

8-1-1942

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Reprinted from
AMERICAN SOCIOLOGICAL REVIEW
Volume VII, No. 4, August, 1942

THE NEGRO FAMILY IN BAHIA, BRAZIL*

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THE TITLE is a misnomer for two reasons: first, this study is based almost entirely upon materials collected on only fifty families in the city of Bahia; and secondly, the designation "Negro family" has certain connotations for Americans which are misleading in regard to race relations in Brazil. Therefore, by way of introduction, I shall indicate first the nature and scope of the materials upon which this study is based and then give a brief account of the racial and cultural background of the population of Bahia. The data upon which our analysis is based consist of one to three interviews with each of fifty-five families during four and a half months residence in the city of Bahia. Forty of these families lived close to the seat or temple (o terreiro) of a religious cult, the Gantois Candomblé, in a semirural area of Bahia, known as Federação.¹ Sixteen of these forty families formed a close community about the Candomblé. In addition to these forty families, fifteen other families were interviewed in order to obtain comparative data on families occupying a different economic and social status. These families included three physicians, a teacher, a law graduate, two stevedores, a weaver, and three leaders of religious cults. Interview materials of a miscellaneous nature, which were obtained from many other persons, helped to give the investigator some general knowledge of the character of the family among certain classes in the population of Bahia.

Bahia, or Salvador, as the city was originally named in 1549, is located in the tropical part of Brazil on a bay 700 miles north of Rio de Janeiro. It was originally settled by a heterogeneous population consisting of adventurers and criminals banished from Portugal, impoverished noblemen, Jews expelled by the Inquisition, Jesuits and Catholic priests, and some gypsies.² The males among the indigenous Indian population were killed

* Presented to the American Sociological Society, Dec. 27, 1941, at New York City.

¹ Arthur Ramos, *O Negro Brasileiro*, 57-74, São Paulo, 1940.

² See Donald Pierson, *A Study of Racial and Cultural Adjustment in Bahia, Brazil*, 1-6 unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1939, for an excellent digest of materials on the history of the city of Bahia.

or driven into the interior and the Portuguese settlers took the Indian women as wives and concubines. During the sixteenth century, Bahia, or the Bay of All Saints, became one of the principal ports for the importation of Negro slaves. So great was the demand for slaves for the cultivation of sugar cane in the rural area surrounding the port that from 1785 to 1806 over 100,000 Negro slaves entered the port of Bahia.³ On the basis of wealth produced by slave labor, Bahia became the center of Portuguese culture and its aristocracy became powerful in the affairs of the Brazilian state.

In contrast to the situation in the United States, the Portuguese and Brazilians had some knowledge of the tribal and cultural backgrounds of the imported Negro slaves. As stated by Ramos:

At the beginning of the slave trade, the largest number of those imported into Brazil were from Angola, the Congo and Guinea. When more active communication began with Bahia, the leading source of supply was Guinea and the western Sudan. There began a remarkable influx of Yorubas, Minas from the Gold Coast, Dohomans and various Islamized tribes such as the Hausas, Tapas, Mandingos, and Fulahs.⁴

Unlike the Negro in the United States, these Negro slaves were able to re-establish to some extent in the New World their traditional social organization and religious practices. In fact, it was due to this that they were able to organize their revolts which were more successful than similar attempts in the United States. In order to suppress these revolts, it became necessary to expel Mohammedan Negroes from Brazil. Nevertheless, many elements of African culture survived, especially religious practices that are perpetuated in the Candomblé, a religious cult, which embodies a fusion of African practices and Catholicism.

The type of rural civilization which grew up in Brazil on the basis of African slavery has been described by Gilberto Freyre in his celebrated work, *Casa Grande e Senzala*.⁵ As indicated in the subtitle of this book, slavery became the basis of a patriarchal economy. Under the patriarchal organization, the Portuguese and the Negro slaves lived in close and intimate association, the racial and cultural background of the Portuguese having facilitated such association.⁶ As a result of this association, a large class of mixed-bloods came into existence who enjoyed special privileges because of their kinship with the master class. These mixed-bloods became important in the history of Brazil as the once stable rural patriarchal organization began to disintegrate and urban communities began to dominate the life of the country during the first half of the nineteenth century. In a book describing this process, Gilberto Freyre devotes a chapter to the rise of the

³ *Ibid.*, 30-31.

