Home is Where the Hurt Is: Racial Socialization, Stigma, and Well-Being in Afro-Brazilian Families

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Sherman James

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of Sociology in the Graduate School of Duke University

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ABSTRACT

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Abstract

This dissertation examines racial socialization in Afro-Brazilian families in order to understand how phenotypically diverse families negotiate racial hierarchies and ideologies of white supremacy. As an inductive, qualitative project, this research is based on over fourteen months of ethnographic fieldwork in Salvador, Bahia, Brazil in fifteen poor and working-class Bahian families and 116 semi-structured interviews with family members and informants. Findings suggest that one of the most prominent features of racial socialization is the pervasive devaluation of black/African influences, which is conveyed through implicit and explicit messages as well as concrete practices (including rituals) that promote the stigmatization of negatively valued racialized physical features. The study reveals a pattern of unequal distribution of affection based on racial appearance (phenotype), which is evident in parent-child, sibling, extended family, and romantic relationships. Findings suggest that negative appraisals of racial phenotype may significantly compromise affective bonds in families and have social psychological consequences impacting self-esteem and sense of belonging, while also eliciting suicidal ideations and anxieties. These outcomes are most pronounced for Afro-Brazilian females. Racial socialization also conveys the “strategically ambiguous” logic of color and racial classification, uncritically exposes family members to racist messages, jokes, and stereotypical images of Afro-Brazilians, and encourages cultural participation that superficially valorizes Afro-Brazilian culture and fosters nationalism, rather than racial identity. In contrast to traditional findings of racial socialization in the U.S., messages valorizing racial heritage are rare and efforts to prepare family members for bias rely on universal terms. Families do employ counter-discourses and creative strategies of resistance; and so, racial socialization is characterized by practices that reflect both resistance and accommodation to racial hierarchies. I conclude that racial socialization in families is influenced by and sustains racialization processes that
maintain the broader system of white supremacy. Contrary to how racial socialization has been framed as having a purely protective role in families, this study illustrates how it may disadvantage blacks vis-à-vis whites and uniquely stigmatizes the most “black-looking” family members vis-à-vis those who more closely approximate an idealized (whiter) somatic norm. Future studies should triangulate data on racial socialization from other regions of the Americas.
Dedication

For my son, Nathaniel.

For Essence, Sonia, Lauryn, and Gabrielle.

And for black girls of the African Diaspora: past, present, and future.

A luta contra o racismo e o sexismo é uma luta internacional.
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1. Introduction

1.1 The Face of A Slave

“Aw, yes! In a family, people are happy to have children. They have the dark one first ... but when the white one comes everything changes! The white one is treated really well and the dark one is forgotten. The black one is punished because it is said to have the “face of a slave”... (Ana, college student)

With a hushed voice, Ana a dark-skinned woman, who identifies as negra, whispered this statement to me in an interview about the relationship between race, color, and socialization in Afro-Brazilian families. Previous interviewees had hinted to the importance of race and color in shaping family interactions and processes, but they mainly cited inter-racial marriage and dating choices to illustrate this. Ana’s response was much more provocative, suggesting that parent-child relationships are also embedded in racial hierarchies and can be characterized by differential treatment. Her assertion directly challenged the “myth of racial democracy” which continues to wield formidable ideological power by arguing that racism is nonexistent in Brazil (Telles 2004; Sheriff 2001). It was sharply in contrast to how multiracial and phenotypically diverse families in Brazil have historically been mobilized to validate nationalistic discourses of mestiçagem framing Brazil and Latin American countries as exceptional, raceless societies. Could it be that the Brazilian family, an institution portrayed as the paragon of racial egalitarianism served as the most important site for the reproduction of racism (Freyre 1933)? I argue that Afro-Brazilian families are complex institutions, using racial socialization to respond to racial hierarchies in ways that simultaneously illustrate resistance and accommodation. However, hegemonic structures, ideologies, and hierarchies exert such pressure in families that even acts of resistance are deeply entangled in and limited by the formidable weight of the dominance of whiteness. This project analyzes the process of racial socialization and phenotypic differentiation and
interprets families’ negotiation of racial hierarchies as evidence of the power and permeability of hegemony.

