



Universiteit
Leiden
The Netherlands

Kinship as a factor in manumissions and straatvoogdschap in Suriname, 1765-1795

Koning, Camilla de

Citation

Koning, C. de. (2022). *Kinship as a factor in manumissions and straatvoogdschap in Suriname, 1765-1795*.

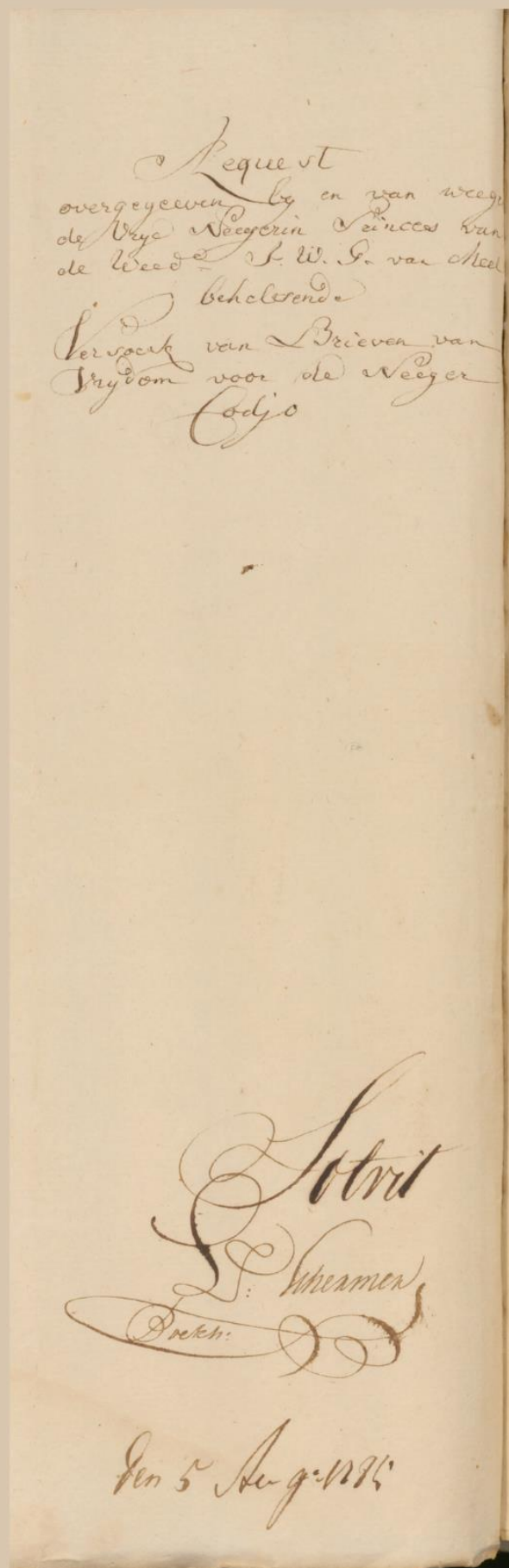
Version: Not Applicable (or Unknown)

License: [License to inclusion and publication of a Bachelor or Master thesis in the Leiden University Student Repository](#)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3281553>

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

**Kinship as a factor
in manumissions
and *straatvoogdschap*
in Suriname, 1765-
1795**



Kinship as a factor in manumissions and *straatvoogdschap* in Suriname, 1765-1795



Universiteit
Leiden

Camilla de Koning

S1361783

camilladekoning@gmail.com

Research Master History: Cities, Migration and Global Interdependence

Leiden University

Master Thesis: 30 ECTS

23-02-2022

26.250 words

Supervisor: Dr. Karwan Fatah-Black

Second reader: Dr. Alicia Schrikker

Cover image: Cover page of the request of *de vrije* Princes van van Meel for her son Codjo. Source: NA, RvP, inv. nr. 436, scan nr. 495, folio nr. 68. Petitioner: De vrije Negerin Princes van van Meel. Manumitte: Codjo (1785-08-08).

Table of contents

Table of contents	3
Introduction	5
Chapter 1: Manumission in law	13
<i>Legislation and amendments</i>	13
Chapter 2: Straatvoogdschap	18
<i>Straatvoogdschap in Suriname</i>	18
<i>Development of the practice</i>	19
<i>Testaments and self-purchase</i>	21
<i>Kinship and straatvoogdschap</i>	24
<i>Frequent straatvoogden</i>	25
<i>Conclusion</i>	27
Chapter 3: For love and blood	28
<i>Additional data: Dataset II</i>	28
<i>Kinship in slavery</i>	29
<i>Princes van van Meel</i>	32
<i>Connecting motivation to kinship</i>	35
<i>Family groups</i>	39
<i>Conclusion</i>	41
Chapter 4: Close-kin slavery	43
<i>Close-kin ownership by Ben-Ur</i>	43
<i>Diana van Adam and Santje</i>	44
<i>Conflicts and ease</i>	46
<i>Conclusion</i>	50
Chapter 5: Chain manumissions	51
<i>De vrije Jan, Jan Hendrik and Dickie Samson</i>	51
<i>Catharina van Dikie Samson</i>	54
<i>Tingie van der Son - strategic manumissions</i>	57
<i>Dossoe Vigilant</i>	58
<i>Conclusion</i>	59
Chapter 6: A network emerges	60
<i>The core group of manumitters</i>	60
<i>Conclusion</i>	69
Chapter 7: The effect of support and affection	71
<i>Guaranteeing the gift of freedom</i>	71
<i>An addition to the gift of freedom</i>	74
<i>Conclusion</i>	76

Conclusion	78
List of tables and images	81
Bibliography	82
<i>Primary sources</i>	82
<i>Literature</i>	84
Appendix I: Quantitative overview of Dataset I	87
Appendix II: Person indexes	92
<i>I. List of names of manumittees mentioned</i>	92
<i>II. Index selected people of interest</i>	97
Acknowledgements	98

Introduction

The ties that bind together history are made up of interactions and relationships between people. From family by blood to chosen family in the form of friends and loved ones, kinship influences life and therefore history. Elisabeth Keye stated that ‘Kinship could be claimed only in freedom’¹. A statement that research on manumission and kinship can oppose. Kinship and slavery, or kinship in slavery, existed in a contradiction. The principle of hereditary slavery, coded into law in the colonies of the Dutch Republic, entailed that children followed the status of the mother.² As Jennifer L. Morgan put it: ‘Slavery destroyed, exploited, and remade kinship among the enslaved through a contradictory claim about African women: that they birthed strangers, or property, rather than kin.’³ Relations of kin were rarely noted in documents of slave traders, plantations, and colonial governments. By denying the existence of these bonds, an idea of kinlessness was enforced on the enslaved. Nonetheless, bonds of kinship emerged through births and connections. This created the contradiction Morgan described: the enslaved could not be perceived of as completely kinless.

Kinship existed in both slavery and freedom and was only noted down at the moments where (fictive) kinship was deemed relevant. Mother-child relationships were noted down to keep track of the enslaved, but a variety of other kinship bonds were also acknowledged. Two of the most important sources available that provide insight on kinship of the enslaved and free coloured and black community are manumission requests. In these sources kinship appeared as motivation and explanation. To unearth the bonds of kinship that connected the enslaved and free coloured and black population of Suriname, this thesis will analyse Surinamese manumission requests from 1765-1795.

Manumission and kinship

Manumission was known as ‘the priceless gift of freedom’ in eighteenth century Suriname. The chance of acquiring this gift was small, only 0.5 per cent of the enslaved population in the second half of the eighteenth century were granted letters of freedom.⁴ The manumitted often found their newly acquired status to entail new forms of dependency and limitations on their

¹ Jennifer L. (Jennifer Lyle) author Morgan, *Reckoning with Slavery: Gender, Kinship, and Capitalism in the Early Black Atlantic* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2021), 1.

² Jennifer L. Morgan, ‘Partus Sequitur Ventrem: Law, Race, and Reproduction in Colonial Slavery’, *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism* 22, nr. 1 (2018): 1–2.

³ Morgan, *Reckoning with Slavery*, 247.

⁴ Rosemary Brana-Schute, “Approaching Freedom: The Manumission of Slaves in Suriname, 1760-1828,” *Slavery & Abolition* 10, no. 3 (1989): 40–63: 213.

freedom. The legal status of the manumitted was more limited than that of free born coloured and black population and even more so when compared to white landowners in the colony.

In his study of the structure and development of Suriname society in the time of slavery, Rudolph van Lier argued that the discrimination against black people, and coloured people in a lesser degree did not diminish until the start of the nineteenth century. The differentiation between these two groups, as van Lier argued was the proximity to the white landowners in the colony of whom mixed-race people in part descended from. Van Lier stated that there was little to no contact between the free coloured and black population.⁵

Research on manumission and the free coloured and black community had focussed on the nineteenth century until Rosemary Brana-Shute completed an extensive study on the phenomenon of manumission. Brana-Shute showed that the commonly assumed bond of white plantation owners freeing their mixed-race offspring or *bijvrouwen*/concubines is not the most found kinship bond.⁶ According to her research, free people of colour were the most frequent manumitters, in an increasing fashion throughout the timeframe of her research.⁷

Rosemarijn Hoefte responded to van Lier's findings by shifting the focus to the lack of research on the free black and coloured population. She analysed the position of free blacks and coloureds from the perspective of this group and concluded that the unbalanced sex-ratio in the colony led to the undermining of the strict hierarchy discussed above. This led to a situation in which 'the importance of family networks in obtaining freedom, protection and assistance was undeniable'.⁸ Apart from this assistance through kin and networks, being able to own property was crucial for the financial stability of this group and their opportunities for social growth.⁹

Jean Jacques Vrij further analysed the division in society in the late eighteenth century, which he named 'the political systema'. Contradicting but also renewing van Lier's ideas Vrij stated that the social mobility of free coloured and black people was the logical result of social developments in the colony. The increasing numbers of the free coloured community problematised the fact that many like them remained in slavery. This observation made by Governor Wichers was not meant to be enlightening towards the free coloured community as

⁵ Rudie van Lier, *Samenleving in een grensgebied: een sociaal-historische studie van Suriname*, 2e dr. (Deventer: Van Loghum Slaterus, 1971), 79–95.

⁶ Brana-Shute, 358–59; Rosemary Brana-Schute, "Approaching Freedom: The Manumission of Slaves in Suriname, 1760-1828," *Slavery & Abolition* 10, no. 3 (1989): 56–57.

⁷ Parts of this line of argumentation were used in an earlier paper by myself 'Kinship as a factor in manumissions in Suriname, 1790-1791'. written for the course 'Cornerstones of the colonial household' taught by K. Fatah-Black at Leiden University.

⁸ Rosemarijn Hoefte, 'Free Blacks and Coloureds in Plantation Suriname', *Slavery & Abolition* 17, nr. 1 (2008): 103.

⁹ Hoefte, 104–10.

van Lier stated. It was centred around the fact that the strict division between free and enslaved, which was once based on the colour of one's skin, was threatened by this development.¹⁰

The growth of the free coloured and black community found its roots in manumission, which was framed as a gift. The later conceptualisation of manumission as a form of gift giving stemmed from Orlando Patterson and was further explored by Robin Blackburn. By framing manumission as a gift that was bestowed upon someone, it is placed within a broader framework of obligation and indebtedness.¹¹ Granting someone their freedom was seen as a gift and 'kindness' that could never be repaid, creating a lasting relationship that started after manumission in which the manumittee is culturally and socially in debt to their former owner. This debt was not relinquished if someone first purchased themselves, as all that the enslaved owned was already their owner's and therefore that sum can be seen as a first gift of repayment to the owner. Manumission is thus framed as the start of a cycle of gift exchange, not only between manumitter and manumittee, but one that spreads out to the community at large.¹² This owed gratitude and indebtedness is reflected in the inequality of Surinamese society. The free coloured and black community remained in debt to the white elite, and this was reflected in matters such as discriminative legislation. Ideas of obedience and indebtedness were not only reflected in means of slavery and manumission. Kinship influenced if and when 'the gift of freedom' was granted to others, and if it was deserved. The family systems of the enslaved and free(d) community were analysed by Willem Buschkens, and this thesis will build on his findings.¹³

Brana-Shute's study revealed that kinship is pervasively mentioned in these so-called manumission requests. Not only are bonds of kinship the third most frequent reason given when petitioning for a manumission, kinship is also often referred to in these documents, leading her to the conclusion that uniting families constituted a major motivation for manumissions.¹⁴ To reveal family reunions Brana-Shute introduced the concept of chain manumissions. A chain

¹⁰ Jean Jacques Vrij, 'Jan Elias van Onna en het "politiek systema" van de Surinaamse slaventijd, circa 1770-1820', *OSO. Tijdschrift voor Surinaamse taalkunde, letterkunde en geschiedenis.*, 1998, 133–36.

Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* (Harvard University Press, 1985).¹¹ Robin Blackburn 'Introduction', in: Rosemary Brana-Shute en Randy J. Sparks, *Paths to Freedom: Manumission in the Atlantic World* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2009), 8–9.

¹¹ J. Th de Smidt en To van der Lee, *Plakaten, ordonnantiën en andere wetten uitgevaardigd in Suriname, 1667-1816*, West Indisch plakaatboek 1 (Amsterdam: Emmering, 1973), 508. Article 419

¹² Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death*, 210–14. Patterson argues on page 213: 'If the relationship is an ongoing one, it is clear that repayments both complete and initiate a cycle of gift exchanges in a continuous dialectical progression that moves forward lineally for the two persons interacting, but concurrently spreads out laterally to all persons interacting in the total system of prestation – in other words, to the community at large.'

¹³ Willem F.L. Buschkens, *The Family System of the Paramaribo Creoles*, 1974.

¹⁴ Brana-Shute, *The Manumission of Slaves in Suriname, 1760-1828*. (Unpublished dissertation, 1985): 358–59; Rosemary Brana-Schute, "Approaching Freedom: The Manumission of Slaves in Suriname, 1760-1828," *Slavery & Abolition* 10, no. 3 (1989): 56–57.

manumission is formed by kin working to free kin and acquiring their manumissions spread out over a longer period. One by one, link by link, the family is reunited by this consecutive chain of manumissions. The other important concept Brana-Shute introduced is that of suspected paternity, which I will expand to suspected kinship. With the help of three identifiers Brana-Shute analysed her sample of manumissions requests to reveal (suspected) paternity bonds between manumitter and manumittedes that would otherwise have stayed unnoticed. By doing this the visibility of kinship in these requests is increased, simultaneously portraying the far-stretching importance of kinship in manumission.

Brana-Shute painted an optimistic and hopeful picture by stating that free coloured people worked to manumit others and reunite families in freedom that were started in slavery. Not only through manumission requests did kin aid each other. Unable to represent oneself, as enslaved people were not recognized as persons in law, it was also possible to be manumitted with the help of a *straatvoogd* (street guardian). *Straatvoogden* approached the Council on behalf of the enslaved to petition for manumission. This was necessary when the owner of the enslaved was unwilling to do so themselves, had died, or if someone had been only freed privately, in which case they could or would not call upon their old master. The presence and influence of kinship in these relationships has not been studied apart from Brana-Shute noticing that kinship was also mentioned in these requests.

Wim Hoogbergen and Okke ten Hove shifted the gaze from earlier mentioned 0,5 per cent of enslaved that were manumitted to the relatively big addition these people were to a small, coloured population. The free coloured population was made up out of 330 people in 1762 and grew to 821 in 1781, and manumission was in part behind this growth.¹⁵ By shifting this perspective, Hoogbergen and ten Hove reveal how we should study the manumitters and the manumitted from their perspective, the perspective of the growing community of coloured people. This social group of freed people, as argued by Ellen Neslo in her doctoral dissertation *Ongekende elite*, worked hard to free each other, but Neslo also stated that the group of manumitters themselves did not form a cohesive social group.¹⁶ The size of this population and the importance of (family) networks argued by the authors referenced above seems to suggest the opposite.

A contrasting view on family reuniting manumission as argued by Neslo, Hoefte and Brana-Shute is offered by Aviva Ben Ur. She argued that kinship and slavery were not

¹⁵ Okke ten Hove en Wim Hoogbergen, 'De vrije gekleurde en zwarte bevolking van Paramaribo, 1762-1863', 2001, 306-8.

¹⁶ Ellen Neslo, *Een ongekende elite*, 157.

incompatible. Not just when it came to kinship between white and coloured families, but also within coloured and black kinship. Ben-Ur pleaded for a less ‘romantic’ or benevolent view on this matter and to do so introduces the concept of close-kin slavery. Close-kin slavery was not solely close-kin ownership, a situation in which kin owned kin, but a relationship in which kin owned kin and used them as slavery entailed everywhere else in the colony. It has been the tendency to view these transactions through the lens of affectionate kinship and close-kin ownership as a steppingstone towards manumission.¹⁷ Ben-Ur added the concept of elective kinship, closely related to the close-kin slavery. Elective kinship was the process of favouring one family over the other, meaning that one would be kept in slavery while others were manumitted. Elective kinship is compared by Ben-Ur to how white planters could choose to denounce their kinship ties to those in slavery but not to all, and those freed started copying this behaviour.¹⁸

Thus, the connection between kinship, slavery and manumission turns out to be complex in multiple ways and open to research from different perspectives. With the role that kinship played in manumission and *straatvoogdschap*, it is inevitable that a network of kinship emerged that did not only exist in one part of society. These networks crossed from enslaved to free(d) people. The manumission requests show that the belief that enslaved and free(d) people were not in contact can be contradicted. These groups were in constant contact and so were free(d) and enslaved kin. Together with a network of consanguineal kin, another network emerged from the manumissions found from 1765-1795. Based on relationships of business and affection, a small part of Paramaribo society knitted together. Blurring the lines between white, mixed-race, and black and between free(born), manumitted and enslaved. The second half of the eighteenth century can be seen as a turning point for this group. Rights for coloured people were created and taken away, the power of the colonial state was tested and confirmed and all the while the free coloured population, creoles and manumitted, gained strength in numbers. Until, around the turn of the century, the free coloured population took over the majority from the white population. Manumission practices that were motivated by bonds of consanguineal and fictive kinship laid at the very heart of this development.

This thesis will analyse: **How did kinship motivated manumission practices influence the cohesion of the free coloured population in the second half of eighteenth-century Suriname?** To answer this question this thesis will start by identifying in which ways

¹⁷ Ben-Ur, ‘Relative Property: Close-Kin Ownership in American Slave Societies’. *New West Indian Guide*. Vol. 89, nr. 1–2 (2015): 3.

¹⁸ Ben-Ur, 23.

kinship appeared in manumission and *straatvoogd* requests in the chosen period. By taking the period before the start of Ellen Neslo's study and overlapping in part with the study of Brana-Shute, this thesis will explore the different roles that kinship played in the process of manumission from 1765 to 1795 and show what came before the 'coloured elite' that Neslo researched in her dissertation. By including *straatvoogdschap* a never researched aspect of manumission practices is uncovered. Researching manumission from the perspective of kinship will expand our knowledge of the concepts kinship and community in slave societies and reveal a network of connection in the eighteenth century that until now had not been uncovered.

Chapter 1 will outline the legal context of manumissions, followed by Chapter 2 which will discuss the requests involving a *straatvoogd*, how kinship played a factor in these requests and how the development of this phenomenon can be traced throughout the decades. Chapter 3 will elaborate on different forms of consanguineal ties that are apparent in the manumission requests. Chapter 4 discusses the cases of close-kin slavery that have been found in the sample to further investigate the arguments made by Aviva Ben-Ur. Chapter 5 analyses the chain manumissions that have been found in the sources. Chapter 6 will dive into the emerging network that was based on manumissions. Finally, Chapter 7 discusses the bonds that were made through property and guarantors, along with affective ties.

Sources and methodology

Brana-Shute based her extensive work on working with sample years. In this research I have therefore chosen years that the work of Brana-Shute has not covered as information from this the intervening years is unknown. Doing this allowed me to add on to the already available information. Unfortunately, Brana-Shute's exact data is unknown. What remains and what I have used in this thesis are the quantitative overviews she provided. An overview table that combines the quantitative information of both Brana-Shute's and my own research can be found in Appendix I as Table 5. Based on these sample years a set of data was comprised that I will refer to as **Dataset I**. A second dataset, **Dataset II**, was created in addition to the first for the purpose of tracing individuals and chain manumissions. A different method was used to do so, and elaboration on the method used to gather this data can be found at the start of Chapter 3.

The manumissions for **Dataset I** have been counted per year based on the year they were finalized in. If a manumission was requested in 1760 but was finalized in 1766, it will be found in the request book of 1766. A year in this analysis therefore consists of the total of request books found for the specific year, corresponding to the number of sessions the Governing Council held. The sample years 1765, 1767, 1771, 1774, 1777, 1780, 1789, 1790

and 1792 all consisted of two requests books. The year 1783 consisted of three requests books, years 1786 and 1791 of four. An overview of this can be found in Table 4 in which each inventory number refers to a request book.

Brana-Shute decided to use only those cases that were adjudicated in her sample years, which means that the quantitative findings may differ slightly. As the focus of this analysis lies more in the qualitative approach and the question of kinship as a factor, all manumission requests were included in both Datasets. Only a handful of requests were undecided, or no final verdict could be found, but their qualitative information still provides information on forms kinship. If the final verdict of a request is unclear, this will be stated. A quantitative overview of the findings of the sample years can be found in Appendix I. In the main text I will refer to quantitative conclusions based on these numbers and focus on working out cases from a qualitative perspective. Dataset I contains 325 manumission cases that manumitted 540 individuals, Dataset II contains 67 cases that manumitted 101 people.¹⁹

The archival sources that were used for this research are firstly the requests filed to the *Raad van Politie* all bundled in the *Oud Archief Suriname*. Manumission requests were not filed separately from other kinds of political requests.²⁰ Therefore, to find manumission or *straatvoogd* requests one must read all requests, especially as sometimes a manumission request would be filed in unison with requests on other matters such as inheritances. The *Oud Archief Suriname* is a vast collection of documents that was digitized in the Netherlands and was then returned to Paramaribo. In addition to the requests filed to the *Raad van Politie*, additional documents like minutes of the Council and Governor General, baptismal records, testaments and wills and inventories have been consulted when necessary and to gather as much as information as possible.

It is important to note something about the nature of these sources. All requests were created by an employee of the colonial government, according to the guidelines of that same government. The information that is presented is what the Council and clerks deemed relevant. It is therefore likely that information was left out. Ages for example were often not known, but also not relevant to the government, someone was a girl, woman or elder. Another thing to keep in mind is that all documents are in Dutch, but that the enslaved and free black and coloured community spoke Sranan Tongo, also called *neger Engels*. This means that most documents were translated, and information could have been lost in this process as well.

¹⁹ An overview of which inventory numbers were researched for Database I and II can be found in the bibliography.

²⁰ Only inventory numbers 535 and 536 contain solely requests and disputes regarding manumissions.

In this thesis referencing to the specific cases will be done in a set order. All requests were found in the National Archive in the archive of the Governing Council and Criminal Justice of Suriname, 1669-1828, number 1.05.10.02.²¹ Footnotes will refer to the inventory number, the starting scan number of the request which was depicted on the website of the National Archive in February 2022, the folio number, the name of the petitioner, the name of the enslaved and in parentheses the date the request was filed on (typically found in the left hand corner of the request itself).²² The format of the dates is yyyy-mm-dd. Names of petitioners, owners, *straatvoogden* and manumittees are often spelled in various manners in the sources and errors may have occurred reading them. The name depicted is the most frequently used and/or simplest form of the name found in the sources.

²¹ Archief van het Hof van Politie en Criminele Justitie en voorgangers, in Suriname, 1669-1828, (1.05.10.02)

²² Nationaal Archief Den Haag (NA), Oud Archief Suriname: Raad van Politie (RvP), inv. nr. 394, scan nr. 519, folio nr. 257. Petitioner: *de vrije* Grietje. Manumittee: Cassaar (1765-12-06).

Chapter 1: Manumission in law

To understand the influence legislation had on manumission in practice this chapter will provide an overview of which legislation was in effect from 1765-1795. In addition, a reflection is offered on how this legislation was based in racial notions and how this influenced manumittedes and the free coloured and black community.

Legislation and amendments

In 1733 the government decided to intervene in the privately conducted manumissions by legislating the conditions under which enslaved people could be freed.²³ By regulating manumissions, the Governing Council (*Raad van Politie*) gained more control over this particular aspect of slavery in the colony. By interfering in the manumission process, the colonial state increased its influence over the slave owners, the petitioners, the enslaved and the manumitted. Especially controlling this last group seems to have been of importance to the Governing Council. In various briefs and legislation, the concern about the public behaviour and financial situation of the manumitted was expressed by the council. They reasoned that if the manumitted would fall into poverty they would become a great burden for the colony.²⁴ The core of the legislation put out in 1733 was simple: no one could be manumitted without the formal approval and permission of the council.²⁵

An important side-effect of the new law was that the freedom of those already manumitted was put into question. They had not received freedom papers from the governing council and could therefore not prove their status. The law of 1733 created a dichotomy in the free coloured community between those who had been freed informally before the passing of the law and the others who did receive freedom papers after. Those manumitted by their owners without going through the legal proceedings faced the risk of being re-enslaved after 1733.

To begin the formal process of manumission a request should be admitted to the Council and the petitioner should promise to do two things: educate the enslaved in the ways of Christianity and the financial stability or independence of the manumitted should be guaranteed. These two obligations were clearly derived from the main concerns of the Council regarding the economic status and future behaviour of the manumitted.

The approval of a manumission request also meant that the to be manumitted person would agree to several obligations, which can be seen as conditions to their freedom. The

²³ Brana-Shute, *The Manumission of Slaves in Suriname, 1760-1828*, 101, 106.

²⁴ Brana-Shute, 114.

²⁵ Smidt en Lee, *Plakaten, ordonnantiën en andere wetten uitgevaardigd in Suriname, 1667-1816*, 411. Article 350.

manumitted and their children should always honour their previous master (and all whites). They could not strike or slander the former master. If the former master would fall into poverty, the manumitted was obliged to help him or her. If the manumitted died childless, the former master would inherit a fourth of their belongings. Manumitted persons could not marry or have sexual intercourse with enslaved people. And last, the line of inheritance would follow that of the so called *Aasdomsregt*. Violating these obligations could lead to fines or in the worst case: the re-enslavement of the manumitted.²⁶ Both sets of obligations for the petitioner and manumitted person would be tweaked and extended in the century to come, all with the purpose of further restrict and control the movements of those manumitted. The obligations a manumitted person agreed to were a way to remind them of the fact that their new status was a gift and a privilege, given to them by their owner and the government. The restrictions put on them served as a reminder that they, although now no longer enslaved, differed from those born free. Being born with slave status therefore meant a life of regulation and control, even if you were one of the very few that succeeded in being manumitted.²⁷

Between 1733 and 1790 the manumission legislation was adjusted five times.²⁸ The two most important changes for this analysis regarded the principle of guarantors and the price that had to be paid for manumission. The first legislation put out on manumission dating from 1733 did not cover the subject of guarantors or bail. This however seemed to not be enough to safeguard that they would not fall into poverty and consequently ‘be a burden to the colony’. On 19 May 1760 an additional notification was communicated saying that the Council sometimes received petitions for letters of freedom which did not disclaim if the manumitted would be able to support oneself. After this notification the Council intended to reject all requests unless proof was provided that the to-be freed person was able to make their own money, that a guarantor had pledged to support them or that a sufficient amount of bail was posted to ensure their livelihood.²⁹

In 1788 the Council turned manumissions into a taxable transaction. To obtain the letters of freedom, a manumission tax had to be paid. This tax meant a fee of 100 guilders for men above the age of fourteen and 50 guilders for women and children.³⁰ This rule added a financial obstacle to the manumission process. Who would pay the fee depended on the agreements

²⁶ Neslo, *Een ongekende elite*, 100–106; Brana-Shute, *The Manumission of Slaves in Suriname, 1760-1828*, 110.