⁴ Arthur Ramos, *The Negro in Brazil*, 11, Washington, D. C., 1939.

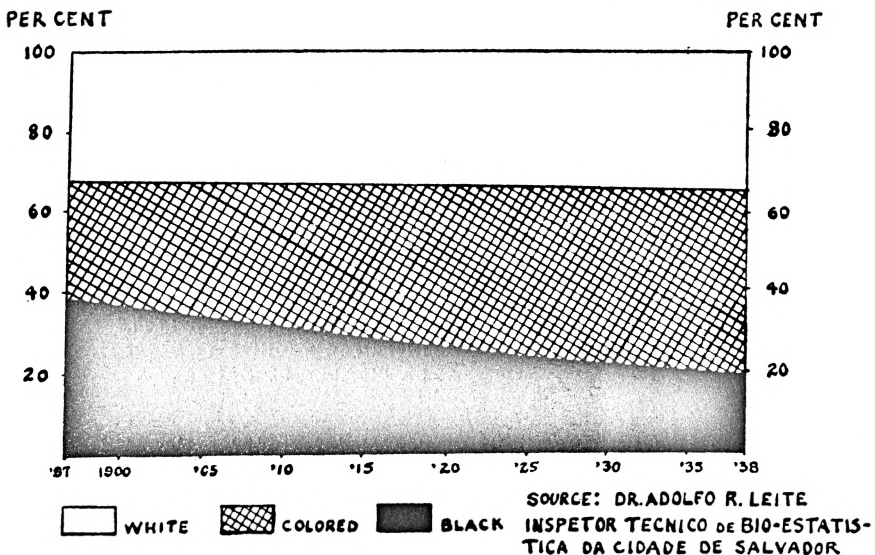
⁵ Gilberto Freyre, *Casa Grande e Senzala*, Rio de Janeiro, 1939. *Casa Grande e Senzala* may be translated as *The "Big House" and the Slave Quarters*.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.

bachelor of arts and the mulatto.⁷ In the mobile, urban society that came into existence, the mixed-blood found an opportunity to compete on almost equal terms with the pure blooded Portuguese. During this period, the pure blooded Negroes, especially after emancipation, became more mobile and lost much of their African culture. In the absence of race prejudice, such as exists in the United States, the increasing mobility of the Negroes accelerated the mixture of the races. It is impossible to secure accurate figures on the extent of race mixture. Diagram I is based upon the estimates of

DIAGRAM I

ESTIMATED PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION OF THE CITY OF BAHIA WHITE, COLORED, AND BLACK: 1897-1938.



Adolfo R. Leite, the statistician in the Department of Health of the City of Bahia, who made his estimates on the basis of the school population and birth and death rates. Leite, realizing the unreliability of these statistics, was reluctant to have them used for scientific purposes, but it is significant that they are practically the same as Donald Pierson's estimates, which were based upon an inspection of 5000 persons attending a festival in 1936.⁸ According to Leite's estimates, from 1897 to 1938 the proportion of whites in the population remained about 33 percent, whereas the proportion of blacks declined from 38 to 19 percent. In 1936, Pierson estimated that 32.7

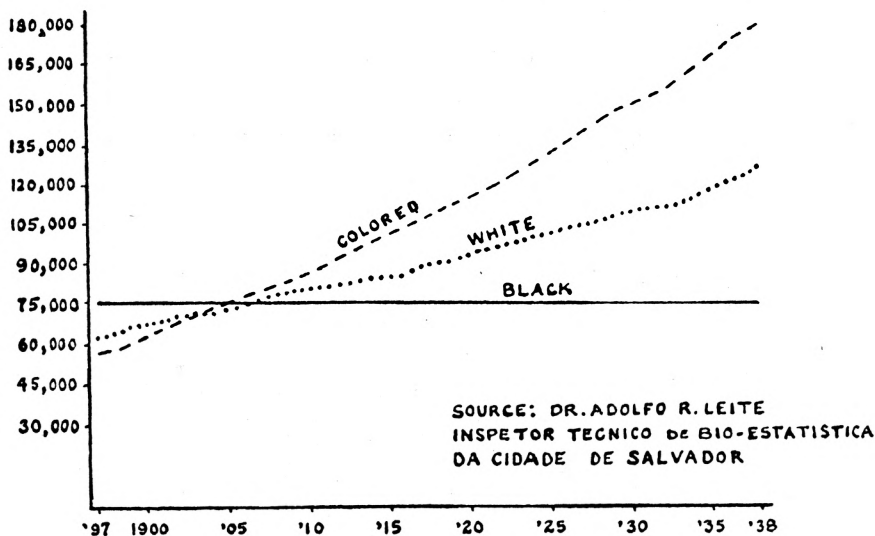
⁷ Gilberto Freyre, *Sabrados e Mucambos*, São Paulo, 1936. The title of this book may be translated as *Two Storied Town Houses and Huts*.

