner and, returning to the church, it was 5 o'clock and the sun had set, and it being discussed whether at least one roll call [of voters] could be made, they decided that it could not." The fact that the minutes of electoral boards could be falsified and written even in utter privacy does not lessen society's expectation that elections would be emphatically public. For the important task of sorting social roles, only a highly visible public performance would do.²⁵

The campaigns themselves focused public attention. Although candidates solicited votes from electors primarily by letters addressed to them or to the other parish notables, each local patron demonstrated his importance by encouraging the voters, his clients, to participate in noisy demonstrations. Rival groups simultaneously proclaimed shared beliefs and competing allegiances when they

"[ran] through the streets of this town at night with music and fire-works, [shouting] *vivas* for His Majesty the Emperor, the legislative assembly, religion, or particular persons, according to the predilection of each group." Such goings-on sometimes became generalized merrymaking or degenerated into armed confrontations, and in 1860 the president of Ceará province had to issue orders forbidding "parades of groups through the streets that only serve to provoke a greater excitation of feelings," adding that "popular gatherings of any kind with drumming and spirits and especially those commonly known by the name *samba*" should particularly not be permitted.²⁶ On election day itself patrons treated their voters to "fine delicacies." When the political chieftains gathered their *agregados* and dependents in town, they would sometimes try to isolate them as if in a corral to prevent them from being tempted to accept a ballot from an opponent's camp in exchange for cash or other reward. Or, as one delegado explained, to display their strength such groups might "enter the streets of this city regimented in close-ordered columns to the sound of thunderous *vivas* and, after a splendid and encouraging victory lunch, go deposit their ballots in the box, proceeding in close order to the church with their chiefs in the lead."²⁷

With the attention of the public fully focused on it, the electoral process provided an excellent opportunity to elaborate the detail of social rankings. Although in the end most clients of the powerful would vote, the vocabulary of the registration procedure had already emphasized the importance of social place. For the registration board to screen out servants but not bookkeepers and head cashiers of business houses or managers of plantations and factories, it had to publicly discuss occupation, residence, age, income—in short, status.²⁸ Among those between the ages of twenty-one and twenty-five, the board took special note of military officers, law graduates, and "clerics of holy orders," who could vote despite their youth. Among churchmen, however, the board distinguished between the secular clergy and the religious "who live in cloistered communities" and took a formal vow of obedience; the latter, because not independent, could not vote. For each case a public examination of social place might occur. Did the prospective voter live in his father's household, and, if so, was he married? How old was he? What was his income and where did it come from? All these questions set some apart from others, highlighting subtle distinc-

tions. Even when argument ensued and a prospective voter, confident of his patron's power and backing, rebuffed a challenge, the fact of rank remained central to the discussion. After 1875 the registration board also identified the voter by specifying whether or not he knew how to read and the names of both his parents, thus forcing some not only to admit their ignorance but to confess their illegitimate birth.²⁹

On election day the chairman read out the names of the voters from the list drawn up by the registration board. As he recited each name the voter would step forward, presenting himself to public view, ballot in hand. But wait: was this the same person whose name appeared on the list? According to the law, confirming the voter's identity was the first duty of the electoral board. The identification of voters further played to the need to make class distinctions. One writer noted that in the "better" neighborhoods of Rio de Janeiro, where "all the voters are well known—he is the international merchant or wholesaler, . . . the capitalist, the banker, the [urban] property owner, the doctor, the lawyer, . . . —as each name is called an individual known by all responds." In contrast stood the poor, the newly arrived, "the nomadic factory worker who works at one place today and another tomorrow. . . . Outside a narrow circle of those near where he lives, no one in the parish knows him." In case of doubt or challenge, the board called witnesses. Suitable ones included the justice of the peace himself, the parish priest, or any citizen whom the board deemed a "trustworthy [*abonadas*]" witness; since the board had to agree on and therefore discuss who would make an acceptable witness, it thus made distinctions even among those who would testify. Now excitement peaked. Here challenges appeared, the mask of deference might slip, and orderly procedure slide toward violent outburst. Would the authority of the electoral board and, above all, of its chairman hold? Or would a rival patron succeed in weakening that authority, perhaps momentarily loosing pent-up resentments among voters, only to reimpose respect for rank and place at the next election?³⁰

As each man voted the chairman scratched off his name from the list of voters. When all the names had been called once, the names of those who had not been present were called a second time. By then the proceedings might have already spilled over into a second or third day; but a minimal interval of one night always intervened

before the chairman called out the names of the absentees a third and final time, in order to "guarantee the voter's exercise of his rights." Sometimes a voter had to wait several days before his name was called. Each voter deposited, as a ballot, a list of names in the box. He did so publicly because, as one commentator explained, one only does things secretly that one is ashamed to do in public. When the third reading of voters' names had been completed, the board opened the ballot box and counted the lists to make sure they matched the number of voters.³¹

As the board opened the ballots, more discussion of qualifications—and hence of social rank—ensued. Did the candidate for elector have twice as much income as that required of the ordinary voter, as the Constitution specified? Could he by any chance be excluded as a freedman who could vote but not be chosen as elector? Voters were supposed to indicate the occupations of the candidates on their ballots; although intended as a way of firmly identifying the persons they chose, the provision suggested that all electors had to have known occupations, recognized by everyone.³² As the board recorded this information, one can imagine the opportunity for impertinent questions or snickers from the crowd if some voter had identified a failing planter, for instance, as a *sitiante*, or farmer. Although ready to accept the notion of hierarchy, those present may nevertheless have played with its specificity, standing outside an imposed ideology.

Elaborate instructions guided the tallying of the votes. As one member of the electoral board read off the names on each ballot, the other members, assuming responsibility for certain letters of the alphabet, wrote the names down. When a name was called a second time, the board member wrote a number "two" next to the one on his list, and so forth; the last number written down would then be the number of votes the candidate had received. When all the ballots had been read, each member of the board announced the names on his list with the total number of votes the person had received, and the scribe recorded these names and placed them in descending order of their vote count. To break a tie, a little boy (no older than seven) drew lots from the ballot box. All the candidates receiving votes, no matter how few, would be listed. The chairman of the board then read out this roll for all to hear, and the scribe copied it into the special book he kept for the purpose and posted another

list on the church door. The parish's quota of electors was filled by the men at the top of the list, and the immediately following runners-up were their substitutes.³³

Thirty days after their selection, the electors met at the town designated as head of the district for the third and final act of the election. The Electoral College's proceedings, like those for registration and balloting, remained open to the public, but at this point no bit players took part, and the audience thinned out. Here other purposes of elections became paramount, but the formal steps deserve brief mention here. Only at this point did the names of candidates for Deputy appear, and electors voted for as many of them as the province would send to Rio de Janeiro. Their task had not ended, however, for they continued to be electors until the next voting took place and thus played a substantial part in organizing subsequent parish registration boards. They could also be summoned to choose a Senator or perform other electoral acts in the interval.³⁴ The provincial capital's County Council tallied the results from each Electoral College and issued the credentials of each Deputy. (From 1855 to 1875, when provinces included several districts, the County Council that headed each district performed this function.) The Council recorded the results received from each College, listed in order—from the most votes to the least—the persons receiving votes, and issued copies of its minutes to each Deputy. These he took with him to Rio de Janeiro to be presented in Parliament.³⁵ For the full social import of elections, however, we must look not to Rio de Janeiro but to the villages and towns.