²⁷ Brana-Shute, ‘Approaching Freedom’, 122–23.

²⁸ Smidt en Lee, *Plakaten, ordonnantiën en andere wetten uitgevaardigd in Suriname, 1667-1816*. Articles: 350, 394, 573, 597, 663, 720; Neslo, *Een ongekende elite*, 104–6.

²⁹ Smidt en Lee, *Plakaten, ordonnantiën en andere wetten uitgevaardigd in Suriname, 1667-1816*, 690. Number 573.

³⁰ Brana-Shute, *The Manumission of Slaves in Suriname, 1760-1828*, 139.

between manumittee and petitioner. If the manumittee had purchased themselves from their owner, all financial responsibilities laid with them, and this extra fee would be another amount the enslaved would have to save for, on top of their ‘self-purchase price’ and clerical costs of the Council. When a person was being manumitted by a patron or family member, the cost may have been for or loaned to the manumittee by their family. No matter the situation surrounding the manumission, 50 or 100 guilders was a significant amount of money. For men another option was also available: they could serve the government for three years in the Free Corps (*Vrij Corps*) in which case their 100 guilders fee would be remitted.³¹

The singularity of every manumission is the reason why it is impossible to give a general timeframe or cost for the process of manumission. Every manumission was dictated by different circumstances, obstacles, and people. Because the first phase was a completely private and undocumented aspect of the process nothing can be said about the length of the process. But for the second phase Brana-Shute was able to deduce the average time it took for a manumission request to be approved.

The Council of Policy and Criminal Justice convened in four sessions during the year. Each session would ‘run’ for four to ten weeks and in this time the Council would among other things handle all submitted petitions. Manumission requests were typically submitted close to the beginning of a session or during the sessions themselves. If there were no problems or complications, the petitioner could expect to have a decision from the Council in the following session, sometimes even the same day. The majority of the requests took the time of one session, a petition filed in February would be resolved in May or August of that same year.³² In this waiting time the Council published the intent of manumission for the public to see if anyone was opposed. If this was the case, they could file a letter of opposition to the Council, which would lead to a hearing slowing down the process. Together with the advertisement of the intent to manumit, the time in between sessions gave the clerks of the Council time to check different kinds of *quitanties* or receipts. These receipts contained statements that were submitted together with a request to manumit and could for example confirm if the owner had recently purchased this person or the receipt would state that all fees were paid.³³ If everything was in order, the enslaved would be manumitted.

³¹ Brana-Shute, 139; More information on the legislation of het Korps Vrije Negers can be found in: Smidt en Lee, *Plakaten, ordonnantiën en andere wetten uitgevaardigd in Suriname, 1667-1816*, 845. Article 723.

³² Brana-Shute, *The Manumission of Slaves in Suriname, 1760-1828*, 179–80.

³³ Unfortunately, the added-on documents such as declarations, receipts and signed consents were handed back to the petitioner and not saved in the archives of the Governing Council.

A lasting relationship

The process of manumission extended long before and after a legal date of manumission itself, resulting in a long-lasting relationship with their previous owner, petitioner and/or guarantor. Granted the gift of freedom, a certain amount of respect towards them was expected and even encoded in law.³⁴ Laws that for example decided how manumitted people should behave towards white people regulated the behaviour of the manumitted, resulting in a situation in which the manumitted were discriminated in comparison to those freeborn, both white, coloured, and black.³⁵ This lasting relationship was influenced by the ideas of race in the colony.

Racial categories were indicators in social and especially legal proceedings. Manumittedes and petitioners were described with name and skin colour, indicators such as age, kinship or residence were seen as unimportant and are found less. The most common used racial categories found in the requests are the following and were based on the skin colour or descent of parents. Black or *neger* meant that someone had two black parents or came from purely African ancestry. Enslaved people that were born in Suriname were also described as *criool* or *creool* as opposed to ‘salt-water negroes’ who were born in Africa and then transported to Suriname. Mulattos had one black and one white parent. *Carboegers* were the offspring of a black and mulatto. *Mesties* or *musticen* were children of a white and a mulatto parent. *Casties* or *casticen* derived from a *mesties* and a white parent.³⁶

Although the lines of race seem rigid in these categories, sources show that whiteness and blackness were relative depending on the matter at hand. In one manumission request the same person can be referred to as both *mulat* and *neger*, or *carboekel* and *mesties*. When necessary, the degree of one’s skin colour and descent was up for discussion, depending on what would benefit the goal that was to be achieved. Dropping the common *de vrije* prefix from someone’s name allowed former enslaved people to pass as free-born or even white and by doing so circumventing (a part of) the prejudice and discrimination against coloured people.³⁷ These descriptions must therefore always be seen as flexible or the result of the observation and opinion of the one who wrote them down.

Vasconcellos argued that the social pyramid of a slave society was made up out of three ranks: white, mulatto and black. These ranks then contained ‘various subcategories that were

³⁴ Robin Blackburn ‘Introduction’, in: Brana-Shute en Sparks, *Paths to Freedom*, 8–9.

³⁵ Smidt en Lee, *Plakaten, ordonnantiën en andere wetten uitgevaardigd in Suriname, 1667-1816*, 508. Article 419.

³⁶ Brana-Shute, 227; Neslo, *Een ongekende elite*, xxi.

³⁷ Karwan Fatah-Black, ‘The Use of Wills in Community Formation by Former Slaves in Suriname, 1750-1775’, *Slavery & Abolition* 41, nr. 3 (2020): 627–28.

arranged by myriad qualifiers and were defined almost exclusively by the white community'.³⁸ The closer one was to whiteness, the more the white community humanized the enslaved and freed people. An example of this is the manumission of George Francois and Jean Henrij. Francois de Cachetou manumits them from the plantation Egmond as he is: 'moved and affected to see two simple creatures, same in colour to the whites, by misfortune brought into slavery'.³⁹ Those with lighter skin were assumed to be too delicate for field labour, which set these enslaved people apart from the rest of the slave community.⁴⁰ Resulting in manumissions in Suriname showing that the lightness of one's skin was an important factor in obtaining manumission, with 60 per cent being identified as mixed-race and 40 per cent as black.⁴¹

Conclusion

This chapter has sketched the context of legislation on manumission from 1765-1795 and how race could play a factor in manumission and later freedom. This information will be used as a basis for the coming chapters which will focus on kinship as a factor in manumission and less on manumission in general.

³⁸ Colleen Vasconcellos, *Slavery, Childhood, and Abolition in Jamaica, 1788–1838*, Early American Places (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2015), 40–43.

³⁹ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 430, scan nr. 121, folio nr. 50. Petitioner: Francois de Cachetou. Manumittees: George Francois and Jean Henrij (1782-12-10). Original text: 'En vermits de suppliant zig teder voelt bewogen en aangedaan op het zien van twee zulke onnozelen schepzelen in koleur bijna met de blanken gelijk; door hun ongelukkig noodlot in slavernij gebracht.'

⁴⁰ Vasconcellos, *Slavery, Childhood, and Abolition in Jamaica, 1788–1838*, 31–32.

⁴¹ Brana-Shute, 'Approaching Freedom', 47; Dataset I.

Chapter 2: Straatvoogdschap

Straatvoogdschap represents a sub-category in manumission practices, which has received little to no attention in research. After explaining how the sample was formed, this chapter will first focus on the development of the practice of *straatvoogdschap* and its legal background. It will then portray the general development seen in the sampled cases and kinship as a factor in these manumissions, demonstrating the place it had within the free coloured community. Studying *straatvoogdschap* is crucial to display the underlying connections within the free coloured and black community, but also their connections to the white colonial elite, the plantocracy.

Straatvoogdschap in Suriname

Manumissions that were carried out with the help of a *straatvoogd* consisted of an extra step in the manumission process. *Straatvoogden* approached the Council on behalf of the enslaved, as they could not legally do so themselves, and petitioned for manumission. The need for a *straatvoogd* could arise from three different situations: self-purchase, the enslaved being freed by a clause put in a testament or when the owner had given verbal or written consent that someone was manumitted but did not legally arrange this.⁴²

Before one could act as a *straatvoogd* a request had to be submitted to the Governing Council, in the same matter as a request had to be filed for the manumission itself. One of the consequences of this was that manumissions by a *straatvoogd* could take an extra session of Council to be completed. Initially the only legal obligation or task a *straatvoogd* had was submitting the request for manumission. When the letters of manumission were granted her or his status dissolved and she or he had no further duties of guardianship over the newly manumitted, unless they had pledged themselves as guarantor and thus carried financial responsibility.⁴³ Throughout the second half of the eighteenth century, this demarcation of the *straatvoogd* status would be compromised as will be explored later on.

Who these *straatvoogden* were has not been a subject of historical study, but just as with manumitters, free coloureds increasingly acted as *straatvoogden* throughout the eighteenth century.⁴⁴ Manumissions involving a *straatvoogd* showcase a situation in which more parties are involved than in a regular manumission. *Straatvoogd* requests grant us a look at who was the owner, and sometimes why they did not or could not petition for letters of freedom themselves.

⁴² Brana-Shute, *The Manumission of Slaves in Suriname, 1760-1828*, 150–51.

⁴³ Brana-Shute, 148.

⁴⁴ Brana-Shute, 'Approaching Freedom'.

To analyse the development of *straatvoogdschap* in the researched period from 1765 to 1795 two kinds of approaches were used to gather a total of 59 manumissions involving a *straatvoogd*. The first was finding requests for *straatvoogdschap* in Dataset I. A total of 32 *straatvoogd* requests was found and for 11 of these cases the corresponding manumission request was located.⁴⁵ The other 27 requests that are included in this chapter are the manumissions found in the sampled inventory numbers that were carried out with the help of a *straatvoogd*, creating a sample of 59 distinct cases.⁴⁶

Development of the practice

The concept of *straatvoogden* unfortunately remains elusive when researching it. Nowhere in the West-Indische Plakkaatboeken is the word mentioned or referred to.⁴⁷ Meaning that there was no law specifying this practice, although it was a significant part of manumission practices, as 17 per cent of the sample was assisted by a *straatvoogd*.⁴⁸ What is known from the legal basis of *straatvoogdschap* is that it finds its roots in Dutch law.

Brana-Shute stated that *straatvoogdschap* finds its origins in the Netherlands in the Middle Ages.⁴⁹ A legal dictionary from 1791 stated that street guardians were an old legal institution in the Netherlands meant for women who were underage or otherwise not considered legally competent or called *onmondig* in Dutch.⁵⁰ In practice this meant that widows and unmarried girls needed a street guardian to represent them in legal matters. To nuance this view, according to Ariadne Schmidt *straatvoogden* were only utilized by unmarried and widowed women in cases of trials. In other legal matters such as making contracts or agreements they would not be assisted by a *straatvoogd* and handled their own legal matters.⁵¹

How and why this practice originally meant to oversee women was adapted for the enslaved population is unclear. In the requests a particular sentence is always mentioned in this

⁴⁵ Not all corresponding requests could be found for the 59 individual cases. This could be due to one of the parties deceasing, insufficient funds, changing petitioners, loss of the request or it being overlooked.

⁴⁶ Information from Dataset II has only been included if it granted information on a *straatvoogd* or manumission request that was already found in the sample years, new cases or petitioners were left out of this chapter.

⁴⁷ Smidt en Lee, *Plakaten, ordonnantiën en andere wetten uitgevaardigd in Suriname, 1667-1816*.

⁴⁸ Dataset I.

⁴⁹ Brana-Shute, *The Manumission of Slaves in Suriname, 1760-1828*, 149.

⁵⁰ *Nederlandsch placaat- en rechtskundig woordenboek; behelzende al het geen, door de hoog mog. heeren Staaten Generaal der Vereenigde Nederlanden, en de edele groot mog. heeren Staaten van Holland, Zeeland, en West-Vriesland, zedert de vroegste tijden, over allerlei zaaken, bij placaaen, resolutien en ordonnantiën vastgesteld is. Alsmede de oude wetten, privilegien en costumen van deze landen en van derzelve onderhorige steden, dorpen en heerlijkheden* (bij Allart, De Leeuw en Krap, 1791), 757.

⁵¹ Ariadne Schmidt, 'Vrouwenarbeid in de vroegmoderne tijd in Nederland', *TSEG-The Low Countries Journal of Social and Economic History* 2, nr. 3 (2005): 8.

or a comparable form: ‘As the [manumittee] does not represent a person in law, they request [name] to be appointed as their *straatvoogd* to obtain their letters of manumission’.⁵²

A text search through the newly digitalized correspondence between Governor and Council with the Directors of the Society of Suriname provides no additional information. Therefore, it is possible that this practice was entirely based on a custom that was imported from the Dutch Republic and remained as such. Most likely a similarity was concluded between *onmondige* women and the enslaved population. The enslaved were regarded as property and therefore had no legal rights. When they did come in contact with the Council, an intermediary had to be created. What is interesting in the sample is that sometimes the request to become someone’s *straatvoogd* is phrased as: ‘as the [manumittee] does not yet have a person to oversee their legal matters’. This seems to suggest kinlessness or the fact that in other manumission cases manumitees did have someone to advocate for them. People who applied for their freedom through a *straatvoogd* seem to have been more secluded or less connected to the free coloured community, leading them to approach a relative stranger to act as their *straatvoogd*.

The development that can be seen in the *straatvoogd* requests is that the process becomes slowly more standardized. In May 1765 the black man Giem, still enslaved, approached the Council on his own account. His owner Pierre D’Anglade had died, and his letters of freedom were bestowed to him in Pierre’s will, but according to Giem the executor of the will was not hurrying along. This moved him to request the Council to assign him a *straatvoogd* to act on his behalf. The Council granted this request and assigned the lawyer P.C. Stuijvessant to act as his *straatvoogd*.⁵³ Interesting about this case is that Giem, although still enslaved and officially not a legal person was heard when he appealed to the Council.

After 1765 cases such as Giem’s do not appear, and a shift is noticed in the petitions as their form becomes more systematic. *Straatvoogd* request first explain the situation of why an enslaved person is petitioning for a *straatvoogd* and then, humbly, nominate someone to be the *straatvoogd* of the manumittee.⁵⁴ At the end of the 1780s *straatvoogden* themselves become the petitioners stating that they were directly approached by the manumittee and requesting for themselves to be assigned the position of *straatvoogd*.

⁵² Example: NA, RvP, inv. nr. 437, scan nr. 137, folio nr. 32. Petitioner: de neger Pieter alias Pita. Manumittee: Pieter (1786-02-07).

⁵³ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 393, scan nr. 541, folio nr. 213. Petitioner: de Neeger Giem, slaef van wijlen Pierre d’Anglade. Manumittee: Giem (1765-05-17).

⁵⁴ Example: NA, RvP, inv. nr. 432, scan nr. 489, folio nr. 427. Petitioner: Cerie van Isak Lopes Nunes. Manumittee: Cerie (1783-12-09).

Only one case has been found in this sample in which a still enslaved person acted on their own behalf and succeeded. In February 1783 the black woman Amimba approaches the Council with proof that she had bought herself from madam G.E. Crommelin. It might have been the connection to the family of the former Governor Wigbold Crommelin that abstained her from the need for a *straatvoogd*, but her request was accepted, and letters of freedom were granted.⁵⁵

Testaments and self-purchase

An overview for the reasons for manumission for both the *straatvoogd* and the manumission requests in which a *straatvoogd* was involved can be found in Table 1 below. A combination between self-purchase and a testamentary manumission existed: the manumitted had bought themselves from their owners but they would not be free until their owner had died, which I will call a testamentary condition.

Table 1: Reasons stated for manumission in *straatvoogd* and manumissions aided by a *straatvoogd*.

Reason for manumission	<i>Straatvoogd</i> requests nr.	Manumission requests nr.
Self-purchase	18	8
Self-purchase with testamentary condition	2	3
Testamentary	4	6
Exchange for other enslaved person	1	0
Travelled to the Dutch Republic	1	0
No reason	6	8
Affection	0	2
Total	32	27

(Source: Dataset I)

⁵⁵ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 431, scan nr. 155, folio nr. 71. Petitioner: neegerin Amimba. Manumittee: Amimba (1783-02-25).

The high amount of self-purchase and testamentary manumissions involving a *straatvoogd* reflect the statistics found in the overall sample which are summarized in Appendix I. The self-purchase cases found in the *straatvoogden* part of the sample seem to have been the cases in which no problems arose. For all cases but one both the *straatvoogd* and manumission request were approved, and letters of freedom were provided to the manumittees. Manumission through a testament or self-purchase could be precarious as the manumittee still depended on the cooperation of a former owner, *straatvoogd* or executioners of a will.⁵⁶ In the *straatvoogd* sample, only the case of *de vrije* mulattin Annaatje was more difficult and shows that although *straatvoogden* were only supposed to have one task: petition for someone's freedom, the lines between *straatvoogdschap* and other guardianships could become blurred in complex situations.

On March 15 in 1791 Hanna Isak Eliazer and Joël Gomperts approached the courts as executors of the will of Alexander Solomons with the request that at least one *straatvoogd* should be assigned.⁵⁷ *De vrije* Annaatje had bought 3 of her family members: her mother Desere, her sister Martha and brother Verdriet. As Annaatje was only 13 when they were purchased in April 1788, Salomons had acted on her behalf. It is stated that she had bought her family with the objective to manumit them. While being in the possession of Annaatje, Desere had another child named Claes. In his will Salomons specified that Annaatje should now be able to act without his guardianship. Eliazer and Gomperts request went on to request letters of manumission for Martha and *straatvoogden* for all the other family members who remain property of Annaatje.

Although Annaatje intended to free her family, it is unclear if she was able to pay the cost for the manumission of her family and therefore if it was already time to procure *straatvoogden* for them. Unfortunately, the names of the *straatvoogden* are not mentioned and the names of Annaatjes' family do not come up in the rest of the sample.

Cases such as Annaatje's show that the responsibilities of a *straatvoogd* may seem clearly defined, but in practice their involvement was not bound to just this task. The case of Elisabeth Logeman portrays that cases could also become too complicated for a *straatvoogd* to handle. On the 18th of May 1789 the lawyer W. Jungius requests to be assigned as the curator

⁵⁶ Awareness of this risk is reflected in the case regarding Fransina's freedom. Promised her freedom by her deceased owner 'she kept the statement once made by H.D. Sobre in her bosom'. Unfortunately, safekeeping this declaration did not procure her freedom in the end. NA, RvP, inv. nr. 458, scan nr. 217, folio nr. 25. Petitioner: de vrije Sara van HD Sobre. Manumittee: Fransina (1794-12-15).

⁵⁷ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 449, scan nr. 437, folio nr. 41. Petitioner: Hanna Isak Eliazar en Joel Gomperts testateurs. Manumittee: Martha (1791-03-15).

of the still enslaved Elisabeth Logeman after she approached him to do so. From his request it turns out that Elisabeth was already assigned a *straatvoogd* named David van Mori Fernandes.

Elisabeth, a black woman, was freed by the testament of her late owner a *metselaar* Jan Barend Logeman and was legated 300 guilders.⁵⁸ Logeman died a year previously to the request. His first executor Philip Stolting had since also died and left the task to his own heir J.D. Bartholomaij. According to the request, Elisabeth had already filed a complaint against Bartholomaij and he was disposed by the Council to complete the dealings of the will as soon as possible. Bartholomaij then claimed that the estate was liquidated with debt (insolvent), thus making him unable to grant Elisabeth her letters of freedom and 300 guilders. With the help of Jungius, Elisabeth wanted to fight this and her request to appoint Jungius as her curator was approved.

This situation raises the question who decided that her earlier appointed *straatvoogd* could not act on her behalf. Did Elisabeth not have faith in him? Or was he unwilling or unqualified to do so? What this case shows is that the legal dealings of the enslaved went beyond the confines of the *straatvoogdschap*, and in more complex situations *straatvoogdschap* could not solve the legal problems that arose.

Elisabeth's case portrays that for those freed by a testament the situation could be more precarious as they depended on the actions and good intentions of the person(s) who were assigned as executor of the will. Just as the earlier named Giem, *straatvoogden* were called to help when executors took too long in procuring one's freedom or seemed not to be inclined to do this at all. This made it possible for the manumittee to address the Council on their misconduct.

The request of mother Truij with her two children Primo and Adomes is an example of the difficult position families were put in. Promised their freedom through the testament of their late owner J.F. Martens, the family had remained in slavery and Truij stated that she was still expected to hand over her earnings: 'to bring in rent'.⁵⁹ J.F. Martens died in 1782, but in December 1786 the executors of his will Abraham Lemmers and A. Malmberg still had not procured the promised letters of freedom, greatly impacting the life of the family.⁶⁰ After waiting for four years, Truij decided to reach out to Gerrit Conijnenberg and on her behalf

⁵⁸ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 444, scan nr. 505, folio nr. 85. Petitioner: de negerin Elisabeth van Logeman. Manumittee: herself (1788-12-01).

⁵⁹ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 440, scan nr. 359, folio nr. 185. Petitioner: G Conijnenberg. Manumittees: Truij, Primo and Adomes. (1786-12-31).

⁶⁰ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 440, scan nr. 359, folio nr. 185. Petitioner: G Conijnenberg. Manumittees: Truij, Primo and Adomes. (1786-12-31).

Conijnenberg files a request to become her *straatvoogd* in December 1786.⁶¹ Conijnenberg's request was approved, but in both Dataset I and II no subsequent manumission request was found.⁶²

Kinship and straatvoogdschap

Among the 32 *straatvoogd* requests, eight cases or 25 per cent mentioned a bond of kinship. Four of these cases concern a mother and her children and in two cases sibling bonds are the reason for manumission. One of the two cases that reflect another bond of kinship concerns Constantie who was baptized as Lucia and who was manumitted in 1792. Lucia was manumitted with the help of *straatvoogd* A.S. Comvalius and was bought by *de vrije* Julian Venus van Maurin, who seems to have been her partner. Julian is stated to have also arranged the manumission of her/their son Louis.⁶³

The manumission requests involving a *straatvoogd* show a similar percentage, out of the 27 cases, eight of them mention kinship which is 29 per cent. Both Simga and Gabriel Judeu were manumitted as a compensation for their parents' good services to their former owners.⁶⁴ The remaining six cases are family groups, making this the most found bond of kinship in this sample. It is also this group of mothers and children that seems to have been plagued with the most trouble concerning their *straatvoogd* request and following manumission.

Fransina's path to freedom further illustrates these difficulties *straatvoogden* and the to be manumitted had to endure. On the 25th of February 1783 J.B. Weijssenbrucher petitions to become the *straatvoogd* of Fransina/Francina and her six children. Fransina and all children she may have had were granted their freedom in the testament of her former owner Laurens Johannes Wriedt, who died the 3rd of June 1769. In the fourteen years that have passed, the executor of his will, Walter Kennedy had travelled to the Republic to see if he could contest the freedom granted to Fransina and her family, but in 1776 Kennedy himself died, moving

⁶¹ Original text: 'Dat zij [Truij] nu geen Persoon in regte hebbende haar bij de Suppt hadde geaddresseerd, die den de Saak naukeurig hebbende na gegaan, ook wel heeft wille inclinere haare belangens waar te nemen. En wijle dit niet kan geschieden bevorens haars en haare kinderen een *straatvoogd* is toe gevoegd.'

⁶² Dataset I and II.

⁶³ *Straatvoogdrekest*: NA, RvP, inv. nr. 535, scan nr. 197, folio nr. 59. Petitioner: A.S. Comvalius. Manumitte: Constantie (1792-09-03). *Manumissionrekest*: NA, RvP, inv. nr. 535, scan nr. 469, folio nr. 151. Petitioner: A.S. Comvalius. Manumitte: Lucia (1792-09-01).

⁶⁴ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 423, scan nr. 433, folio nr. 211. Petitioner: Joseph Jourdan. Manumitte: Simga (1772-02) and NA, RvP, inv. nr. 430, scan nr. 45, folio nr. 15. Petitioner: Gabriel Judeu geassiteerd met David Uz. Davilar jr. als *straatvoogd*. Manumitte: Gabriel Judeu (1782-12-19).

Fransina to procure a *straatvoogd*. Up until that time Fransina and her children remained in slavery.⁶⁵

Appointed as her *straatvoogd* Weijssenbrucher petitions for the letters of freedom in the next session in May for Fransina and her six children named: Laurens Wriedt, Archibal Signeus, Charles Signeus, Jan, Peter Fransua and Hendrik. The request is denied due to an administrative error that is unfortunately not readable in the request.⁶⁶

It takes more than three years for the case to be settled. On the first of May 1786 Weijssenbrucher approaches the Council with a plea for settlement. It seems that the matter of L.J. Wriedt's estate is still ongoing, but it has become clear that the estate is solvent enough to release the family. Fransina was promised her freedom and that of her children, together with an allowance of 600 guilders a year. In their final offer Weijssenbrucher and Fransina demand the freedom of Fransina and her (now) five remaining children.⁶⁷ Instead of the allowance, they demand the house and ground that they currently live in, Weijdestraat 235. In addition, Fransina wants four slaves named Adjuba, Lea, the mulat girl Christina and the black man Adam who was promised but was exchanged for another slave as he lived on the plantation Wriedijck with his family. On top of this, the estate should cover the letters of freedom for a mulattin named Betje and her son Jacobus, together with Betje's brother Willem. As explanation the request offers the information that both Betje and Willem were the children of the deceased mulatin Marietje, who turns out to be Francina's sister. This settlement is then stated to have been approved by I.E. Becker, the heir of L.J. Wriedt.⁶⁸

Fransina's path to freedom takes the longest of all cases found in the total sample of 324 cases. It takes her 17 years to go from promised freedom to being a legally freed woman. Her long road and grievances do allow her to free not only her own children, but a whole chain of her kin.

Frequent straatvoogden

The sample contains multiple people who posed as a *straatvoogd* on more than one occasion and some of them also manumitted their own enslaved people, making them what I call frequent manumitters. Researching who these people were grants us a better understanding of how the

⁶⁵ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 430, scan nr. 513, folio nr. 240. Petitioner: J.B. Weijssenbrucher. Manumittees: Fransina and her six children (1783-02-25).

⁶⁶ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 431, scan nr. 459, folio nr. 222. Petitioner: J.b. Weissenbrucher. Manumittees: Francina and her six children (1783-05-30). In letter added behind the request Weijssenbrucher requests to be reimbursed the sum handed over to manumit the seven people as soon as possible. (Scan 463).

⁶⁷ Between the two petitions, Archibal has seemed to have died, leaving Laurens, Charles, Jan, Francois and Hendrick.

⁶⁸ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 438, scan nr. 161, folio nr. 37. Petitioner: J.B. Weissenbrucher. Manumittee: (1786-05-01).

practice of *straatvoogdschap* functioned within the free (coloured) society. This chapter will focus on their actions as *straatvoogden*.