⁸ Pierson, *op. cit.*, 99.

percent of the population was white and 18 percent black. Both Leite and Pierson estimated that about 50 percent of the population was colored or mulatto.⁹ According to Leite's estimates, the black population has remained stationary from the standpoint of numbers, whereas the whites have doubled and the colored have almost tripled their numbers. (See Diagram II.) Although Pierson uses the term European for white in his table, in de-

DIAGRAM II

ESTIMATED GROWTH OF WHITE, COLORED, AND BLACK ELEMENTS
IN THE POPULATION OF THE CITY OF BAHIA, 1897-1938.



scribing the whites he agrees with Leite that he is referring to skin color and features and not pure white descent. Many whites in Bahia would be classed as mulattoes in the United States. That the vast majority of the population is mulatto is indicated in the designation of the city as "*A Velha Mulatta*," or "The Old Mulatto Woman."

In his study of racial and cultural adjustment in Bahia, Donald Pierson has given a brief but excellent account of the history and the present economic and cultural organization of this city.¹⁰ This study indicates that although the city of Bahia has a population of nearly 400,000, or about the same as Indianapolis, it is not a highly urbanized community in the sociological sense. In the lower city, there is a cluster of modern stores and banks on several streets, hemmed in by a medieval market and ancient churches.

⁹ According to Dr. Leite the percentage of colored (*pardos*) in the population increased from 29 in 1897 to 47.4 in 1938.

¹⁰ See Donald Pierson, *op. cit.*, Chapters I and II.

When one mounts to the upper city by a modern Otis elevator, one finds a main thoroughfare with a large modern hotel, small shops and a department store. Outside these areas, the richly appointed homes of the wealthy as well as the decayed houses of the poor bear the marks of a medieval civilization in a tropical setting. Within fifteen minutes after leaving the modern hotel, a street car brings one suddenly to semirural areas with mud and clay thatched huts shaded by tropical vegetation. It was in one of these areas, Federação, at the terminus of a streetcar line, that forty of our families lived.

Most of the houses in this section of the city have two rooms and are built of saplings and blocks of mud or clay with roofs of palm fronds. The better houses are covered with clay that is tinted or whitewashed, with wooden or concrete floors and tile roofs. The *seita*, or seat of cult, the Gan-tois Candomblé, is a one-story building about forty by sixty feet, one half of which is devoted to the ceremonies of the Candomblé, though women work and sew there during the day. This section has only a dirt floor and there are windows with shutters on three sides. The other half of the building has rooms for altars to African gods and Catholic saints and dwelling quarters for the *mãe de santo* (woman head of the cult) and her *filhas de santo* (daughters in saintliness). The *seita* is located on a low plateau surrounded by trees beyond the end of the streetcar line and may be reached by several footpaths. At the time of our study there were all together nineteen family groups living about the *seita*. These families formed a community of neighbors and friends who sought advice and help from the *mãe de santo* in case of need, sickness, or death. Not all of these families were members of the cult. Within the temple or *seita* itself there were three family groups, constituted as follows: a mother with three daughters; three sisters with a brother; the *mãe de santo* with two of her own children and an adopted child. During the course of an analysis of the data on the forty families, these sketchy details will become more meaningful.