Voting—and the registration process—took place in the parish church, redolent with symbols of unquestioned authority and graded degrees of authority. Churches even displayed, by their internal layout, the differing status of various saints. And some rooms had a higher symbolic impact than others: election officials gathered around a table, "placed in the nave of the parish church," and rival groups disputed control of that sacred ground; one faction had to settle in the end for a side chapel. If the annual registration and the voting coincided, a decision had to be made on where each activity was to take place. In one case the voting took place in the nave, and the registration board was removed to a "hallway" of the church—necessarily, as the board explained, because it could not use the sacristy, where the blessed host was lodged for the worship

of all. The event also gained importance from the particular church building: a few electoral boards impressively met in a cathedral, but in rural places workers sometimes rushed to finish building a church or at least one wall where the proclamation summoning voters could be posted.³⁶

Locating elections in churches linked the social order to a holy one reaching to God himself, and the repeated performance of church rituals further heightened the sacredness of the civil drama. Once the chairman of the electoral board had opened the ceremony, but before the voting began, "the Most Reverend parish priest preached a sermon relating [*analoga*] to the [electoral] act, after which he celebrated mass." Some priests received fees for celebrating election masses; others charged nothing. Once the voting and counting were completed, the chairman of the board "summoned the newly chosen electors to the church, where a solemn *Te Deum* was sung." The Electoral Colleges similarly performed their tasks only after hearing mass and, as soon as the County Council had tallied the results, it proceeded—along with the elected Deputies, any electors present, and "the People"—to the provincial capital's "principal church" for a *Te Deum*.³⁷ The perceived importance of the religious ceremony and the precise observance of the law led challengers to question whether elections were valid if the religious ceremony had to be omitted because of the "illness of the vicar." They were.³⁸ Customarily, however, incense, bells, and the solemnity of sacred ritual accompanied the no-less-theatrical performance of the election.

In the civil as in the sacred acts, emphasis fell on the real difference between each social level. The justice of the peace and members of the electoral board clearly occupied a position apart from the great mass of the people. The law specified that during the process of organizing the board there should be a railing or other suitable division between the board's table and the assembled voters, so that the citizens might "inspect and verify" its work while leaving it free to go about its business. Once the board had been properly constituted, however, the separation between it and the voters was to be removed, allowing those present to "circle the board and examine its acts." Thus, the distinction having been sharply drawn, witnesses could legitimize it by their presence.³⁹

In a predominantly illiterate society—only 21 percent of the free

could read and write—the written word and the books of minutes took on a power of their own. A forensic culture determined that acts gained validity only by being recorded. Hence those who could manipulate that esoteric reality enjoyed an impressive advantage. Attention centered always on the written record. “During a small tumult” in a small Northeastern village, “the book of the [board’s] minutes was snatched away by force.” The law made elaborate provision for the security of “the book,” its safekeeping in the archives of the County Council, the careful recording of the minutes in it, the signatures of all board members at the end of each section, and the initials of the chairman on each page. The minutes constituted the only account with legal standing, so an 1881 law set a harsh penalty for “tearing or destroying books and papers relative to the process of election”: one to three years of hard labor and a fine of 1,000 to 3,000 milreis (U.S. \$440-\$1,320). And this was above and beyond any punishment for other crimes to which such an act contributed. Designed to prevent fraud, such provisions heightened the importance of the book and further raised the social standing of the literate.⁴⁰

Voting was not restricted to those who could read and write, but literacy clearly separated the few who conducted elections from the many who merely voted. The very fact that illiterates did vote made them simultaneously actors and audience in a drama that set them below their betters. In other contexts contemporaries recognized a clear division between those who could read and those who could not.⁴¹ And the functions involved in carrying out the election process could only have been performed by men who read and wrote easily. The chairman of the electoral board, for example, opened the performance by reading out loud and “in an intelligible” fashion the first two chapters of the election law, some six printed pages in all. Although the scribe who kept the minutes may have had to nudge and prompt the other members of the board, they too must have been literate, since as they opened the ballots, “[one member] read while the others wrote the names that appeared on these ballots.” In contrast, when the ordinary voter complained of the electoral board’s actions, he would likely have had to ask someone else to sign for him. Those chosen as electors must also have been literate—though the law did not specifically require it—since in place of a scribe the Electoral College elected two of its members to serve

as secretaries, and all the members signed their ballots.⁴² The literacy of election officials is attested, finally, by the reaction to the occasional exception. The Minister of Empire found it necessary to write to a provincial president that a county councilman "who admits not knowing how to read or write except to sign his name with difficulty" must nevertheless be considered eligible, since "the law does not exclude" him from the post. The occurrence seems to have been rare enough and significant enough to require a special inquiry.⁴³ Granting the vote to illiterates ensured their presence as minor actors in a drama in which the literate found their social superiority visibly reinforced.

Certainly a great deal of scratching of pens went on during election days. The process began with the filling out of ballots, that is, a list of names put forward for the Electoral College, and their distribution among the voters. As one planter instructed a friend, "Have the ballots made with only 7 names, leaving the 8th place for us to fill in with Mattheus or another on Saturday as we deem fit." Another landowner paid for the expense of hiring this copying done, but one delegado found himself dismissed for having filled them out "in his own hand," thus displaying a lack of impartiality.⁴⁴ Before the election ended the importance of the official scribe became doubly evident. He copied his draft minutes into the official book and made a separate list of the winners for posting on the church door. Next he transcribed the minutes over and over again, one copy for the County Council, another for the provincial president, and one copy for every elector chosen. No wonder the law required County Councils before each election to "prepare table, chairs, paper, ink, . . . and whatever else may be necessary to effect this solemn act with all dignity." Even so, one justice of the peace complained that, although he had received the registration list, he had not received "the lined paper" for the board members.⁴⁵ Elections were truly the apotheosis of writing in an illiterate society.