Those who posed as *straatvoogden* on multiple occasions turn out to be *procureurs*, lawyers, clerks and other employees involved with the colonial government. Abraham Sigismundis Comvalius posed as a *straatvoogd* on three different occasions in this period and was a coloured man who served as a clerk, just as his brother Adriaan Johannes.⁶⁹ In 1786 he was randomly assigned when the black woman Betje was in need of a *straatvoogd*.⁷⁰ Jacob Alexander Blikveld posed as a *straatvoogd* on four cases and was part of a group of ‘mulatten writers’ according to Hoogbergen and Ten Hove.⁷¹ Johannes de Bijje who created a reversed chain manumission starting with himself, then his mother, followed by his grandmother also posed as a *straatvoogd* at least three times and was part of this same group of coloured clerks. Others who appear in this sample and are mentioned by Hoogbergen and Ten Hove are the *mustice* brothers Willem Hendrik and Johan Adolf Esser and the mulat Philip Samuel Hansen.⁷² These men and their manumission practices will be discussed more in depth in Chapter 6.

The connection between *straatvoogden* and manumittees therefore seemed to depend more on their clerical and judicial skills and not so much their affective connections to each other. Those looking for a *straatvoogd* were to search someone they considered to be able to do the job and properly act on their behalf. The shift from manumittees asking the Council to assign their *straatvoogd* to them, to *straatvoogden* petitioning the Council directly seems to have shifted the responsibility from the Council to the manumittee and petitioner themselves. This also suggests that *straatvoogden* or those who were able to pose as *straatvoogden* were known for these qualities and therefore sought out and referred to.

Some questions do remain about the choice for a *straatvoogd* and if there was not a financial compensation attached to fulfilling this task. In May 1792 J.J. Leijnsner functions as the *straatvoogd* for Apollo, who has approached him to fulfil this task after buying himself from his brother W.J. Leijnsner.⁷³ But in the same session, May 1792, Moses da Silva Solis poses as *straatvoogd* for one of J.J. Leijnsners former enslaved, Lucretie and her daughter Truij.⁷⁴ Why

⁶⁹ Karwan Fatah-Black, *Eigendomsstrijd: de geschiedenis van slavernij en emancipatie in Suriname* (Amsterdam: Ambo/Anthos uitgevers, 2018), 141; Hove en Hoogbergen, ‘De vrije gekleurde en zwarte bevolking van Paramaribo, 1762-1863’, 139.

⁷⁰ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 438, scan nr. 169, folio nr. 38. Petitioner: J.J. van velsen in qq als curator over de boedel van wilen H. Anders. Manumittee: Betje (1786-05-08).

⁷¹ Hove en Hoogbergen, ‘De vrije gekleurde en zwarte bevolking van Paramaribo, 1762-1863’, 139.

⁷² Dataset I.

⁷³ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 535, scan nr. 81, folio nr. 19. Petitioner: J.J. Leijnsner. Manumittee: Apollo (1792-05-29).

⁷⁴ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 535, scan nr. 63, folio nr. 15. Petitioner: Moses da Silva Solis. Manumittee: Lucretie (1792-05-21).

would Leijsner not manumit the two women if he had agreed upon their manumission already? Occurrences like these make me wonder if financial compensation was offered to those who posed as *straatvoogden*, or that this was at least a possibility. What clashes with this line of thought is that most *straatvoogden*, for example Moses da Silva Solis, stood bail for all the people he helped manumit and thereby took on an extra financial risk.⁷⁵

Conclusion

Straatvoogdschap shows that connections existed crossing the different divisions in Surinamese society that the colonial government wished to uphold and keep separated. Although the exact origination of these interactions may not always be found, their occurrence becomes clear by studying *straatvoogd* aided manumissions. Kinship played a minor role in *straatvoogdschap* when it comes to the *straatvoogd*-manumittee relationship. Families did search out *straatvoogden* after their self-purchases and due to this kinship is mentioned in 25 per cent of the requests.

⁷⁵ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 535, scan nr. 63, folio nr. 15. Petitioner: Moses da Silva Solis. Manumittee: Lucretie (1792-05-21) and NA, RvP, inv. nr. 448, scan nr. 421, folio nr. 64. Petitioner: Moses da Silva Solis. Manumittee: Benine (1790-08-30).

Chapter 3: For love and blood

This chapter will focus on the different forms of kinship that could be found in the manumission requests and thus the factor kinship played in manumissions. Those (seemingly) related by blood will be the focus of this chapter, but the definition of what can be seen as kinship will be redefined. After discussing how a second Dataset was created, this chapter will conceptualise kinship. Following, the two ways in which kinship appeared in manumission requests will be discussed. The first being the cases in which kinship was stated as a motivation for manumission. We will then focus on requests in which kinship is mentioned, but not provided as a motivation. By exploring these cases I will argue to expand the concept of ‘suspected paternity’ into ‘suspected kinship’, by including categories of manumissions extracted from my research. These categories are ‘children alone’ and ‘sales under condition’. By referencing as many key cases as possible, the complexity of the combination of kin and manumission will be portrayed.

Additional data: Dataset II

To properly trace chain manumissions throughout the time sample it was necessary to broaden the scope of research beyond the original sample years. By taking sample years, the risk of missing links within a possible chain of manumissions was too large. Therefore, a second data set of manumissions and *straatvoogd* requests was created. To create **Dataset II** all the indexes of the inventory numbers existing between the sample years were studied. These indexes give an alphabetical overview of petitioners, without specifying what kind of request it concerns. In these indexes all requests of those marked as *de vrije* or another description that might indicate a person of colour or an enslaved person were read to see if they concerned a manumission or *straatvoogd* request or another matter. This method was inspired by Fatah-Blacks work on last wills and testaments and manumissions.⁷⁶

Aside from this, the indexes were searched for 65 individuals from Dataset I identified as either manumitted themselves, frequent manumitters or for whom an existing chain was already found. The goal of this was to find more manumission cases to either be able to reconstruct chains more completely or strive for a complete overview of their involvement in the manumission process during the period. For thirteen individuals out of the 65 enough sources were found to make them the final set of ‘people of interest’ who will be the focus of

⁷⁶ Fatah-Black, ‘The Use of Wills in Community Formation by Former Slaves in Suriname, 1750-1775’.

the coming chapters. The others were less active in the chosen period, died, turned out to only manumit once or twice or no (affective) ties could be identified.⁷⁷ Doing another search on those manumitted and noted as *de vrije* in the indexes beyond the original scope of this analysis granted additional insight on the manumitted as manumitters. Dataset II includes 67 cases that manumit 101 individuals.

Kinship in slavery

As discussed in the introduction, kinship in slavery was a complex concept. Kinship ties of those enslaved were acknowledged by the hereditary nature of slavery, but simultaneously ignored and overlooked. Bonds of kinship were disregarded upon capture on the African coast or, in appalling situations even used against the captives. An example used by Morgan is when confronted with a fighting mother who was resisting capture they realized ‘they could simply take her son from her and carry him to the boat; and love of the child compelled mother to follow after it’.⁷⁸ Infants and pregnant women were brought on board of slave ships, but at the same time seen as an inconvenience or plague which more often than not lead to their death. Throughout Middle Passage and slavery, the concept of childhood was malleable as the enslaved were for example aged according to height and girls by fertility. Punishments were dealt out to the young, pregnant, and old all the same.⁷⁹

The slave trade tore apart families and slave traders resisted affirming kinship among the enslaved by leaving this information out of their records. Kinship ties emerged nonetheless through notes on childbirths, resistance and the sale of infants and children alone at the auction that followed the Atlantic crossing.⁸⁰ Both consanguineal ties, and fictive ties that had formed during Middle Passage were torn and disrupted once again through sales.⁸¹

An edict on 4 August 1782 prohibited selling children separately from their mother. Before this time, families were supposedly not sold separately out of custom, which is hard to

⁷⁷ Important to note is that the original sample of 65 was based off my sample years and therefore many interesting petitioners and/or manumitters could have been obscured from view as my perspective was based on the findings in the sample years and checking all individuals would have yielded too much information to cover in this thesis.

⁷⁸ Jennifer L. Morgan, ‘Kinship, the Middle Passage, and the Origins of Racial Slavery’ (Open Book Publishers, 2019), 197.

⁷⁹ Ramona Negrón, ‘The Enslaved Children of the Dutch World: Trade, Plantations, and Households in the Eighteenth Century’ (Research Master thesis, Leiden University, 2020), 30–35. For more information on enslaved children in Suriname see this thesis.

⁸⁰ Morgan, *Reckoning with Slavery*, 156–57. Slavery in the Americas and the fact that slave status was seen as hereditary thus created ‘[...] a labour system that always took into account the reproductive possibilities of the enslaved.’

⁸¹ Sowande M. Mustakeem, *Slavery at Sea: Terror, Sex, and Sickness in the Middle Passage*, The New Black Studies Series (Baltimore: University of Illinois Press, 2016), 200–204.

verify.⁸² It still seemed to occur regularly as in 1743 Governor Mauricius referenced this custom and enforced the prohibition.⁸³ Mauricius was not moved by compassion for the kinship of the enslaved, but feared revolts sparked by separation. At the same time, it was seen as an impediment on prospective buyers if they were only able to buy groups of enslaved instead of individuals.⁸⁴

Kinship in a state of enslavement entailed that human relationships were always subordinate to financial gain. Women and young girls were valued for their reproductive abilities, while also denied connection to their children by separation.⁸⁵ Fathers and men were even more excluded from this, and their relationships recorded even less. Proximity to the enslaver by for example working in the household could increase the importance for enslavers to acknowledge these bonds, creating sources on kinship for solely this part of the enslaved population.⁸⁶

Mustakeem argued that creating kinship in slavery should not be seen as agency or assertion of humanity. '[Historians should] grapple with the ways in which the humanity [of the enslaved] was used against them, and if, how, and when, they pitted their lives and loves and joys and anguish against the terms used by their [enslavers] to rationalize their dispossession.'⁸⁷ Denying bonds of kinship, also called natal alienation or social death by Orlando Patterson, can be seen as one of the cornerstones of slavery systems.⁸⁸ Claiming bonds of kinship in both enslavement and freedom therefore pushes the confines of hereditary slavery. Using kinship as a motivation for manumission fuelled the growth of a free coloured and black community in Paramaribo. This thesis will build on these principles of kinship in slavery and display the far-reaching influence kinship had through manumission and networks.

⁸² Brana-Shute, *The Manumission of Slaves in Suriname, 1760-1828*, 9.

⁸³ The declaration that was sent by A. der Meij as a response to the manumission request of Fransina by *de vrije Sara van H.D. Sobre* reflects on this practice with the following statement: 'separating the children from their mother and the mother from her children should not be a problem as 'this is a daily occurrence allowed by the laws of this country.' NA, RvP, inv. nr. 458, scan nr. 217, folio nr. 25. Petitioner: de vrije Sara van HD Sobre. Manumittee: Fransina (1794-12-15).

⁸⁴ Ramona Negrón, 'The Enslaved Children of the Dutch World', 37–38.

⁸⁵ Morgan, *Reckoning with Slavery*, 189.

⁸⁶ Negrón, 'The Enslaved Children of the Dutch World', 44.

⁸⁷ Mustakeem, *Slavery at Sea*, 204. Mustakeem summarizes this statement as: 205) 'Creating kinship in these conditions is to refuse the structures of commodification that undergird not just racial slavery and human hierarchy, but indeed the edifice of colonial extraction that fueled early modern capitalism.'

⁸⁸ Orlando Patterson, 'Authority, Alienation, and Social Death', in *Critical Readings on Global Slavery*, 2017, 93–104. For more research on the concept of social death and natal alienation see the complete article and publication along with Patterson's original publication: Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study*.

Kinship as a reason

The continuous mentioning of family or kinship in the manumission requests might give the impression that kinship would have been a valid reason to manumit someone, but in only thirteen cases in the original sample of 324, kinship was clearly stated as the foremost reason for manumission. It was not particularly necessary to state a reason, as can be concluded from the 91 manumissions that were allowed with no reason or motivation stated at all in the sample years.⁸⁹

The reason why kinship as a motivation for manumission is quite rare is because of the information that lies within it. By stating kinship as a reason, the petitioner is either admitting and/or revealing that they themselves are related to those enslaved, or that they care enough for the family bonds of the enslaved. Through law, relations between white colonists and the enslaved were strictly forbidden, which meant that claiming kinship was openly stating that the petitioner had previously broken this law.⁹⁰

By looking at this sample of thirteen, it becomes clear that the first circumstances apply most of the time: manumitter and manumittee are related. Out of thirteen, only J.J. Rouleau seems to not be directly related to the man he is manumitting, Frenk also known as Louis.⁹¹ Louis' mother Siemba was already manumitted and had bought him with the intention to free him but had died before this plan was executed. Asked to represent Louis, J.J. Rouleau assisted in the manumission.

In 1780, N. Guisan manumits the *mustice* girl Nanette from the plantation La Liberte. Nanette is the daughter of the seemingly still enslaved mulattin Johanna. As a reason Guisan stated that due to his relationship to the girl he is inclined to manumit her, making it very likely that he is in fact her biological father.⁹²

The eleven remaining manumissions are all petitioned for by coloured people themselves, of which eight are confirmed to be formerly enslaved, including Jan Hendrik Samson, a case which will be explored in Chapter 4.⁹³ The other three petitioners appear to be of colour, but this cannot be concluded from their names. Jan Willem Boon, a person that will also be featured in Chapter 6, manumits his own mother Nanie and his three siblings Bachus, Anna, and Maria. His motivation is that it is 'a mark on his soul that his mother and siblings

⁸⁹ Dataset I and Brana-Shute, *The Manumission of Slaves in Suriname, 1760-1828*, 361.

⁹⁰ Smidt en Lee, *Plakaten, ordonnantiën en andere wetten uitgevaardigd in Suriname, 1667-1816*, 167.

⁹¹ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 398, scan nr. 523, folio nr. 527. Petitioner: J.J. Rouleau. Manumittee: Frenk alias Louis (1767-08-10).

⁹² NA, RvP, inv. nr. 423, scan nr. 339, folio nr. 164. Petitioner: N. Guisan. Manumittee: Nanette (1780-02-18).

⁹³ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 417, scan nr. 519, folio nr. 255. Petitioner: Jan Hendrik Samson. Manumittee: Kwaaw/Quaaw (1774-04-21).

remain in slavery'.⁹⁴ D. J. Nahar also frees his own mother called Nerie out of 'filial love'.⁹⁵ Isaac Gobaij Fonseca manumits his own brother referred to as I. Naar.⁹⁶ Of the first two men it can be concluded that they were manumitted themselves but no longer referred to themselves in that way, *de vrije* has been dropped from their name, by themselves or by the clerk or Council.⁹⁷ This is inevitable as they are both freeing their own mother and by law slave status was passed down from mother onto child. These cases show how easily bonds of kinship can be overlooked.

The group formed by the other seven cases consists of women freeing their kin which is also their main motivation. Five mothers free their children: Grietje manumits Cassaar, Princes van van Meel manumits daughter Coba, Petronella van Goede does the same for both of her sons Christiaan and Pieter. Lastly, Madelon van van den Balk manumits Trompé and Hendrik, all stating a form of maternal love and affection. With the same motivation Madras van Vogel frees her granddaughter Louisa after her baptism by the Evangelical Church and Cato van Vuist frees her own sister called Alida and her cousins Cornelis and Frans.⁹⁸

These thirteen petitions manumit twenty family members and reflect a small part of all family reuniting manumissions found in both datasets.

Princes van van Meel

De vrije Princes van van Meel is an example in multiple ways when it comes to kinship and manumission. Princes herself was manumitted in 1772 by the widow of Gerard van Meel, Alida Maria Wossink.⁹⁹ She was manumitted for her long and loyal services and would be known as both *de vrije* Princes van van Meel and van Coetzee, as Alida later remarried to a man called Coetzee. Being a manumitted woman herself, Princes seemed to have worked her whole life to

⁹⁴ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 417, scan nr. 93, folio nr. 44. Petitioner: Jan Willem Boon. Manumittee: Nanie (1776-12-23). Original text: '...tot heeden eenparig in den staat der slavernij binden 't geene de suptt. in zijne seele smettelijk komt te sijn...'

⁹⁵ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 448, scan nr. 47, folio nr. 6. Petitioner: D.J. Nahar. Manumittee: Nerie (1790-05-17). Original text: '[...] kinderlijke liefde.'

⁹⁶ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 535, scan nr. 417, folio nr. 134. Petitioner: Isaac Gobaij Fonseca. Manumittee: I. Naar (1792-08-27).

⁹⁷ This practice of distancing oneself from their heritage in slavery will be discussed more in Chapter 6.

⁹⁸ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 535, scan nr. 35, folio nr. 9. Petitioner: *de vrije* Madras van Vogel. Manumittee: Louisa (1792-05-25) and inv. nr. 430, scan nr. 165, folio nr. 70. Petitioner: *de vrije* Cato van Vuist. Manumittee: Alida (1782-12-16).

⁹⁹ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 408, scan nr. 239, folio nr. 115. Petitioner: Alida Maria Wossink, weduw van Willem Gerard van Meel. Manumittee: Princes (1772-05-05).

free her unknown number of children and by doing so created a small chain manumission. In 1785 she bought her son Codjo, a skilled tailor, from Coetzee and manumitted him.¹⁰⁰

The son that followed was Lackey, although this case was more complicated and to manumit him Princes hired a lawyer to approach the courts. Lackey and another slave named Pita, were taken to the Dutch Republic by E.J. Coetzee in April 1778 and did not return until May 1780.¹⁰¹ Meanwhile, Coetzee had died, and the executors of his will were planning to sell Lackey. Thus, Princes requested letters of freedom for both Lackey and Pita in 1786 as they had been on ‘free soil’ for an extended period and both men were officially free.¹⁰² A demonstration to this request is made by C. Juliaans, the executor of Coetzee’s will. Stating that the enslaved were not taken to the Republic to be freed and that he wants time to procure evidence for this to prove his case. Furthermore, he states that *de vrije* Princes has no right to advocate for Pita as she does for her son Lackey. He writes that ‘He does not know what kind of relationship the free Princes van van Meel has or which authority she is claiming, to try and free a slave without having any right to him’. Pita, as an enslaved person should turn to a *straatvoogd* approved by the Council, not Princes, to request his manumission.¹⁰³

The Council grants C. Juliaans request and permits eight months to gather evidence, and Princes is no longer allowed to advocate for Pita.¹⁰⁴ Pita is forced to get a *straatvoogd* by this decision, while Lackey is allowed to be represented by his mother. Showcasing that Princes had (parental) authority that was recognized by the colonial government. The coloured clerk Jacob Alexander van Blikveld immediately filed a request to become Pita’s *straatvoogd*, which is allowed by the Council and Blikveld is ultimately responsible for bringing the case to a close. After eight months, Blikveld sends a bailiff to Juliaans house, where he is unable

¹⁰⁰ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 436, scan nr. 495, folio nr. 68. Petitioner: *De vrije* Negerin Princes van van Meel. Manumitte: Codjo (1785-08-08).

¹⁰¹ “Coetzee” in Dataset *Scheepsregisters* by John de Bye. <http://www.johndebye.com/scheepsregisters/schip.htm> (last visited on 22 February 2022). John de Bye has created this dataset on the information extracted by R. van Lier from the Governors Journals.

¹⁰² The article Princes’ request refers to from 23 May 1776 regulated that all enslaved people who were taken to the Republic would be marked not as free, but freed people to whom the laws of manumitted people from the colonies applied. More explanation on this matter can be found in: H. R. Jordaan, ‘Slavernij en vrijheid op Curaçao : de dynamiek van een achttiende-eeuws Atlantisch handelsknooppunt’ (Leiden University, 2012), 114.

¹⁰³ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 437, scan nr. 132, folio nr. 31. Demonstration by C. Juliaans.

Original text: ‘Den berigter qq merkt nog aan dat *de vrije* Princes van van Meel deesen vrijdom niet alleen vraagd voor haaren soon Lacquai, het welk als moeder eenigen schijn heft, maar ook voor den neeger Pita. Den berigter qq weet niet welke eene relatie deese vrije Princes van van Meel of welke autoriteit zij zig aanmatigd, omme voor een slaaf sonder dat zij eenige titul daartoe heft op te komen, aangesien aan een slaaf, vermeenende zijn vrijdom te moeten hebben, tot verdediging van zijn Recht, altoos een *straatvoogd* word gegeven, maar nimmer aan een ander vrijstaat voor denselven een verzoek tot vrijdom te doen.’

¹⁰⁴ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 437, scan nr. 137-140. Demonstration C. Juliaans.

to provide the evidence. The report states that Juliaans said: '*het is goed*', agreeing to the manumission of both men.¹⁰⁵

In 1790 Princes frees the black woman Kettie to which no kinship bond can be found, but it may be that this was her daughter called Quassie. Finally on the 16th of August 1791, Princes requests the manumission of her daughter Coba. In this request it is stated that she has become the owner of her family, existing out of twelve enslaved people, which she has bought from the estate of Coetzee at an unspecified date. Coba would be the last child she herself freed as her testament can be found in the collection of the year 1792.¹⁰⁶

In her testament Princes stated that it was her intention to free all her children, and if she had not succeeded before her death, the children that had already been freed should work to free their siblings. At the time of writing four children are named as manumitted: Quassie, Codjo, Coba and Lakeij. The testament also states that the enslaved people she still owned should not be sold under any condition, but that they should remain to work for her estate and goal: freeing her children. But as the remaining enslaved are not named, and the 1791 request claiming that she has bought twelve of her family members, it is hard to discover how many children were still alive and who owned who at that point. Princes' goal was family reunion and to accomplish this both close-kin ownership and slavery were utilised.

That family reunion was primarily an objective of the coloured community emanates from the very nature of slavery, those born free had no need to strive for family reunion unless they had involved themselves with the unfree, which was illegal. Nonetheless, white colonists who did want to free their coloured kin were less likely to state their kin relations in manumission requests than those who were themselves manumitted as can be seen from the patterns found in Dataset II. Searching the indexes for names that indicated that the petitioner was manumitted themselves resulted in a total of 90 cases of which 64 concerned the topic of manumission or *straatvoogdij*. Out of this sample 44 petitions were manumission requests and 43 per cent (nineteen cases) out of 44 stated kinship as the reason for manumission, a much higher percentage than was found in Dataset I. These nineteen manumission requests manumitted 36 people and by doing so these manumittedes who became manumitters became the start or were perhaps already part of a chain manumission.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 440, scan nr. 281, folio nr. 151. Petitioner: *De vrije* Negerin Princes van van Meel. Manumittees: Lackey (1786-12-14) and inv. nr. 440, scan nr. 271, folio nr. 145. Petitioner: Jacob Alexander van Blietveld. Manumittees: Pita (1786-12-14).

¹⁰⁶ A genealogical website mentions that Princes also freed a woman named Gratia in 1791, but this request could not be found. <https://suriname.nu/surinamezoeken/knowledge-base/de-vrije-joseph/>

¹⁰⁷ Information from Dataset II gathered from NA, RvP, indexes and requests from 1765-1795.

It was the sense of kinship that led these people to aid their kin in crossing from the enslaved part of the society to the free part and by doing so setting a process in motion. The coloured free family and the presence of coloured people in Suriname's society was greatly aided and accelerated by these manumissions and the fact that a growing amount of coloured people was able to free their kin shows an on-going development in society.

Connecting motivation to kinship

Even if kinship is not stated as the reason for manumission, the information provided in a request can indicate that kinship was the motivating factor. It was not necessary to provide the relationship a petitioner had to the people they wanted to manumit. When information on kinship is present and no other reason is stated for the manumission, an assumption can be made that kinship laid at the heart of the motivation. Petitions that do not contain a specific motivation but do provide information on kinship can be divided in two categories. The first category is made up by the 22 manumission requests from Dataset I, in which the petitioner clearly indicates their relation to the manumittee and they are related, of which thirteen were mentioned in the previous section.¹⁰⁸

The second category is what Brana-Shute conceptualised as 'suspected paternity'. In these cases, the petitioner may not refer to the person or people he is manumitting as his kin, but it often concerns women with small(er) children. Brana-Shute grants the following indicators for this: "A presumably white male freeing the children of a black or mulatto woman, the children are lighter than either the owner or the mother and the children carry the owner's name and/or the children will inherit from the owner".¹⁰⁹ It requires a lot of additional research to meet all three criteria and for not every manumittee the same amount of information is available. Nonetheless these criteria can be used as guidelines.

To go from suspected paternity to what I call 'suspected kinship', I would like to add two indicators or criteria, based on two other categories of manumissions that emerged from my analysis. The first are 'children alone', who as the name indicates are children who are manumitted without a parent, sometimes siblings. Out of 27 cases, in which 40 children are manumitted, an example is Jan Snijders who manumits four mulatto children named Johannes, Joseph, Willem, and Sara out of 'special affection'.¹¹⁰ Nowhere in the request are the parents mentioned.

¹⁰⁸ Dataset I.

¹⁰⁹ Brana-Shute, *The Manumission of Slaves in Suriname, 1760-1828*, 359.

¹¹⁰ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 424, scan nr. 747, folio nr. 235. Petitioner: Jan Snijders. Manumittee: Johannes (1780-05-09).

As was stated earlier, separating children from their mother was prohibited, first through custom and from 1782 on by law. Selling and manumitting children regardless of this can be seen as a powerful statement: ‘It signalled that children were a distinct category and were alienable from the adults, unprotected by kinship and vulnerable to loss.’¹¹¹ The relatively high occurrence of children manumitted alone found in the sample provides an interesting group of manumitters and manumittees. Manumitting a child seems to inherently mean taking on their care and upbringing, indicating a bond of (fictive) kinship. Reference to caring for their upbringing and education is mentioned in three requests.¹¹²

Finally, including this group in the category of suspected kinship is also supported by a financial argument. Historians long assumed that children were solely a (costly) burden to an estate, but research has contested this by showing that children were put to work as young as five or six and taught a trade from the ages of eight on, creating revenue for their owners.¹¹³ This confirms that non-economic motives were more important for manumission and indicates that manumitters willingly took on the care for children out of affection.

The second group or indicator I would like to add are family groups and children who are bought under the condition of being freed. These arrangements reflect a different kind of manumission process. The petitioner seems to have contacted the owner of a specific enslaved person and made a deal with them, leading to the enslaved person(s) being manumitted by a new owner. An example that combines both indicators is the manumission of a mulatto boy called Bernhard by a man called Bernhard Strijdt. As the administrator of the plantation Houthuijn, Strijdt has bought little Bernhard under the condition of freeing him. In addition, he promises to raise and educate him.¹¹⁴ Only two out of three criteria of suspected paternity are presented. Bernhard may be named after Bernhard Strijdt and because he is referred to as a mulatto boy, we can assume that Strijdt himself was white. Adding on the two new criteria broadens the scope of research on not only suspected paternity but suspected kinship. If kinship is mentioned in a request and it concerns a child alone or a sale with condition(s), kinship, either consanguineal or affectionate, is likely to be the motivational factor. Looking at the data found

¹¹¹ Morgan, ‘Partus Sequitur Ventrem’, 8.

¹¹² NA, RvP, inv. nr. 405, scan nr. 85, folio nr. 35. Petitioner: *de vrije* neger Jasmijn. Manumittee: Adjuba (1770-08-14), inv. nr. 439, scan nr. 81, folio nr. 20. Petitioner: A. C. Knispel. Manumittee: Frederik (1786-05-15) and inv. nr. 412, scan nr. 65, folio nr. 28. Petitioner: Bernhard Strijdt. Manumittee: Bernhard (1774-05-02).