From what has been said concerning the racial background of the population of Bahia, it is not surprising that these families showed considerable racial mixture. None of the persons interviewed regarded themselves as Negroes but simply as Brazilians. They used the term black as a means of identifying themselves with reference to color but not as to race. As far as possible, we attempted to construct genealogical trees showing the racial origin of each person interviewed.¹¹ This information was, of course, limited by their knowledge of their ancestors. About a fourth, or eleven, of the persons interviewed had no knowledge of their grandparents. Only seventeen

¹¹ In nearly all of these forty families, only the wife or mother was interviewed because it was difficult to interview the men who were at work during the day and sometimes at night. Moreover, in arranging the interviews with our informant and his wife, whose home was generally used for the interviews, it was easier to secure the cooperation of the wives and mothers, who were in fact better able than their husbands to give the required information on the family. The investigator interviewed all persons in Portuguese.

had knowledge of all their grandparents or earlier ancestors, the remaining twelve knowing only one to three grandparents who were about equally divided between paternal and maternal line. Therefore, for only seventeen of our informants were we able to use genealogical trees in the determination of racial background. The genealogical trees of these seventeen informants showed the following backgrounds: six white and Negro; two Negro and Indian; two white, Negro, and Indian; two white and Indian; one pure white; and four pure Negroes. The remaining 23 families interviewed showed in their partial genealogies or physical appearance the same types of racial mixtures. These statistics are not important except that they express quantitatively the fact that these families represent all degrees of mixtures. However, one fact of significance is that the majority of those who did not know anything about their ancestors were black and Negroid enough in their appearance to be regarded as pure Africans. Another factor of importance in regard to the group of families as a whole is the means of designating the race of their ancestors. Negro ancestors were designated as African or black, African being the term used for those who were born in Africa. The term *Caboclo*, which meant Indian and white mixture, was used interchangeably in two cases with *Cigano*, meaning gypsy. There is reason to believe some of those claiming *Caboclo* ancestors preferred the term to mulatto which implied Negro ancestry.

Our interest in the racial and cultural backgrounds of the persons interviewed was due primarily to our effort to discover the influence of African traditions and culture in the organization and functioning of their families. In attempting such a study, the writer was working in a virgin field, since investigators who have interested themselves in African survivals in Brazil have been concerned with the study of religious practices and beliefs, music, dances, and folklore.¹² This is doubtless attributable to the fact, as pointed out by Ramos, that slavery changed completely the social behavior of the Negro and that African culture survived only in his folklore.¹³ That this has been true specifically in regard to the Negro family was borne out in the data which were collected on the families studied.

The first fact that impresses one about the families of our informants as a whole is that they lack the characteristics of a well established institution. This is indicated not only in their lack of knowledge concerning their ancestors but also in the absence of family traditions and continuity in family life. Whatever influence African traditions might have exerted upon the family organization of their African forebears in the New World had evidently been lost through racial mixture and the mobility of these families.

¹² See Gilberto Freyre e outros, *Novos Estudos Afro-brasileiros* Trabalhos apresentados ao 1.º Congresso Afro-brasileiro do Recife, Rio de Janeiro, 1937, and Varios Autores, *O Negro no Brasil*, Trabalhos apresentados ao 2.º Congresso Afro-brasileiro Rio de Janeiro, 1940.

¹³ Arthur Ramos, "Culturas Negras: Problemas de Acculturação no Brasil," in *O Negro no Brasil*, 153-154.

Only three of the forty informants had any knowledge of African words and these words had been acquired in the Candomblé. In many of the families, African foods were eaten but such foods were eaten as they are eaten in many families in Bahia and even in the large hotel which is patronized by Brazilian intellectuals, business men, and foreigners. In only three cases were these foods eaten in connection with what might be called African rites and ceremonies. The important fact about such practices is that they were not transmitted through the family but had been acquired in the Candomblé.

The manner in which these practices have been acquired is shown in the case of one of the few informants who were able to trace their ancestry to African origins (See Diagram III). This informant was a big, black, single woman of twenty-three years of age who made her living as a seamstress at fifteen cents a day. She was a *filha de santo* (daughter in saintliness) but went regularly to the Catholic Church. Her great grandfather, whom she described as of Nagô-Gêge or of Yoruba-Ewe mixture, died when she was a "small child." She had a vague memory that he could speak an African language, but she was too young to learn the language. In regard to family ties, the most important person was her mother who had married and had five children who were with her in Rio de Janeiro. After this marriage, her mother had lived "*maritalmente*," or as the common-law wife, of a man for a few years during which time our informant was born. When our informant was left as an orphan, she was taken into the Candomblé where she learned a few African words, the meaning of which she had no knowledge. When interviewed, she was living with her father's nephew who acted as a father, requiring her to be in the house by dark. She said that she was a virgin and observed her *obrigações*, or certain ceremonies, in regard to foods and other rites connected with the Candomblé. As to the future, she wanted to be married in the Catholic Church and have children if it were the will of God.

