

# COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES DURING THE COLONIAL PERIOD IN GOIÁS - BRAZIL

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## Abstract

Since the colonial period, commercial activities have always been present in Goiás and even as subsidiary activities, they contributed to the economic dynamics of the Captaincy. In this historical and geographical article, these activities are discussed in the context of colonial economics. The research methodology is based on a bibliographical survey of the historical geographic formation of Goiás, and the documentary research used the databases of the Historical Geographical Institute of Goiás (IHGG) and the Ultramarinho Historical Archive of Lisbon (AHU). The result of the investigation shows that the commercial activities based mainly on importation were developed thanks to the surplus capital generated by the gold.

**Keywords:** Trade. Colonial period. Goiás.

## Resumo / Resumen

### ATIVIDADES COMERCIAIS DURANTE O PERÍODO COLONIAL EM GOIÁS - BRASIL

Em Goiás, desde o período colonial, as atividades comerciais sempre se fizeram presentes e mesmo como atividades subsidiárias contribuíram para a dinâmica econômica da Capitania. Neste artigo, de cunho histórico-geográfico, buscamos discorrer sobre essas atividades no contexto da econômica colonial. A metodologia de pesquisa baseou-se no levantamento bibliográfico, sobre a formação histórico geográfica de Goiás e na pesquisa documental junto as bases do Instituto Histórico Geográfico de Goiás (IHGG) e do Arquivo Histórico Ultramarinho de Lisboa (AHU). O resultado da investigação demonstrou que as atividades comerciais alicerçadas, preponderantemente, na importação, desenvolveram-se graças aos excedentes de capitais gerados pelo ouro.

**Palavras-chave:** Comércio. Período Colonial. Goiás.

### ACTIVIDADES COMERCIALES DURANTE EL PERÍODO COLONIAL EN GOIÁS - BRASIL

En Goiás, desde el período colonial, las actividades comerciales siempre se hicieron presentes e incluso como actividades subsidiarias contribuyeron a la dinámica económica de la Capitania. En este artículo, de cunho histórico-geográfico, buscamos discorrir sobre esas actividades en el contexto de la económica colonial. La metodología de investigación se basó en la revisión de la literatura de la historia geográfica de Goiás y la formación en la investigación documental a lo largo de las bases del Instituto Geográfico Histórico de Goiás (IHGG) y File Historia Ultramarinho Lisboa (AHU). El resultado de la investigación demuestra que las actividades comerciales basadas, preponderantemente, en la importación, se desarrollaron gracias a los excedentes de capitales generados por el oro.

**Palabras-clave:** Comercio. Período Colonial. Goiás.

## INTRODUCTION

The economic and urban history of the state of Goiás begins with gold and everything that the exploitation of the metal represented. This first cycle commenced in the 1720s, with the arrival of the Bandeirantes and the official occupation of the territory, and extended, roughly, until 1820, when gold extraction was no longer an economically viable option.

During the first century of Goiás' socioeconomic history, which was marked by the extractive economy, it is difficult to write about the existence of any other structured economic activities. This is due to the almost complete absence of services such as education, health, and communications, and transformation activities of raw materials, as well as the limited agricultural activity developed in the Captaincy. As explained by Palacin (1972), Alencastre (1979) and Furtado (2004), the high profitability of mining, especially during the initial phases, concentrated all the available resources in mining activities, thus inhibiting the development of other productive undertakings.<sup>1</sup> However, mercantile trade was always present and, to a greater or lesser extent, contributed to the productive dynamics of the captaincy. The objective of this geographic, historical article is to discuss the development of commercial activities in Goiás in the context of the colonial economy.

In the first instance, the research methodology is based on a bibliographical survey on the historical geographic formation of Goiás; the classic contributions of Palacin (1976), Salles (1992), Palacin *et al.* (1995) and Bertran (1978, 2010) are noteworthy as their research is based on primary documentary sources. After this, the focus was on documentary research using the databases of the Historical Geographical Institute of Goiás (IHGG), and the Ultramarinho Historical Archive of Lisbon (AHU). The documents analyzed are fiscal reports of the local colonial administration, which, although limited in terms of the methodology of the data collection, definitions of terms and time gaps, provided important records about the *juílgados* (jurisdictions) in Goiás, allowing the delineation of hypotheses about the dynamics of mercantile activity carried out in the period.

## TRADE DURING THE COLONIAL PERIOD IN GOIÁS

The historiographical records of Goiás indicate that mercantile activities followed mining activities during the colonial period. The document *Notícia Geral da Capitania de Goiás de 1783* (BERTRAN, 2010), describes a commercial exchange carried out in the year 1726.

After six months of Journey, they arrived at the plateau where the Arraial de Ouro Fino is now, and a few days later Antônio Ferraz de Araújo arrived, who was one of the most challenged a second entrance, leading forty pigs, with which later he installed at Cabasacus, and sold them for a pound of gold each. With his arrival, Captain Mor sent him to examine the Ribeirão, that today is the Rio Vermelho until he found some land where his father had planted crops for 40 years. (BERTRAN, 2010, page 48)

Salles (1992, p. 110) emphasizes that this fact does not illustrate the trade that should emerge with the mining activities and the implementation of the royal administration in the captaincy. Instead, "it was an occasional and irregular exchange, which, however, would often repeat itself throughout colonial history." The historian goes on to highlight that "the initial stage of mercantile life in the region was based on anomie and improvisation until the first access routes to the population center of Sant'Ana outlined the norms of the system" (p. 110).

The Arraial de Sant'Ana, now the city of Goiás, was established by Bartolomeu Bueno da Silva in 1727. From that time, the nuclei of settlements multiplied in the vast region of *Minas dos Goyazes*<sup>2</sup>. Figure 1 shows the location and the foundation year of the mining centers in Goiás during the eighteenth century.