Another case that explores this can be found in the thesis of Ramona Negrón in the case study of Samuel.

¹¹³ Negrón, ‘The Enslaved Children of the Dutch World: Trade, Plantations, and Households in the Eighteenth Century’, 2020, 54–55.

¹¹⁴ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 412, scan nr. 65, folio nr. 28. Petitioner: Bernhard Strijdt. Manumittee: Bernhard (1774-05-02)

in Dataset I this argumentation is supported by the fact that the group of children alone and sales with intent to free overlap and kinship is mentioned in eighteen out of the 23 cases found in the sample years indicating a connection between both groups and kinship motivated manumissions.¹¹⁵

An example of a sale under condition can be seen below to show the intricacies of these deals. These contracts or *quitanties* were originally added on to the manumission requests but were unfortunately returned after being checked by the clerks, but this one was accidentally stored instead of returned.

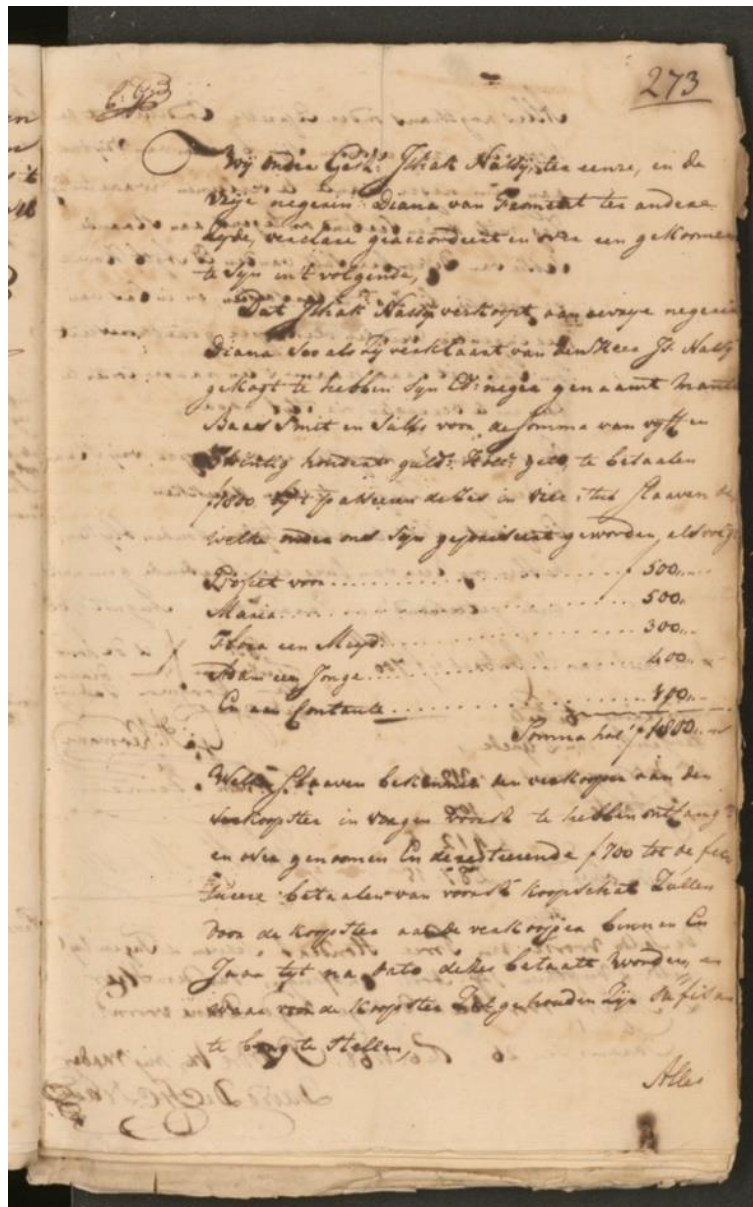


Image 1 Sale contract of Manthe by de vrije Diana van Fromant. Source: NA, RvP, inv. nr. 401, scan nr. 581-582, folio nr 272

¹¹⁵ Dataset I.

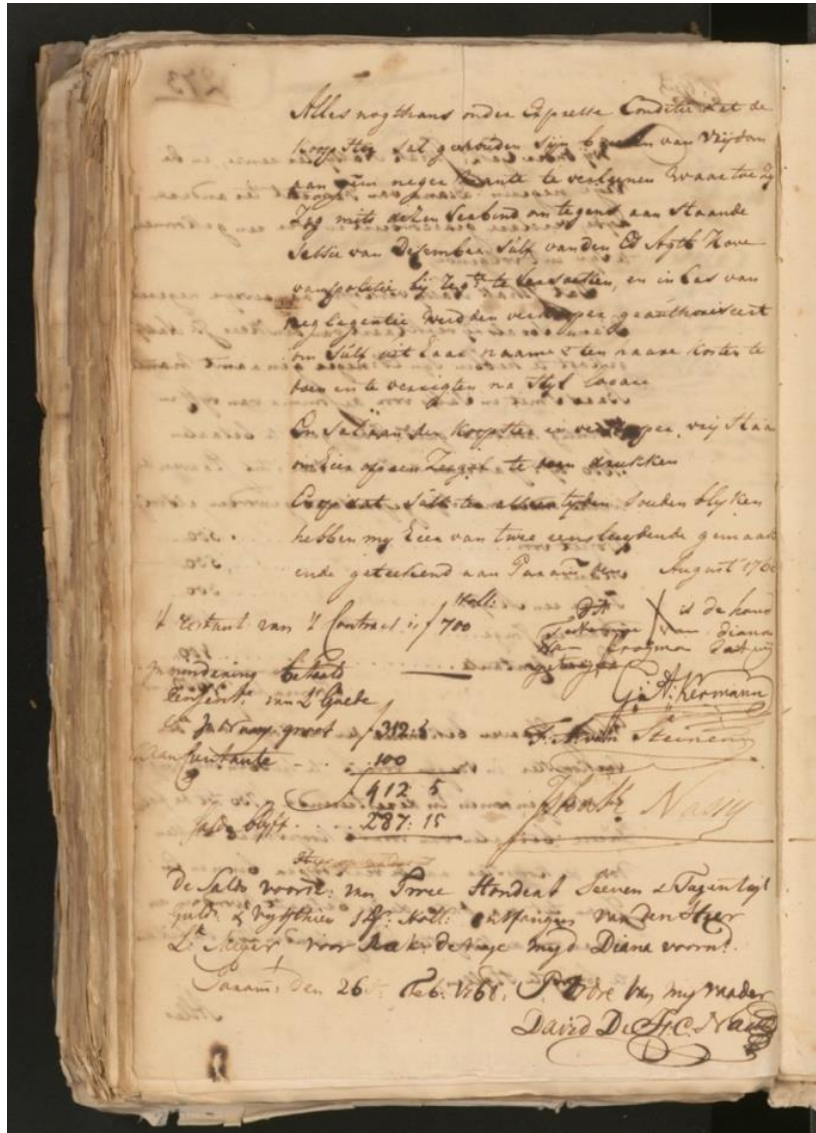


Image 2. Sale contract of Manthe by de vrije Diana van Fromant. Source: NA, RvP, inv. nr. 401, scan nr. 581-582, folio nr 272.

Although no bond of kinship could be deduced between the petitioner Diana van Fromant and the manumittee Manthe, the contract shown in Image 1 shows the lengths to which Diana went to buy and free Manthe. To first become his owner, she agrees to pay Isaac Nassij a total of f2500, of which f1700 is paid by handing over the ownership of four enslaved people called Profiet, Maria, Flora and Adam, the last two being children. The remaining sum of f800 is owed within a year but she vows to free Manthe by December's session of the Governing Council. This last part of the deal is not held up as she petitions for his letters in February, but no repercussions seem to be attached. Diana's contract shows the complexities of these arrangements and how seemingly careful the conditions were dictated.

Family groups

The manumission of family groups was the most prevalent type of manumission. Of the 107 manumissions that involved more than one person, 83 were groups of family members. Of these, 77 groups were mothers and fathers with their children. Six groups of siblings were found.¹¹⁶ Several complex cases were found in which multiple generations and even aunts/uncles and cousins were manumitted together. For 54 of these family groups at least three out of five criteria for suspected kinship are present.¹¹⁷ By manumitting a family, a manumitter acknowledged the kinship ties of the enslaved, and based on both databases women were more likely to do so: 29 per cent of family groups were manumitted by a woman, as opposed to fourteen per cent of the total of manumitters being female.

To showcase the presented concepts and categories of manumitted covered in this chapter, the following two sections will explore several examples. The first section will focus on Elisabeth Danforth. The second section will discuss the role of fathers in family groups and manumission practices.

Elisabeth Danforth

Elisabeth Danforth was a wealthy woman who owned multiple plantations in Suriname and remarried three times. Apart from wealthy, she was well connected and influential, and exploring her behaviour as a manumitter allows a glimpse at the network that will be explored in Chapter 6. Elisabeth, also known as the widow Godefroij can be connected to the manumission of at least 22 enslaved people.¹¹⁸ Of the six manumissions she initiated herself, three were family groups. Aside from these manumissions Elisabeth also sold at least seven of her enslaved people to be bought under the condition of manumission, or she agreed to self-purchase after which the person would find a *straatvoogd*. In half of the manumissions she was involved in kinship played a role. By becoming a frequent manumitter, multiple chain manumissions can be traced back to her as the first link.

Only once does Elisabeth state a motive for manumission: the black woman Desiree is freed because of the affection that Danforth felt for her.¹¹⁹ In 1776 Elisabeth manumits Amimba with her two mulatto children Francois and Posthume, and strangely enough a girl called

¹¹⁶ Dataset I.

¹¹⁷ Dataset I.

¹¹⁸ It must be taken into account that Elisabeth regularly let others act on her behalf. Manumission requests initiated by her will therefore be linked to other petitioners until more in-depth research on manumission is done.

¹¹⁹ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 417, scan nr. 397, folio nr. 201. Petitioner: Elisabeth Danforth, weduwe van Wijlen Charles Godefroij. Manumitted: Desiree (1777-02-11).

Paulina is manumitted with them although she does not seem to be related to them.¹²⁰ From this manumission a small chain manumission emerges. In 1794, *de vrije* mulattin Paulina of the widow Godefroj, manumits her mother called Cato, who turned out to be still enslaved. She had bought Cato from her old mistress on the condition of freeing her mother as soon as possible. In her request she stated: ‘she has now fulfilled the condition of this sale, made possible by the goodness of widow Godefroj’.¹²¹ The peculiar choice that Paulina was manumitted without her mother who was still alive, seems an extension of the category of ‘children alone’. This unearths a pattern that will be discussed in Chapter 5. Why were children manumitted before their parent(s) and was this part of a strategy connected to kinship?

Also manumitted by Elisabeth are Affie and her daughter Ruth in 1784.¹²² In 1793 *de vrije* Ruttie van Smit frees her daughter called Frederica.¹²³ Remarkable in the manumission request of Affie and Ruth is that Danforth stated that she has ‘given both enslaved women over to themselves’.¹²⁴ Indicating that no sale or transaction had taken place, they were allowed into freedom and Danforth cared to procure their letters. Frederica is referred to as a *mustiece* child, making her presumably under fourteen. Had Danforth allowed Ruth to take Frederica with her until she herself had been able to procure her letters of freedom? The last family Elisabeth would free herself before passing away in 1796 at the age of 83 were Willemijntje and her daughters Martina and Alida, again, no reasons are stated.¹²⁵

The sales under condition that have been found show the same kindness or at least relative generosity of Elisabeth. A.C. Knispel is given, not sold, his presumed son the *mustiece* Frederik, a son of mulattin Placi who herself seems to have remained in slavery. Again, on the condition of freeing and raising the boy.¹²⁶ Elisabeth’s kindness towards the enslaved and those affectionate towards people in bondage was also mentioned in the report written by John

¹²⁰ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 416, scan nr. 139, folio nr. 125. Petitioner: Elisabeth Danforth, wed. van wijlen Charles Godefroj. Manumitte: Amimba, Francois, Posthume and Paulina. (1776-05-06).

¹²¹ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 458, scan nr. 133, folio nr. 16. Petitioner: *de vrije* mulattin Paulina van de weduwe godefroj. Manumitte: Cato (1794-12-08). Original text: ‘Weeshalven de supliante ter voldoening aan de conditie op welk mevrouwe de goedheid gehad heeft haar moeder aan haar te verkoopen.’

¹²² NA, RvP, inv. nr. 435, scan nr. 77, folio nr. 71. Petitioner: Elisabeth Danforth, wed. van wijlen Charles Godefroj. Manumitte: Affie and Ruth (1784-12-13).

¹²³ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 454, scan nr. 291, folio nr. 46. Petitioner: *de vrije* Ruttie van Smit van de weduwe Godefroj. Manumitte: Frederica (1793-05-21).

¹²⁴ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 435, scan nr. 77, folio nr. 71. Petitioner: Elisabeth Danforth, wed. van wijlen Charles Godefroj. Manumitte: Affie and Ruth (1784-12-13). Original text: ‘[...] dat sij suppt om diverse reedene goed gevonde hebbende, haar bijde slavinne met naame Affie en haar Mulatte Dogter Ruth aan haar zelve te cederen, door welke afstand die bijde haare suppt slavinne in de possessien van den zoo dierbare schat den vrijdom zijn geraakt.’

¹²⁵ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 456, scan nr. 281, folio nr. 34. Petitioner: Elisabeth Danforth, wed. van wijlen Charles Godefroj. Manumitte: Martina and Alida (1794-02-07).

¹²⁶ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 439, scan nr. 81, folio nr. 20. Petitioner: A. C. Knispel. Manumitte: Frederik (1786-05-15).

Gabriel Stedman on his time in the colony. Apart from multiple praises of her good manner and kindness it is the widow Godefroij who offered to loan Stedman 2000 guilders to be able to buy and then manumit his beloved, enslaved, Joanna and their son.¹²⁷

Apart from suspected kinship in both Datasets only nine references are made to fathers or fatherhood. The five cases of fathers manumitting their children and by doing so denouncing this bond have been covered in this chapter or will be covered in the following chapters.¹²⁸ *De vrije Dona* manumits her granddaughter Angelica after her father, who had been taking care of her, dies in service of *het Vrijcorps*.¹²⁹ This leaves two cases. The first, father Fido, baptised as Andreas van Weederzorg in the Republic, and his son Baron. They were manumitted by Dorothea Kulenkamp through her testament. They are only father-son couple manumitted in both samples.¹³⁰ Catharina Rodriguez passing also brought freedom to Pierro, ‘with his two women’ Dorinda and Griet, and his two children Tobie and Jackie. This manumission provides insight on the varying forms of family that existed in the enslaved community, a subject which Buschkens has researched.¹³¹ This section has depicted that the acknowledgement of fathers and their ties in sources was minimal, as unfortunately expected. The following sections will give glimpses on what fatherhood could mean in manumission, but it is important to note that the absence of fathers in sources should not be interpreted as a lack of involvement.

Conclusion

By including more data and creating the concept of suspected kinship a broader perception on kinship was presented. The cases mentioned in this chapter show that the majority of manumissions indicate that family was the prerogative of these manumissions and that more manumitters than previously assumed were moved by love and affection for kith and kin. By exploring the manumission practices of Elisabeth Danforth and the representation of fathers in the sample, a more inclusive image of the concept family was created, a term normally reserved to describe white European colonists.¹³² Kinship as a motivating factor led to a significant

¹²⁷ John Gabriel Stedman, ‘Narrative of a Five Years Expedition against the Revolted Negroes of Surinam’, 1790, 385.

¹²⁸ See Index I for page numbers. In Chapter 3: *de vrije* Jasmijn and his daughter Adjuba. In Chapter 4: Tromp van Waterland and his son Adam, Jan Samson and his sons Kwauw and Dirck, Dossie and son Coffij, Quassie and his son Quassie.

¹²⁹ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 425, scan nr. 45, folio nr. 34. Petitioner: *de vrije* Dona. Manumittee: Angelica (1780-12-15).

¹³⁰ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 432, scan nr. 53, folio nr. 42. Petitioner: Adriaan Goortenaar and H.W. Talbot as executors of the will of Dorothea Maria Kulenkamp, wed. den heer N. Lemmers. Manumittees: Fido and Baron (1783-05-04).

¹³¹ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 394, scan nr. 41, folio nr. 17. Petitioner: Jan snijder, Christoffer Kraaijvanger, Jan Carel Somers en Pieter Quirenius Pinckernel as executors. Manumittees: Pierro, Dorinda, Griet, Tobie and Jackie. (1765-05-20).

¹³² Morgan, *Reckoning with Slavery*, 172; Buschkens, *The Family System of the Paramaribo Creoles*.

growth of the free coloured and black community. These free(d) people then added to the cohesion of this group by their already existing bonds of kinship that helped them pass from the enslaved to the free part of the population.

Chapter 4: Close-kin slavery

To properly understand the influence of kinship motivated manumissions on the cohesion of the free coloured population, a contrasting view must be considered. This chapter will focus on the concept of close-kin slavery, introduced by Aviva Ben-Ur. After shortly summarizing the concepts and her research methods this chapter will dive into the cases of close-kin ownership and slavery that were found in the sample. Through the example of *de vrije* Diana and Santje, the accumulation of obligations connected to both kinship and enslavement are explored.

Close-kin ownership by Ben-Ur

In her article on close-kin ownership published in 2015 Ben-Ur introduced two new concepts. The first being close-kin slavery, a situation in which kin owned kin, not with the intent to free them but to treat them as any other enslaved person with the purpose of capital gain. The second concept was elective kinship. Elective kinship was the process of (financially) favouring one family over the other, meaning some would be kept in slavery while others were manumitted. Elective kinship is compared by Ben-Ur to how white planters could choose to denounce their kinship ties to those in slavery, but only those they deemed worthy. Leading to free(d) people copying this behaviour.¹³³ Ben-Ur called us to ‘expand our understanding of how deeply capitalistic values of slavery could permeate every sector of society, including the world of those who lived in or recently emerged from bondage.’¹³⁴ Ben-Ur’s article is based on reading an unknown number of wills and testaments from the years 1792-1800. By searching for close-kin ownership from 1765-1795 more cases have been found to further investigate Ben-Ur’s concepts.

Before elaborating on the cases found in the two datasets it is important to note that close-kin ownership links together different manumission practices discussed in this thesis. Chain manumission and frequent manumitters are inherently linked to close-kin ownership, as those working to free and reunite their family were likely to purchase them themselves before manumitting them. Therefore, looking at close-kin ownership from the perspective of manumission is somewhat biased. By searching for close-kin slavery in manumission requests, we are bound to find more cases of close-kin ownership that ended in manumission. Only through conflicts will the image we have of ‘simple kin manumissions’ be adjusted to the situation of more complex and troublesome close-kin ownerships or slavery. For each of the cases of close-kin ownership in the sources I have therefore tried to find at least the testaments

¹³³ Ben-Ur, ‘Relative Property’, 23.

¹³⁴ Ben-Ur, 5.

of the ones manumitting kin, in which I succeeded for only three individuals. A digitized index of the Reformed church parish registers exists up until 1792. What could be concluded from the testaments that were found is that what close-kin owners did in life, they continued after death through their testaments, either manumitting kin or prolonging their enslavement.

Diana van Adam and Santje

Emancipatory strategies could not exist without functioning within the slave economy. A legal manumission was obtained by a financial and legal transaction, approved by the colonial government. Ben-Ur argued that this is ‘following the exploitative logic of a slave economy’, but just as with close-kin ownership, internalising the economic values behind the slave system comes in gradients.¹³⁵ The following example will depict that apart from concerns on economy and enslavement, the factor of kinship and the obligations attached to it were at the centre of close-kin ownership and perhaps slavery.

A situation that clarifies this line of thought is that of *de vrije* Diana van Adam and her daughter Santje. Conflicts about manumissions could expose strained family relationships and discussions on what kind of behaviour was justified when someone was not just enslaved but also kin, often a child of the owner. In her petition Diana stated that she has bought her daughter named Santje in 1791 from the plantation *De Drie Gebroeders*.¹³⁶ In 1794 Diana had already manumitted her son called Adam, baptized in the Jewish faith as Izaak.¹³⁷ It is likely that Diana herself is the woman who was manumitted with assistance of Dossoe Vigilant in 1786, who posed as her *straatvoogd*. In her own manumission request it is stated that Diana traded another woman into slavery on the plantation *De Drie Gebroeders*. Her guarantors were: Dossoe Vigilant and H.D. Gentillez, the man of whom Diana is *huishoudster* in 1796.¹³⁸

Diana had purchased Santje with the objective to manumit her, but Diana had loaned the sum of money to purchase Santje and unfortunately had not been able to resolve this debt, which lead to insufficient funds to procure Santje’s letters of freedom. Diana’s solution was simple: she requests Santje to work so they could pay off her purchase sum and purchase letters of freedom together.¹³⁹ But Santje refused. The petition reads that Diana ‘to her sorrow had to

¹³⁵ Ben-Ur, 4. Complete quote: Many of the cases here considered do point to emancipatory strategies, but others speak unmistakably to the key role of coercive economy in families emerging from enslavement. In both scenarios the agency of families follow the exploitative logic of a slave economy.

¹³⁶ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 461, scan nr. 323, folio nr. 40. Petitioner: *de vrije* Diana van Adam. (1796-02-08).

¹³⁷ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 458, scan nr. 161, folio nr. 19. Petitioner: *de vrije* Diana van Adam. Manumittee: Adam/Iszaak (1794-12-19).

¹³⁸ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 438, scan nr. 57, folio nr. 13. Petitioner: *de vrije* Dorsoe Vigilant. Manumittee: Diana (1786-02-13).

¹³⁹ This manumission takes place in 1796 and therefore the additional tax of 100 guilders also needs to be collected, on top of clerical costs.

experience that her daughter did not respond with the expected obedience to her natural obligation'. This natural obligation is not only compensation for the (financial) trouble Diana had gone through, but also filial obligation. The confrontation reached a boiling point when Santje 'Approached the petitioner [Diana] with malicious ingratitude, Yes! With disrespect and contempt, in such a way, that she [Santje], with the help of another, has withdrawn herself from her obligations as a slave.'¹⁴⁰ Santje left Diana's residence and when 'kindly reminded' of the sum that needed to be paid responded with 'grand insolence'.¹⁴¹

The situation was complicated by the interference of three men. The first is I. Wijnen, with whom Santje had taken up residence. When Diana was away, he spoke to Gentillez with whom Diana lived. Wijnen offered Gentillez 200 guilders to repay Santje's debt if Diana promised to acquire Santje's letters of freedom as soon as possible. Gentillez accepted the money without promising anything as Wijnen insisted and would be leaving the colony soon.

After this occurrence J.G. Waagenaar, of whom Santje is *huishoudster*, approached Gentillez with the totality of Santje's purchase sum. This led to Wijnen's anger over a broken agreement. Diana was the angriest of all, as these deals were made without her present. Diana requested the Council to force Wijnen to accept the reimbursement of the 200 guilders and then proclaimed that Santje's misbehaviour had increased, and she was already 'acting as a free person, without granting Diana any of the owed obedience'.¹⁴²

Diana's reasoning shifts from filial love to *slaafsche verplichting*, the duty of the enslaved. Where her concern first lied with her daughter, her discontent shifted to the infringement on her property, being Santje. It is a switch we will also see in the case of Jan Samson and his son Jan Hendrik in Chapter 5. Can we define this as 'coercive economy' or a reasonable expectation? The lack of obedience and consideration of her daughter leads her to no longer refer to her as her daughter, but her property.¹⁴³

Diana requests that Santje should be allowed to find a *straatvoogd*, be it Wijnen or Waagenaar, no longer showing willing to assist her daughter in gaining her legal freedom and by doing so distancing herself from both their kinship and owner/enslaved bond. Taking place beyond the scope of this analysis, it is unclear when and by whom Santje is manumitted. Upon her death Diana passes on everything to her two children Isaac and Annatje, the last most likely

¹⁴⁰ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 461, scan nr. 323, folio nr. 40. Petitioner: *de vrije* Diana van Adam. (1796-02-08). Original tekst: 'Haar suppliantte [Diana] met Snoode ondank, Ja! Met disrespect en laage verachting bejeegend, in zoo verre, dat zij ondersteund door andere zig een geruijme tijd heeft onttrokken aan de slaafsche verplichting'

¹⁴¹ Ibidem.

¹⁴² Ibidem.

¹⁴³ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 461, scan nr. 323, folio nr. 40. Petitioner: *de vrije* Diana van Adam. (1796-02-08).

being Santje.¹⁴⁴ Kin and an emancipatory strategy, even through hardship, persevered in this case.

Conflicts and ease

To collect as much data as possible on close-kin ownership the information found in Dataset II was also included in this chapter. After analysing the manumission requests, 22 cases of close-kin slavery were found in Dataset I and 18 cases in Dataset II. These ownerships only include cases in which the kinship tie is clearly stated in the request or additional documents, no cases of suspected paternity or kinship were included. Of the total of 40 cases found in both Datasets, 15 petitions in Dataset I and 17 in Dataset II are petitions that were filed and closed without conflict. The 15 first open-and-shut cases manumit 27 out of 36 individuals of the total. The 17 cases in Dataset II manumit 36 out of 37 individuals, with Santje being the only one raising conflict. This leaves nine cases in total that evolved into disputes, granting us more information on their circumstances. Moreover, this reflects the statement made by Ben-Ur, conflict did arise, but these examples seem to not be representative for close-kin ownership and manumission as a whole.

Some of the cases found in these Datasets were also mentioned in the article of Ben-Ur: Jan Samson and his son Jan Hendrik and Tromp van Waterland and his son Adam. Both cases involve a father who was legated his son so that they could teach them a trade. Ben-Ur frames this as: ‘Rewarding good slavery with slave ownership’, but it can also be seen as the opportunity to raise your own child, teach them a trade and have time to gather the means to manumit them.¹⁴⁵ As we will see in Chapter 5, there is more to the case of Jan Samson and his son Jan Hendrik than Ben-Ur discusses, especially as his other son and children are left out of her analysis. Ben-Ur’s example on Tromp van Waterland shows that he underestimated himself. Where he originally ordered his son to be purchased through his last will and testament, he was able to buy Adam and manumit Adam in 1789. According to the request Adam was part of a ‘family of enslaved people’ of which he first wanted to manumit Adam out of ‘special affection.’¹⁴⁶ Tromp went through the effort of creating a new will after manumitting Adam to assure that his assets went on to his son.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁴ NA, ONAS, inv. nr. 79, folio 14. Will of *de vrije* Diana van Adam.

¹⁴⁵ Ben-Ur, ‘Relative Property’, 22.

¹⁴⁶ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 446, scan nr. 15, folio nr. 2. Petitioner: *de vrije* Tromp van Waaterland. Manumitte: Adam Tromp (1789-05-18).

¹⁴⁷ NA, ONAS, inv. nr. 61, folio 37. Will of *de vrije* Tromp van Waterland.