1.2 Background

After two generations of race scholarship from which contemporary research on race in Brazil has developed, racial socialization in families still remains an understudied area in Brazil. The first generation of scholars of race in Brazil consisted of researchers that framed social inequality as a question of class, using interracial interactions as evidence that inequality was not a race issue (Telles 2004). This interpretation was internationally supported by researchers, including U.S. scholars such as Frazier, Pierson, and Dubois, who praised Brazil for its ability to overcome its race problem (Hellwig 1992). Some of the classic studies of black families in Brazil, were conducted by Pierson (1967) and Frazier (1942) and focused on Bahian families but used a social disorganization approach (characteristic of the Chicago School of Sociology) to examine families and analyze the social and racial landscape of the region. The purported success that Brazil had experienced in eliminating racism lead to a sponsored research trip of social scientists by UNESCO whose mission was to discover the secret to Brazil’s racial success. The team, however, discovered that far from being a racial democracy, racial inequality in Brazil was pervasive (Wade 1997). It is from this research that the second generation of researchers emerged focusing on the structural aspects of inequality (income, education, etc.), while underemphasizing interracial social relations (Telles 2004).

Research over the last few decades suggests that race theory in Brazil continues to evolve to the extent that researchers have re-evaluated past constructions of the racial systems in Brazil and the U.S. as diametrically opposed. These scholars view both countries as approaching a converging path and argue that they are less different than initially believed (Bonilla-Silva 2004; Skidmore 1993; Daniel 2006). Telles’ (2004)
monumental work *Race in Another America* provides a comprehensive summary of structural racial inequality in Brazil and puts forth a theory of horizontal and vertical axis of race relations. In it, he argues that both generations are limited by their focus either on structural dynamics or social interactions, instead of theorizing on how they function together. That is, he argues that the key to understanding Brazil is that high interracial sociability (horizontal axis) can co-exist with low structural mobility (vertical). However, his theory of horizontal (social) and vertical (structural) relations in Brazil underestimates how whiteness shapes seemingly egalitarian social relationships (along the horizontal axis) between Brazilians of varying phenotypes. It does not fully interrogate how, along the horizontal axis, practices of racial socialization and rules of racial interactions particularly in the day-to-day lives of Brazilians can reproduce racial hierarchies. While he gestures towards the importance of family in reproducing race and color, he takes the position that racism can “rear its ugly head” in families, which frames racism in families as sporadic, rather than systemic.

Given that studies of black families in Brazil and the U.S. have a historical linkage, it is possible to draw on U.S. research to theorize about racial socialization in Brazil.¹ But, I do so cautiously. Racial socialization, particularly on black families, in the U.S. has historically been framed as positive, as such, the field has been overwhelmingly dominated by studies that illustrate the positive impact of racial socialization on combating racism (Hughes et al 2006; Lesane-Brown, 2006).² Moreover, investigations

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¹ Research in Brazil has always been engaged in a transnational discourse with the United States either implicitly or explicitly. That the debates that shaped the development of New World and African Diaspora Studies finds their origins in the debates between Frazier and Herkovits about African continuities in Salvador, Bahia, Brazil speaks to this legacy of comparative research. For this reason, some of the research on racial socialization from the U.S. can and will be cautiously used to understand racial socialization practices in Brazil.

² An important reason for the contemporary framing of racial socialization in black families as positive is because this research was produced as a response to Moynihan’s scathing attack on black families and black mothers in 1965. Researchers vehemently critiqued Moynihan’s racist and sexist portrayals of families by highlighting ways that families and, in particular, mothers were important resources and actors in supporting black families. Unfortunately, it seems emphasizing the virtues of racial socialization has come at the expense of marginalizing studies that might reveal the complex ways that black families in the U.S. negotiate white supremacy.
that might reveal how colorism or phenotypic differentiation impacts contemporary US families have been marginalized (Burton, et. al 2010). As a result, the complexities of families and their ability to serve as both a site of resistance and reproduction of racism have not been fully evaluated. Similarly, Brazilian researchers’ analysis of families is often limited to family formation in traditional interracial relationships or rely on a heavily psychological or educational perspective to deconstruct socialization practices (Souza 1983; Brito and Mantoani 2009; Cavalheiro 1999). This approach does not adequately explore questions of how power and an overarching racial structure ordains the phenotypic continuum that impacts intra-familial and intra-racial group dynamics.