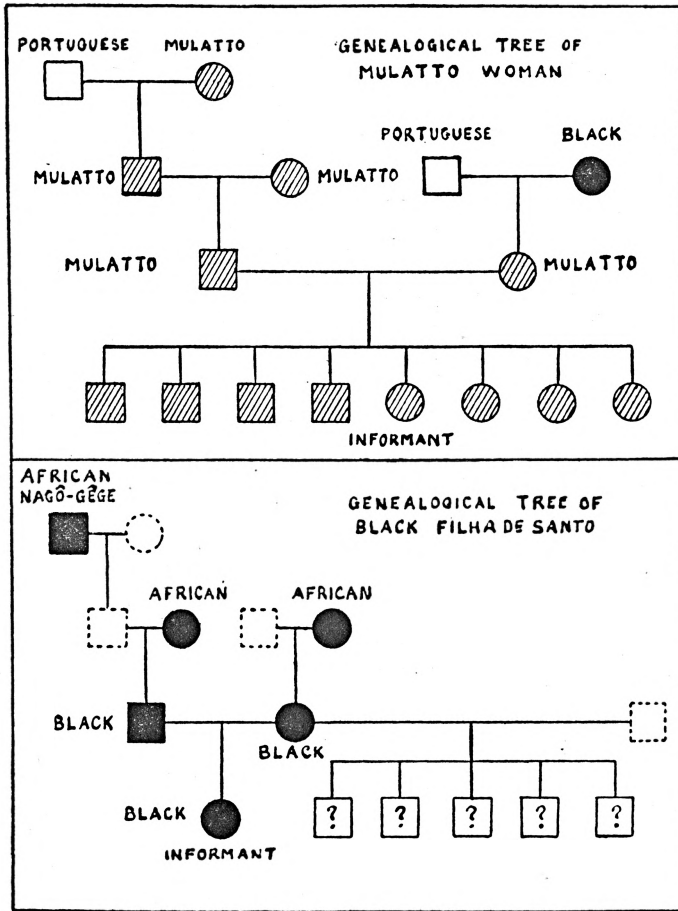
Because of the importance of the Candomblé in the social life of certain elements in the black and colored population in Bahia, we shall consider at this point its relation to the families studied. The Candomblé has been studied by several Brazilian anthropologists¹⁴ and by two American scholars, Donald Pierson and Ruth Landes.¹⁵ Briefly described, the Candomblé is a religious institution in which African fetish worship has been fused with Catholic beliefs and practices. In the most important Candomblés in Bahia, the African practices are derived from the Yoruba nation or Nagô

¹⁴ See Nina Rodrigues, *Os Africanos no Brasil*, 2.a Edison, São Paulo, 1935 and *O Animismo Fetichista dos Negros Bahianos*, Rio de Janeiro, 1935 and more especially Arthur Ramos, *O Negro Brasileiro*, São Paulo, 1940; and Edison Carneiro, *Religiões Negras*, Rio de Janeiro, 1936 and *Negros Bantus*, Rio de Janeiro, 1937.

¹⁵ Donald Pierson, *A Study of Racial Adjustment in Bahia, Brazil*, Chicago, 1939, and Ruth Landes, "A Cult Matriarchate and Male Homosexuality," *J. Abnor. and Soc. Psychol.*, 1940, 35: 386-397.

according to Bahian speech. The vast majority of the Nagô priests are women because, according to tradition, only women are eligible to render service to the African deities. However, the Candomblé is not only a center for religious festivals and worship; it is also the center of the social life of the neighborhood in which it is located. The families that live about the

DIAGRAM III



Candomblé visit the *seita* to gossip and spend their leisure hours. The *mãe de santo*, or priestess, who is regarded as the head of the community, is sought by those in need of physical as well as spiritual aid. Less than half of the forty families studied were connected with the Candomblé in the sense that they participated in its ceremonies. About three fourths of our informants attended the ceremonies of the Candomblé and also went to the Catho-

lic Church; and two thirds of these regarded both as forms of religious expression. The remainder went to the Candomblé in order to enjoy themselves or "*apreciar*" the rites and were not participants. In fact, some of our informants made it clear that they went to the Catholic Church for worship and to the Candomblé in order to enjoy themselves. Of the remaining one fourth of our informants who did not go to the Candomblé, three did not attend even the Catholic Church.