Ben-Ur also mentions Amimba van Knoppomombo who orders her children to a similar path of freedom as we will see in the case of Princes van van Meel in Chapter 5. Unable to purchase all her children herself, the free children should care for those unfree, carrying what she strived for in life.¹⁴⁸ This care for kin could even span multiple generations. In 1792 *de vrije* Madras van Vogel purchases her granddaughter Louisa, with the intent to raise her.¹⁴⁹ *De vrije* Dona van van der Meij sets up a deal with her former owner Dirck van der Meij to buy her granddaughter Anselica after the girl's father Welkom had been shot in service of the *Vrijcorps*.¹⁵⁰ These cases show efforts of extended family to first of all, keep track and stay in contact with their family members, but also to go through the manumission process to care for those who were without caretakers. It demonstrates a passing kind of close-kin ownership, in which the goal to manumit might only be complicated by financial matters.

The combined datasets show nine other cases in which the manumittedes are manumitted by new owners who bought them under the condition to manumit. In order to study close-kin ownership more extensively it would be useful to discover the dates the original purchases took place, but for these cases these dates are not included in the requests. The only possible timeline that could be construed was in the manumission of Coffij and Jasmin, the sons of *de vrije* Angelica. She herself had been manumitted in the year 1760, six years later she was able to manumit her two sons who were already in her possession.¹⁵¹

The most impressive case of the dataset is that of Betje van Pardo. In 1779 she manumits nine of her family members after acquiring them from the estate after the death of her very wealthy former owner mister Pardo.¹⁵² Betje manumits her two daughters Gracia and L'Esperanze with her children Elisabeth van Hertsbergen, Johanna, Christiaan, Alida, Willem Andries and Betje.¹⁵³ Manumissions based in close-kin ownership represent the highest number of siblings and aunts/uncles found in the datasets. Cato van Vuijst manumits her sister Alida and her two children.¹⁵⁴ David Nicolaas Goede is purchased by his mother from his aunt for

¹⁴⁸ Ben-Ur, 'Relative Property', 19.

¹⁴⁹ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 535, scan nr. 35, folio nr. 9. Petitioner: *de vrije* Madras van Vogel. Manumittee: Louisa (1792-05-25).

¹⁵⁰ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 425, scan nr. 45, folio nr. 34. Petitioner: *de vrije* Dona. Manumittee: Angelica (1780-12-15).

¹⁵¹ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 396, scan nr. 335, folio nr. 163. Petitioner: *de vrije* Angelica. Manumittees: Coffij and Jasmin (1766-05-21).

¹⁵² It is unclear if Betje is given her nine family members, or if she bought them from the estate of Pardo. In 1769 Betje had already purchased and manumitted her son Tobias, baptised as Abraham Albertus Willems. In this request she states her own manumission date as 12 December 1758. NA, RvP, inv. nr. 402, scan nr. 713, folio nr. 351. Petitioner: *de vrije* mulattin Bethie (vrijbrief van 12-12-1758) van Pardo). Manumittee: Tobias (1769-08-14).

¹⁵³ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 421, scan nr. 401, folio nr. 371. Petitioner: *de vrije* Betje van Pardo. Manumittees: Gratia, L'Esperanze, Elisabeth van Hertsbergen, Johanna, Christiaan, Alida, Willem Andries and Betje (1779-02-19).

¹⁵⁴ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 430, scan nr. 165, folio nr. 70. Petitioner: *de vrije* Cato van Vuijst. Manumittee: Alida (1782-12-16).

whom he was working as a carpenter.¹⁵⁵ Cleopatra likewise manumits her sister Laura, and Quassi van Timotibo manumits his son Quassie together with his sister Aba.¹⁵⁶ *De vrije* Margot van Bedloo frees four of her siblings: Palm, Fortuijn, Claas and Adjuba claiming to be motivated by a ‘natural affection’.¹⁵⁷

These sources speak of (natural or inherent) affection, motherly love and duty, and the joy of being able to purchase and then manumit kin.¹⁵⁸ The ownership of these family members seems to be limited by economic considerations that no one could essentially escape. The absence of labour related references complicates being able to investigate close-kin slavery further as unfortunately no additional sources in the form of testaments were found that could shed light on these kinds of arrangements. The two cases that have not yet been discussed, do point at close-kin slavery and not just close-kin ownership.

The first is that of *de vrije* Dina van Stolting who in 1791 manumits her son Welkom on the condition that he must serve her for the remainder of her life.¹⁵⁹ The other is Dorothea who is manumitted by Samuel Townshend out of special affection. To fulfil the condition of bail, Townshend grants Dorothea ownership of her mother America and brother Fredrik. It is explicitly stated that their labour of both mother and son should be rented out for Dorothea’s profit.¹⁶⁰ Circumstances that seem to have been upheld until the end of the studied period. Our sample therefore yields only two cases of intended close-kin slavery.

Granting a child ownership of their parents, Ben- Ur argued, was an attempt to undermine parental authority, or a way to divide and rule enslaved families.¹⁶¹ The analysis of both Datasets I and II lead me to argue otherwise. Manumitting children instead of their parents could be seen as a strategy for turning a line of enslaved people into a family line of freed people. Parents and especially mothers were charged with the care of their children in and out of slavery and societal standards expected children to care for their ageing parents in a similar matter when they were able to do so. The case of Dorothea for example thus not directly reflect

¹⁵⁵ The reference to his trade is made to declare his bail and it is the only reference to labour that is made in these requests. NA, RvP, inv. nr. 446, scan nr. 347, folio nr. 49. Petitioner: Affiba van Ggoede. Manumittee: David Nicolaas Goede (1789-08-17).

¹⁵⁶ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 413, scan nr. 5, folio nr. 2. Petitioner: *de vrije* negerin Cleoptara. Manumittee: Laura (1774-08-17) and NA, RvP, inv. nr. 415, scan nr. 25, folio nr. 23. Petitioner: de neger Quassi van Timotibo. Manumittees: Quassie and Aba (1775-12-19).

¹⁵⁷ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 442, scan nr. 381, folio nr. 56. Petitioner: *de vrije* Margo van Bedloo. Manumittees: Palm, Fortuijn, Claas and Adjuba (1787-08-23).

¹⁵⁸ Dataset I and II.

¹⁵⁹ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 453, scan nr. 169, folio nr. 62. Petitioner: *de vrije* Dina van Stolting. Manumittee: Welkom (1791-12-06).

¹⁶⁰ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 424, scan nr. 155, folio nr. 59. Petitioner: Samuel Townshend. Manumittee: Dorothea (1780-05-23).

¹⁶¹ Ben-Ur, ‘Relative Property’, 15–17.

a ‘coercive economy’. Instead of handing their earnings over to their owner, America and Fredrik were now working to support a family they were part of. As Morgan argued in her book, we must continue to consider the capacity of women and mothers to understand that ‘the market would forever undermine Black people’s social connections.’¹⁶² And if not undermine, always influence. Morgan referred to Marshall Sahlings who concluded that kinfolk are ‘persons who belong to one another, who are members of one another’.¹⁶³ Although close-kin slavery certainly existed, close-kin ownership can definitely be seen as an extension of this belonging.

In his research on close-kin ownership in the wills and testaments of freed people in Paramaribo 1750-1775 Fatah-Black concluded that close-kin ownership mainly functioned as an emancipatory strategy and last wills and testaments were an important tool in aiding the development of a free coloured society and their property.¹⁶⁴ He also touches on the subject of giving children and/or enslaved people to others with the objective to be of service or care for kin. His findings combined with Ben-Ur’s ideas on close-kin slavery shed a different light on the children who were manumitted alone and discussed in Chapter 3. These children might have been manumitted only in name for the remainder of their childhood but were provided and cared for. Or if they were charged to service another, that household would be (legally) conditioned to reward their service with manumission. We should consider these arrangements close-kin slavery, as children were forced or expected to work for their education and upbringing. Fatah-Black concludes his paper with a conclusion that perfectly reflects the findings of this chapter: ‘The freedmen use of slavery was not simply the permeation of capitalistic values among the formerly enslaved, but was one of the options when trying to protect kin or other dependents.’¹⁶⁵

The different gradients or forms of close-kin ownership and close-kin slavery depicted in this chapter lie closely to what Patterson argued on the existence of different modes of release.¹⁶⁶ Where some enslaved people ‘achieved full manumission at once, others attained it over time, still others remained for the rest of their lives in a twilight state of semi manumission.’¹⁶⁷ This is clearly present in close-kin ownership and slavery situations. In these arrangements, kin - as owner - was able to determine what the exact arrangement would be, and

¹⁶² Morgan, *Reckoning with Slavery*, 171.

¹⁶³ Morgan, 247.

¹⁶⁴ Fatah-Black, *Eigendomsstrijd*, 638–39.

¹⁶⁵ Karwan Fatah-Black, ‘The Use of Wills in Community Formation by Former Slaves in Suriname, 1750-1775’, *Slavery & Abolition* 41, nr. 3 (2020): 637.

¹⁶⁶ Patterson distinguishes seven types throughout the slaveholding world: postmortem, cohabitation, adoption, political, collusive litigation, sacral and purely contractual. For more on this see Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death*, 219–39.

¹⁶⁷ Patterson, 219.

which factors or actions would lead to the initiation of manumission. A different ‘mode of release’ was connected to the expected outcome of manumission. Diana set her daughter free to go wherever she wanted, while Diana van Stolting intended to keep her son Welkom close. The legal system of Paramaribo enabled these partial or conditional manumissions, confirming the power of the owner over their manumittee, in these cases kin, no matter what ‘mode’ of manumission was promised.

Conclusion

Close-kin slavery certainly existed in Paramaribo, but without conflicts arising it is hard to assess on which scale. The analysis depicted here shows that most close-kin ownership existed out of an intent to manumit, which not all owners were able to succeed in. As we saw in previous chapters, testamentary manumissions were procured by the executors of wills, but not all of them were willing and in many cases the estates were insolvent. In future research of close-kin slavery, wills and testaments should always be cross referenced with the manumission requests, to see who was manumitted, when and under which conditions. Furthermore, research on close-kin slavery is complicated by the lack of documents describing the labour circumstances of privately owned enslaved people.

Another cause for caution in close-kin slavery research is the wording in the sources, on which Ben-Ur bases her cases of close-kin slavery. Documents that speak of lifelong service, and ‘a good slavery’ should be interpreted carefully. As explained in the introduction, the dictation of wills and testaments and requests were translated from Sranan Tongo to Dutch by clerks of the colonial government. The documents were then read back to verify their contents to the petitioners, but again in Sranan Tongo, leading to an unawareness of the petitioners of the exact wording in Dutch and how their intentions were summarized in the language of the government.

Chapter 5: Chain manumissions

When the manumitted become manumitters themselves, a chain of manumission can be created. The more manumitted pass on the gift of freedom to others, the longer these chains will become. This chapter will explore three chain manumissions, started by Jan Hendrik Samson, Tingie van der Son and Dossoe Vigilant. These three different chains represent the variety in manumission practices than can be found in the sample, and further develop the findings on concepts as kinship and close-kin slavery as discussed in previous chapters.

To interpret these chains more systematically they are divided into levels. In this, level 0 is the first manumitter/petitioner, who is most likely free born and/or white. The following levels translate to how a manumitted is away from the initial manumission. In these chain manumissions and the cases surrounding them, an image emerges of the layered expectations and responsibilities of families who were transitioning from slavery into freedom.

When the expectations connected to relationships of kinship fail, those manumitted and enslaved fall back on the authority and responsibility that owners had over their enslaved property and the obligations of the enslaved towards their owners. This is then used to either argue for, or against granting someone the status of freedom.

De vrije Jan, Jan Hendrik and Dickie Samson

De vrije Jan Samson was a man who was once owned by the widow Hester Moll, born Adamse. It is unknown when Jan was manumitted himself, as Hester Moll, later remarried as Welman, died in 1757.¹⁶⁸ Most likely someone acted on behalf of Hester, which makes the request hard to locate. However, one of Jan's own demonstrations suggests that he was manumitted after her death, at which time he was also granted the ownership of his son Kwauw. Unfortunately, Moll's testament was not handed down. The chain of manumission that goes from *de vrije Jan* Samson, as the level 1 manumitted, can be seen in Image 3 below.

¹⁶⁸ Index Suriname: Gereformeerden (1.05.11.16), Doop-, trouw- en begrafenisregisters. Originele bron: Algemeen Rijksarchief Den Haag (ARA), Oud archief Burgerlijke Stand Suriname, inv.nr. 9, kerkboek 1688 - 1730 (Paramaribo) and inv. nr. 35, page 10.

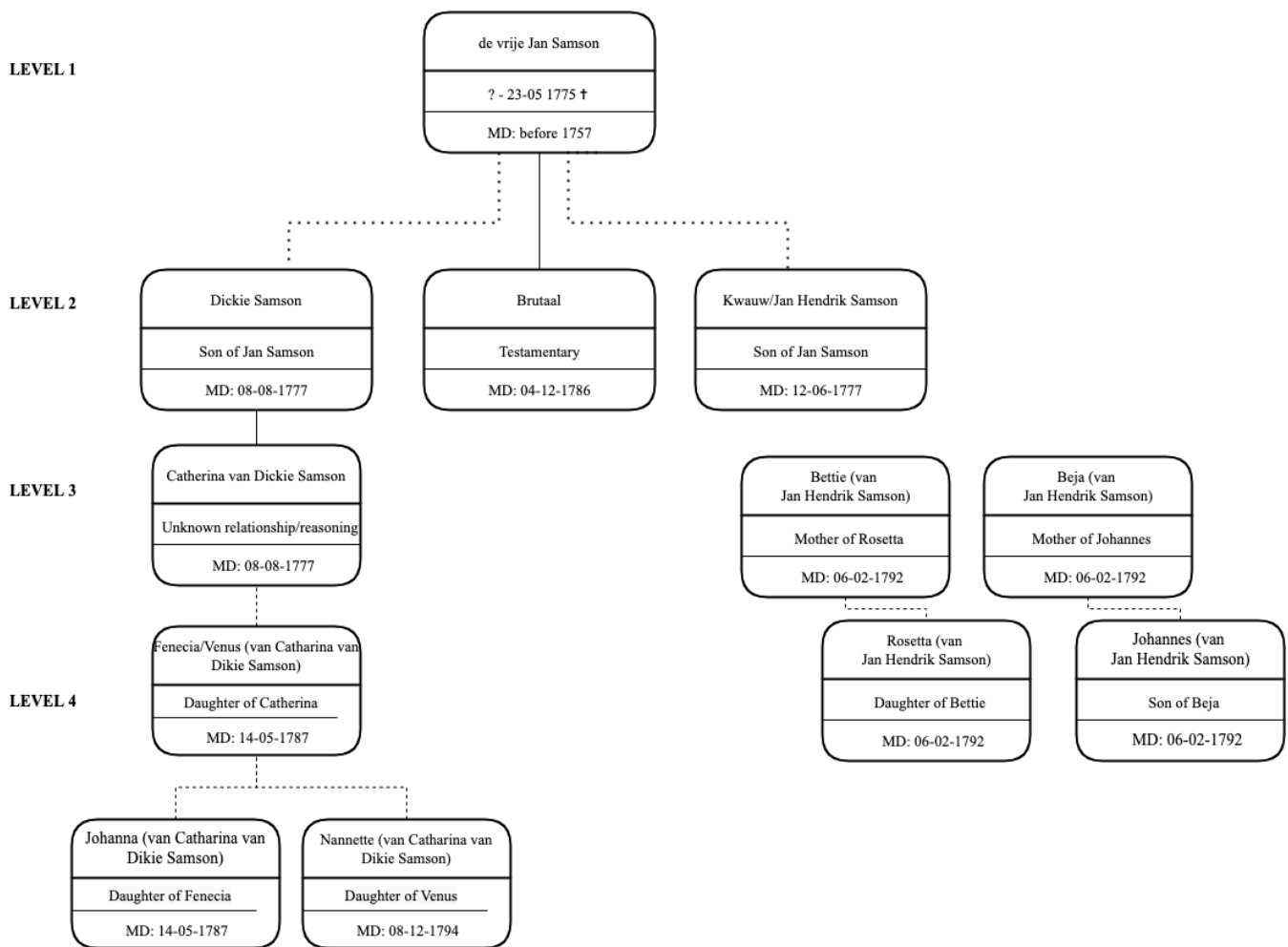


Image 3 Chain manumission diagram de vrije Jan Samson. (Source: Dataset 1 and 2).

The manumissions that can be seen in level 2 in Image 3 are all testamentary manumissions commissioned by Jan Samson. Unfortunately, the original testament is lost as Jan Samson died on 23 May 1775 and not all testaments of this year have been preserved. With the help of Dirck van der Meij, both Jan's sons: Dickie and Jan Hendrik (Kwauw) petition the courts for their freedom. But the requests and multiple declarations show that Jan Hendrik had already petitioned for his freedom back in 1774.

The case of Jan Hendrik is used by Ben-Ur as an example of close-kin slavery, and through this case she argued that elective kinship influenced family bonds and solidarity. Ben-Ur stated that Jan 'picked' or elected certain family members worthy of freedom and excluded others. Strangely enough Ben-Ur referred to the testament of Jan without a reference, giving the impression that she bases her conclusions on the partial summary provided by Dirck van

der Meij in one of the requests.¹⁶⁹ By only reviewing Jan Hendrik's case, Ben-Ur missed the broader perspective on this family.

To summarize, Jan Hendrik was given to his father at the time of his manumission. Samson argued that he was given ownership of his son by widow Moll for two reasons. Firstly, it would assure that Jan Hendrik would care and support him for the remainder of his life and secondly, it would allow Jan to raise his son, while simultaneously teaching him the trade of carpenter.¹⁷⁰ Jan promised his son his freedom at an undefined date, which becomes a problem when Jan Hendrik leaves for the Republic in 1772 'out of love for the Christian religion'.¹⁷¹

In his original case in 1774 Jan Hendrik argued that because he was baptized and promised freedom, the Council should grant him his letters of freedom. His father clearly disagrees and wants Jan Hendrik, who he consistently refers to as Kwauw, to return to his sonly duties: to provide and care for his aging father. As Jan Hendrik had refused this, Samson resorted to hiding his Dutch proof of baptism and collected his son's wages behind his back as he was still officially enslaved. The core of this conflict lied in the grasp that Jan wished to have over his son. If he would not provide for his father out of filial love, he would be forced to do so as an enslaved person with limited free will.

Jan Samson's response to Jan Hendrik's 1774 request argued just that: according to him, his sons' accusations of him being a bad father were despicable. He reasons that Jan Hendrik is obliged to care for him, since Kwauw was legated to him for this purpose: he was specifically raised and cared to serve Jan Samson and on top of that, Kwauw was still enslaved and therefore duty-bound to do so. The Council mandated that Jan Hendrik must serve his father until his death. Eventually, his letters of freedom were provided in 1777 at his own cost.¹⁷²

Jan's other son, Dirck, too was involved in a complicated matter - one might say once again of Jan Samson's making. In his testament Samson made Dirck or Dickie, his freeborn son, his universal heir. But upon sorting through his testament and belongings, executor van der Meij was not able to find proof that Dickie's mother, Bettie, was ever manumitted. All the executors had found was a signed note by Samson that Bettie was freed, making her a *piki nyan*,

¹⁶⁹ Ben-Ur, 'Relative Property', 21–26.

¹⁷⁰ Jan Samson was both carpenter and made tent boats for a living, which was recognized as two separate trades.

¹⁷¹ 'Jan Hendrik Samson' in *Scheepsregisters*, 'NA, RvP, inv. nr. 417, scan nr. 519, folio nr. 255. Petitioner: Jan Hendrik Samson. Manumittee: Kwauw/Quaauw (1774-04-21).

¹⁷² NA, RvP, inv. nr. 417, scan nr. 563, folio nr. 232. *Memorie by de vrije mulat Jan Samson on the request of Kwauw. (1777-05-15).*

an unofficially freed woman. The Council's data also did not possess proof of this, making both Bettie and Dickie officially of enslaved status.¹⁷³

The matter was complicated further by the fact that the estate was in debt and Jan Samson had ordered that his house and enslaved people could not be sold. In order to manumit Dickie, a bargain was struck. Before passing away, Bettie had another son, who, following Bettie's status, turned out to be still enslaved. To raise the money needed to manumit Dickie and for him to take on his role as universal heir, his half-brother was sold at a public auction. No name is provided for his brother, but this seems to mean he was (re-)enslaved after living in a previous state of freedom.¹⁷⁴

Catharina van Dikie Samson

Both Dickie and Jan Hendrik went on to become manumitters themselves, creating a level 3 in this chain. It is in the fourth level of this chain that the issue of parental obligation was raised again. In 1775 Catharina van Dikie Samson approached the Council on behalf of her daughter Venus and her unnamed granddaughter.¹⁷⁵ Barend Quassie den Loester was the father of her daughter, and she claimed that the now deceased Dikie Samson had sold Venus to Barend for 500 guilders under the condition that he would manumit her. Dikie even discussed the matter with Catharina, and she had agreed to this. At the time of writing Catharina had discovered that Barend, in her opinion, was not behaving 'as a father should' and that 'without knowledge of her, the mother of Venus, he was offering and bargaining to sell Venus and her daughter'. According to Catharina this was not only against the laws of the colony but against the natural duties of a parent towards their children.¹⁷⁶

Catharina then proposed three possible solutions for her problem. The first was that Barend would be forced by the Council to honour his agreement and manumit Venus and her daughter. If that was not possible, Catharina wants to buy Venus and her daughter for f500 from Barend, so she could manumit them herself. If the Council did not agree with this, she

¹⁷³ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 417, scan nr. 463, folio nr. 232. Petitioner: Dirck van der Mey. Manumittee: Dirk (1777-05-15).

¹⁷⁴ Ibidem.

¹⁷⁵ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 413, scan nr. 917, folio nr. 482. Petitioner: *de vrije* negerin Catharina van Dikje Samson. Manumittee: Venus (1775-05-21). All information on this case is based on this request.

¹⁷⁶ Ibidem. Original text: 'Egter al nu ontwaer komt te worden, hij daer van is afwijkende en gantschelijk met sijne dogter, niet en handelt soo als een vader betaemd te doen, alsoo hij buijten kennis en weeten van de supt. als moeder van voorn Venus weetende deselve met haar dogtertje op een clandestine wijze te koop presenteert aen particuliere lieden en ook daar omtrend eenige onderhandeling is maakenden. En dewijle diergelijke weederzegtelijks en ongepermitteerde menees sijn strijdende teegens de geusiteerden wetten, placaten en de natuurljke pligten van ouders, ten opsigten hunne kinderen, 't gunt ook met eerbied gezegd ten hoogste corrigibel is.'

wanted both Venus and her child to be officially taxated or *gepriseerd* and she vowed to pay whatever this price was.¹⁷⁷ Whatever the Council would choose, she pleaded that at least Barend should be forbidden to sell them until the matter was solved.

Barend's response was the opposite of Catharina's. In her request, we see that for her the kinship to her daughter and grandchild were the main motivation. Moreover, she felt betrayed by the father of her child. Her relationship to Barend in this was secondary and it seems they were no longer involved.¹⁷⁸ Catharina trusted both Dikie and Barend that this deal would assure the freedom of her child. With her father, Venus was assured to be only enslaved in name. The sale to her father was temporary and conditional step to freedom.

Barend simply stated that he would not engage in speculation, whether Venus was his child or not. In other words, he refused to claim or acknowledge her as his kin, making his following line of argumentation even more remarkable: 'If the black woman Venus is a daughter of the petitioner or not (yes or no), the contrary can be claimed as none of her behaviour or actions comply with what is owed by children to their parents.'¹⁷⁹ He went on to argue that he had a 'quitantie' of his purchase and that he indeed had offered to sell Venus and her mulatto daughter for more than the originally paid 500 guilders. His rebuttal to the promised freedom of Venus was that 'if she had wanted to benefit from this, she should have adjusted her way of life to this'.¹⁸⁰ What Barend meant exactly remains unclear, but he mentioned that she has caused him great sorrow daily. Based on her rudeness and the fact that she had not handed over her earnings in a year, she did not deserve her promised freedom.

Barend refused to take the 500 guilders or agree to taxation as Catharina had acted dishonestly. Furthermore, the price of 500 guilders was outdated and not enough to cover the costs of Venus and her daughter, especially factoring in the hardship they had caused Barend.

¹⁷⁷ Official assessors, appointed by the colonial government, estimated the market value of the enslaved through so called *prisaties*. The price that was dictated by them was seen as final and was based on factors such as age, health, gender, skin colour and skills.

¹⁷⁸ For research on the longevity of relationships in the free coloured and black community, and their different forms see amongst others: Willem F.L. Buschkens, *The Family System of the Paramaribo Creoles*, 1974.

¹⁷⁹ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 413, scan nr. 925, folio nr. 486. Petitioner: Barend Quassie den Loester. Manumittee: Venus (1775-05-21). All information on this case is based on this request. Original text: Off de negerin Venus een dogter van den berigter is (jaa dan neen), 't contraer van dien word deeser seijds gesustineerd alsoo de handelingen van haar in geen en deelen over een komen (met soodaningen) als kinderen aan ouders verschuldigd zijn nogthans, 't zij hoe het zij: genoeg is 't dat den berigter ten evidenste met quitantie kan bewijzen haar te hebben gekocht; gelijk sulks bij requeste ook werd erkend.'

¹⁸⁰ Ibidem. Original text: 'Wat het geposeerde aangaat; naamelijk dat den berigter bij 't aangaan der koop beloofd soude hebben; aan haar Venus, den schat den vrijheid te sullen schenken, doen ten deesen in geene deele tot de saak; aangesien ingevalle sulks de waarheid was (en) hadde zij daar van willen profiteeren soo hadde zij zich een gansch andere levenswijse moeten voeren; maar geensints den berigter daagelijks het grootste verdriet aandoen, gelijk den berigter in waarheid betuijgd; soo noopens haar lasteringe als noopens haar maandelijkse vastgestelde weeks off maands gelde; gerekend circa een jaaren daar aan niet te voldoen.'

He argued that the malicious actions of Catharina had forsaken any kind of reason with him, as he was never approached in a kind and reasonable way.¹⁸¹

Barend's rebuttal is remarkable in many ways. It is one of the rare occasions that a (suspected) father figure is included in a case on manumission. As slavery was passed down matrilineally and women were more likely to be manumitted, more women in turn posed as manumitters, especially for children.¹⁸² Research also points at the family life of the enslaved to be more maternally focused, but this can also be influenced by the fact that fatherhood in the enslaved and free coloured and black population was rarely acknowledged by the colonial government.¹⁸³ An example is the law on selling children apart from mothers that was discussed in Chapter 3. Nowhere are fathers mentioned even though there are examples of fathers being involved in their children's lives.

The argumentation used in Barends letter uses kinship as a matter of reasoning even though he never claimed Venus as his daughter. He simply pointed back to her behaviour being despicable or unworthy of freedom. In the first argument he referred to her obligations as a daughter, but his later argument referred to her obligation as a slave. His argument on sorrow seems more emotional, while his claim that she had never handed over her earnings was pointed centrally at the obligation of the enslaved towards their owner, creating an economical argument. Suggesting that if she had handed over her earnings, perhaps he would have been able to free her, even though he did not state this explicitly.

The rude, dishonest, or 'malevolent' ways of both Catherina and her daughter Venus are the core of his letter, making them both unworthy of a gift only he could bestow upon them. It therefore seamlessly joins in with the overarching ideology that manumission or freedom is a gift one must be worthy of, or it will be taken away.¹⁸⁴

It is a line of argument the Council agreed with, although no notes were made in the minutes of the Council on this case.¹⁸⁵ Barend was not ordered to relinquish or sell Venus and her daughter to Catharina for any price as Catharina had hoped. A manumission request dated 1787 provides us the ending of this story. From J.J. Rouleau Catharina has bought her daughter Fenisie or Fenisia, a likely alternative spelling for Venus(sie), and her mulatto granddaughter

¹⁸¹ Ibidem.