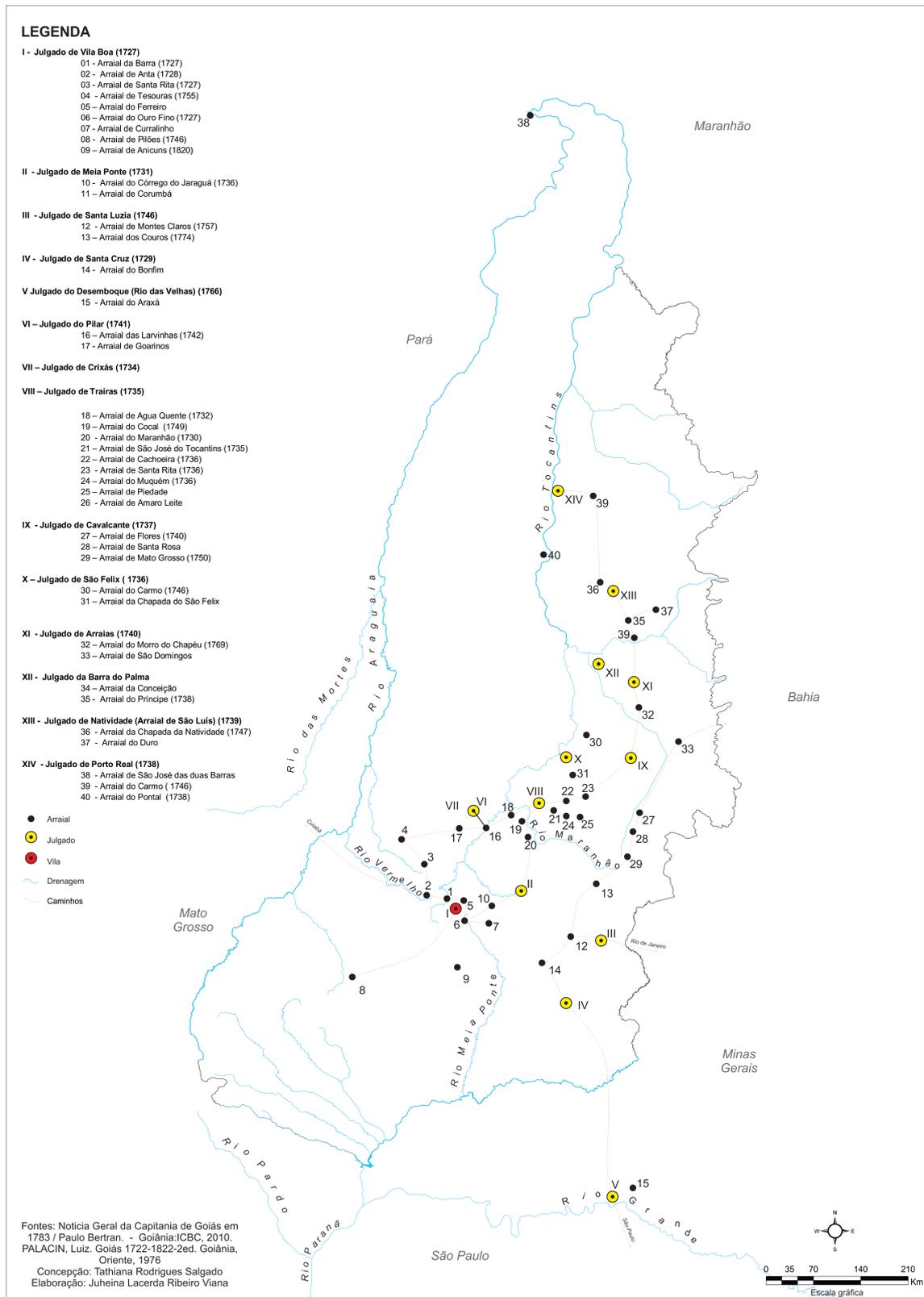


Figure 1 - Arraiais do Ouro, Captaincy of Goiás, eighteenth century

As can be observed in Figure 1 and is also evidenced by Gomes *et al.* (2004), one of the main aspects of mining settlements were their *ad hoc* and irregular character, which was due to the very nature of colonial mining activities, as Furtado (2004: p. 82) explains:

[...] the mining company did not allow connections to the land of the type that prevailed in the sugar regions. Fixed capital was reduced since a mine's lifespan was always uncertain. The company was organized so that it could remove itself in a relatively short time.

The panning of alluvial gold predominated in Goiás, with the main extraction centers located near the riverbanks. According to Palacin (1976), the presence of water and gold were enough for camps to be set up throughout the immense territory of the Minas dos Goyazes.

Palacin *et al.* (1995, p. 32) point out that the formation of the gold *Arraias* "brought a new form of settlement to colonial Brazil: an urban settlement." By nature, this occupancy profile generates consumption demands, either for primary-need items or complementary articles. The new settlement profile allowed the emergence of trade flows determined by the logic of the society that was engendered there. As Palacin *et al.* (1995: p. 37) explain:

The human concentration and preponderance of the mining activity, together with the long distances from other centers, led, for the first time in Goiás, to the formation of an internal market, which bought and sold horses, animals, and cattle, besides trading other products, such as food and manufactured goods.

On the predominance of mining activity and the dependence on external supplies, D'Alincourt (1975, p. 113), in his passage through Goiás in 1818, recorded that:

[...] the first discoverers, eager for this precious metal, covered a large part of the country where they found rich discoveries, and without looking to the future, tied themselves to them. There they founded their works and judging perhaps that the sources of gold were inexhaustible, they were utterly contemptuous of agriculture, and with the same ease with which they extracted the gold, they passed it on to other hands, in exchange for the goods they needed.

In order to prove the "urban character" of the population of Goiás during the colonial period, Palacin *et al.* (1995) draw attention to the number of commercial establishments paying the *Capitação* tax in the years 1736 and 1742. Table 1 shows that in those years, there were already more than 300 establishments distributed in Goiás' settlements.