Hence, neither the work of Brazilian or US researchers provides a sufficient conceptual frame for understanding the complex relationship between hegemonic whiteness and racial socialization in families. Historical and contemporary trends in race studies in Brazil create a significant gap in the literature with regards to understanding how practices of racial socialization allow families to negotiate white supremacy and a stratification system based on phenotypic differentiation. Given the current limitations of research on racialization processes in families and the static conceptualization of racial socialization, this dissertation is an intervention that is in dialogue with scholars of race and family in both Brazil and the U.S. The major contribution of this work is that it articulates the mutually constituting relationship between racialization and racial socialization in families, as well as highlights the discursive, affective, and concrete practices that resist and reproduce racial hierarchies. In doing so, it challenges an almost dogmatic presumption of the family’s purely protective role, which is a position espoused by both racial socialization scholars and health researchers that focus on its stress-buffering effects.³

³ One way that health researchers have begun to address some of these concerns are evident in how they incorporate questions about relationship quality in their studies, but racial phenotype and racialization are not considerations in these studies.
There are three major questions that drive my research:

- What are the practices that undergird racial socialization in Afro-Brazilian families?

- Does differential treatment based on phenotypical differences occur and how does it reflect or reinforce racial hierarchies?

- What can an analysis of the affective and emotional realm of family relations reveal about the mechanisms and consequences of racial socialization?

Racial socialization is operationalized to incorporate: 1) all messages (affirming and devaluing) that family members receive about race and color, 2) affective responses (positive and negative) about racialized features and racial appearance, 3) exposure to racial and/or racist imagery (colloquialisms, media and/or participation in activities), 4) training about how to modify or control racial appearance, and 6) responses to and silences about racially charged experiences, events, or images.

1.3 Case Selection: “Blackest Region in Brazil”

Located in the Northeast region of Brazil, Salvador has over 3.5 million inhabitants making it Brazil’s third largest city. Salvador was selected as the site of this study for many reasons. First, as the entry port of thousands of enslaved Africans during colonization, it is the city with the largest number of people of African descent in Brazil. Outside of Africa, Salvador has been described as being part of the blackest regions in the world. According to the 2006 Census, Salvador is 51.7 percent pardo (brown or mixed-race), 28 percent preto (black), and 18.9 percent branco (white).\(^4\) The demographics of the greater Brazilian population are 47.7 per cent white, 43.1 per cent brown, and 7.6 per cent black. Secondly, extensive racial mixture, particularly in the

\(^4\) This was the first year that non-whites officially outnumbered the white population in over a century. Ironically, in the early 1900’s researchers gleefully predicted that the African element of the population would have disappeared completely by 2012, but current statistics have suggested quite the opposite has happened (Santos 2002).
Northeast regions, provides the variation necessary to study racial socialization within phenotypically diverse families. Thirdly, given Salvador’s historical and increasingly popular status as the Afro-Brazilian cultural center of Brazil, if not the Americas, finding practices of racial socialization that perpetuate racial hierarchies and include differential treatment based on racial appearance would seemingly provide strong evidence to suggest that these practices are present in other regions on Brazil.

1.3.1 Community Site

Lua Cheia is the pseudonym for the small neighborhood in the Lower City of Salvador, Bahia, Brazil that is the site of my ethnographic fieldwork. The Lower City comprises a fairly large region of the city and the neighborhood of Lua Cheia is located along the beach, in the relative vicinity of Ribeira. The location’s designation as part of the “Lower City” of Salvador is as much a physical description as it is a class and racial reference, to the extent the researchers argue that the rich and poor function in “differentiated and juxtaposed cities” (Souza 2000: 167). The racialization of space is evident in the fact that the poorer, darker population tends to live in the lower part of the city and the wealthier, whiter population enjoys life in the Upper City (McCallum 2005). Descending from the upper city to the lower city down the major street, Avenida Contorno, one travels a route that reflects the effortlessly idyllic physical landscape of Salvador with beautifully preserved (and gentrified) historical areas that are reminders of the city’s importance in Brazil. The demarcation of racial space is not only evident in the description of “lower” and “upper” city, but it is also visible in the changing physical appearance of the areas as one moves from one space to the other. Travelling down the Avenida Contorno, on the left is the Bahia de Todos os Santos (Bay of All Saints) and the Bahia Marina where hundreds of small vessels and cruise ships are docked. The tall wire like poles that extend from the boats are often one of the first details visible
from the bay, which is framed by a few “chique,” expensive restaurants offering picturesque views.