¹⁸² Dataset I and II.

¹⁸³ Buschkens, *The Family System of the Paramaribo Creoles*.

¹⁸⁴ Robin Blackburn 'Introduction', in: Brana-Shute en Sparks, *Paths to Freedom*, 8–9. and Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death*.

¹⁸⁵ NA, RvP, inv.nr. 90-94.

Johanna and she manumitted them out of motherly love.¹⁸⁶ Barend chose to sell Venus and her daughter Johanna and until then they were held in slavery, possibly away from kin.

Tingie van der Son - strategic manumissions

Smaller chains such as those that originate from Tingie van der Son and Dossoe Vigilant show highlight affective connections more than kinship. The rising number of (freed) coloured people in the sample suggests that those who were manumitted, were more likely to manumit and these chains show that although the first or level 0 manumission was often motivated by kinship, the following manumissions were not.

Tingie van der Son was manumitted alongside her mother Wollie in 1766. Wollie was referred to as an *Indianin*, an indigenous woman, and her daughter Tengee a *carboekel mulattin*. The testament of the late J.G. van der Son legated them their freedom because he had taken them to the Republic while he was alive and to reward their loyal service.¹⁸⁷ The *scheepsregisters* indeed show that Wollie and Tingie were taken to Amsterdam on the 6th of April 1759, without stating a return.¹⁸⁸

Twenty years after her own manumission, Tingie began to manumit people herself. In 1786 she freed a mulatto girl Kea as compensation for the loyal services of her mother.¹⁸⁹ In 1788 Tingie manumitted a family group of 3 from the very own plantation she herself likely belonged to: Tout Lui Faut. This plantation was owned by the der Son family, making a (fictive) kinship tie between Tingie and this family group likely. Willemeijntje, Damba and her son Willem were bought from the plantation under the condition that Tingie would free them as soon as possible.¹⁹⁰ Four years later in 1792 Tingie manumitted another black girl called Jeanneton, once again for the loyal services of her mother.¹⁹¹

Manumitting a child on behalf of the services of an elder family member occurs eight more times in Dataset I. These children are an addition to the group of children who were manumitted alone as discussed in Chapter 3. Based on these cases found in both Dataset I and Dataset II, I would like to introduce the concept of the strategic manumission of children. To

¹⁸⁶ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 442, scan nr. 251, folio nr. 37. Petitioner: *de vrije* Catharina van Dikie Samson. Manumittee: Fenecia and Johanna (1787-05-14).

¹⁸⁷ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 397, scan nr. 483, folio nr. 461. Petitioner: Samuel van Heijst on behalf of Marie Anna Pieteron. Manumittee: Wolli and Tengee (1766-12-09).

¹⁸⁸ 'Wollie en Tingie' in *Scheepsregisters*.

¹⁸⁹ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 439, scan nr. 123, folio nr. 30. Petitioner: *de vrije* cabougerin Tingie van der Son. Manumittee: Kea (1786-05-24).

¹⁹⁰ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 445, scan nr. 263, folio nr. 35. Petitioner: *de vrije* Tingie van der Son. Manumittee: Willemeijntje, Damba and Willem. (1788-08-14).

¹⁹¹ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 453, scan nr. 451, folio nr. 160. Petitioner: *de vrije* Tingie van der Son. Manumittee: Jeanneton (1792-02-22).

manumit younger members of the family meant that they were able gather money to free the others. More importantly, it would also put a stop to passing on the status of slavery within the family. especially when (young) women were manumitted as slave status was passed down through the maternal line. The mother of the first free born of the family might be seen as the tipping point for enslaved kin: a lifeline to freedom. Freeing a child as compensation for the work of another family member enforces this line of thought. Just as pregnant women like Benine were manumitted before they gave birth, the manumission of children on behalf of their parents shows the strategic nature that could lie behind kinship motivated manumissions.¹⁹² These manumission in turn increased the cohesion between free(d) and enslaved people, although families initially would remain split by the status of freedom.

Coming back to Tingie, in 1795, Aurora and a small boy named Gerardus were manumitted for no specific reason.¹⁹³ Although there are no direct kinship ties going from Tingie as a manumitter to her manumittees, it is obvious that through her manumission Tingie showed her acknowledgement of kinship and the consequences this would have. Manumitting these children meant giving them and their kin an opportunity at a life of freedom. Freeing a young child, especially a girl, might be a better strategic choice for family reunion than freeing a mother. After 1788, children were 50 guilders cheaper to manumit and if they had acquired a skill, they themselves could work to free their parents.¹⁹⁴ In the case of young children, it is likely that the children would remain in the same household and would perform the same duties - but now in 'official' freedom or as Patterson called it partial manumission.

Dossoe Vigilant

De vrije Dossoe Vigilant was manumitted at an unknown date by an unknown owner, but what is found on his lifeway creates perspective on kinship and points at the networks that will be discussed in the next chapter. Dossoe's first manumission in 1773 was his son called Coffij. Dossoe bought Coffij from M.A. Du Maurin under the condition of manumission upon Maurin's death.¹⁹⁵ In 1786 Dossoe posed as *straatvoogd* for the black woman Diana, who was discussed in Chapter 4. His connection to her also means that he is connected to her chain

¹⁹² NA, RvP, inv. nr. 448, scan nr. 195, folio nr. 30. Petitioner: Moses Da Silva Solis. Manumittee: Benine (1790-08-09). Manumitted in August 1790, Benine baptized her freeborn son David Da Silva Solis on 24 October 1790.

¹⁹³ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 459, scan nr. 25, folio nr. 2. Petitioner: *de vrije* Tingie van der Son. Manumittee: Aurora (1795-02-23) and inv. nr. 461, scan nr. 41, folio nr. 606. Petitioner: *de vrije* Tingie van der Son. Manumittee: Gerardus (1795-12-29).

¹⁹⁴ Negrón, 'The Enslaved Children of the Dutch World', 55.

¹⁹⁵ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 411, scan nr. 9, folio nr. 2. Petitioner: *de vrije* Dossoe. Manumittee: Coffij (1773-12-21).

manumission.¹⁹⁶ A year later in 1787 Vigilant manumitted two young boys named Abraham Johannes Petrus and Frederik, bought under the condition to free them. Their guarantor is *de vrije* Felieda van Mementon.¹⁹⁷

An interesting request of Dossoe from 1785 grants us insight on his life, property and perhaps priorities. Due to a growing inability to pay his creditors, Dossoe asked the Council for a *hypotheek* on two of the houses he owns, located in the Jodenbreestraat and Gravenstraat. The explanation of his misfortune was that he has had to deal with dwindling profits of his unknown profession and that he cared for his elderly mother who was unable to due to old age and sickness. His son was not mentioned in the request, but Dossoe was granted a loan of 3000 guilders to pay of his creditors.¹⁹⁸ The later manumission requests show that he must have regained his earnings.

Conclusion

Chain manumissions tie together a variety of manumission practices and show that (fictive) kinship was often the first incentive, after which other ties motivated following manumissions. Dossoe's manumissions might be compared more to oil spreading than a chain. His manumission practices spread out into society and linked into other chains such as that of Diana, once again showing the cohesion between part of the free coloured community and those living in slavery.

This chapter has also argued on the complexity of kinship as a motivational factor for manumission. As was explored more fully in Chapter 4 on close-kin slavery, bonds of kinship can be interpreted in multiple ways and did not bring relief or freedom to all. Aside from this, ideas of obedience and indebtedness not only in means of slavery but also in ways of kinship influenced if and when 'the gift of freedom' was bestowed on others, even more so if it was deserved.

¹⁹⁶ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 438, scan nr. 57, folio nr. 13. Petitioner: *de vrije* Dorsoe Vigilant. Manumittee: Diana (1786-02-13).

¹⁹⁷ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 442, scan nr. 417, folio nr. 61. Petitioner: *de vrije* Dossoe Vigilant. Manumittee: Abraham Johannes Petrus and Frederik (1787-08-31).

¹⁹⁸ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 435, scan nr. 157, folio nr. 150. Petitioner: Dossoe Vigilant.

Chapter 6: A network emerges

This chapter will focus on how the factors kinship and closeness to the colonial system influenced manumissions. Rosemarijn Hoefte argued that ‘The importance of family networks in obtaining freedom, protection and assistance is unmistakable.’¹⁹⁹ Yet, little research has been done on these family networks that reach beyond the standard definition of kinship. Ellen Neslo stated that the overall group of manumitters was not a socially cohesive group, but I will argue that although the entire body of manumitters was not connected, connection was at its heart.²⁰⁰ Moreover, I will argue that more connection between those living at the margins and those living in the colonial elite existed than expected.²⁰¹ To do so eight out of the thirteen people who were selected as people of interest have been researched more in depth. Their lives and interaction with the system and manumission will be sketched to uncover a part of the network that existed within this society.

What frequent manumitters display is that once one started to manumit, it could become a habit or reoccurring practice. Either because one was recognized as an ally or familiar with the process, or because they supported the idea of manumission for reasons such as kinship or compensation. Their own freedom was granted on behalf of kinship, but their following manumission practices represent a tipping point. The manumissions they request increasingly become community motivated manumission instead of kinship motivated. This chapter will use the conclusions of the previous chapters to build this expanding network on.

The core group of manumitters

The following eight frequent manumitters were part of the thirteen people of interest that were selected for this analysis as discussed in Chapter 3. In previous chapters the manumission practices of Princes van van Meel, Tingie van der Son and Dossie Vigilant depicted that once they had acquired freedom, their assistance and/or ambition for family reunion rippled out into both the enslaved and free(d) population. This analysis revealed a bigger network or connectedness within this society based on (primarily) kinship motivated manumission.

The nine people whose manumission practices will be explored show that closeness to the system can also play an important factor in manumission practices. The relevance of this must be discussed first. These eight people were part of or close to the colonial government and

¹⁹⁹ Hoefte, ‘Free Blacks and Coloureds in Plantation Suriname’, 103.

²⁰⁰ Neslo, *Een ongekende elite*, 132.

²⁰¹ Fatah-Black, ‘The Use of Wills in Community Formation by Former Slaves in Suriname, 1750-1775’, 624. Fatah-Black stated that the lives of those who ‘were fully integrated in the colonial elite and who could pass as free-born and white [...] rarely intersected with those who were to form the community of former slaves and their descendants.’

were slave and plantation owners themselves. In addition, most of them were of a similar age, around 30 or 40, meaning that they were established and settled in the colony and had acquired certain means, knowledge, property, and connections that allowed them to petition for these manumissions. Six out of these eight were people of colour and at least one of these six was born in slavery. The relevance of this lies in what their manumission practices will reflect: the cohesion of the free coloured community.

Their manumission practices will reaffirm the earlier developed argument that those who were manumitted themselves, aided others in manumission and were in constant contact with different parts of society. In addition, their heritage and how they are referred to indicates how relatively close they might have been to being enslaved themselves or having enslaved kin or bonds with those still living in slavery.

In his article on last wills and testaments of the manumitted Fatah-Black elaborates on how the way names were written reflects how people were treated and perhaps also on how they strived to be treated. As stated before, a difference existed in the way manumitted people were treated by the colonial government compared to those who were freeborn, this was even regulated by legislation. But a certain amount of flexibility existed in this depending on the situation and who were involved. It was possible to hide one's former slave or manumitted status or the fact that they descended from a line that was once enslaved by changing the way they were addressed. The simplest example being that *de vrije* was dropped or a last name did not include *van*, 'of'. By allowing this or enforcing this for certain individuals the colonial elite was able to exempt them from limitations that were put on this group. 'By passing their children off as freeborn, the slave-holding elite lifted a heavy burden from the shoulders of their children [...].²⁰² How the manumitted were named therefore can also reflect how close they were to the plantocracy, the elite planters class.²⁰³ The eight frequent manumitters we will discuss here are all examples of this, they either used this leeway for their own advantage or was utilized for their own kin and network.

Finally, I should note that the perspective we use to view manumission, especially that of coloured people themselves and (coloured) frequent manumitters should be along the lines of what Vrij argued. In the period from 1776 to 1796 these eight men together manumitted or assisted in the manumission of at least 88 people. Between 1781 to 1791 the free coloured

²⁰² Fatah-Black, 627–28.

²⁰³ Fatah-Black, 628–29.

population would increase from 821 to 1760, making this group of people responsible for approximately ten per cent of the total increase of the coloured free community. As manumitters they were also part of a relatively small group of approximately 400 free(d) people in the 1770s, making them represent two per cent of the total coloured population at that time.²⁰⁴

Pieter Hendrik (1734 - †1789) and Johannes de Bijе (1761? - †1802)

Pieter Hendrik and Johannes de Bijе were a father and son who created a three-level chain manumission that was not discussed in Chapter 5.²⁰⁵ The centre of this chain was rooted in kinship ties. Pieter Hendrik came to Paramaribo from the Dutch Republic around 1755. During his life in Paramaribo, he fulfilled administrative duties on the plantation *de Eendragt* and came to own his own plantation called *Soribo*.²⁰⁶ In 1786, Pieter Hendrik was admitted to the Governing Council, gaining significant influence in the colony. Pieter Hendrik met the then still enslaved Marianna on the plantation *de Eendragt* where he also resided. Eight months before his death, Pieter Hendrik would manumit Marianna.²⁰⁷

Johannes was born around 1761 according to the age that was stated in his prenuptial agreement.²⁰⁸ Uncertainty surrounds Johannes's status at birth, making him a perfect example of the flexibility on lineage that was discussed. As Marianna was manumitted by his father in 1789, Johannes must have been born in slavery, but no manumission request for him seems to exist.²⁰⁹

In total Pieter Hendrik manumitted at least five people from 1782 to 1789, and three people were manumitted through his testament. Pieter Hendrik had granted letters of freedom to the mulattin Concordia, and two black women named Seraphina and Santje upon his death. The three women inherited a house worth 2000 guilders, and where they would live for the rest of their lives. A boy who is suspected to be another son of Pieter Hendrik, baptised as Hermanus Pieterse, was to be sent to the Republic and educated. The ownership of the house in Paramaribo was to eventually go to him.²¹⁰

²⁰⁴ Hove en Hoogbergen, 'De vrije gekleurde en zwarte bevolking van Paramaribo, 1762-1863', 312.

²⁰⁵ Findings on the family de Bijе were presented in a paper submitted for the course 'Cornerstones of the colonial household' at the University Leiden by Camilla de Koning in 2019.

²⁰⁶ NA, Suriname: Oud Notarieel Archief (SONA), inv. 295, doc. nr. 65. Testament Pieter Hendrik de Bijе.

²⁰⁷ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 445, scan nr. 287, folio nr. 38. Petitioner: Pieter Hendrik de Bijе. Manumittee: Marianna (1789-02-23).

²⁰⁸ NA, SONA, inv. Nr. 137, doc. nr. 61, Johannes de Bijе and Maria Hendrietta van Huijstvlіet.

²⁰⁹ Pieter Hendrik did manumit a mustiece boy named Jan in May 1782. Johannes was 21 at that time, making it unlikely that this request referred to him. NA, RvP, inv. nr. 427, scan nr. 416, folio nr.. Petitioner: Pieter Hendrik de Bijе. Manumittee: Jan (1782-05-06).

²¹⁰ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 447, doc. nr. 15, petitioner: Johannes de Bijе and NA, SONA, inv. 295, doc. nr. 65. Testament Pieter Hendrik de Bijе.

Johannes followed in the footsteps of his father regarding his manumission practices and an overview of the requests that were found can be seen in Table 2 below. In his lifetime Johannes posed as a *straatvoogd* on four different occasions and manumitted eight enslaved people himself. A definite consanguineal bond of kinship could be detected with one of these manumittees, his grandmother. In August 1789 Johannes manumitted the old black woman Jacoba, who had belonged to the same estate as his mother Marianna. By doing this Johannes created a ‘reversed’ chain of manumission in which he was manumitted first and his grandmother last.²¹¹ For one woman a bond of kinship was later constructed. Johannes manumitted Colinette or Coletta van Cacheleu in May 1790.²¹² According to the research Neslo has done on the coloured elite in Paramaribo from 1800 to 1863, this woman later lived with his son Jacques Lambertus de Bijé at the Gravenstraat 60 and 61, one of the most expensive streets to live in Paramaribo.²¹³

Table 2: People manumitted by Johannes de Bijé.

Johannes de Bijé							
Name(s) manumittees	Premiere	Jacoba	Colinette van Cacheleu	Ephraïm van Amstel	Candacie	Jeanette	Cornelis & Catharijntje
Straatvoogd	10-12-1787	-	19-05-1790	22-05-1791	12-12-1791	-	-
Manumission	11-02-1788	28-08-1789	25-05-1790	23-05-1791	23-12-1791	03-08-1793	09-05-1796
Details	Self-purchase	Maternal grandmother	Suspected kinship	Self-purchase	Self-purchase	Bought under condition	Mother & daughter pair

Source: Dataset 1 and 2.

The slaves Premiere, Candacie and Ephraïm all bought themselves from their owner, after which Johannes functioned as their *straatvoogd*.²¹⁴ For the girl Catharina who was manumitted in 1794 by *de vrije* Toetoe van J.H. van Heemskerk Johannes pledged himself as guarantor,

²¹¹ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 446, scan nr. 287, folio nr. 42. Petitioner: Johannes de Bijé. Manumittee: Jacoba (1789-08-28).

²¹² NA, RvP, inv. nr. 448, scan nr. 71, folio nr. 9. Petitioner: Johannes de Bijé. Manumittee: Colinette van de Cacheleu (1790-05-25).

²¹³ Neslo, *Een ongekende elite*, 297 and NA, RvP, inv. 295, doc. nr. 65, Inventory of estate Johannes de Bijé.

²¹⁴ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 443, scan nr. 381, folio nr. 52. Petitioner: Johannes de Bijé. Manumittee: Premiere (1788-02-11), NA, RvP, inv. 452, doc. nr. 51, ‘Candacie’, NA, RvP, inv. nr. 451, doc. nr. 48, ‘Ephraïm’, petitioner for all cases: Johannes de Bijé.

displaying another connection to the free coloured community. In addition to this, Johannes posed as guarantor for all eight enslaved people he had manumitted, making him the guarantor for at least nine people. This kind of involvement will be discussed in Chapter 7.

Johannes would follow in Pieter Hendrik's by footsteps performing tasks on several plantations, but he also acted as bookkeeper of *de Compagnieën Vrije Burgers Mulatten en Negers*, the organisation that oversaw the civilian duties of free coloured and black people.²¹⁵ Aside from this Johannes was a clerk for the Council in Paramaribo.²¹⁶ The fact that Johannes was able to fulfil several higher ranking positions shows that by the time it was 1790, the strict hierarchy and separation between whites and coloureds that the government wanted to uphold was being undermined by cases such as Johannes'. As Hoefte notes, the basis of this lied in the unbalanced sex-ratio in the white planter class. The scarcity of white women in the colony led to the development of concubinages and other forms of relationships between white men and coloured women, which led to many mixed-race children.²¹⁷ These children were then raised and educated to be part of the middle and upper-class free people living in Paramaribo. By doing this the whites belonging to the administration broke the separation between whites and coloureds themselves, leading to and fuelling the construction of a well-to-do free coloured and black segment of society.²¹⁸

In addition to this the directors of the Society of Suriname had suggested that the free coloured community could become the most prominent part of Suriname's society. A sentiment that was later echoed by Governor General Wichers in 1785, the connection of the creole population to the colony they were born in would make them good citizens. Wichers' agreement did not reach as far as that of the Directors, the Governor believed that upward social mobility of coloured people should be somewhat limited.²¹⁹ Developments on these ideas can be seen clearly reflected in the life of Johannes, but also the other clerks that will be explored below.

Jacob Alexander van Blikveld (1752 - †?)

The first of the other clerks is Jacob Alexander van Blikveld, who was most likely manumitted himself. He was the son of Willem Bliet and the black woman Phyllis van Bliet.²²⁰ Jacob used his function as clerk of the Council to the advantage of other coloured people. He posed as

²¹⁵ Jordaan, 'Slavernij en vrijheid op Curaçao', 59–63.

²¹⁶ Vrij, 'Jan Elias van Onna en het "politiek systema" van de Surinaamse slaventijd, circa 1770-1820', 138.

²¹⁷ Willem F.L. Buschkens, *The Family System of the Paramaribo Creoles*, 69–73.

²¹⁸ Hoefte, 'Free Blacks and Coloureds in Plantation Suriname', 113.

²¹⁹ Vrij, 'Jan Elias van Onna en het "politiek systema" van de Surinaamse slaventijd, circa 1770-1820', 130.

²²⁰ Vrij, 137.

straatvoogd four times and was the man who quickly filed a petition for in Chapter 3 mentioned Pita.²²¹ Table 3 below features all the people who Jacob manumitted that were found in the requests.

Table 3: People manumitted by Jacob Alexander van Bliëkveld.

Jacob Alexander van Bliëkveld						
Name(s) manumittees	Katro	Jabelie	Pieter/Pita	Antje	Hendrik	Adam & Februarij
Straatvoogd	-	31-12-1785	07-02-1786	09-12-1783	10-12-1787	10-12-1792
Manumission	15-12-1784	13-02-1786	14-12-1786	16-12-1786	13-12-1787	21-12-1792

Source: Dataset 1 and 2.

In addition to these ‘closed’ manumission another *straatvoogd* request was found for a woman named Movitoe, but the corresponding manumission request was not located. Jacob also stood bail for the young woman Isabel who was manumitted by Abraham de Para.²²²

Jacob started a small chain manumission. After receiving her letters of freedom in 1786, Antje van van Bliëkveld manumitted her two sons Jacob and Isack in 1788 out of ‘motherly duty’.²²³ Antje becomes Jacob’s partner as the baptismal records later show that they have two daughters born in 1790 and 1792.²²⁴ Another boy was born in 1785 named Willem, but although Willem is born in 1785 Antje is already noted down as free leading Willem to also be baptized as freeborn. Providing another example of someone close to the system bypassing manumission legislation and the negative associations and consequences of not being freeborn.²²⁵

Aside from this manumission connected to kinship it is remarkable that Katro was the only manumittee Jacob previously owned.²²⁶ The other manumittees all found their ways to Jacob after their self-purchase. Another connection is hard to make as the eleven manumittees did not seem to come from one plantation, shared things like a profession, a former owner or

²²¹ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 440, scan nr. 271, folio nr. 145. Petitioner: Jacob Alexander van Bliëkveld. Manumittee: Pita (1786-12-14).

²²² NA, RvP, inv. nr. 424, scan nr. 125. Petitioner: Abraham de Para. Manumittee: Isabel (1768-08-11).

²²³ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 443, scan nr. 35, folio nr. 27. Petitioner: Jacob Alexander van Bliëkveld. Manumittee: Antje (1786-12-16) and inv. nr. 443, scan nr. 513, folio nr. 69. Petitioner: *de vrije* Carboegel meid Antje van van Bliëkveld. Manumittees: Jacob and Isack (1788-02-27).

²²⁴ ARA, Oud archief Burgerlijke Stand Suriname, inv.nr. 10, kerkboek 1770 - 1792 (Paramaribo), page 219: Geertuijda Helena van Bliëkveldt and Philis Catharina Johanna van Bliëkveld.

²²⁵ ARA, Oud archief Burgerlijke Stand Suriname, inv.nr. 10, kerkboek 1770 - 1792 (Paramaribo), page 140: Willem Bliëkveld.

²²⁶ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 435, scan nr. 13, folio nr. 9. Petitioner: Jacob Alexander van Bliëkveld. Manumittee: Katro (1784-12-15).

even a religious denunciation. Antje's children most likely came from a Jewish plantation/owner, but Pita was baptized in the Reformed Church in the Republic. Adam and Februarij, baptismal names Simon Petrus and Februarij, were baptized by the Evangelical church in the colony.

Abraham Sigismundis Comvalius (born 1759)

The Comvalius brothers are referred to in other sources, mainly when describing the developing middle-class that clerks belonged to in the colony.²²⁷ Abraham Sigismundis was promoted to one of the five assistants of the Council in 1789 and was the only person of colour to perform this task until his brother was promoted in 1805. Clerks like the Comvalius' brothers did not only rise above the less educated of the free coloured population, but they also rose above a fair part of the white population who can define as lower class.²²⁸ This information is important when we reflect on their position as manumitters, as they were able to manumit because of their status and means and were more able to do so than a significant part of the Surinamese population. By manumitting they also enhanced this effect, leading to the growth of the coloured population.

Of the two brothers Abraham Sigismundis was responsible for the highest number of manumissions. Where Abraham manumitted ten people, Adriaan Johannes acted as *straatvoogd* for the two women Patentia and Murthina and assisted them in their manumission.²²⁹ Abraham posed as a *straatvoogd* on four occasions, for Aratha and Constantie (baptized Lucia) who had purchased themselves, Betje who had been freed in a testament and Christoffel.²³⁰ Christoffel poses an interesting case as it became clear that his former owner mister Sluijter had simply released Christoffel, making him a *piki nyan*. In the end, these four people approached Abraham to aid them in their manumissions as they had no other to advocate for them, without a link through kinship or affection. Abraham was guarantor every manumission except one and by doing so carried the financial responsibility for ten people. He only manumitted one child,

²²⁷ Fatah-Black, *Eigendomsstrijd*, 141.

²²⁸ Vrij, 'Jan Elias van Onna en het "politiek systema" van de Surinaamse slaventijd, circa 1770-1820', 139.

²²⁹ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 444, scan nr. 351, folio nr. 58. Petitioner: Adrianus Johannes Comvalius. Manumittee: Patentia (1788-12-01) and inv. nr. 444, scan nr. 533, folio nr. 92. Petitioner: Adrianus Johannes Comvalius. Manumittee: Murthina (1788-12-23).

²³⁰ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 443, scan nr. 121, folio nr. 14. Petitioner: Abraham Sigismundis Comvalius. Manumittee: Arattia (1787-12-03), inv. nr. 535, scan nr. 197, folio nr. 59. Petitioner: A.S. Comvalius. Manumittee: Constantie (1792-09-03), inv. nr. 438, scan nr. 169, folio nr. 38. Petitioner: A. S. Comvalius. Manumittee: Betje (1786-05-08) and inv. nr. 443, scan nr. 445, folio nr. 61. Petitioner: Abraham Sigismundis Comvalius. Manumittee: Christoffel (1788-02-25).

which he purchased on the condition of manumission by the earlier mentioned Elisabeth Danforth, the widow Godefroij, qualifying this case as suspected paternity.²³¹

Willem Hendrik Esser (1754 - †1809)

From 1777 the *mustiece* Willem Hendrik Esser rose from a simple clerk to in a sworn in clerk 1784, a trade which was similar to that of a notary.²³² In 1787 Esser became solicitor of the Council and through this career path his name appears on a lot of documents ranging from petitions, last wills and testaments, *prisaties* to inventories. Willem Hendrik Esser manumitted the most people out of the eight people mentioned here. He did so by manumitting fifteen people as a *straatvoogd*, five of his own enslaved and posing as guarantor for all his manumissions and legal guardian for one extra case.