Undoubtedly, in the past the Candomblé played a more important part in the religious life of the Negroes and provided group sanction for familial behavior that had been carried over from Africa. An old black informant said that when she came to Bahia over a half century ago, the Africans were living in a large house under a *pae de santo* (father in sainthood) and had a communistic division of the products of their labor which was carried on individually. They spoke an African language and practiced African rites. However, when she was seventeen years of age, she married the son of a gypsy woman who was opposed to the African way of life. This old woman, now widowed, attends the Catholic Church and the Candomblé.¹⁶ This woman is one of the relatively few living ties with the African past. For example, in the old Candomblé Engenho Velho there are a few very old women living in the temple which was established over a hundred years ago by free Africans. The *mãe de santo*, who is over eighty years of age, is the daughter of two Africans, both of the Yoruba nation, who were brought to Brazil as slaves. She did not remember how many wives her father had but she was sure that his plurality of wives was sanctioned by the Candomblé.

In the family histories of three persons closely connected with the Candomblé, we can see how the African patterns of family life became disintegrated or were lost. In the Gantois Candomblé, which was in the neighborhood we studied, the office of *mãe de santo*, or priestess of the cult, has been filled by four generations of women in the same family. According to the present *mãe de santo*, her great grandfather was born in Africa of the Egba-Arake Tribe and was brought to Brazil as a slave. In Brazil, he married according to Catholic rites an African woman of the Gêge-Mahin Nation or Tribe, though he had another woman as a concubine. His wife was connected with a Candomblé and an African society in Bahia. This great grandmother left the Candomblé and founded the Gantois Candomblé over a hundred years ago. She was the mother of ten children. One of her daughters succeeded her as the *mãe de santo* of the Candomblé. Another daughter, who was the grandmother of the present *mãe de santo*, lived "*maritalmente*" with a musician by whom she had three children, two boys and a girl. When

¹⁶ When her daughter began to show signs of possession, some people said that she was crazy but her "husband," who was an *ogan* of the Candomblé, said that she was possessed of an Indian spirit. There are today in Bahia *Caboclo* Candomblés that are organized about the worship of Indian deities. See Landes, *op. cit.*, 391-394.

the girl grew to womanhood, she succeeded her aunt as the *mãe de santo* in Candomblé. She also lived "*maritalmente*" with a man who was a carpenter and bore him one child, the present *mãe de santo*. The present informant says that her great grandfather told her stories of Africa and slavery in Brazil. However, it was his daughter who became the *mãe de santo* who taught her African rites and the Yoruba language only a few words of which she knows at present. The present *mãe de santo* lived "*maritalmente*" with a man by whom she had two children.

The second family history is of a black man, sixty-one years of age, who is a *pae de santo* of a Bantu Candomblé.¹⁷ He has little knowledge of his past except that he knew that he was the only child of his mother who was not married to his father. When eight years of age, he was given by his mother to his father who had been born free but had continued in the employ of his father's owner, a white woman. This white woman who became our informant's godmother was a member of a Candomblé. Our informant learned African rites and some knowledge of an African language from the *mãe de santo*, or priestess, who had learned African from an Angola man. Before his marriage 23 years ago, he lived for a time with two women, having had three children by the first and one child by the second woman. These children are living at present with their mothers. By his legal wife, he has had three children who live with him in the Candomblé which he inherited from the *mãe de santo* twelve years ago. Besides his own family, there are also living in the cult house a "*comadre*," or godmother, for the neophytes; three *filhas de santo* including an adopted daughter; and two nephews and two grandchildren. According to the *pae de santo*, when a person is taken into the Candomblé, she is baptized and given an African name. Since these ceremonies are secret and the neophytes swear not to reveal them, the investigator could not learn their nature. According to our informant, since the members of the Candomblé are regarded as brothers and sisters, no intermarriages are permitted between them.