As in all carefully designed and presented performances, costume revealed role. Actors displayed their status and authority, the superiority of some and the inferiority of others, through their clothes. The justice of the peace, although the lowest figure in the judicial pyramid, often appeared as the only representative of that ranked system in the parish, proudly decked out in his sash of office, "one hand wide," consisting of a yellow stripe between two green ones

and worn "from right shoulder down to the left side." One justice of the peace, a major coffee planter in Valença, had to remind his successor that the sash "is not the property of the judge but of the office." The parish priest or vicar, robed especially for raising the host at mass, could scarcely be mistaken for an ordinary voter, or even for a simple member of the electoral board when he participated in its work (although at least one priest, "having said high mass," went "home to change vestments and eat something" before returning to his task on the board). A costume for each role heightened the scene's dramatic impact.⁴⁶

Most colorful of all, the officers of the National Guard—drawn as we have seen from the landed and slaveowning class—maintained order at elections wearing "rich uniforms," which they themselves provided. The uniform of a cavalry officer, for instance, included dark green pants with a double red stripe running vertically along the outside of the leg, and a red, close-fitting jacket with short tails and a stiff high yellow collar. Heavy gold braid epaulets, yellow trim down the front and at the cuffs, and brass buttons decorated the jacket. Across his chest, diagonally from his right shoulder to his waist, he wore a wide white leather strap bearing a medallion with the imperial insignia; and around his waist he wore a scarlet sash with a golden tassel, surmounted by a white belt fitted with a scabbard for his gold-hilted sword. Completing his finery were white gloves, shiny black boots, and a gold-trimmed black helmet topped by a red plume. In full panoply like this, officers of the National Guard were imposing figures, elegant, stiff, and unapproachable, players of a particular part, signaling unquestionable superiority as well as authority. As they summoned and dispatched their men or met each other on election day, saluting and clicking their heels, they gave sharp expression to the hierarchical relationships that suffused everyday connections.⁴⁷

The ordinary voter also dressed for the occasion: he wore shoes. And shoes spoke volumes. There was a small riot in one parish in 1860 when a coachman, known to be a slave, arrived at a polling place wearing shoes, because everyone assumed that, being shod, he had been brought in to vote for his master's faction. Patrons so often supplied new "shoes and clothes" to voters that these benefits came to be seen as a right. One ex-judge later compared the voters to foot soldiers, who "held the right to rations, which were fur-

nished generously, and . . . equally the right to a uniform or at least to a certain part of one; for since there was then in fact universal suffrage and not all could present themselves in a sufficiently decent way, it became necessary for the paymaster to bear the cost of a more or less presentable set of clothes and, even more critically, of a good pair of shoes." By their dress voters claimed a station above those not allowed to vote.⁴⁸

Even those who did not vote played a part in the drama as stagehands, so to speak. Women and slaves had hand-sewn and pressed the uniforms and vestments. They doubtless demonstrated these and other skills with pride. They cooked large quantities for the assembled voters lounging about the square or concocted choicer fare for the board members, who might return home to "eat something" before resuming their duties or stop work to take their "dinner" at two o'clock.⁴⁹ Even cleaning the church and its ornaments for the grand occasion provided an opportunity to show attentive care. Here no doubt some could handle the vestments while others could only sweep. Women and slaves took up a role that revealed their social standing while witnessing and thus acknowledging the assertive parts played by others, more highly located in the social system.

A summary display of these rankings took place at sunset on each day of the election. In a ritual centered on the ballot box, participants demonstrated the entire array of social positions and heightened the attention focused on the problematic nature of electoral results. These boxes were sometimes "small chests of red morocco" with three locks and a "slot" through which voters slipped the ballots. At night the presiding justice of the peace closed the slot with wax, impressing it with his seal. He then placed the ballot box "inside a strongbox with three keys, one of which was kept by the chairman, one with board member—, and the other with me, the secretary, the strongbox [also] being sealed, and tied by a white ribbon." The electoral board then carried this box to the most public and visible part of the parish church, which remained open throughout the night. National Guardsmen took turns guarding it, the changing of the guard carried out formally and ceremoniously, presumably by the flickering light of torches, candles, or whale-oil lamps. Such a ritual attracted support. When a county judge once suggested that a ballot box should be turned over for safekeeping

to the parish sacristan, others insisted that, on the contrary, it should be guarded by the "National Guard and other citizens who took it on themselves to care for it where it stayed in the same visible place of the parish church." The next morning spectators saw them carefully untie the ribbon, publicly turn the three keys, and remove the ballot box from the chest; all could inspect the seal as it was solemnly broken. By such elaborate displays actors not only asserted the honesty of the procedure, but performed distinct roles according to their position.⁵⁰

Two final acts pointed to the locus of power and stressed the importance of electoral procedures. As the electoral board concluded its tasks, it prepared a list of the voters who had not appeared. Voting was compulsory for those on the registration list, but the board normally excused all voters and forgave them their fines for not appearing, thus adding one more gesture of magnanimous paternalism to distinguish those who had power from those who did not.⁵¹ Then, to draw this lengthy ceremony to a fittingly celebratory and public end, the board took the ballots themselves to the front steps of the church and burned them in a small bonfire, doubtless attracting the lively attention not only of participants in the process, but of women, children, slaves, and others shut out from the main event.⁵²

Extending the vote to a broad segment of the population served a particular purpose. In each ritual every individual asserted his place and played out a preassigned role. The National Guard officer, the justice of the peace, the priest, the voter, each performed a distinct part. Individuals did not always occupy the same place in the social pyramid—a man with shoes might jump from slave to voter—but elections repeatedly affirmed the gradations of society. Insofar as a measure of fluidity and mobility in society existed, it ranged up and down a fixed ladder, clearly recognized and emphasized by electoral procedures. The rites repeated at each election asserted and reinforced the ordering of society and the desirability of that ordering. They defined and preserved the various and particular gradations that comprised the whole and instructed actors and audience alike on the nature and propriety of that order.

Elections were, first of all, elaborate dramatic performances that

insistently reiterated the conviction that the only proper basis of social organization lay in a clear recognition of everyone's social superiority or inferiority. Many more participated in these electoral events than is usually acknowledged—indeed more than in most countries of Europe at that time—yet that participation served not to manifest an egalitarian ideology, but to ensure that some would be called on to play bit parts while others of higher standing stood in the spotlight. Because elections were indirect, this system of broad participation did not endanger the imperial structure or governmental control of the end results. Rather, in assigning roles, whether working out the list of registered voters and verifying their identity or establishing the qualifications of the elected, electoral procedures repeatedly imprinted the appropriateness of inequality on the public consciousness. The stage for this drama, as well as its costumes, chorus, and crew, all served to advance that unspoken end.

61. Pedro II to Luiz Alves de Lima e Silva, marquês de Caxias, 1856, quoted in Viana, *D. Pedro I e D. Pedro II*, p. 145. Also see Heitor Lyra, *História de Dom Pedro II, 1825-1891*, 2d rev. ed. (Belo Horizonte, 1977), II, 269.