The remarkable thing of Willem Hendrik's manumissions is that kinship is present in all. His first manumission involves a family group which is related to Gilles Pater. Annaatje and her children, Maria, Jacobus and Louisa Pater had purchased themselves from their former owner, Gilles Pater.²³³ Pater, who is still alive, provides bail in the form of an estate situated in the Joodenbreestraat. In the time between the *straatvoogd* petition and the eventual manumission another baby is born Wilhelmina Cornelia Pater.²³⁴

In 1786 Esser manumits another family group, now bought by himself with the intent to free them. Elsje and her children Wilhelmina, Anna Marianna and Jacobus are granted their freedom while Esser stands bail.²³⁵ In 1793 Esser manumits his last family group through *straatvoogdschap*. This family of six consists of grandmother Amba and Aurora and her children Hannaatje, Simcha, Cornelia and Carolina who once belonged to Abigail Robles de Medina.²³⁶ Esser is guarantor for another manumittee named Marianna, a role he fulfils because he is the legal guardian of J.A.B. Kraemer, someone who will be discussed in the section on legates.²³⁷

²³¹ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 434, scan nr. 7, folio nr. 1. Petitioner: Abraham Sigismundis Comvalius. Manumittee: Luis (1784-05-12).

²³² Vrij, 'Jan Elias van Onna en het "politiek systema" van de Surinaamse slaventijd, circa 1770-1820', 139-40.

²³³ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 427, scan nr. 875, folio nr. 422. Petitioner: Willem Hendrik Esser. Manumittees: Annaatje, Maria Pater, Jacobus Pater, Luisa Pater (1781-05-13).

²³⁴ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 428, scan nr. 171, folio nr. 83. Petitioner: Willem Hendrik Esser. Manumittees: Annaatje, Maria Pater, Jacobus Pater, Luisa Pater and Wilhelmina Cornelia Pater. (1782-05-22).

²³⁵ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 440, scan nr. 312, folio nr. 166. Petitioner: Willem Hendrik Esser. Manumittees: Elsje, Wilhelmina, Anna and Jacobus. (1786-08-10).

²³⁶ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 455, scan nr. 37, folio nr. 4. Petitioner: Willem Hendrik Esser. Manumittees: Aurora, Amba, Hanaatje, Simcha, Cornelia and Carolina (1793-08-19).

²³⁷ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 448, scan nr. 407, folio nr. 62. Petitioner: J.A.B. Kremer. Manumittee: Marianna (1790-08-30).

Gerrit Conijnenberg (unknown)

From these men Gerrit Conijnenberg is the least known and he does not appear in other studies on manumission or colonial Suriname, making it hard to pin him down in additional sources. Conijnenberg helps manumit seven people, all in assisting roles. He is never stated as the original owner or owner, which does not happen for any of the other frequent manumitters. Conijnenberg assists as *straatvoogd* or ‘*assisterende*’ on behalf of five testamentary manumissions, of which one family group of three: Truij and her children Primo and Adomes.²³⁸ He also assists on the manumission of an elderly woman named Azetta who is described as ‘too old to sell’.²³⁹

Through his assisting roles Gerrit can be connected to people that appear elsewhere in the sample years as frequent manumitters such as J.J. Ferrand. He is also the guarantor for Fenicia, the daughter of Catherina van Dikie Samson who is mentioned in Chapter 5. But Gerrit’s connections to the free coloured community become clear through searches through the baptismal, marriage and funeral records of the Reformed Church of the colony. From 1782 to 1790 Gerrit has at least eight children with the *de vrije mustiece* Anna Louisa Arnaud.²⁴⁰ Anna Louisa was likely a child of the planter A. Arlaud who was part of the colonial Council from 1773 on.²⁴¹

Gerrits’ attachment to the colony becomes clear in one of his requests dated 25 February 1793.²⁴² In this request Gerrit asks to be instated or recognized as translator of ‘Negro English’, the locally spoken language now called Sranan Tongo. Apparently there was only one translator and this man, J.J. Dieuliefit, was often sick, leading to freed people not getting the help they needed. He elaborates that he has lived in the colony for 47 years and tries to make his living as a translator of Sranan Tongo, explaining his connection to those he manumitted. Only two days later does Abraham Comvalius also hand in his petition to be instated as translator, leading to both men being admitted and fulfilling this task.²⁴³ Both men were involved enough with the free coloured community and the enslaved to have gained knowledge on Sranan Tongo, or this may have been their first language. Either way their knowledge was the result of a lot of interaction with the Sranan speaking population.

²³⁸ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 440, scan nr. 359, folio nr. 185. Petitioner: Gerrit Conijnenberg. Manumittee: Truij, Primo and Adomes (1786-12-31).

²³⁹ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 426, scan nr. 867, folio nr. 416. Petitioner: Gerrit Conijnenberg. Manumittee: Azetta (1781-12-17).

²⁴⁰ ARA, Oud archief Burgerlijke Stand Suriname, inv.nr. 10, kerkboek 1770 - 1792 (Paramaribo)

²⁴¹ Dataset Karwan Fatah-Black on the election of the Governing Council and Court of Criminal Justice.

²⁴² NA, RvP, inv. 536, folio 88.

²⁴³ NA, RvP, inv. 536, folio 111.

Dirck van der Meij (1727 - † 1798) and Jan Willem Boon (1750 - † 1801)

The last duo that will be discussed are the father and son Dirck van der Meij and Jan Willem Boon. For Jan Willem it is also unclear if he was born free or manumitted without a trace. Dirck van der Meij was an active part of the legal landscape of Paramaribo as he had an office as administrator.²⁴⁴ Throughout the years Dirck manumits seven people and is present as executor or estate manager on at least fifteen other occasions. It was Dirck who aided the sons of Jan Samson in reaching their official freedom and additional searches must reveal Dirck's involvement in many more. It is therefore not strange that Dirk's involvement with those enslaved and freed led to him having a mixed-race child.

After having lived in Utrecht for seven years, Jan Willem sends word to manumit the enslaved woman Flora, as compensation for her loyal service.²⁴⁵ After his return in 1770 Boon first manumits his mother and siblings in 1776, a case covered in Chapter 3. Ten years later he manumits Dona with her two children Peter Johannes and Maria Janetta, although no bond of kinship can connect them. Boon's most remarkable manumission is on behalf of social club *D'Unie* (the Union). Together with E.C. Hoth, another coloured clerk, and Wilhelmus Augustinus who was manumitted himself in 1780, they gather the funds to free an old man name Robin Arias after he asked them for help.²⁴⁶ No other references are made to this club, but it seems that the men were business partners and were moved by the old man's request.

Conclusion

Apart from their individual manumission patterns and lifeways these men and women were connected on another level. Not only did they allow and enable the conditional sales of each other's enslaved people, but they were also executors of each other wills, administrators on each other's plantations, godmothers and fathers for each other's children and witnesses at marriages. Johannes de Bije was the witness of the baptism of Comvalius' children, and Comvalius did the same for the children of Jan Willem Boon in 1790.²⁴⁷

These connections do show the socially rooted and extensive connection of this core to the Surinamese society they belonged too. Of course, not all connections within this group were

²⁴⁴ Vrij, 'Jan Elias van Onna en het "politiek systema" van de Surinaamse slaventijd, circa 1770-1820', 140.

²⁴⁵ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 406, scan nr. 609, folio nr. 290. Petitioner: Nicolaas de Kruijff on behalf of Jan Willem Boon. Manumittee: Crioole Flora (1770-08-14).

²⁴⁶ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 424, scan nr. 307, folio nr. n.a. Petitioner: Dina de Vries. Manumittee: Wilhelminus Augustinus (1780-05-16) and NA, RvP, inv. nr. 441, scan nr. 1888, folio nr. 71. Petitioner: E. C. Hoth, Jan Willem Boon, Wilhelmus Augustinus. Manumittee: Robin Arias (1787-03-05).

²⁴⁷ ARA, OBSS, inv.nr. 10, kerkboek 1770-1792, page 149: Abraham Johannes Comvalius.

positive. Rivalry and dislike existed within and around this coloured elite, something Vrij elaborates on in his article on Jan Elias van Onna.²⁴⁸

The impact these eight manumitters had on the colonial society of Suriname cannot be overlooked. These examples reflect just a sample of the total that could be researched. Amongst others there are the members of the Lemmers family, who are closely tied to Elisabeth Danforth. The family Saffijn, Hendrik M. Wolff, J.J. Leijnsner, Philip Samuel Hansen and Frederik Cornelis Stolkert were all frequent manumitters that fell beyond the scope of this analysis but had just as much influence on the development of the free coloured community as the men and women featured in this chapter and those before.²⁴⁹

This chapter has shed light on how manumission practices motivated in the first place by kin but then by a closeness to the system influenced the development of the free coloured community in eighteenth-century Paramaribo. A start has been made at uncovering the underlying connections of both of affection and business that were another incentive behind manumission practices. Those who were manumitted or became manumitters, passed the gift of freedom on to others. Access to functions in the colonial elite and financial security played a significant role in this and these functions were used to the advantage of those striving to attain the status of freedom.

²⁴⁸ Vrij, 'Jan Elias van Onna en het "politiek systema" van de Surinaamse slaventijd, circa 1770-1820', 144.

²⁴⁹ Dataset I and II.

Chapter 7: The effect of support and affection

The heart of the cohesion of the free coloured and black community laid in (fictive) kinship, but affective ties should not be overlooked. These ties can reveal themselves through different actions and arrangements. The first two things this chapter will explore are the consequences of the change in legislation on the matter of bail or guarantors in 1760. Guarantors represented an important element in the network linking free(d) people. The effect of bestowing property on manumittedes through legates will then be after. Finally, this chapter summarizes the findings on affective motives of manumission: philanthropy and (special) affections. By doing so this chapter ties together practices and motivations that would otherwise fall beyond the scope of kinship as a factor in manumissions but should be included as they showcase the ripple effect of connections throughout the free coloured community.

Guaranteeing the gift of freedom

The first legislation put out on manumission dating from 1733 did not cover the subject of guarantors or bail. The first article of this *plakkaat* simply stated that those who were to be freed should be able to support oneself before they were manumitted.²⁵⁰ As stated in Chapter 1, additional legislation in 1760 enforced stricter conditions on this financial stability and gave rise to people pledging themselves as guarantors or signing over property and money as bail.

The change in legislation was evident: in all requests handed in after 1760 a note is included if the 1760 conditions were met. It was not uncommon for petitions to be delayed or refused on the matter of bail and it was clear that not everyone could pledge to be guarantor based on these delays. In some manumission two or more people acted as combined guarantors, not being allowed to act as such on their own. As a result of this notification the requests read in the years from 1765-1775 are more detailed when it comes to the description of how the conditions were met. By studying these requests, it becomes clear that the 1760 amendment did not include a set minimum or special criteria.

Three kinds of guarantees could be made and accepted by the Council in the second half of the eighteenth century. The first was a reference to a skill or trade that was deemed to bring in sufficient funds. Like Philander who was a tailor, Avontuur Jonas a painter and Isaac a carpenter. In these cases, no additional sums or guarantors were pledged.²⁵¹ The second was

²⁵⁰ J. Th de Smidt en To van der Lee, *Plakaten, ordonnantiën en andere wetten uitgevaardigd in Suriname, 1667-1816*, West Indisch plakaatboek 1 (Amsterdam: Emmering, 1973), 411, 471. Numbers 350 and 394.

²⁵¹ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 418, scan nr. 520, folio nr. 521. Petitioner: G.A. Herman als executeur. Manumitte: Philander (1777-08-17), NA, RvP, inv. nr. 449, scan nr. 169, folio nr. 16. Petitioner: *de vrije* Philip Hazard van Pichot. Manumitte: Avontuur Jonas (1790-12-21) and NA, RvP, inv. nr. 418, scan nr. 259, folio nr. 256. Petitioner: N. R. van Hout en D. Cokdercq. Manumitte: Isaac (1777-05-17).

granting the manumittee a sum of money, ranging from 500 to 2000 guilders, or giving them property. These donations were either done in life or post-mortem when it involved a testamentary manumission. The last option was personally pledging to stand as guarantor for the freed person, by far the most chosen option.

In 81 per cent of the 324 cases comprised in Dataset I the owner themselves pledged bail or the statement declaring this was not included, which most likely means that the petitioner themselves fulfilled this duty. In 49 requests someone other than the former owner posed as guarantor. In the remaining thirteen requests a grant or legate was involved of either money or property. One petition that stood out on the matter of bail was that of the black women Comtesse. Manumitted by the testament of her deceased owner Henriette Bogel she was legated a sum of 500 guilders, but this did not suffice according to the Council. Willem Beynseldorp, who was the executor of Bogel's will, therefore used his plantation Rynsfort as collateral ensuring Comtesse's manumission three years later.²⁵²

At the end of the eighteenth century, it becomes more common for another party to be the guarantor instead of the ex-owner. In addition, free coloured and black people increasingly take over the place of white planters or colonists when it comes to pledging themselves as guarantors. Brana-Shute argued that this stems from the idea that white colonists would be leaving Suriname and therefore petitioners and manumittees turned to the free coloured community.²⁵³ I do completely not agree with this statement: not all white colonists planned on leaving the colony or never returning, even though 'absenteeism' was increasing.²⁵⁴ The increased presence of free coloured and black people as guarantors should be seen as a reflection of their increased financial position, their numbers in general and the relationships that they had towards those who were being manumitted.²⁵⁵ Turning to kin and your own community to safeguard your financial well-being ties directly to the rising figure of coloured people as manumitters and what was previously discussed on family reunion and the network of coloured people throughout society.

The guarantor/manumittee relationship was not an empty role as can be concluded from the case of Betje van Seijler. In September 1793 Betje approaches the Council with a request. In 1791 she had been manumitted by her former owner J.C. Seijler, who had bought her to

²⁵² NA, RvP, inv. nr. 423, scan nr. 387, folio nr. 189. Petitioner: Willem Carel Hendrik Beynseldorp as executor. Manumittee: Comtesse (1777-12-08).

²⁵³ Brana-Shute, *The Manumission of Slaves in Suriname, 1760-1828*, 314.

²⁵⁴ Negrón, 'The Enslaved Children of the Dutch World': 47.

²⁵⁵ Brana-Shute, *The Manumission of Slaves in Suriname, 1760-1828*, 315–16.

manumit her from the plantation *De Twee Gebroeders*.²⁵⁶ Seijler himself was the guarantor but on the 21st of Augustus 1792 Seijler died. Betje had hoped and expected that Seijler would legate her enough for her livelihood in his testament, but ‘to her sorrow she has found out that he [Seijler] had not thought of her in the least’.²⁵⁷ She therefore requested the Council to compel the executors of Seijlers will to legate her money to fulfil the late Seijlers duty and obligation as guarantor. According to Betje she had approached C. Werner and J.C. Kohlwaagen already but they would not take over Seijlers role as guarantor or grant her any money as the estate was liquidated as soon as possible and left-over funds were granted to heirs in Germany. Approaching the Council ‘as fathers and judges of all living in this colony’ she hoped that the Council would act on her behalf and impose that the men come up with the funds themselves, take out a loan to do so or at least buy her a garden or house so she can support herself.²⁵⁸

Betje’s request shows how much freed men could lean on their guarantors. It also raises questions on why Betje as a 21-year-old woman, did not have someone else to rely on. Was it just a matter of principle? Betje is assisted by her former owner Frederik Cornelis Stolkert, who she might have turned to for support later as her request was denied by the Council in March 1794. This example also shows that the pledge of guarantor was a lifelong connection, especially if one chose to manumit an enslaved person who did not have a skill or trade that was sufficient. Analysing who stood as bail for whom therefore becomes an interesting research perspective. The other side of this lifelong connection is that a new manumittee with little roots in the freed community could find her- or himself without a financial safety net. The security of guarantors links closely to the security of property and income, in other words how freed people were independent parts of a community and were able to build their lives. In the next section we will therefore investigate what the beforementioned legates constituted of and how we can contextualize this.

Finally, it is relevant to note that frequent manumitters did not always stand bail for everyone they manumitted. Depicting that through this pledge, decisions of affection or closeness, were made. Others stood bail for up to 10 people, showing their wealth, trust in the manumitees or connections to a group of people. Elisabeth Danforth, the frequent manumitter from the Chapter 3, never stood bail herself except once.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁶ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 451, scan nr. 115, folio nr. 44. Petitioner: J.C. Seijler. Manumittee: Betje (1791-06-01).

²⁵⁷ Ibidem. Original text: ‘Dat sij suppliant heeft verwagt na alle regt en billijkheid dat den voornoemde heer Seijler uit hoofden sijner borgtogt na sijn dood voor haar souden hebben gesorgd. Docht tot haar leedweesen heeft moeten bespeuren dat sijn Ed. bij deszelfs testamentaire dispositie geen deminste gewag van haar heeft gemaakt eeven of deszelfs boedel voor sijne daaden aanspraakelijk niet soude sijn.’

²⁵⁸ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 456, scan nr. 161, folio nr. 20. Petitioner: Betje van Seijler.

²⁵⁹ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 417, scan nr. 397, folio nr. 201. Petitioner: Elisabeth Danforth, weduwe van Wijlen Charles Godefroij. Manumittee: Desiree (1777-02-11).

An addition to the gift of freedom

The earlier mentioned testamentary inheritance or legate that involved Pieter Hendrik de Bije and the manumitted Concordia, Seraphina and Santje reflects the amounts of money and property that could be involved in post-mortem grants. Twelve requests were found in Dataset I and II combined that included a legate to fulfil the condition of bail. In four cases the manumittee was given a sum of money upon their manumission. Petronella 300 guilders, Pecien Anna and Comtesse both 500 guilders and Elisabeth an undefined sum of money that was at least enough to appease the Council.²⁶⁰

Afiba is the only one of this category who is given property on which she should then pay interest to her former owner. Gustaph Dahlberg, the former owner himself then pledges himself as guarantor for these yearly costs, creating a strange construction.²⁶¹ Mamaatje had already been granted property, in which she could live for the remainder of her days. The whereabouts of said property and house are unknown, but as she was manumitted on behalf of her loyal services it is likely that it is either on the property of P.C. Stuijvesant himself or a property owned by him.²⁶²

Gerrit van Gunst legated various kinds of property onto Princes who was manumitted alongside her mulatto son Hermanus van Gunst and a black child Adam. The information in this request seems to suggest that only Hermanus is van Gunst's son, but nonetheless Princes' other child is also manumitted. Apart from half of all Gerrit's properties, they receive an enslaved woman named Affiba with her three children Mimie, Janplaisier and Flora. They also receive Jaep who was a carpenter and was to be rented out at public vendue to sustain the young Hermanus. What share Princes and Adam had in this is unclear, but the property was officially all Hermanus'.²⁶³ A similar situation is found in the legate of Gracia. Gracia and her child Mina were manumitted together from the plantation Hooijland and a house is to be bought for them.

²⁶⁰ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 405, scan nr. 425, folio nr. 204. Petitioner: Sebastiaan Pelzerius. Manumittee: Petronella (1769-12-11), inv. nr. 406, scan nr. 621, folio nr. 296. Petitioner: C: M Pottendorff en DIW Hatterman. Manumittee: Pecien Anna (1771-05-12), inv. nr. 423, scan nr. 387, folio nr. 189. Petitioner: Willem Carel Hendrik Beynseldorp als executeur. Manumittee: Comtesse (1777-12-08) and inv. nr. 449, scan nr. 83, folio nr. 7. Petitioner: Jacobus Telnis Lemmers en Jan Benjamin Jetz (als administratueren van de Plantagie Queekhooven). Manumittee: Elisabeth (1790-12-24).

²⁶¹ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 405, scan nr. 385, folio nr. 184. Petitioner: Gustaph Dahlberg. Manumittee: Afiba (1771-02-22).

²⁶² NA, RvP, inv. nr. 411, scan nr. 21, folio nr. 8. Petitioner: P.C. van Stuijvesant. Manumittee: Mamaatje (1773-12-07).

²⁶³ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 424, scan nr. 933, folio nr. 309. Petitioner: Gerrit van Gunst. Manumittees: Princes, Hermanus van Gunst and Adam (1780-15-12).

The property is officially given to Mina, but her mother must be allowed to live there her entire life. If Mina dies, the property should go on to Gracia.²⁶⁴

Constantie receives half of her late owner's estate and garden on the Wagewegstraat. A house is to be built on a demarcated strip between his own house and that of Cecilia van Wijne. Marie is granted in 'free and complete ownership' an estate on the Swarthoovenstraat, between that of mister C. Graafland and *de vrije* Janette van Saffijn.²⁶⁵ Eva is manumitted on behalf of *de vrije* Hester Paracabo and receives 100 guilders for her substance but to meet the conditions of bail additional property is thrown in. She is granted ownership of a house in the Domineestraat, situated between the estate of van Dames and a familiar name: Dossoe Vigilant.²⁶⁶

The last legate is also the most interesting. J.B. Kraemer manumits Vinivie and her two daughters Charlotta and Johanna. Together they received his property in the Keijzerstraat. The legate stated that it could be sold, but that the corner house including the buildings laying behind it and garden should situate his heir Jan Hermanus van Kraemer with the family. Jan Hermanus himself appeared to have already been manumitted previously. Several parts of the house should then be rented out to provide them with an income. That income should first be used to pay for Jan Hermanus' education, secondly to support the other family members.²⁶⁷

The addresses in these legates allow us to see where former owners sent their manumittedes to live and due to the custom of mentioning neighbours, we receive information on them as well. The mentioned streets: Gravenstraat, Wagenwegstraat, Keijzerstraat and Domineestraat all belonged to the richest and were the most expensive streets in the city centre. By granting manumittedes these estates property flowed directly from the rich plantocracy on to the free coloured community, where they would then reap the profits of this property with their kin and network. By the names stated as neighbours we can see that people such as Dossoe and Janette van Saffijn had already situated themselves in this neighbourhood. Neslo's research shows that this development would continue in the nineteenth century and a coloured elite would move into the city centre that was previously reserved for white colonists and Europeans.²⁶⁸

²⁶⁴ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 451, scan nr. 161, folio nr. 56. Petitioner: Mathijs Obrecht as executor. Manumittedes: Gracia and Mina (1791-05-1791).

²⁶⁵ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 430, scan nr. 153, folio nr. 64. Petitioner: Johan Claasen. Manumittede: Constantie (1782-12-16).

²⁶⁶ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 432, scan nr. 525, folio nr. 459. Petitioner: N. B. van Hout as executor. Manumittede: Eva (1783-12-19).

²⁶⁷ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 447, scan nr. 33, folio nr. 10. Petitioner: Mathijs Obregt & L. Link. Manumittedes: Vinivie, Charlotta and Johanna (1789-12-10).

²⁶⁸ Neslo, *Een ongekende elite*, 217–20; Fatah-Black, *Eigendomsstrijd*, 83–84.

Reflecting affection

This last section will explore manumission requests that were motivated by *menschlievendheid* (philanthropy) or (special) affection as these manumissions reflect a small group of connections between manumitter and manumittee. In the sample years for this research philanthropy is mentioned five times, of which four cases regard children alone and one large family. Mustice Pieter and Mulat Johanna are manumitted on account of their *onnoozelheid* which can refer to them being simple or innocent.²⁶⁹ Frederik, David and Jan, all mulatto boys, are freed as a humane deed.²⁷⁰ Dirk van Bruijnsberg, a surgeon or *dresneger*, is freed for multiple reasons aside philanthropy: the old age of his owner Mr. Beudt, his loyal service and to allow him to be able to do his job more freely.²⁷¹ W.H. van Steenberch tot Keenenburg, an important man in the colony who sat on both Governing Council and Civil Court manumits the largest group found in the sample.²⁷² ‘Out of feelings of philanthropy and other pious reasons amongst which the encouragement of the Christian faith’ he manumits a family of eleven.²⁷³

In 25 manumissions a (special) affection was stated and in eleven of these manumissions a bond of kinship was mentioned in the request, leaving fourteen cases that have not been discussed. Only once the word *liefde*, love, was mentioned. Alexander Moses Eliazer manumitted a mustiece boy Samuel, the son of a mulattin Annaatje. ‘Out of love’ Samuel is manumitted while his mother is to remain in slavery. Samuel certainly falls in the category of suspected kinship as discussed previously.²⁷⁴ These motivations seem a product of their time. Only four out of 25 petitions granting this reasoning are found before the 1780s.²⁷⁵ Displaying that an increasing number of manumitters believed that their affection towards enslaved people was an acceptable motivation for manumission.

Conclusion

The requests explored in this chapter mentioned affectionate feelings for the manumittees or showed connections through guaranteeing freedom through property or financial support.

²⁶⁹ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 424, scan nr. 237, folio nr. n.a. Petitioner: Jurjanis Sluijter. Manumittee: Pieter (1780-05-11).

²⁷⁰ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 432, scan nr. 9, folio nr. 1. Petitioner: M. R. Jona. Manumittee: Fredrik (1783-05-14).

²⁷¹ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 445, scan nr. 19, folio nr. 3. Petitioner: Mr. Beudt. Manumittee: Dirk (van Bruijnsberg) (1788-12-08).

²⁷² Dataset Karwan Fatah-Black on the election of the Governing Council and Court of Criminal Justice.

²⁷³ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 440, scan nr. 93, folio nr. 53. Petitioner: Frans Saffin in qq als generaale gemagtigde van W.H. van Steenberch tot Keenenburg. Manumittee: Alida, Philis, Francina, Johannes, Willemijntje, Joba, Europa, Betje, Cornelis, Susanna and David (1786-08-31). Original text: ‘[...] aangespoort door gevoelens van menschlievendheid en andere pieuse oogmerken ter bevordering van de christelijke godsdienst.’

²⁷⁴ NA, RvP, inv. nr. 535, scan nr. 409, folio nr. 132. Petitioner: Alexander Moses Eliazer. Manumittee: Samuel (1792-08-17). Original text: ‘Dat de suppliant uijt liefde voor gemelde mustice jonge gaarne geneege is met den schad der vrijdom te begunstigen.’

²⁷⁵ Dataset I and II.

These bonds reflect the variety of relationships that were built in slavery and sustained in freedom. Focusing not just on the bond between owner and enslaved allows us to create a more inclusive picture of the relationships that the enslaved built amongst themselves, additionally with the free(d) community. By shifting the perspective to what these sources can tell us about these 'alternative' bonds, insight can be gained about relationships and family lives. This subject is obscured from the sources due to its private nature, however it can be seen as the foundation of the cohesion of the free coloured and black community. The enslaved had large, intricate, and complex relationship networks that manumission requests allow us to explore and then trace into the society of Suriname as a whole.

Conclusion

Claiming kinship in both enslavement and freedom, connected the coloured and black population of eighteenth-century Suriname. Their ties of affection, of love, like or blood, moved individuals who were granted the gift of freedom, to pass this gift on to others. With the number of manumissions steadily growing, the free coloured and black community grew with it. Financial obstacles or additional legislation created by the colonial government were not able to stop this progress once it had begun.

This thesis has answered the question: **How did kinship motivated manumission practices influence the cohesion of the free coloured population in the second half of eighteenth-century Suriname?** To analyse this, the concept of kinship was broadened. Kinship in slavery was in the first place connected to the hereditary aspect of slavery. But kinship in both slavery and freedom included (fictive) kinship and affective ties that should be acknowledged in historical research. The importance of these bonds has become clear through studying the manumission requests. Kinship played different roles in the manumission process and the subsequent development of a free coloured and black community.