The third informant is a man over eighty years of age who, in the words of one of the leading Brazilian novelists, is "the most noble and most impressive figure among the blacks in Brazil today." His father, who was of the Egba tribe, was brought to Brazil as a slave in the 1820's and freed in 1842. His mother was of the Yoruba Nation and was bought by her husband in 1855. His father and mother were never married either according to Catholic rites or Mohammedan rites, though at the time many Negroes were married according to Mohammedan rites. His grandfather, who was a warrior in Africa, had forty wives and his father, following African polygynous practices had five wives, of whom his mother was the chief wife. Although his father had a child by another woman before setting up his household, this woman was not included in the household. His father had four

¹⁷ See Edison Carneiro, *Negros Bantus*.

children, including our informant, by his chief wife. All of the cousins were considered brothers and sisters and, because he was the child of the chief wife, he had a special place in the family. He learned Yoruba from his parents and when around fourteen years of age went with his father to Africa. He remained eleven years in Africa where he perfected his knowledge of Yoruba in an English mission school. When he returned to Brazil he was long a *babalão*, or a sort of "father in saintliness." In former times, the *babalão* was a male connected with the Candomblés who practiced divination and sorcery. The sex life of our informant was of a casual nature until his marriage when fifty years of age. He had one child in Africa and, after returning to Brazil, he had about twenty children but did not know how many different mothers they had. He knows only one grandchild to whom he has given an African name just as he received from his parents an African name in addition to his Brazilian name. He and his first wife, to whom he was married by Catholic and civil rites, lived together fourteen years until her death. Only two years ago, he married another woman, according to Catholic and civil rites, who had been kind to him during an illness.

These three family histories have been presented because they show how African family patterns have disintegrated even when they had the support of a religious cult in which African practices have been perpetuated. However, there are certain facts in the family history of the priestess, as for example, the dominance of the female and the inheritance of the cult house, that might lead one to speculate upon the persistence of African culture pattern. It will be remembered that her great grandmother was Ewe-Mahin origin, African tribes among which descent is traced in the female line and property is inherited by males on the mother's side. When we examine closely the data on her family, we find no consistent culture pattern but rather an accommodation to Brazilian conditions. The cult house was the property of the great grandmother and, instead of being inherited according to family law, it was given the next priestess. The family arrangements appear to be similar to Negro folk in the southern part of the United States. Likewise, in the case of the *pae de santo* of the Bantu Candomblé, there appear evidences of exogamous regulations concerning the members of the Candomblé which might have African origins. From the studies of Brazilian anthropologists, we know that Bantu culture either disappeared in Brazil or became merged in the Bantu Candomblés with the rituals and beliefs of the Sudanese Negroes. The disorganization of African patterns of family life are clearly shown in the case of the *babalão*. The father of our informant continued the polygynous practices of his African forebears and the system of family relationships according to which all cousins were regarded as brothers and sisters was perpetuated in Brazil. Our informant's sex life did not follow any consistent culture pattern. When he decided to form a marriage relationship, he married according to one in his position in Brazil. His

interest at present in African culture is due partly to family tradition and racial pride and he is skeptical of the African beliefs and practices. His many illegitimate children and grandchildren are scattered in the Brazilian population and have not become the inheritors of African traditions. In fact, as far as I was able to discover, this was generally true of the blacks and persons of African descent. There were no rigid culture patterns governing their family behavior. They exhibited the same characteristics as folk and peasant societies in other parts of the world.¹⁸

The manner in which the men and women in our families met and mated shows on the whole an absence of a consistent pattern of behavior though the influence of the Portuguese customs is apparent. More than half of the women had met their mates at work, casually on the street, or at the various festivals. The type of associations to which such contacts led is indicated by their marital status. Twenty of the women were married; ten had been married by both civil and church authorities; all except two of the remaining ten had been married by the church authorities alone. There were two women who called themselves widows, one of whom had never been married. Of the five single women, three said that they were virgins, and two were having casual sex relations with men. The remaining thirteen women in our forty families were living "*maritalmente*" with men, or in what we call a common-law relationship. To live "*maritalmente*" is sharply differentiated from a casual relation with a man.¹⁹ It appears to be a customary form of marriage relationship which has grown up among the poorer classes because of the cost of a church or civil marriage. These marriages are evidently relatively stable since some of the couples had been together fifteen to twenty years and had reared large families.

In the organization of the families of our informants, there could be no question concerning the influence of the patriarchal family traditions of the Portuguese. In fact, as Landes has indicated, the position of *ogans*, or male providers, in the Candomblé and the *mãe de santo* bear a striking resemblance to the man's position in his household and the elder woman's position in the Brazilian family.²⁰ In every family where there was a male, except one, the man was recognized as the head of the house. The one exception was the case of a woman who owned the house. However, the subordination of the woman in these families was not as great as among the upper class Brazilian families. As pointed out by a Brazilian sociologist, the superior position of the Negro woman has been due to the loose family ties which have thrown

¹⁸ Robert Redfield, "The Folk Society and Culture," in *Eleven Twenty-Six, A Decade of Social Science Research*, 39-50, Chicago, 1940.