62. Progressive Party program in Brasiliense [de Almeida Mello], ed., *Programas dos partidos*, pp. 16-17; PM (Alves Branco) to PPs, circular, 1847, quoted in HGCB, no. 7, p. 82; speech of Pacheco, 18 Apr. 1861, BCCD, *Anais*, 1861, I, 20.

63. Lourenço de Albuquerque to Luis Felipe de Souza Leão, Engenho Velho, 1 Mar. 1885, AIHGB, L456, D48; Junqueira to Cotegipe, Salvador, 11 Oct. 1884, AIHGB, CC, L31, D99.

64. José Antonio Saraiva to José Thomaz Nabuco de Araújo, 24 Dec. 1868, quoted in Nabuco, *Estadista do império*, p. 676. Pedro II told his daughter that he too wished for free elections but thought them unlikely: Pedro II, "Conselhos à D. Isabel (1871)," in Viana, *D. Pedro I e D. Pedro II*, p. 241.

Chapter 4

1. LB, Decreto, 7 Mar. 1821, Decisão 57 (Reino), 19 June 1822, cap. 2, art. 6. Elections for county councilmen, of course, had long been familiar: Candido Mendes de Almeida, ed., *Código Philippino; ou, Ordenações e leis do reino de Portugal* (Rio de Janeiro, 1870), Liv. I, Tit. 67. On Bonifácio's effort to avoid direct elections, see Emília Viotti da Costa, "The Political Emancipation of Brazil," in *From Colony to Nation: Essays on the Independence of Brazil*, ed. A. J. R. Russell-Wood (Baltimore, 1975), p. 82.

2. "Projecto de Constituição," arts. 122-37, in Brazil, Assembléia Geral Constituinte e Legislativa, *Diário* (1823; facsim., Brasília, 1973), II, 694-95; Brazil, *Constituição política do Império do Brasil*, arts. 90-97; LB, Decreto, 7 Mar. 1821, Decreto 3 June 1822, Decisão 57 (Reino), 19 June 1822, Decreto 26 Mar. 1824, Decreto 157, 4 May 1842; José Honório Rodrigues, *Conciliação e reforma no Brasil. Um desafio histórico-político* (Rio de Janeiro, 1965), pp. 135-38. Before 1842 in the few parishes that had a resident royal judge, he served as the chairman of the electoral assembly instead of a county councilman.

3. "Lei, 1846." The legislative history of this law is summarized in BCCD, *Reforma eleitoral: Projectos offercidos á consideração do corpo legislativo desde o ano de 1826 até o anno de 1875 . . . colligidos na secretaria da Camara dos Deputados* (Rio de Janeiro, 1875), pp. 127-226. Many of the laws are reproduced in Francisco Belisário Soares de Souza, *O sistema eleitoral no império (com apêndice contendo a legislação eleitoral no período 1821-1889)* (Brasília, 1979), pp. 163-208.

4. "Lei, 1846," arts. 40, 92; Brazil, *Ato adicional [à Constituição política do Império do Brasil]*, art. 4; "Decreto, 1855," art. 1; "Decreto, 1860," art. 1; "Decreto, 1875," art. 1. When a Deputy entered the Cabinet, he had to stand for re-election: Brazil, *Constituição*, arts. 29, 30. Before 1860 substitutes for Deputies were simply those further down the list

in the order of votes received: "Lei, 1846," art. 89. Also see Paulino José Soares de Souza, visconde de Uruguay, *Estudos praticos sobre a administração das provincias do Brasil. . . Primeira parte: Acto Adicional* (Rio de Janeiro, 1865), I, 76-85. The careful attention to the electoral schedule is reflected in Braz Carneiro Nogueira da Costa e Gama, visconde de Baependy to unidentified, Sta. Rosa, 27 Jan. 1857, AN, SAP, Cód. 112, Vol. 8, 2d part, fl. 28. To be sure, through negligence or with an ulterior motive, sometimes years passed without a new list being drawn up: MI to PP-PE, Rio, 22 Oct. 1860, copy, AN, SPE, IJJ 5-3, fl. 34. Beginning in 1875 the process of drawing up the electoral roll was required only every other year.

5. Brazil, *Constituição*, art. 90.

6. *Ibid.*, art. 92, par. 5. The electoral law gratuitously added the phrase, "in silver" ("Lei, 1846," art. 18), and the government then declared this to be equivalent to 200 milreis in currency, a figure retained until the end of the Empire: *LB*, Decreto 484, 25 Nov. 1846.

7. According to José Antonio Pimenta Bueno, *Direito publico brasileiro e analyse da Constituição do Imperio* (Rio de Janeiro, 1857), p. 472, the income requirement would only exclude "idlers and vagabonds," but he slightly modifies this on p. 194 by saying one would "almost have to be a beggar not to have such an income, or at least a perfectly idle and useless man." José de Alencar, *Systema representativo* (Rio de Janeiro, 1868), p. 93, agrees that only the "vagabond" was thus excluded. As early as 1837 a conservative newspaper claimed suffrage had been extended to men "of the lowest social position aside from slaves and criminals": *O Constitucional Cachoeirano*, 21 Nov. 1837, p. 3, in AN, SPE, IJ 1-708.

8. Justiniano José da Rocha, quoted in Thomas Flory, *Judge and Jury in Imperial Brazil, 1808-1871: Social Control and Political Stability in the New State* (Austin, Tex., 1981), p. 118 (also see p. 141); speech of Martinho Campos, 24 Sept. 1875, BCCD, *Anais*, 1875, V, 208; speech of Saraiva, 4 June 1880, BCCD, *Anais*, 1880, II, 35. A later defender of the Empire also said the law of 1846 really implied "universal suffrage": [João Cardoso de Meneses e Sousa], barão de Paranapiacaba, "Elleições," in Afonso Celso de Assis Figueiredo, visconde de Ouro Preto, et al., *A decada republicana* (Rio de Janeiro, 1900), III, 252.

9. C. F. van Delden Laerne, *Brazil and Java: Report on Coffee-Culture in America, Asia and Africa to H.E. the Minister of the Colonies* (London, 1885), p. 304. Cooks could earn 300 milreis annually in 1877, and a wet nurse, if nursing, as much as 600 in early 1881: Sandra Lauderdale Graham, *House and Street: The Domestic World of Servants and Masters in Nineteenth-Century Rio de Janeiro* (Cambridge, Eng., 1988), p. 14; also see Ubaldo Soares, *O passado heróico da Casa dos Expostos* (Rio de Janeiro, 1959), p. 48. Pedro Carvalho de Mello shows that from 1852 onward the average cost of hiring slaves would have been more than 200 milreis annually: "The Economics of Labor in Brazilian Coffee Plantations, 1850-1888" (Ph.D. diss., Univ. of Chicago, 1977), p. 66, Table 19. A very different conclusion was drawn for workers in the interior by the intransigent reformer André Rebouças, as cited in *HGCB*, no. 7, p. 223.