Kinship motivated manumissions functioned as a starting point for following (chain) manumissions. Those who were manumitted, would go on to manumit others. This study has found a significant change in the practice of manumission: those who were manumitted motivated by kinship, went on to manumit those they were connected to through affection and/or community. Furthermore, upward social mobility helped a middle class of coloured people emerge. Their manumissions enabled them to help others in a broader network of family, friends, acquaintances and even strangers, made possible by their closeness to and involvement in the colonial government.

Ideas of obedience and indebtedness not only in means of slavery but also in ways of kinship influenced if and when ‘the gift of freedom’ was bestowed on others, even more so if it was deserved. The analysis of close-kin slavery redefined what should be included in this definition and sheds light on the *layering of obligations through enslavement and kinship*. The tie of (fictive) kinship that was the basis to you being deemed worthy for manumission was the same connection or relationship that held you in servitude. Therefore, partial or conditional manumissions should be seen as a form of close-kin slavery and from this perspective more research should be done on manumitting children while their parents remained in slavery.

Analysing *straatvoogdschap* has shed light on a part of manumission practice in Suriname that has been neglected until now. *Straatvoogdschap* displays the extensive connections that were made to obtain letters of freedom. These connections spanned across the

division of free and enslaved, countering the assumed notion that different parts of Surinamese society were not in close contact with each other. *Straatvoogden* represent a significant part of manumission practice in Suriname and the opportunity for researching this unique phenomenon should not be overlooked. The changing role *straatvoogden* had in the lives of those striving to be legally manumitted changes over time. This development reflects the changing role of the community of free(d) people in manumission as a process.

Legates and the role of guarantors played a crucial part in the development of a network within the free coloured and black community. This thesis has made clear that the impact of granting property to those who were manumitted goes beyond the principle of creating a stable financial situation for them. As Fatah-Black has given a glimpse of with his research, there are rich possibilities in research based on the property of the free coloured and black community. An estate created opportunities for the future. Like in the case of Dossoe Vigilant, those who were not part of a family, created a network of obligation and dependence by using their wealth to be a guarantor for others. Families were able to acquire enough money from their bequeathed places of financial security to create chain manumissions and share their financial stability with others. Acting as guarantor bound together people in perhaps the most lasting relationship that could exist between a free person and manumittee. Future research should focus on who these guarantors were, strive to see the connections between guarantor and manumittee and should attempt to reconstruct the details of these financial arrangements. Finding more cases such as Betje's could increase our understanding of this crucial foundation of the coloured community.

In the nineteenth century, coloured and black free people take over as the majority of the population. Simultaneously a coloured elite as described by Neslo develops. Both developments find their roots in the kin-based manumission practices of the eighteenth century. The basis of manumission in kin, which was expanded into affective and community-related relationships created cohesion in this population. This resulted in the coloured free and black community being a force to be reckoned with and to be accounted for, no longer could the population be divided in to free and enslaved based on the colour of one's skin.

The perseverance of the importance of kinship and family in the eighteenth century shows the validity and richness of kinship to explain the cohesion of the nascent community of freedmen. To deepen our understanding of the transformation discussed in this thesis, the methods should be expanded into the first half of the eighteenth century and reach until the moment of abolition and beyond, connecting kinship and manumission through the decades. This will lead to new conceptions of kinship and community in slave societies, connecting research previously done by Morgan, Buschkens, Negrón and others on family, childhood,

motherhood, generations, and sexuality. The importance of family is undeniable and accounting for this fact in studying history can enrich our understanding of what family meant through the ages.

List of tables and images

Table 1: Reasons stated for manumission in <i>straatvoogd</i> and manumissions aided by a <i>straatvoogd</i> .	21
Table 2: People manumitted by Johannes de Bije.	63
Table 3: People manumitted by Jacob Alexander van Bliëkveld.	65
Table 4: Inventory numbers Governing Council used for Dataset I and II.	83
Table 5: Number of manumission petitions per year, 1765-1793.	87
Table 6: Overview of number of people in the petitions, 1765-1795.	88
Table 7: Race and gender of manumitted, 1765-1795.	89
Table 8: Age groups of manumitted, 1765-1795.	90
Table 9: Reasons stated for manumission, 1765-1795.	91
Image 1 and 2: Sale contract of Manthe by <i>de vrije</i> Diana van Fromant.	36
Image 3: Chain manumission diagram <i>de vrije</i> Jan Samson.	52

Bibliography

Primary sources

Nationaal Archief Den Haag

Suriname: Oud Notarieel Archief, 1699-1828 (1.05.11.14)

Testamenten. inv. nrs. 35-78.

Suriname: Gereformeerden (1.05.11.16)

Doop-, trouw- en begrafenisregisters

Oud Archief Suriname: Raad van Politie (1.05.10.02)

Minuut-notulen. inv. nrs. 71-140.

Rekesten. inv. nrs. 393-461, 535-536.

Sociëteit van Suriname (1.05.03)

Gouvernementssecretarie (1.05.10.01)

Datasets

Elections to the Governing Council and Court of Criminal Justice by Karwan Fatah-Black,
based on NA, 1.05.10.02, inv. nr. 235.

Scheepsregisters by John de Bye. <http://www.johndebye.com/scheepsregisters/schip.htm> (last
visited on 22 February 2022).

For the inventory numbers included in **Dataset I and II**, see Table 4 below.

Table 4: Inventory numbers Governing Council used for Dataset I and II.

Years	Dataset 1	Dataset 2
1765	393, 394	
1766		395, 396
1767	397,398	
1768	399	400
1769		401, 402
1770	403, 404	
1771	405, 406	
1772		407, 408
1773	409, 410	
1774	411, 412	
1775		413, 414
1776	415, 416	
1777	417, 418	
1778		419, 420
1779	421, 422	
1780	423, 424	
1781		425, 426
1782	427, 428, 429	
1783	430, 431, 432	
1784		433, 434
1785	435, 436	
1786	437, 438, 439, 440	
1787		441, 442
1788	443, 444	
1789	445, 446	
1790	447, 448	
1790		447, 448
1791	449, 450, 451, 452	
1792	453, 535	
1793		536, 454, 455
1794		456, 457
1795		458, 459, 460, 461

Source: Nationaal archief inventory overview 1.05.10.02.

Literature

- Allart, De Leeuw en Krap, *Nederlandsch placaat- en rechtskundig woordenboek*. (1791).
- Ben-Ur, Aviva. 'Relative Property: Close-Kin Ownership in American Slave Societies'. *New West Indian Guide*. Vol. 89, nr. 1–2 (2015): 1–29.
- Ben-Ur, Aviva. *Jewish Autonomy in a Slave Society: Suriname in the Atlantic World, 1651-1825*. (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020)
- Brana-Shute, Rosemary. 'Approaching Freedom: The Manumission of Slaves in Suriname, 1760-1828'. *Slavery & Abolition*. Vol. 10, nr. 3 (1989): 40–63.
- Brana-Shute, Rosemary. *The Manumission of Slaves in Suriname, 1760-1828*. (Unpublished dissertation, 1985).
- Brana-Shute, Rosemary, en Randy J. Sparks. *Paths to Freedom: Manumission in the Atlantic World*. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2009).
- Buschkens, Willem F.L. *The Family System of the Paramaribo Creoles* ('s Gravenhage, 1974).
- Candlin, Kit and Cassandra Pybus. *Enterprising Women: Gender, Race, and Power in the Revolutionary Atlantic*. (University of Georgia Press, 2015).
- Fatah-Black, Karwan. *Eigendomsstrijd: de geschiedenis van slavernij en emancipatie in Suriname*. (Amsterdam: Ambo/Anthos uitgevers, 2018).
- Fatah-Black, Karwan. 'The Use of Wills in Community Formation by Former Slaves in Suriname, 1750-1775'. *Slavery & Abolition*. Vol. 41, nr. 3 (2020): 623–42.
- Fatah-Black, Karwan. *Sociëteit van Suriname 1683-1795: het bestuur van de kolonie in de achttiende eeuw*. Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2019.
- Gaspar, David Barry, en Darlene Clark Hine. *Beyond Bondage: Free Women of Color in the Americas*. Baltimore: University of Illinois Press, 2004.
- Herlein, J. D., *Beschryvinge van de volk-plantinge Zuriname* (Leeuwarden: 1718).
- Hoefte, Rosemarijn. 'Free Blacks and Coloureds in Plantation Suriname'. *Slavery & Abolition* Vol. 17, nr. 1 (2008): 102–28.
- Hoogbergen, Wim en Okke ten Hove. 'De vrije gekleurde en zwarte bevolking van Paramaribo, 1762-1863', *OSO. Tijdschrift voor Surinaamse taalkunde, letterkunde en geschiedenis*, 2001.
- Jordaan, H. R. *Slavernij en vrijheid op Curaçao: de dynamiek van een achttiende-eeuws Atlantisch handelsknooppunt*. (Dissertatie: Leiden University, 2012).
- Lier, Rudie van. *Samenleving in een grensgebied: een sociaal-historische studie van Suriname*. (Deventer: Van Loghum Slaterus, 1971).

- McLeod, Cynthia, *Elisabeth Samson. Een vrije zwarte vrouw in het achttiende-eeuwse Suriname* (Schoorl: Conserve 1996)
- Morgan, Jennifer L., *Laboring Women. Reproduction and Gender in New World Slavery* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press 2004).
- Morgan, Jennifer L. 'Kinship, the Middle Passage, and the Origins of Racial Slavery'. *Open Book Publishers*, 2019.
- Morgan, Jennifer L. 'Partus Sequitur Ventrem: Law, Race, and Reproduction in Colonial Slavery'. *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism*. Vol. 22, nr. 1 (2018): 1–17.
- Morgan, Jennifer L. *Reckoning with Slavery: Gender, Kinship, and Capitalism in the Early Black Atlantic*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2021).
- Mustakeem, Sowande M. *Slavery at Sea: Terror, Sex, and Sickness in the Middle Passage*. The New Black Studies Series. (Baltimore: University of Illinois Press, 2016).
- Negrón, Ramona. *The Enslaved Children of the Dutch World: Trade, Plantations, and Households in the Eighteenth Century*. (Research Master thesis, Leiden University, 2020).
- Neslo, Ellen. *Een ongekende elite: de opkomst van een gekleurde elite in koloniaal Suriname 1800-1863*. (The Netherlands, 2016).
- Patterson, Orlando. 'Authority, Alienation, and Social Death'. *Critical Readings on Global Slavery*, 90–146, 2017.
- Patterson, Orlando. *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study*. Harvard University Press, 1985.
- Postma, Johannes, *The Dutch in the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1600-1815* (Cambridge etc.: Cambridge University Press 1990).
- Schmidt, Ariadne. 'Vrouwenarbeid in de vroegmoderne tijd in Nederland'. *TSEG-The Low Countries Journal of Social and Economic History*. Vol. 2, nr. 3 (2005): 2–21.
- Smallwood, Stephanie E. *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008).
- Smidt, J. Th de, en To van der Lee. *Plakaten, ordonnantiën en andere wetten uitgevaardigd in Suriname, 1667-1816*. West Indisch plakaatboek 1. (Amsterdam: Emmering, 1973).
- Stedman, John Gabriel, *Narrative of a Five Years Expedition against the Revolted Negroes of Surinam. Transcribed for the First Time from the Original 1790 Manuscript*. Richard Price and Sally Price eds. (New York: 2010).
- Vasconcellos, Colleen. *Slavery, Childhood, and Abolition in Jamaica, 1788–1838*. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2015).

Vrij, Jean Jacques. 'Jan Elias van Onna en het "politiek systema" van de Surinaamse slaventijd, circa 1770-1820'. *OSO. Tijdschrift voor Surinaamse taalkunde, letterkunde en geschiedenis*, 1998.

Appendix I: Quantitative overview of Dataset I

This appendix contains the quantitative information that was extracted from the manumission requests bundled in Dataset I. A total of 325 petitions were found that manumitted 540 people.

Table 5: Number of manumission petitions per year, 1765-1793.

Years	Petitions per year	Total of enslaved
1765	13	24
1766	25	39
1767	12	29
1768	-	-
1769	21	32
1770	-	-
1771	11	28
1772	15	31
1773	-	-
1774	11	20
1775	22	50
1776	-	-
1777	12	27
1778	11	20
1779	-	-
1780	30	49
1781	34	52
1782	-	-
1783	31	40
1784	31	51
1785	-	-
1786	63	127
1787	61	88
1788	-	-
1789	34	43
1790	28	40
1790	26	37
1791	30	47
1792	50	66
1793	25	37

Source: Dataset I.

The inventory numbers that were included in Dataset I and II can be found in Table 4. Table 5 shows how many petitions were found per year and how many enslaved people were mentioned in these petitions. The years that are marked in blue are the years for which all requests in the

request books were read for this analysis. The data of years represented in white rows was extracted from the research of Rosemary Brana-Shute.

The sample of 325 requests is made up by 219 ‘single requests’ in which the freedom of one enslaved person was petitioned. The other 105 requests, or 32 per cent of the total, petition the freedom of multiple people. An overview can be read in the Table 6 below. The total amount of people manumitted in this table is 537, this is caused by two requests in which a mother is manumitted with her children, but it is not stated how many of the children are manumitted or alive. These requests are therefore marked as a multiple request, but it slightly disrupts the numbers.

Table 6: Overview of number of people in the petitions, 1765-1795.

Nr. petitioned for	Occurrence of petition	Percentage occurrence	Number of people	Percentage nr. of people
1	219	67,6%	219	40,8%
2	50	15,4%	100	18,6%
3	28	8,6%	84	15,6%
4	15	4,6%	60	11,2%
5	8	2,5%	40	7,4%
6 or more*	4	1,2%	34	6,0%
Totals	324	100%	537	100,0%

*Source: Dataset I, *One request each was found manumitting groups of 6, 8, 9 and 11 people.*

Manumitters

The petitioners of manumission requests can be divided into two categories: the petitioner and the owners. In most cases the petitioner is also the owner of the to be manumitted person. But petitioners could also be *straatvoogden*, representatives, executors of wills or other kinds of delegates, in which cases petitioner and owner are not the same person. As *straatvoogdschap* and the data collected on them will be discussed in Chapter 5, their information is left out of the following graphs, which will only feature information on petitioners and owners. Involved in the 324 requests were 339 petitioners, as some petitions were admitted on behalf of two or more people. These 339 petitioners represented 285 individuals.

In 94 of the 324 cases an owner was stated that differed from the person petitioning the courts. Of these 94, 35 were referred to as deceased and the petitioners according to their testament. 69 people or 73 per cent of the owners were identified as male, 25 people or 27 per cent of the owners were female. Of the 35 deceased owners, women represented 37 per cent,

making the men in this sample the largest portion of testamentary manumitters. Based on the prefix *de vrije* or a racial category being mentioned we can conclude that at least 14 per cent coloured of the owners in this sample were coloured or black, a total of 13 persons. Coloured and black people represented 19 per cent of the petitioners.

Manumittees

The descriptions provided in the sources for the manumittees can unfortunately be very inconsistent. What was noted down depended on what the clerk or petitioner found relevant and therefore information we would now find useful to know about the manumittees was often omitted. For the complete sample of 541 information on gender, racial description and age were collected. For only 44 manumittees it was noted that they came from a certain plantation. The absence of data for the remainder of the group of manumittees does not mean that the manumittees did not live on plantations, but that this was not found relevant to note down. Most petitioners were also the owners of the enslaved they were freeing, making it needless to state the origin of the enslaved person that was to be manumitted.

The racial categories that are stated in Table 6 must be interpreted by caution, a more comprehensive reflection on these racial categories can be found in Chapter 1. Table 7 combines the data from the sample years found on gender and race. Overall, 35 per cent of the sample was found to be male, 65 per cent was female. This ratio only differs one per cent point from what Brana-Shute found in her sample: 37 per cent males and 63 per cent women.

Table 7: Race and gender of manumittees, 1765-1795.

Racial description	Male	Percentage of males	Female	Percentage of females	Totals	Percentage of total
<i>Carboeger</i>	3	2%	10	3%	13	2%
<i>Castice</i>	1	1%	1	0,3%	2	0,4%
<i>Criool</i>	1	1%	1	0,3%	2	0,4%
<i>Mulat</i>	79	42%	121	35%	200	37%
<i>Mustice</i>	28	15%	13	4%	41	8%
<i>Black/Neger</i>	53	28%	152	43%	205	38%
Unknown	26	13%	52	15%	78	14%
Total	191	100%	350	100%	541	100%

Source: Dataset I.

Table 8 portrays the different age categories that the manumittedes were described by. Only four mentions of ages were found in the sample of 541 manumittedes. For the remainder of the manumittedes, age was described by certain words, which allows for the division into age group. These descriptions often correlated with a description of race such as *mulatinnetje* meaning young female mulatto. Four age groups can be distinguished: adults, children, girls/boys and little girls/boys. Girls and boys were called *jongen* or *meid* in the sources, younger girls and boys were called *jongetje*, *meisje* or *meidje*. It is hard to determine if the additional diminutive can be connected to the children being younger. In general children or adolescents over 14 were considered adults.

Table 8: Age groups of manumittedes, 1765-1795.

Age groups	Male	Percentage of males	Female	Percentage of females	Totals	Percentage of total
Adult	105	55%	264	75%	369	68%
Child	27	14%	25	7%	52	8%
Boy/girl	46	22%	49	14%	95	18%
Little boy/girl	13	7%	12	2%	25	5%
Total	191	100%	350	100%	541	100%

Source: Dataset I.

Reasons for manumission

Table 9 below is a frequency table of the main reasons stated for manumission in order of occurrence. A short explanation will be provided for each category. Manumissions motivated by loyal service were on behalf of the loyal service of the manumitted themselves or their family members. Testamentary manumissions were conducted on behalf of the owner's last will and testament. The category 'bought with intent to free' represents cases in which the manumitted was manumitted by a new owner, who had purchased them with the objective to manumit them as soon as possible. In the categories affection and kinship manumittedes were granted their freedom on behalf of relationships. Self-purchase is a category that speaks for itself. Two manumissions were found in which the manumitted was manumitted to stay in service and the for the largest portion of the sample no reason was stated at all.

Table 9: Reasons stated for manumission, 1765-1795.

Reasons for manumission	Number	Percentage of total
Loyal service	64	20%
Testamentary	54	17%
Bought with intent to free	48	15%
Affection	29	9%
Self-purchase	17	5%
Kinship	13	4%
Trades	5	2%
Other	2	1%
Remain in service	2	1%
No reason stated	91	28%
Total	325	100%

Source: Dataset I.

Appendix II: Person indexes

The list provided below represents all manumittedes that were mentioned in this thesis and found in the corresponding requests. If people were manumitted in a group, they are represented here in this same group. If no kinship connection can be found, their names are listed in the order of appearance in the request. The tabs in the left column reflect different generations. In the centre column bonds of kinship are depicted when available. These bonds of kinship also help to differentiate between people with the same name. More information on these manumittedes can be found on the pages referred to on the right and the footnotes that can be found there.

I. List of names of manumittedes mentioned

A		
Abraham Johannes Petrus Frederik	Presumed children <i>de vrije</i> Felieda van Mementon	59
Adam	Son Tromp van Waterland	46-47
Adam/Simon Petrus Februarij		65-66
Affiba		74
Mimie	Children Affiba	
Janplaisier		
Flora		
Affie		40
Ruth	Daughter Affie	
Frederica	Daughter Frederica	
Afiba		74
Alida	Sister <i>de vrije</i> Cato van Vuijst	47-48
Amba	Mother of Aurora	67-68
Aurora	Daughter Amba	
Hannaatje	Children of Aurora	
Simcha		
Cornelia		
Carolina		
Amimba		21
Amimba		39
Francois	Son Amimba	
Posthume	Daughter Amimba	
Andreas van Weederzorg/Fido		41
Baron	Son Andreas	
Angelica	Granddaughter <i>de vrije</i> Dona	41, 47
Annaatje	Partner Gilles Pater	67
Maria Pater	Children Annaatje and Gilles	
Jacobus Pater		

Louisa Pater		
Wilhelmina Cornelia Pater		
Antje van van Bliekveld	Partner Jacob van Bliekveld	65
Jacob	Sons Jacob and Antje	
Isack		
Apollo		26
Aratha		66
Aurora		58
Avontuur Jonas		71
Azetta		68
B		
Bernhard	Presumed son of Bernhard Strijd	36
Betje		26
Betje		66
Betje van Seijler		74
C		
Candacie		63-64
Cassaar	Daughter of Grietje van Frederiksdorff	32
Catharina		64
Cato	Mother Paulina	39-40
Paulina		
Christiaan	Sons of Petronella van Goede	32
Pieter		
Christoffel		66-67
Coba	Children <i>de vrije</i> Princes van van Meel	32-34
Cojo		
Lackey		
Kettie/Quassie		
Coffij	Sons <i>de vrije</i> Angelica	47
Jasmin		
Coffij	Son Dossoe Vigilant	59
Colinette van Cacheleu	Partner Jacques Lambertus de Bij	63
Comtesse		72, 74
Concordia		62, 74
Seraphina		
Santje		
Constantie		75
Constantie/Lucia		24, 66
D		
David Nicolaas Goede	Son Affiba van Goede	48
Desere	Mother	22
<i>De vrije</i> Annaatje	Children Desere	
Martha		

Verdriet		
Desiree		39
Dona		69
Peter Johannes	Son Dona	
Maria Janetta	Daughter Dona	
Dorothea		48
America	Mother Dorothea (remained in slavery)	
Fredrik	Brother Dorothea (remained in slavery)	
E		
Elisabeth Logeman		23
Elsje		67
Wilhelmina Marianna	Daughter Elsje	
Jacobus	Son Elsje	
Ephraïm van Amstel		63-64
Eva		75
F		
Flora		69
Fransina		24-25
Five children		
Willem	Cousins Fransina	
Betje		
Jacobus	Son Betje	
Frederik	Son of Placi and presumably A.C. Knispel	40
Frederik	Presumably brothers	76
David		
Jan		
Frenk/Louis		31
G		
Gabriel Judeu		24
George Francois		17
Jean Henry		
Gerardus		58
Giem		20
Gracia	Daughters <i>de vrije</i> Betje van Pardo	47
L'Esperanze		
Elisabeth van Hertsbergen	Children L'Esperanze	
Johanna		
Christiaan		
Alida		
Willem		
Andries		
Betje		
Gracia		75
Mina	Daughter Gracia	

P		
Princes	Mother Hermanus	74
Hermanus van Gunst	Son Gerrit van Gunst and Princes	
Adam	Half-brother Hermanus	
I		
I. Naar	Brother of Isaac Gobaij Fonseca	32
Isaac		71
J		
Jan Samson		46, 51-
Jan Hendrik Samson/Kwauw	Son <i>de vrije</i> Jan Samson	54
Dirck Samson	Son <i>de vrije</i> Jan Samson	31, 51- 54 51-54
Jeanneton		57
Joanna	Partner John Gabriel Stedman	41
Johannes	Presumed son of Jan Snijders	35
K		
Katro		66
Kea		57
L		
Laura	Sister <i>de vrije</i> Cleopatra	48
Louisa	Granddaughter <i>de vrije</i> Madras van Vogel	47
Lucretie		26
Truij	Daughter Lucretie	
M		
Mamaatje		74
Manthe		38
Marianna	Mother Johannes de Bije	62
Marie		75
Movitoe		65
N		
Nanette		31
Nanie	Mother Jan Willem Boon	31
Bachus	Son	
Anna	Daughter	
Maria	Daughter	
Nerie	Mother of D.J. Nahar	31
P		
Patentia		66
Murthina		
Pecien Anna		74
Petronella		74
Philander		71

Pierro		41
Dorinda	Partner Pierro	
Griet	Partner Pierro	
Tobie	Son Pierro	
Jackie	Son Pierro	
Pieter	Presumably brothers	76
Johanna		
Pita		33, 65-66
Premiere		63-64
Profiet		38
Maria		
Flora		
Adam		
Q		
Quassi	Son Quassi van Timotibo	48
Aba	Sister Quassi van Timotibo	
R		
Robin Arias		69
S		
Samuel	Son of Annaatje and Alexander Moses Eliazer	76
Santje	Daughter <i>de vrije</i> Diana van Adam	44-46
Adam/Izaak	Son <i>de vrije</i> Diana van Adam	
Simga		24
T		
Trompé	Sons of <i>de vrije</i> Madelon van van den Balk	32
Hendrik		
Truij		23, 68
Primo	Sons Truij	
Adomes		
V		
Venus/Fenisie	Daughter Catharina	54-56,
Johanna	Granddaughter Catharina	68
Vinivie		75
Charlotta	Children Vinivie	
Johanna		
Jan Hermanus Kraemer		
W		
Welkom	Son <i>de vrije</i> Dina van Stolting	48, 50
Willemijntje		57
Damba	Mother of Willem	
Willem	Son of Damba	

II. Index selected people of interest

The thirteen people of interest that were selected from Datasets I and II are listed here. The page numbers on the right side refer to where these people are referenced in this thesis. Please note that this reference may also be found in the footnotes.

Johannes de Bije	26, 62-64, 70
Pieter Hendrik de Bije	62-64, 74
Jacob Alexander van Bliekveld	26, 33, 65-66
Jan Willem Boon	31, 69-70
Gerrit Conijnenberg	23, 68
Abraham Sigismundis Comvalius	24, 66-67, 70
Elisabeth Danforth (weduwe Godefroj)	39, 40-42, 70, 74
<i>De vrije</i> Princes van van Meel (Coetzee)	32-34, 47, 60
Dirck van der Meij	47, 52-53, 69
Jan Hendrik Samson	31, 51, 53
<i>de vrije</i> Tingie van der Son	51, 57-58, 60
<i>de vrije</i> Dossoe Vigilant	44, 51, 57, 58-59, 61, 76, 80

Acknowledgements

Finishing this thesis, or as I loved to call it my labor of love, would not have been possible without my people. As once said in my guilty pleasure tv-series: ‘people are what matters’. Friends and family let me rattle on about kinship, slavery, Suriname and all the stories I found in the sources without complaint. My thesis supervisor Karwan Fatah-Black and friend/colleague Ramona Négron threw oil on the fire of my enthusiasm and passion for this subject with their never failing knowledge, advice, ideas and words of support.

Aniek and Anouk pulled me through days of library sessions with the promise of cappuccinos. Fiona let me take over whole days of work with my excitement and stress. Frits probably has hours of voice message material on this subject and Elianne assured me I could do this, always offering to help however possible. My family FaceTimed me for hours and offered me ‘write-in’ sessions at their homes. Not quite sure what I was doing, they gave me clippings of newspapers on slavery, texted me every time Karwan was on tv and were impressed anyhow. Tessa cooked for me, told me it would be okay a million times and Kemi made me laugh until I cried. My other Tessa took me on walks and calmed me down. Finally, Christien made my physical copies at work. Jessica and Solange, thank you for your feedback. So many other people offered to help and their kindness lifted me up when in doubt.

My gratitude also goes out to the historians and researchers who might never read this but were the backbone of my research. Among others, Rosemary Brana-Shute, Jennifer L. Morgan and Aviva Ben-Ur were women who I could not have written this thesis without. A final acknowledgement must go out to the people whose stories I tried to reconstruct in my writing. I hope I have done you the tiniest bit of justice and lifted you out from the unknown.

I dedicate my thesis to my grandma Jannie who always told me: ‘*zolang je maar je best doet*’. I did and I will dearly miss it.