Establishment	1736	1742
1 <sup>st</sup> class stores	12	35
2 <sup>nd</sup> class stores	13	42
3 <sup>rd</sup> class stores	49	64
Sales	256	212
<b>Total</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>353</b>

Table 1 - Establishments recorded for payment of the capitação tax, Minas dos Goyazes, 1736 - 1742

Source: Map of the single registration of the capitação for all the Minas de Goyaz in the years 1736 and 1742. In: História de Goiás em Documentos: I. Colônia/ Luís Palacin, Leonidas Franco Garcia, Janaina Amando. Goiânia: UFG, 1995, p. 62.

The number of establishments is very expressive, considering that the population estimates for the period were of 15,000 inhabitants, in 1736, and 20,000 inhabitants, in 1742.<sup>4</sup> This represents an average of one establishment for every 45 inhabitants in 1736, and one establishment for every 56 inhabitants in 1742, "a proportion found only in urban concentrations at the time" (PALACIN *et al.*, 1995, p. 39 ).

According to Palacin *et al.* (1995), in general, the stores sold everyday staples, all in the same establishment. Salles (1992) points out that they sold mainly wheat flour, ointments, fabrics such as baize, burlap, velvet, linen, tow, lace, blankets, satin, other fabrics, sewing thread, ribbons, braid, cloves, cinnamon, black pepper, guns, gunpowder, lead, agricultural implements, wine, locks, wire sieves, and artist's paint. In the stores and taverns, there was a small trade in beverages and basic arable produce

such as maize, cassava, rice, beans, and castor beans.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, it is possible to deduce that the classification presented by the official documents (Table 1), was more related to the size of the inventories at the time of the inspection than to the specialization of the commercial establishments.

Even with the conceptual limitation of the documents, it is possible to measure at least the minimum amount of commercial establishments existing at the time, as shown in Table 2, which displays the number of these establishments of the Intendencies of Vila Boa and Tocantins, which left the *Capitação* during the first and second registrations between 1738 and 1751.

Intendency	Large stores 1 <sup>st</sup> class				Medium stores 2 <sup>nd</sup> class				Small stores 3 <sup>rd</sup> class				Sales				Total est. by reg.	
	V. Boa		Toc.		V. Boa		Toc.		V. Boa		Toc.		V. Boa		Toc.		1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>
	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>		
<b>Registration</b>																		
1738	7	12	10	12	18	15	9	15	57	34	23	32	91	109	100	110	315	339
1939	17	-	9	-	14	-	12	-	30	-	28	-	101	-	91	-	302	-
1741	21	24	5	3	22	15	19	12	42	47	25	19	117	129	59	-	336	254
1748	3	2	7	9	11	18	10	15	34	37	22	41	76	93	65	70	228	285
1749	1	10	7	5	15	23	12	19	39	44	47	45	85	105	64	73	270	324
1751	6	3	10	7	19	16	10	8	48	53	28	41	92	99	63	68	276	295

Table 2 - Commercial Establishments of the Intendencies of Vila Boa and Tocantins, Captaincy of Goyaz, from 1738 to 1751, the 1 and 2 registrations of the *Capitação* Tax<sup>1</sup>

- Data not available

The *Capitação* tax was collected twice a year during the 1 and 2 registration.

Sources: Mapa da capitação das matrículas de 1738 e da primeira de 1739. AHU\_ACL\_CU\_008, Cx.01, D.69; Relação das receitas e despesas das duas matrículas da capitação e censo de 1741. AHU\_ACL\_CU\_008, Cx.2, D.184; Mapa e relação do rendimento da capitação e censo, da Intendência de Vila Boa, Tocantins e comissárias, das matrículas de 1748 AHU\_ACL\_CU\_008, cx05, D.406; Mapas do quinto e do rendimento da capitação da capitania de Goiás de 1749. ANU\_ACL\_CU\_008, CX.6, D.444

In the document analyzed it is not possible to identify the criteria used to classify the establishments in the four typologies presented. For the creation of the table, the denominations in the documents were used.

The reading of Tables 1 and 2 suggests that the commercial activities practiced during the period were unstable. This is evidenced by the differences between the number of establishments existing during the first and second registrations and by the positive or negative variations between the years. Three factors, or their sum, are believed to be associated with this instability. The first is related to the link between trade and mining. Thus, the mercantile flow depended directly on the discovery of new sites and the level of production of the mines. This relation explains the higher number of establishments until the first registration of 1741, a period rich in discoveries (see Figure 01).

It was also during this period that the highest number of large or 1<sup>st</sup> class stores is observed. At the Intendency of Vila Boa, on the occasion of the 2<sup>nd</sup> registration of 1741, there were a total of 24 establishments of this size; 14 in Vila Boa itself, 8 in Crixás and 2 in Meia Ponte. As stated by Palacin (1976), from that period there was a decline in new gold finds and, between 1745 and 1750, only three important *arraiais* were formed: Carmo (1746), Santa Luzia (1746) and Cocal (1749), after which they almost wholly died out.

Figure 2, shows that from 1753, the year in which the collection of tributes on the exploration of the gold reached its highest point, 40 *arrobas*, there was a downward trend in the fiscal revenues from mining.