¹⁹ The two women who were having casual sex relations exhibited some shame when they said they were not living "*maritalmente*" with men. On the other hand, the women who were living "*maritalmente*" with their "husbands" exhibited the same pride as a woman who had entered a civil or church marriage.

²⁰ Landes, *op. cit.*, 391.

upon her the responsibility of the family and to some extent to the woman's position in the Candomblé.²¹ So far as our forty families were concerned, it appeared that the absence of institutional controls was primarily responsible for the woman's important position in family organizations. Where there had been legal or church marriages, the man was undoubtedly the head of the family. Although the same was generally true of common-law marriage, such relationships were more easily broken and the woman was often left with the responsibility of caring for the children.

Because of the weakness of institutional controls, the family among the majority of our informants tended to assume the character of a natural organization. In the vast majority of our families, the father and husband was an artisan earning about fifty cents per day who rented a house and a small plot of land for his family. In about a fourth of the families, there were three children who were cared for by their mothers during the day while their fathers were at work. Some of these men were known to have affairs with other women but their wives generally regarded this as a masculine privilege in a patriarchal society, but, generally, common interests and bonds of sympathy and affection held the men to their wives and children. As in the southern United States, where the family among many Negroes develops as a natural organization, some of the families included adopted children who had been left as orphans.²² Only one woman said that she did not like and did not want children. The other wives and mothers regarded children, however numerous, as a gift from God. The children were generally treated indulgently by their fathers as well as their mothers. The girls were subject to the discipline of most girls in the Brazilian household. In a number of families where the girls had escaped parental surveillance to the extent that they could be suspected of sexual relations, they had been expelled from the household. In some cases in which their parents had not been married by civil or religious authorities, such girls had often been forgiven and protected by an indulgent mother. The girl's parents were more likely to be indulgent if the boy intended to live "*maritalmente*" with the girl and assume the obligations of a husband.

Space will not permit a detailed analysis of the black families of a higher social and economic status which were included in our study. The analysis of the family background of a very successful and popular pure Negro professional man will enable us to see how blacks succeed in mounting the economic and social ladder. The paternal grandparents of our informant were free Africans. On his maternal side, his great-grandparents were Africans who were probably slaves but his grandparents were free. His father was a

²¹ See Nestor Duarte, *A Ordem Privada e A Organização Política Nacional*, 153, Rio de Janeiro, 1939.

²² This is a widespread custom among Brazilians and does not appear to have an African origin.

mechanic who, after living seven years "*maritalmente*" with our informant's mother, deserted her and married another woman. When our informant's mother was left with two boys to support, she worked as a dressmaker and endeavored to give them an education which would give them a superior position in the world. Unlike his brother, who cared little for education and was satisfied to become a mechanic like his father, our informant, evidently because of his great devotion to his mother, developed the ambition to enter a certain profession. However, he changed his ambition because he knew that a black man in this particular profession would find it difficult, and decided to enter another profession. In the professional school, he won honors and free tuition. During the ten years that he has followed his profession, he has been highly successful. So far as his beliefs and behavior are concerned, he is a Brazilian, but it is interesting to note that his mother still goes surreptitiously to a Candomblé, which fact she does not openly confess and is regarded with amused indulgence by her son who belongs to another world.

Our investigation of the family life of the blacks in Bahia leads us to some tentative conclusions which should be tested by further study in the same area and other sections of Brazil. Because of the racial mixture which has taken place on a large scale, African patterns of family life have tended to disappear. The dissolution of African family forms was accelerated by the break-up of the rural patriarchal society and the mobility of the population which brought about increased race mixture. Where the black family has assumed an institutional character, it has generally been among those elements in the black and near-black population which have assimilated Brazilian or Portuguese culture. Among the poorer classes clustered about the Candomblés, the family, often based upon a common-law relationship, tends to assume the character of a natural organization. Whatever has been preserved of African culture in the Candomblé has become a part of the folklore of the people and, so far as family relationships are concerned, there are no rigid, consistent patterns of behavior that can be traced to African culture. As Brazil becomes urbanized and industrialized and the mobility of the folk increases, the blacks will continue to merge with the general population.