10. Pedro Autran da Matta Albuquerque, in Antonio Herculano de Souza Bandeira, ed., *Reforma eleitoral, eleição directa: Collecção de diversos artigos sobre a eleição directa dos quaes são autores os seguintes senhores . . .* (Recife, 1862), p. 243; Alencar, *Systema representativo*, p. 92.

11. Brazil, *Constituição*, art. 92 (my italics); *LB*, Decisão, no. 57 (Reino), 19 June 1822, cap. I, par. 8; Projecto de Constituição, art. 124, par. 7, in Brazil, Assembléia Geral Constituinte e Legislativa, *Diário*, p. 694.

12. The definition was made explicit in "Decreto, 1881," art. 3, par. 3. On a similar view of public employment elsewhere, see Richard Hofstadter, *The Idea of a Party System: The Rise of Legitimate Opposition in the United States, 1780-1840* (Berkeley, Calif., 1969), p. 157.

13. José Antônio Saraiva, quoted in HGCB, no. 7, p. 242; Bueno, *Direito publico*, p. 194; F. B. S. Sousa, *Sistema eleitoral*, p. 26; Aureliano Cândido Tavares Bastos, *Os males do presente e as esperanças do futuro ([e outros] estudos brasileiros)*, 3d ed. (São Paulo, 1976), p. 143; Recurso de Qualificação, 1860, Francisco Antonio Feiteiro recorrente, Conselho Municipal de Recurso da Villa de Caçapava [RGS] recorrido, AN, SPJ, Apelação, no. 1242, Cx. 11.880 [old Cx. 32, Gal. C].

14. Luiz Peixoto de Lacerda Werneck, *Idéias sobre colonização, precedidas de uma sucinta exposição dos princípios que regem a população* (Rio de Janeiro, 1855), p. 38; Francisco Freire Alemão, diary entry for 19 Nov. 1859, in "Os manuscritos do botânico Freire Alemão," ed. Darcy Damasceno and Waldyr da Cunha, in Rio de Janeiro, Biblioteca Nacional, *Anais*, vol. 81 (1961), p. 293; José Pereira da Camara to Peregrino José de America Pinheiro, Ubá (RJ), 7 July 1863, AN, SAP, Cód. 112, Vol. 8, Doc. 4; statement of Antonio Borges Rodrigues and Antonio Lourenço Torres, speech of Manoel Furtado da Silva Leite, speech of Julio Cesar de Moraes Carneiro, all in Congresso Agrícola, *Congresso Agrícola: Coleção de documentos* (Rio de Janeiro, 1878), pp. 32, 47, 147; also see Stanley J. Stein, *Vassouras, a Brazilian Coffee County, 1850-1900* (Cambridge, Mass., 1957), p. 57n.

15. "Lei, 1846," arts. 2, 8-14; "Decreto, 1855," art. 1; *LB*, Decreto 1812, 23 Aug. 1856, arts. 1-17; Affonso d'Albuquerque Mello, *A liberdade no Brasil: Seu nascimento, vida, morte, e sepultura* (Recife, 1864), p. III.

16. [Braz Carneiro Nogueira da Costa e Gama], visconde de Baependy, to João Vieira Machado da Cunha, Sta. Rosa, 8 Jan. 1858, AN, SAP, Cód. 112, Vol. 8, Doc. 32.

17. "Lei, 1846," arts. 19, 25, 26; Recurso de Qualificação, 1860, Francisco Antonio Feiteiro recorrente, Conselho Municipal de Recurso da Villa de Caçapava [RGS] recorrido, AN, SPJ, Apelação, no. 1242, Cx. 11.880 [old Cx. 32, Gal. C]; F. B. S. Souza, *Sistema eleitoral*, p. 26. I have never found an instance where accusations of perjury on this matter led to a trial.

18. Speech of José Antonio Saraiva, 4 June 1880, BCCD, *Anais*, 1880, II, 39.

19. Brazil, Ministerio do Imperio, *Relatorio*, 1870, Anexo C; Brazil, Directoria Geral de Estatistica, *Recenseamento da população do imperio do Brazil a que se procedeu no dia 1º de agosto de 1872* (Rio de Janeiro, 1873-76).

20. The minutes of electoral boards I examined show that most registered voters were said to have voted. Since manuscript censuses often show a large number of female-headed households in Brazil, many entire households went unrepresented: Donald Ramos, "Marriage and the Family in Colonial Vila Rica," *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 55: 2 (May 1975), 218-23; Elizabeth Kuznesof, "The Role of the Female-Headed Household in Brazilian Modernization, 1765-1836," *Journal of Social History*, 13: 4 (Summer 1980), 589-613.

21. The total population of Brazil of all ages and both sexes, slave and free, was 9,930,478 in 1872, so more than 10% were registered. During the Republic, after 1889, we know voter participation remained below 6% of the population: Joseph L. Love, "Political Participation in Brazil, 1881-1969," *Luso-Brazilian Review*, 7: 2 (Dec. 1970), 3-24; Steven Topik, *The Political Economy of the Brazilian State, 1889-1930* (Austin, Tex., 1987), p. 8. These authors do not calculate figures for adult males only, an especially important step, given the youthfulness of that population. Even in 1945, when women could vote, the registration rate only reached 16% of the total population: Lawrence S. Graham, *Civil Service Reform in Brazil: Principles Versus Practice* (Austin, Tex., 1968), p. 117.

22. Nelson Werneck Sodré, *História da burguesia brasileira* (Rio de Janeiro, 1964), pp. 102-3. The confusion has continued, so that one historian simultaneously argues that the 1846 law allowed few to vote and a large number to vote: José Murilo de Carvalho, *Teatro de sombras: A política imperial* (São Paulo, 1988), pp. 140-43. When Carvalho turns to actual records of elections, he discovers (pp. 142-43) that indeed the propertyless voted.

23. See, for example, Recurso de Qualificação, 1860, Francisco Antonio Feiteiro recorrente, Conselho Municipal de Recurso da Villa de Caçapava [RGS] recorrido, AN, SPJ, Apelação, no. 1242, Cx. 11.880 [old Cx. 32, Gal. C]. The list of registered voters used by Luiz R. B. Mott, *Sergipe del Rey: População, economia e sociedade* (Maceió, 1986), p. 60, includes race, with the following breakdown:

White	136	35.05%
Black	41	10.57
Mulatto	211	54.38
Total	388	100.00%

24. Acta da Mesa Parochial, Freguezia de S. Sebastião dos Afflictos, Ubá, 7 Sept. 1860, copy encl. in PP-MG to MI, Ouro Preto, 19 Oct. 1860, AN, SPE, IJJ 9-482; Acta da Mesa Eleitoral da Villa Nova do Príncipe e Santa Anna de Caiteté, 10 Jan. 1858, *ibid.*, 5-25. For an example involving the rural property of an electoral board chairman, see Depoimento, Pirassinunga, Feb. 2, 1873, encl. in PP-SP to MI, São Paulo, 15 Feb. 1873, *ibid.*,

5-30. Normally those who sat on the registration board also formed the electoral board, but the process of setting it up could easily occupy half a day.