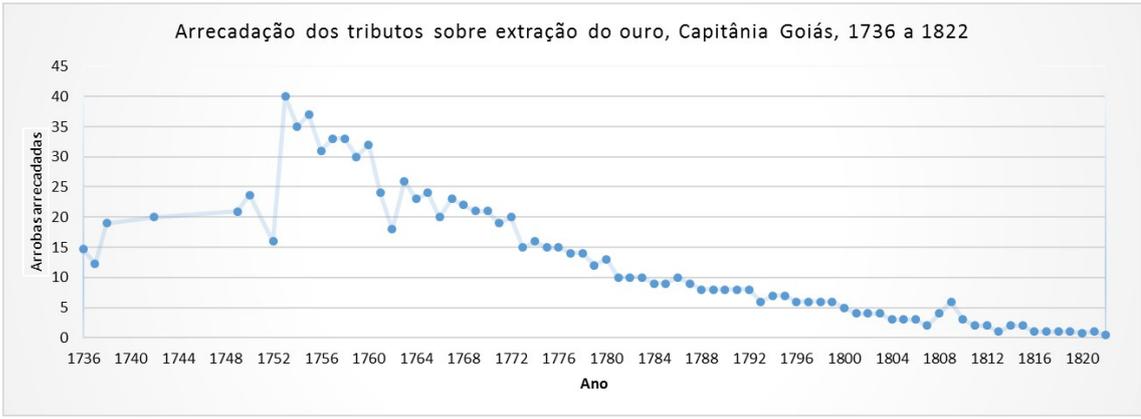


Figure 2 - Collection of taxes on gold extraction, Captainty of Goiás. 1736 to 1822

\* For the period from 1736 to 1750, the values refer to the collection obtained by the *Capitação* tax. For the period from 1752 to 1822, the figures refer to the collection obtained by the *Quinto* Tax.

Sources: Palacin (1976), Salles (1992).

The decline became more pronounced in the 1770s, and by the end of the colonial period, the contribution of mining to the public coffers was so trifling that it did not even cover the maintenance costs of the foundry houses where gold was cast.

In addition to affecting colonial revenues, the fall in productivity also undermined the trade dynamics. Based on a documentary source from 1763, Palacin *et al.* (1995) record the manifest decline of the municipal "*aferição*" tax paid by stores when their systems of weights and measures were inspected. In Vila Boa, the tax fell from "1,250 and 1,280 octaves in 1752 and 1753 to 709 octaves in 1760 and 1761." As the authors point out, "the crisis of urban life, which was brought about by the falling-off of mining, was already clearly announced in Vila Boa" (p. 53).

Figure 3, which demonstrates the decrease in tax collection, suggests that from the 1780s, trade in imported goods in the captainty declined considerably.

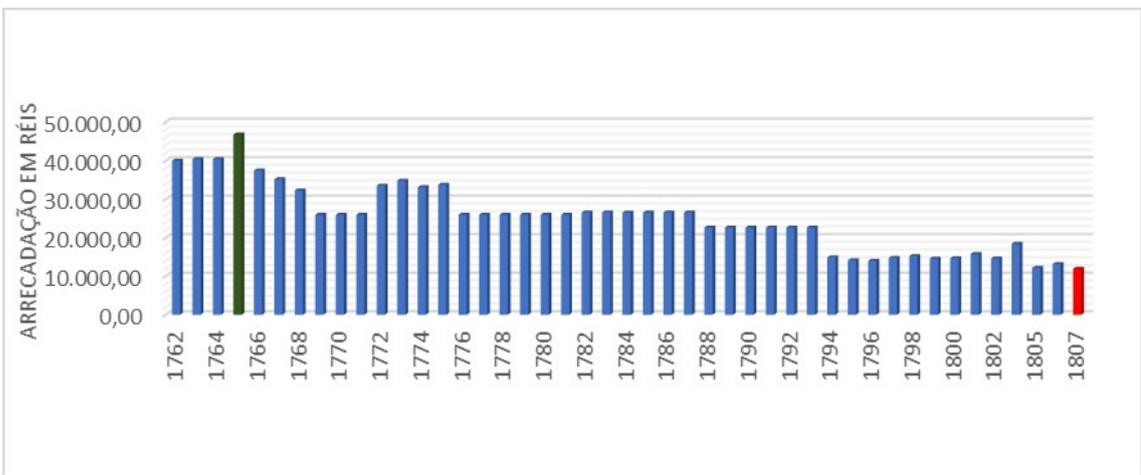


Figure 3 - Income from Tax collection, Captainty of Goiás, 1762-1807.

Source: Salles, Gilka V. Ferreira.

*Economia e Escravidão na Capitania de Goiás*. Goiânia: UFG, 1992, p. 193-194.

Figure 4, based on the information available in the document *Notícia Geral da Capitania de Goiás em 1783* <sup>6</sup>, corroborates the previous statement because it is possible to verify that in 1783

commerce in Goiás was carried out predominantly by stores and taverns. This proves the stronger link of commerce with the internal production of the captaincy, which, due to the reduction of mining activities, began to develop.

It is important to note that, though Bertran (2010) registers the increase in the absolute number of establishments, relative to the population, there was a decrease. The average number of inhabitants per establishment, which was 43:1 in 1736, rose in 1783 to 116:1.

Figure 4 also verifies the privileged situation of the capital Vila Boa concerning commerce, due to its administrative function, and of the *Arraiais* of Meia Ponte and Santa Luzia, which were located at the path junctions, which facilitated the reception of marketable goods.

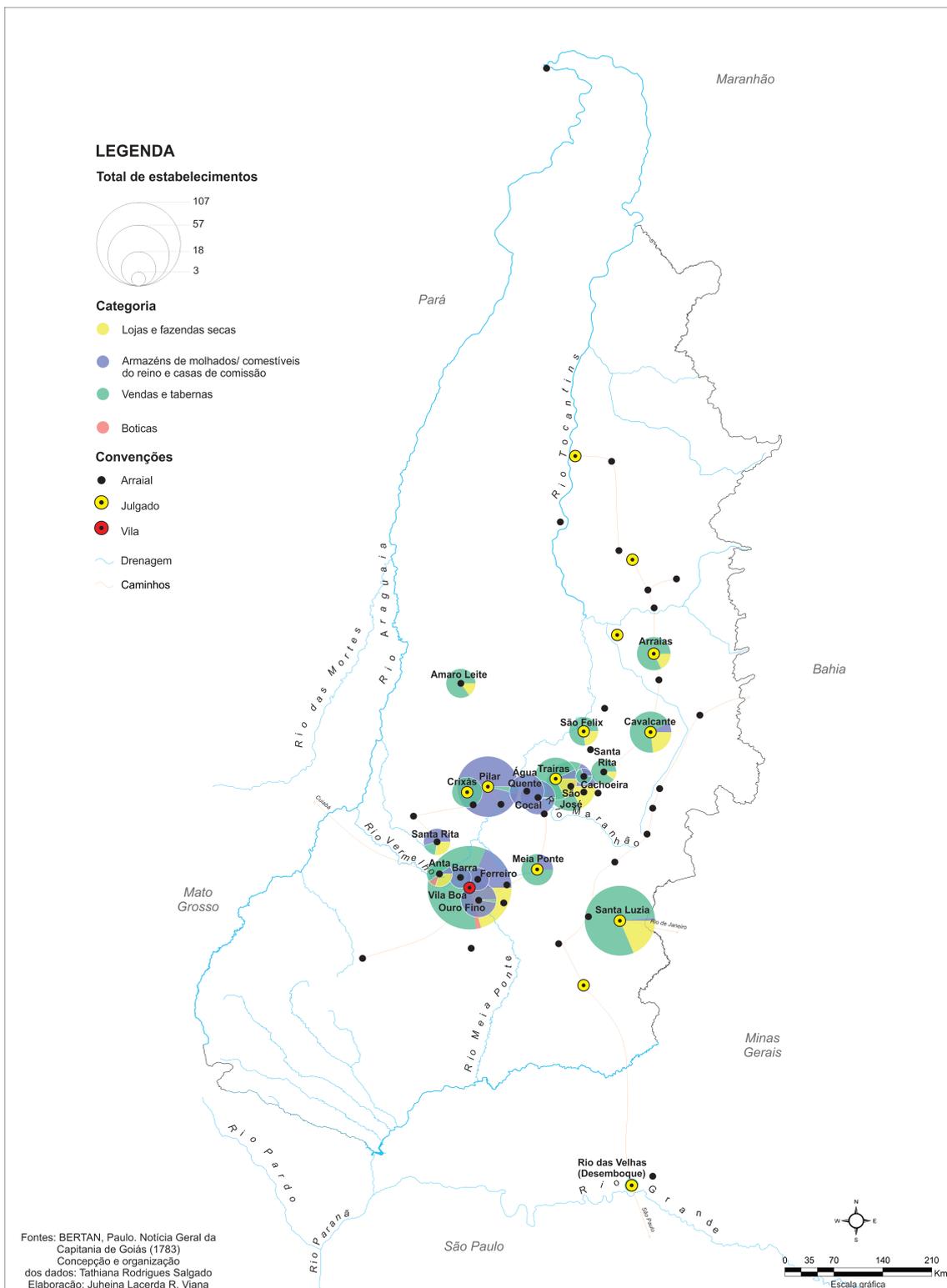


Figure 4 - Commerce by categories, Captaincy of Goiás, 1783

The second explanation for the instability of trade can be attributed to supply problems. Although very active in the initial years, commerce in Goiás was predominantly based on the importation of goods from the coastal captaincies. On this, Chaim (1975: p. 61) writes:

[...] in Brazil, the gold mines were a kind of colony within the colony, the territory was economically dependent on the producers and traders of Bahia, Rio, and São Paulo, since the mining territories were

devoted almost exclusively to the production of gold. Effort was not diverted to the production of other goods, which could be imported from the other captaincies.

The long distances from the supply centers, coupled with the inherent difficulties of the paths, hindered the arrival of tradable goods. According to Funes (1986), it took around eight months to travel the route from Rio de Janeiro to Vila Boa. This could lead to some commercial houses closing their activities for a few months of the year due to lack of goods. This hypothesis explains, for example, the fluctuations between the number of establishments in the same year. In 1741, there was a difference of 82 establishments between the first and the second matriculation.

As can be seen in Tables 1 and 2, on the whole, there is a higher number of establishments in the second registration, in the second half of the year, coinciding with the peak of the dry season in the central-western region of Brazil, which facilitated the arrival of products to supply the stores. Although well after a year than the data of in the tables, the record left by Saint-Hilaire, when passing through a farm between *Arraial* of Meia Ponte and *Arraial* of Jaraguá in mid-June of 1819, corroborates this observation.

I asked my host whether there had been many mule trains coming from Rio de Janeiro, Bahia, and Sao Paulo that year. He replied that he had not yet seen any, and that, in general, they only began to arrive after the Feast of St. John, since, understandably, they could never set out before the end of the rainy season (SAINT-HILAIRE, 1975, p. 42).

The third factor related to the oscillations in the numbers of establishments until 1751, was the practice of tax evasion, indicating that possibly, the actual number of trading houses was higher than that given in *Mapas de Rendimento da Real Capitação*. As Salles points out (1992, p. 113):

The unjust discrimination [In Goiás, the rates of *Capitação* were higher than in other Captaincies] led the settler to reimburse himself through evasion and smuggling. In the North and Northeast goldfields, illicit commerce might be more profitable than legally installed establishments.

Later, Salles (1992, p. 114) explains that "it is still probable that the *Capitação* tax exerted a certain influence, forcing the gradual closure of the less solid commercial firms."

Gumiero (1991), gathers data from the examination of documents from the Archive of the Bandeiras Museum, in the City of Goiás, recording that the main products entering the Captaincy of Goiás between 1761 and 1799 were: sea salt, fresh and dry goods, cheese, gunpowder, lead, tobacco, cotton, slaves, spades, wine, dried meats and fish, soap, horses, oxen, wax, hardware, copper, nails, flour and iron. The author also indicates that Goiás' leading suppliers were São Paulo, Bahia, Rio de Janeiro, and Minas Gerais.