25. Francisco de Paula Ferreira de Rezende, *Minhas recordações* (Rio de Janeiro, 1944), p. 124 (to be sure, Rezende is speaking specifically of the election of 1840, but he contrasts it with the sedate and closed affairs that began only in 1881, so by implication he is describing the intervening period); Acta de recolhimento, numeração das listas, apuração dos votos, e reunião de Eleitores desta freguesia, N.S. do Livramento das Minas do Rio das Contas, 26 Feb. 1823, AN, SPE, IJJ 5-26; "Lei, 1846," arts. 4, 8, 21, 42 (also see "Decreto, 1860," art. 6; and "Decreto, 1875," art. 2, par. 10); Mesa Parochial de Victoria to PP-BA, Victoria, 19 Sept. 1860, AN, SPE, IJJ 5-25; Acta da Mesa Parochial de Pirassinunga, 18 Aug. 1872, copy encl. in PP-SP, to MI, São Paulo, Feb. 15, 1873, AN, SPE, IJJ 5-30; Acta da Mesa Parochial, Freguesia de S. Sebastião dos Afflictos, Ubá, 7 Sept. 1860, copy encl. in PP-MG to MI, Ouro Preto, 19 Oct. 1860, AN, SPE, IJJ 9-482. An *edital* summoning the voters, dated from Santa Theresza (Valença), 7 Aug. 1860, can be found in AN, SAP, Cód. 112, Vol. 8, Doc. 13.

26. Delegado to PP-PA, Breves, 27 July 1860, copy encl. in PP-PA to MJ, Belém, 1 Aug. 1860, AN, SPE, IJJ 5-43; PP-CE, circular, to delegados and subdelegados of the province, encl. in PP-CE to MI, 13 Aug. 1860, *ibid.*, 5-43.

27. F. B. S. Souza, *Sistema eleitoral*, p. 34; Rezende, *Minhas recordações*, p. 126; Delegado to PP-CE, Sobral, 12 Dec. 1860, copy encl. in PP-CE to MJ, Fortaleza, 29 Dec. 1860, AN, SPE, IJJ 5-43.

28. Recurso de Qualificação, 1860, Francisco Antonio Feiteiro recorrente, Conselho Municipal de Recurso da Villa de Caçapava [RGS] recorrido, AN, SPJ, Apelação, no. 1242, Cx. 11.880 [old Cx. 32, Gal. C].

29. "Lei, 1846," art. 18; *LB*, Decreto 6097, 12 Jan. 1876, art. 27. It is worth comparing these purposes with those of 18th-century Virginia: Rhys Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1982), pp. 110-14. On elections in 19th-century Virginia, see Daniel P. Jordan, *Political Leadership in Jefferson's Virginia* (Charlottesville, Va., 1983), pp. 103-56.

30. JD-Muriahé to PP-MG, Ubá, 12 Oct. 1860, encl. in PP-MG to MI, Ouro Preto, 19 Oct. 1860, AN, SPE, IJJ 9-482; Acta da Mesa Parochial de Pirassinunga, 18 Aug. 1872, copy encl. in PP-SP to MI, São Paulo, 15 Feb. 1873, *ibid.*, 5-30; "Lei, 1846," art. 46 (if the list drawn up by the registration board were missing, the chairman could use any authenticated copy: *LB*, Aviso 168, 28 June 1849); F. B. S. Souza, *Sistema eleitoral*, pp. 31-32.

31. Actas da Mesa Parochial de Pirassinunga, 7 Sept. 1872, copy encl. in PP-SP to MI, 25 Nov. 1872, AN, SPE, IJJ 5-30; JD-Muriahé to PP-MG, Ubá, 12 Oct. 1860, encl. in PP-MG to MI, Ouro Preto, 19 Oct. 1860, *ibid.*, 9-482; MI to PP-SE, Rio, 4 Jan. 1858, copy, *ibid.*, 5-8, fl. 1v; "Lei, 1846," arts. 48, 49; *LB*, Aviso 298 (Imperio), 11 Sept. 1856; Alencar, *Systema representativo*, p. 118.

32. "Lei, 1846," art. 51; Acta da Meza Eleitoral de São Braz do Pôrto de Moz, 1 Nov. 1824, AN, SPE, IJJ 5-18.

33. Actas da Mesa Parochial de Pirassinunga, 7 Sept. 1872, copy encl. in PP-SP to MI, 25 Nov. 1872, *ibid.*, 5-30; Acta da Mesa Eleitoral de Nazareth da Vigia (Pará), 2 Nov. 1824, *ibid.*, 5-18; [Acta da Mesa Eleitoral da Freguezia de Inhaúma, MN], 9 Nov. [1852], AGCRJ, 61-4-14, fl. 133; "Lei, 1846," arts. 54, 56, 115. On the drawing of lots, this one at an Electoral College, see Braz Carneiro Nogueira da Costa e Gama, conde de Baependy, to Jeronimo José Teixeira Júnior, Sta. Rosa [Valença], 26 Dec. 1860, AN, SAP, Col. Teixeira Júnior, AP23; Correspondência Passiva, Doc. 99.

34. A typical and routine set of minutes from such an Electoral College is the Acta da Reunião do Colegio Eleitoral da Comarca de Caravellas, 14 Feb. 1856, AN, SPE, IJJ 5-25. Also see Actas da Mesa Eleitoral do 2º Districto, Salvador, 11 Feb. 1858, *ibid.*, 5-25; "Lei, 1846," arts. 69, 70, 71, 73; and *LB*, Decreto 565, 10 July 1850, art. 1.

35. "Lei, 1846," arts. 85-89. For examples of the Councils' work, see *Atas de Apuração de Eleições*, Arquivo Municipal de Salvador, 12.1. They played a similar role in the election of provincial assemblymen: Nancy Naro, "The 1848 Praieira Revolt in Brazil" (Ph.D. diss., Univ. of Chicago, 1981), p. 183.