The data collected by Gumiero (1991) is noteworthy, as can be seen in Chart 1, where the number of salt shipments received at the end of the eighteenth century can be verified:

Origin	Year	Load	Origin	Year	Credit Load
São Paulo	1794	1,396 loads of salt 06 loads of dry fabric 211 loads of wet fabric	Rio de Janeiro	1797	566 arrobas of dry fabric 59 loads of wet fabric 31 slaves 91 arrobas of sea salt 781 loads of sea salt 469 arrobas of dry fabric 132 loads of wet fabric 35 slaves
	1795	48 bags of salt		1799	728 salt loads 1,294 arrobas of dry fabric 648 loads of wet fabric 59 slaves 06 horses
	1796	21 arrobas of wet fabric 02 loads of salt			
	1799	263 loads of dry and fresh fabric 1,348 sticks of salt 10 arrobas of dried fish 209 arrobas in livestock 1,375 loads of salt 442 loads of dry fabric 178 loads of wet fabric 6 loads of slaves 6 loads of flour 39 arrobas of iron			
Bahia	1761	19 bales of tobacco 146 loads of dry and wet fabric 48 horses loaded with cotton 106 horses loaded with salt 1 Creole 300 horses 98 non-specified loads	Minas Gerais	1791	33 loads of salt
	1795	Dry fabric without specification Gunpowder without specification Unspecified hoes Tobacco not specified 2,838 salt pans 309 arrobas in dried meat and fish 19 of soap and tobacco 15 new slaves 1 colt 49 oxen 134 arrobas of wax Tools, copper, dry fabric, board, tobacco and nails		1792	29 arrobas of dry and wet fabric 07 loads of cheese 49 arrobas of gunpowder 39 arrobas of tobacco
				1796	Arrobas of dry fabric
				1798	6 new slaves 18 horses loaded with products Animals Wine Barrels Hoe 8 bales of dry fabric 106 arrobas of salt
				1799	789 sticks of salt 104 sticks of salt 29 arrobas of dry

Chart 1 - Products imported by the Captaincy of Goiás, 1761 -1799.

Source: Gumiero (1991, p. 71)

The data on salt imports suggest that at the end of the eighteenth century, cattle raising was a vigorous activity in the economy of Goiás. A comparison of Table 01 with Figure 04, which shows the predominance of establishments trading in local goods in 1783, indicates that it is no exaggeration to affirm that cattle-raising had substituted gold as the motor for the maintenance, although in a smaller volume, of the import trade in the captaincy. Data from 1804, drawn up by Funes (1986), show that cattle accounted for 37% of Goiás exports in the North and 11% of the South. According to Campos (1982, p. 132-133), the importance of cattle raising for Goiás is undeniable because after the fall of gold production it avoided the complete depopulation and economic bankruptcy of Goiás and functioned as an element of fixation of people and the occupation of new parcels of the territory of Goiás.

## THE ROLE OF TRADE IN THE ECONOMY AND ORGANIZATION OF THE COLONIAL SPACE IN GOIÁS

Besides supplying miners, traders played a fundamental role in the circulation of the gold produced in the mines. As Palacin (1976: p. 60) points out:

The miner extracted the gold and could use it as currency in the territory of the mines, as other currencies were forbidden, and gold powder was the only currency in circulation. As soon as he decided to withdraw his gold to other captaincies, he was forced to castitand pay the *quinto*. [...] but this was a rare case. Buying everything on credit, over long periods, at very high prices, all his gold would immediately end up in the hands of merchants, and it was they who channeled the gold from the mines to the outside and should, therefore, pay the corresponding *quinto*.

Although the law prohibited the use of gold powder as a currency in Goiás from the beginning of the colonial period until the first two decades of the nineteenth century, because of the negligible volumes of external trade, gold powder was the settlers' currency.

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, trade in Goiás was all supplied by *tropeiros* (muleteers). As Palacin *et al.* (1995: p. 127) explain:

The *tropeiros* were transport entrepreneurs, indispensable for the export and import trade. They also acted as messengers, transmitters of personal news and news that they saw and heard in other parts of the country. They often became traders and acted as intermediaries in sending and withdrawing gold, at a time when there were no banks in the region.

Saint-Hilaire (1979, p. 41), in his journey through Minas Gerais in 1818, gives a detailed description of the *tropeiros*' operations:

Tropeiros are the men who lead the caravans of mules destined to undertake these and similar trips. The considerable packs are divided into groups of seven animals, each entrusted to the custody of a negro or mulatto who, walking behind the beasts of burden in his charge, drives them using shouts or whistles. Each beast carries eight arrobas (about 120 kilos), and so as not to hurt them, they are loaded with the utmost care. On arriving at a ranch, each caravan takes its place; the animals are quickly unloaded, and the goods are sorted in order. Each animal receives its corn ration and is led to the pasture; the saddles are organized, and the nails are straightened for the smithy. Meanwhile, the youngest tropeiro fetches water and firewood, lights the fire, sets up three sticks above it, binds them, and suspends a cauldron on the tripod, where he cooks the black beans for the evening meal and the lunch the next day. The tropeiros from the various caravans approach each other, start talking, report their travels and love affairs, and sometimes one of them enchants the work of the neighbors playing the guitar and singing some of the Brazilian arias that have so much grace and sweetness. Everything is orderly, they rarely argue, and speak to each other with a delicacy unfamiliar in Europe among lower-class men. The next day they get up very early; They give the mules a fresh corn ration. Leaving the ranch, they greet the tropeiros who are still there; they make another trek of three or four leagues and arrive at another station by two or three in the afternoon.

The work of the *tropeiros* played an essential role in the integration between the coast and the interior of Brazil. As Furtado points out (2004, p. 84):

The mule train was an authentic infrastructure of the whole system. The almost total absence of local food supplies, the long distances overland that all imported goods traveled, and the need to overcome long treks in the mountainous region to reach the workplaces all contributed to the transport system playing a fundamental role in the functioning of the economy, creating a large market for livestock.

According to Chaim (1975), large areas of Brazil, from the *sertões* of Maranhão and Piauí to the plains of Rio Grande do Sul, underwent a massive hitherto unknown commercial upheaval. "All the producing centers of this area increased their productive capacity to supply the mining regions" (page 61) 7. Furtado also writes about this (2004, p. 83):

if the demand for cattle for slaughter and mules for transportation are considered together, in the eighteenth century the mining economy was a market of greater proportions than the one that had served the sugar economy in its stage of maximum prosperity.

The action of the *tropeiros* also had repercussions in the spatial formation of Goiás. Cunha Matos

(1875, p. 87) states that the settlements of Ouro Fino and Ferreiro lost their importance after the *tropeiros* started to use the road called Picada do Correio de Goiás, eliminating the two camps from the transportation route. Gomes *et al.* (2004, p. 87) point out that the *tropeiros* stopping points were a considerable urbanization factor in Goiás, as they emerged along the paths and, depending on the frequency of the mule trains, "soon evolved into a small agglomeration, with some typical services of a small urban agglomeration: a small business and entertainment for the *tropeiros* and travelers." In this sense, the authors note:

Several cities were born of these movements of men and mule trains: Três Ranchos, which later became a registry or fiscal post, under the name of Mano de Pau, Campo Alegre de Goiás, Damianópolis and Mambai, at the foot of the Serra Geral of Goiás. This *tropeiro* route from Bahia, Itaberaí, the old Curralinho, that sheltered the first mule trains that penetrated in Goiás, only in the eighteenth century, Ituaçu, along the GO-070 highway, Palmelo, Varjão, Sanclerlândia and, the most charming name among them, Pouso Alto, renamed, also charmingly, Piracanjuba. (page 87)

The privileged economic situation of Meia Ponte at the end of the eighteenth century arose from it being the resupply point of the *tropeiros* who came from Cuiabá and followed to Bahia and São Paulo. This also influenced the development of agriculture in the region (D'ALINCOURT, 1975).

With the decrease of mining activities, there was also a reduction in the movement of *tropeiros*. Table 3 gives an example of the reduction in the number of *tropeiros* who passed through the count at São João das Três Barras between 1788 and 1818.

Year	No. of <i>Tropeiros</i>	Income
1788	111	5: 706 \$ 324
1797	94	3: 940 \$ 606
1794	110	2: 244 \$ 650
1795	63	2: 042 \$ 250
1796	58	1: 905 \$ 000
1804	41	998 \$ 366
1805	29	1: 209 \$ 475
1806	32	878 \$ 203
1807	24	1: 011 \$ 487
1808	34	1: 254 \$ 312
1809	07	104 \$ 589
1810	06	15 \$ 112
1812	08	70 \$ 500
1813	02	45 \$ 200
1815	12	77 \$ 236
1816	05	35 \$ 875
1817	11	51 \$ 106
1818	06	73 \$ 687

Table 3 - Movement of *tropeiros* at the entrances, in milreis, count of São João das Três Barras

Source: Archives of the Bandeiras Museum, codes 154 and 156. In: Bertran (2011).

The long distances and the transport structure influenced the charges set by traders. Palacin and Morais (1989, p. 22) highlight that initially "the prices of everything were extraordinarily high since the mines produced nothing and the distances from Rio, Bahia and Sao Paulo were so long for imported goods, and the interest charged by the traders was extremely high." D'Alincourt's account (1975: p. 110) on passing through Goiás during his voyage from the port of Santos to the city of Cuiabá in 1818, illustrates this statement:

[...] Agriculture was entirely neglected, and only the sutlers, who were still were coming from S. Paulo, made considerable reliable profits. They were the masters of taxing the goods, and at that time the prices rose

sharply. Suffice it to say, that the basket of flour cost ten, and eleven gold octaves, of grain six, seven; the first port, sold for eighty, and cow's milk for two pounds of gold. Despite these prices there was still hunger because there were many people, and the *tropeiros* could not carry enough: the men were only thirsty for gold, walking around as though stunned, and did not give a second thought to their real interests, faithfully depositing a large part of the wealth they obtained with excessive work, into the hands that provided them, without much cost to life's indispensables.

A comparative table of the values of some goods traded in Goiás between 1736 and 1786, taken from Salles (1992, p. 121), gives an idea of the high prices charged in the early years of mining:

Products	1736	1786
Sugar (per arroba)	1\$920	3\$600
Brandy (the barrel)	4\$800	8\$000
Ox (the head)	6\$000	1\$500
Salt (the rock)	4\$800	1\$185
Flour (the bushel)	2\$400	2\$400
Corn (the bushel)	1\$500	1\$500
Beans (the bushel)	1\$500	\$800
Chicken (head)	2\$700	\$300

Table 4 - Prices in the commerce of the Captaincy of Goiás in 1736 and 1786

Source: SALLES, Gilka Vasconcelos F Economia e escravidão na Capitania de Goiás

. Goiânia: UFG, 1992.

The fall in the prices of the items shown in table 4, as indicated by Salles (1992, p. 123):

suggests that the lack of gold aroused an interest in agriculture and livestock, increasing the production of certain goods, such as beans, livestock, and chickens, and lowering their value, the harvest periods during the good years also forced the decline in prices.

Funes (1986) states that the decline in mining and the high cost of food products triggered a process of occupation of the areas near the mining centers:

At a time when gold ceased to be the base product of the economy of Goiás, the people who did not leave the province went to the countryside, where they began to dedicate themselves to farming and cattle raising. (p.95).<sup>8</sup>

Bertran (1978) estimates that at the end of the 1770s, agriculture was already responsible for 30% of Goiás' income, while mining still represented 50% and the import trade, so active in previous years, accounted for the remaining 20%.