36. Acta da Mesa Parochial na freguezia de S. Sebastião dos Afflictos, Ubá, 7 Sept. 1860, copy encl. in PP-MG to MI, Ouro Preto, 19 Oct. 1860, AN, SPE, IJJ 9-482; Acta da Mesa Eleitoral de Villa Nova do Príncipe e Santa Anna de Caetetê, 10 Jan. 1858, *ibid.*, 5-25; Actas da Mesa Parochial de Pirassinunga, 7 Sept. 1872, copy encl. in PP-SP to MI, 25 Nov. 1872, *ibid.*, 5-30; Mesa Parochial de Victoria to PP-BA, Victoria, 19 Sept. 1860, *ibid.*, 5-25; [Braz Carneiro Nogueira da Costa e Gama], visconde de Baependy, to João Vieira Machado da Cunha, Rio, 6 June 1856, AN, SAP, Cód. 112, Vol. 8, Doc. 69; PP-BA to MI, 29 May 1867, AN, SPE, IJJ 9-343 and enclosures, especially fl. 63v. Also see the query about the legality of an election that had been held in a chapel because the parish church was not yet complete: Domingos Cardoso N. to Padre Manoel José Alvim, Paripe, 25 Sept. 1852, and reply, APEB, Presidência, Religião, Vigários, M.5215. On the use of a cathedral, see Acta da Mesa Eleitoral de Santa Maria do Belém do Grão Pará, 2 Nov. 1824, AN, SPE, IJJ 5-18.

37. Actas da Mesa Parochial de Pirassinunga, 7 Sept. 1872, copy encl. in PP-SP to MI, 25 Nov. 1872, AN, SPE, IJJ 5-30; Recibo, Rio, 3 July 1847, AGCRJ, 61-4-34, fl. 20; Procurador to Presidente da Camara, Rio, 30 Mar. 1869, AGCRJ, 62-1-21, fl. 2; Acta de recolhimento, numeração das listas, apurações dos votos e reunião de Eleitores desta Freguezia de N.S. do Livramento das Minas de Rio das Contas, 26 Feb. 1823, AN, SPE, IJJ 5-26; Acta da Mesa do Colegio Eleitoral do 2º Districto, Salvador, 11 Feb. 1858, AN, SPE, IJJ 5-25. These practices followed the law: "Lei, 1846," arts. 42, 58, 72, 90.

38. Parecer da 1ª Comissão de verificação de poderes, 17 Apr. 1861, BCCD, *Anais*, 1861, I, 14; also see *LB*, Aviso 168, 28 June 1849, art. 15.

39. "Lei, 1846," arts. 42-44. On the construction of the necessary railing, see Joaquim Pinheiro de Campos to President of Camara Municipal, Rio, 14 Oct. 1847, AGCRJ, 61-4-34. The law indicated that everyone else was to be seated in the church "without precedence," suggesting both the attempt at democracy and the contrasting normal order of things: "Lei, 1846," art. 42.

40. PP-RN to MJ, Natal, 24 Sept. 1860, AN, SPE, IJJ 5-43; "Lei, 1846," arts. 15, 21, 24, 36, 43, 67; "Decreto, 1881," art. 29, par. 8. One list of registered voters was returned by the provincial president because it had not been initialed on every page: marginal comment on JP to PP-BA, Sta. Anna do Catú, 8 June 1855, APEB, Presidência, Eleições, M.2794. The 21% literacy figure is calculated from Brazil, Directoria Geral de Estatística, *Recenseamento . . . 1872*, and refers to the free population over six years of age.

41. See, for example, Comandante do Quartel do Comando do Corpo Policial em Pôrto Alegre to PP-RGS, 20 Dec. 1871, AN, Cx. 781, Pac. 2, [Doc. 20]; and PP-RN to MJ, Natal, 24 Sept. 1860, AN, SPE, IJJ 5-43. Delegados and subdelegados, for instance, could not be illiterate: Caetano José de Andrade Pinto, *Atribuições dos presidentes de provincia* (Rio de Janeiro, 1865), p. 182.

42. Actas da Mesa Parochial de Pirassinunga, 7 Sept. 1872, copy encl. in PP-SP to MI, 25 Nov. 1872, AN, SPE, IJJ 5-30; Acta da Mesa Eleitoral de Nazareth da Vigia, Pará, 2 Nov. 1824, *ibid.*, 5-18; Votantes do 3º districto da Villa de Victoria to the Juiz de Paz, 12 Sept. 1860, encl. in Mesa Parochial de Victoria to PP-BA, Victoria, 14 Sept. 1860, *ibid.*, 5-25; "Lei, 1846," arts. 22, 43, 51, 54, 70, 73, 100. "Decreto, 1855," art. 1, removed the requirement that electors sign their ballots; on the other hand, the 1875 law, which called for issuing election cards to the voters, required that they be signed, and that this signature be repeated in the act of voting, but also recognized the right of illiterates to rely on sworn statements by others: "Decreto, 1875," art. 1, par. 20.

43. MI to VPP-ES, 14 June, 1858, copy, AN, SPE, IJJ 5-8, fl. 6. Also see Manoel Caetano Ribeiro, *Justificação*, n.d., encl. in PP-MG to MI, Ouro Preto, 19 Oct. 1860, *ibid.*, 9-482; and JD-Muriahé to PP-MG, Ubá, 12 Oct. 1860, encl. in *ibid.*

44. [Braz Carneiro Nogueira da Costa e Gama], visconde de Baependy, to João Vieira Machado da Cunha, Sta. Rosa, 28 Oct. 1856, AN, SAP, Cód. 112, Vol. 8, Doc. 26; PP-SE to MI, Sergipe, 10 Dec. 1851, AN, SAP, Cx. 783, Pac. 2; PP-RJ to MJ, n.p., 17 Sept. 1860, AN, SPE, IJJ, 5-43.

45. "Lei 1846," arts. 57-59, 79; JP-Freguezia de S. José to Presidente da Camara Municipal, Rio, 23 Jan. 1849, AGCRJ, 61-4-14, fl. 108. In more prosperous locations the minutes, rather than being copied, were printed in script-like type: *Copia Authentica da Acta da Apuração dos Votos para os Doze Eleitores da Parochia de Sta. Thereza do Município da Cidade de Valença*, 19 Aug. 1862, AN, SAP, Cód. 112, Vol. 7.

46. LB, Decreto, 14 June 1831, art. 2; [Braz Carneiro Nogueira da

Costa e Gama], visconde de Baependy, to unidentified, Sta. Rosa, 27 Jan. 1857, AN, SAP, Cód. 112, Vol. 8, 2d part, fl. 28; Vigario to PP-BA, Canavieiras, 18 Jan. 1858, APEB, Presidência, Religião, Vigários, M.5215. The minutes of at least one Electoral College were kept by "me, vicar —, secretary": Actas da Meza do Colegio Eleitoral do 2º Districto, Salvador, 11 Feb. 1858, AN, SPE, IJJ 5-25. Before 1846 the parish priest was by definition a member of the electoral board.