Palacin *et al.* (1995) point out that, due to the high prices charged by merchants, especially in the early years of mining, trade represented an important means of accumulating capital in the nascent captaincy. To illustrate the argument, the authors quote from the French traveler Ferdinand Denis, who passed through Brazil between 1816 and 1819:

The affluence was such that after two years, that a kind of hunger was declared, and the food provisions from São Paulo were insufficient. Then what had happened in America was repeated in all the mining regions. The settlers who had apparently followed the slower path to riches were precisely the ones who walked more directly to fortune. (Denis, 1980, pp. 345, Palacin *et al.*, 1995, p. 138)

The Entrance tax also contributed to the high cost of the goods. The excerpt from a taxation contract gives an account of some of the sums collected during the passage of the goods in the records:

Subject to the condition that the contractor shall be entitled to all the rights paid in the paths of Rio de Janeiro, Parati, São Paulo, Sertão da Bahia, and Pernambuco, and likewise shall be entitled to the said rights of any

other routes that are currently open, or may be opened in the time of the contract. **The contractor may charge for each male and female slave passing through the register two octaves, and for each head of cattle an octave, and for each horse or other mule beast that enter without a load, without a saddle, bare and not mounted, two octaves, and for each dry fabric load weighing two arrobas an octave and a half and for each wet fabric load will pay half an octave.** [emphasis added]

Contract of the Entrance of the mines, Rio de Janeiro, Biblioteca Nacional, Goiás cód. 19.2.8, p. 2, In: PALACÍN *et al.*, 1995, p. 153.

The high prices charged also resulted in sales on credit, "a damaging resource that stimulated the increased price of products" (SALLES, 1992, p 123).

Indirectly, tithing, a tax levied on agricultural production, also discouraged the development of agriculture and, consequently, the production of surpluses in quantities that would make it possible to reduce prices and increase the supply of marketable products.

In addition to the above factors, the restrictive laws imposed on the Captaincy contributed to the high value of the goods, since they made it hard to concentrate marketable surpluses. Among them, the royal letter of January 10, 1730, which determined that there was only one way into to Goiás, and next, the prohibition of navigation by the river Tocantins, only revoked in 1782. Also, the law of 1732, which established the prohibition of sugar mills and the destruction of sugarcane plantations existing in the Captaincy. These factors influenced the reduction in the availability of local goods for commercialization during the colonial period in Goiás.

## CONCLUSIONS

The various considerations presented in this article lead us to conclude that, during the mining cycle in Goiás, commercial activities, based predominantly on the importation of goods, were developed thanks to the surplus of capital generated by gold. Although these activities emerged as subsidiaries to mineral production, during the eighteenth century, they were essential mechanisms of capital accumulation, mainly due to their capillarity and to the high prices practiced by merchants during the period.

Internal or export trade during the first colonial decades in Goiás was small, mainly due to the excessive attention given to the development of mining activities and the consequent reduction in agricultural, livestock and manufacturing production in the territory. The captaincy was heavily dependent on supplies from other regions in the colony, mainly of the captaincies of São Paulo, Bahia, Rio de Janeiro, and Minas Gerais.

The decline of mining activities, especially from the second half of the eighteenth century, led to a drop in the capital in circulation, thus causing a reduction in imports. This decrease, coupled with the incipient structuring of subsistence agriculture and allied with the captaincy's geographic isolation, was not immediately able to move the export trade by promoting the involution of mercantile exchanges in the captaincy. However, commercial activities continued by focusing on the more structured urban centers and gradually incorporating the goods from local production into the range of goods offered.

## NOTES

1 - The author is to grateful to Professor Dr. Tadeu Alencar Arrais for reading the manuscript and his suggestions.

2 - For example, Alencastre, governor of the province of Goiás between 1861 and 1862, writes in his *Anais da Província de Goiás*, composed in 1863, that during the initial years of the occupation of the territory of Goiás "Mining was the target of all desires, like a fever or delirium taking possession of the people. The owner, the industrialist, the adventurer, and finally all converged their views, their efforts, their capitals, all their activity in short, to the demands of mining" (ALENCASTRE, 1979, p. 18).

3 - The name of the Goiano-Tocantins territory while it was still subordinated to the Captaincy of São Paulo (PALACIN, 1976). The Captaincy of Goyaz was instituted by the Charter of 8<sup>th</sup> of November 1744, that dismembered it from the Captaincy of São Paulo. (Natal *et al.*, 2002).

4 - In 1735, the *Quinto*, one fifth of all the gold extracted, was replaced by the *Capitação*. This tax was levied on slaves, commercial establishments and professions, and was charged twice a year by means of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> registration tickets. For taxation purposes the businesses were divided into three classes: large, medium and small. The first paid 60 octaves, the second 30, and the latter 15 and sales 20 octaves. In Goiás, the *Capitação* values were higher than in other captaincies. The tax was abolished in 1751, when there was a return to the *Quinto* (PALACIN *et al.*, 1995).

5 - According to Palacin *et al.* (1995), one can risk a periodization of the population evolution of Goiás in the colonial period. In 1736, there were around 10,000 slaves; based on the assumption that they constituted two-thirds of the population, the authors estimate that the total would have reached 15,000 inhabitants. In 1750, according to the *capitação* records there were 20,000 slaves; as the population had diversified a little more, it is possible to calculate it around approximately 35,000 inhabitants. In 1783, this total reached 59,287 inhabitants, the maximum registered in the colonial period, and in 1804, according to the census, 50,155 people.

6 - It is difficult to establish clearly the branches of commerce practiced by stores during the colonial period. Cunha Matos, in his Chorography of the Province of Minas Gerais, states: "It should be noted that in the records of Minas Gerais dry fabric it is understood as all the genera used for clothing and for wet fabric, edibles, metals, gunpowder and, generally, what one does not wear" (CUNHA MATOS, 1874, p. 237).

7 - General News of the Captaincy of Goiás in 1783, Paulo Bertran (Org.), 2nd ed. Goiânia: Instituto Casa Brasil de Cultura, 2010.

8 - Straforine (2001) shows how the economy in the south of Brazil was stimulated by the demand for donkey and mule livestock in the mining region and how the trade in these animals reflected in the development of Sorocaba, a city that hosted a large mule fair.

9 - According to Funes (1986, p. 95), the forms of land occupation in Goiás did not deviate from those practiced in other Brazilian regions, i.e. the concession of sesmarias, as the first legal form of land appropriation, and possession - a constant practice in Goiás. They were subsequently joined by other legal forms of land acquisition: purchase, inheritance and other minor forms.

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