47. Commandante Superior of [?] to PP-RJ, n.p., 1 Feb. 1845, quoted by Fernando Uricoechea, *O minotauro imperial: A burocratização do estado patrimonial brasileiro no século XIX* (São Paulo, 1978), p. 200 (also see p. 292); Uniformes dos officiaes aos commandos superiores da Guarda Nacional do Imperio, AN, SAP, Cód. 112, Vol. 7, fl. 1.

48. JP to MI, Rio, 31 Dec. 1860, encl. in Acta da Meza Parochial da Freguezia de Sant'Anna, 30 Dec. 1860-20 Jan. 1861, AGCRJ, 63-3-32; [Antonio Alves de Souza Carvalho], *O imperialismo e a reforma, anotado por um constitucional do Maranhão* (Maranhão [São Luiz?], 1866), p. 42; Rezende, *Minhas recordações*, p. 126. On shoes as "the mark of freedom," see Maria Dundas Graham (Lady Maria Calcott), *Journal of a Voyage to Brazil and Residence There during Part of the Years 1821, 1822, 1823* (1824; rpt., New York, 1969), p. 108.

49. Vigario to PP-BA, Canavieiras, 18 Jan. 1858, APEB, Presidência, Religião, Vigários, M.5215; Acta da Mesa Parochial, Freguezia de S. Sebastião dos Afflictos, Ubá, 7 Sept. 1860, copy encl. in PP-MG to MI, Ouro Preto, 19 Oct. 1860, AN, SPE, IJJ 9-482.

50. Procurador da Camara Municipal to Presidente da Camara Municipal, Rio, 1 June 1847, AGCRJ, 61-4-34, fl. 15; Acta da Mesa Parochial de Pirassinunga, 18 Aug. 1872, copy encl. in PP-SP to MI, São Paulo, 15 Feb. 1873, AN, SPE, IJJ 5-30; Actas da Mesa Parochial de Pirassinunga, 7 Sept. 1872, copy encl. in PP-SP to MI, São Paulo, 25 Nov. 1872, AN, SPE, IJJ 5-30; JM quoted in Mesa Parochial de Victoria to PP-BA, Victoria, 14 Sept. 1860, AN, SPE, IJJ 5-25. On the size and construction of the strongbox, see Acta da Mesa Eleitoral de Villa Nova do Principe e Santa Anna de Caetete, 15 Jan. 1858, AN, SPE, IJJ 5-25; and marginal notes dated 19 Feb 1847 in Procurador da Camara to Presidente da Camara, Rio, 9 Feb. 1847, AGCRJ, 61-4-34, fl. 14.

51. "Lei, 1846," art. 126, par. 7; Actas da Mesa Parochial de Pirassinunga, 7 Sept. 1872, copy encl. in PP-SP to MI, São Paulo, 25 Nov. 1872, AN, SPE, IJJ 5-30. Electors who failed to turn up for the organization of the electoral board, however, could be fined as an act of political vengeance: Parish priest to PP-BA, Canavieiras, 18 Jan. 1858, APEB, Presidência, Religião, Vigários, M.5215.

52. Acta da Mesa Eleitoral de Santa Maria de Belém do Grão Pará, 2 Nov. 1824, AN, SPE, IJJ 5-18; Acta da Mesa Parochial, Freguezia de S. Sebastião dos Afflictos, Ubá, Sept. 9, 1860, copy encl. in PP-MG to MI, Ouro Preto, 19 Oct. 1860, *ibid.*, 9-482; Acta da Mesa do Colegio Eleitoral do 2º Districto, Salvador, 11 Feb 1858, *ibid.*, 5-25; *LB*, Aviso 168, 28 June

1849, art. 22; "Lei 1846," arts. 59 and 78. Since the bulk of the Brazilian population lived outside large cities, I have concentrated my attention on rural elections. Of course, in the capital cities other dramas took place to reinforce hierarchy. When the County Council of Rio de Janeiro, as required by law, asked the city's best preacher to say mass at the meeting of the Electoral College, he brusquely replied that he could not because on that day he would be celebrating the Pontifical Mass of Ashes before the Emperor and the court: Msgr. Felix . . . de Freitas e [illegible] to Presidente da Camara Municipal da Corte, Rio, 18 Feb. 1867, AGCRJ, 61-4-12, fl. 68. Elections, however, were specifically to take place "in all the Empire" ("Lei 1846," art. 40)—and there was only one court.

Chapter 5

1. José Thomaz Nabuco de Araújo to Paes Barreto, 1855, quoted by Joaquim Nabuco, *Um estadista do império*, [3d ed.?] (Rio de Janeiro, 1975), p. 289.

2. Later commentators, in their desire to criticize the First Republic, tended to ignore this fact. Sylvio Romero, *A bancarrota do regime federativo no Brasil: Ação dissolvente das oligarchias, ação indispensavel do exército* (Porto, 1912), p. 14, goes so far as to claim that the Empire, by exercising centralized control through presidents and judges, "knocked caudillismo to the ground and prevented the formation of oligarchies." Francisco José de Oliveira Vianna, *Instituições políticas brasileiras* (Rio de Janeiro, 1949), I, 286, shows a better understanding of the 19th-century origins of *coronelismo*. On 20th-century practices that mimicked those I describe here, see Victor Nunes Leal, *Coronelismo: The Municipality and Representative Government in Brazil* (Cambridge, Eng., 1977), p. 19. The *política dos governadores* under the First Republic, that is, the tendency of the national Presidents to accept as legitimate whatever local or state faction proved strongest, was also prefigured in the Empire.

3. Congresso Agricola, *Congresso Agricola: Coleção de documentos* (Rio de Janeiro, 1878), p. 17.

4. Stanley J. Stein, *Vassouras, a Brazilian Coffee County, 1850-1900* (Cambridge, Mass., 1957), pp. 16-20, 120, 159; Joseph E. Sweigart, *Coffee Factorage and the Emergence of a Brazilian Capital Market, 1850-1988* (New York, 1987) p. 86.

5. Acta da Eleição de Eleitores, Freguezia de N.S. da Conceição do Paty do Alferes, 9 Sept. 1842, AN, SAP, Cód. 112, Vol. 4, Doc. 110. Lacerda Werneck became state assemblyman the next year: Actas da Camara de Nitheroy para a apuração de 36 deputados á Assembleia Provincial, 22 Dec. 1843, *ibid.*

6. *Almanak [Laemmert] administrativo, mercantil e industrial do Rio de Janeiro e indicador. . . . Obra estatística e de consulta* (Rio de Janeiro, 1855), Suplemento, pp. 135-41. For an earlier example of these families' monopoly of official positions, see Thomas Flory, *Judge and Jury in Imperial Brazil, 1808-1871: Social Control and Political Stability in the New*