Descending past Salvador’s oldest catholic church is a major tourist attraction, the Mercado Modelo (Model Market) and a huge sculpture popularly and colloquially known as the “bunda das mulatas” (the mulatta’s butt). Though expansive cruise ships and small vessels now populate the docks on the bay behind the Mercado Modelo, this is where slave ships used to dock during the colonial period. This history is simultaneously buried and commodified in Salvador. For example, on the first and second floors of the Mercado Modelo vendors targeting tourists sell a variety of items that commodify Salvador’s African heritage including items related to Candomblé (an Afro-Brazilian religion), capoeira (martial art originated in Africa that also involves music and dance), black dolls, African masks, African sculptures, and jewelry. Inside the Market, a small, chipped stairwell leads to the basement level where there is a room that is unmarked and preserved in its original state. It is the dungeon-like cellar where slaves were held upon their arrival to Bahia’s shores. The basement has a peculiar, suffocating air with no ventilation, no sound, and a cemented walkway over flooded floors. Walking back up the worn stairs one is struck by the contrast: the dungeon that was a holding pin for African slaves is set directly below the hustle and bustle of the lively market. Upstairs, the images of pitch black grinning dolls with large red lips, dead eyes, and hair that stands straight up are sold by aggressive vendors. Nowadays, it is the image of black bodies and the idea of African continuity that is being bartered. This is Salvador and this is the path to Lua Cheia.

In the neighborhood, family and friends interact with each other regularly. The lines separating family and friends are intentionally blurred and neighbors are more like extended families. In the neighborhood, as in the larger city, residents can often be heard referring to one another as o meu filho/minha filha (my son/my daughter) as a
hackneyed colloquialism irrespective of biological ties. Similarly, the terms “minha nega,” deriving from the term negra (black) is commonly used as a de-racialized term, meaning honey, sweetie, or dear. The terms Negona or Negão are also often used and function as terms that refer to very dark-skinned and large man or women. These two terms can also be used to describe a sexually attractive dark-skinned man or woman.

The very small homes in Lua Cheia mean that large families with children spend a significant amount of time outside since there is limited space inside their homes for movement. The area directly in front of their homes is usually congested with mothers and children while the street esquina (corner) located further away is a space where mostly males congregate. As de Matta (1985) makes clear in his work, A Casa e a Rua (The Home and the Street), the bifurcation of social space is an extension of gendered quality of social domains where men are “of the street” and wives are “of the house.” This spatial separation justifies and fosters the responsibility that women have for familial affairs, including the children and housework. Men, on the other hand, enjoy the freedom and independence that comes along with access to broader spaces. Within the confines of the neighborhood, whether at home or on the street, residents express a strong sense of security. They proudly brag that “we don’t have thieves here, if there are thieves they come from the outside.” The framing of an ambiguous “outside” reflects the strong affective ties that community members have towards their space and each other (Sansone 2003).

The community was selected because it is located in the lower city of Salvador where previous studies of Afro-Brazilian families have been previously conducted. Here, families have a low socioeconomic status monthly income and the neighborhood consists of a large and diverse Afro-Brazilian population. Initially, I targeted large families with structural variation (single/dual/multiple headed households) and required that they have at least three children, diverse sibling configurations by gender,
a wide range of phenotypic characteristics among family members, and proximity to extended family. After beginning the interviews, I was more flexible with the number of siblings in the households as I was able to observe relationships between siblings, cousins, and other family members. Therefore, I did not eliminate families if there was only one child, as long as the family interacted often or lived with other family members.

1.4 Data and Methods

This project is based on fourteen months of ethnographic fieldwork data collected in Salvador, Bahia, Brazil between 2009-2011. I conducted 116 in-depth interviews with Afro-Brazilians (blacks and brown) from fifteen core poor and working class families in the urban neighborhood of Lua Cheia. There were ten core families, but I also included interviews and ethnographic observations with an additional 5 families who were the extended family of the core families that lived in other areas in Salvador. Interviews were often both formal and informal. The average formal interview time ranged between 60 to 90 minutes. Informal interviews ranged from 20 minutes to six hours. The interviews that lasted six hours involved Afro-Brazilian women who I either met with over a period of several days or met and interviewed over the course of one day with periodic breaks for snacks, lunch, and dinner. In the latter case, I often insisted on stopping the interviews so that the informants could break, but they often insisted on continuing wanting to “free themselves” of a history that they had not told anyone. The women who I interview for over four hours are largely part of the special group of “filhas de criação” (raised daughters).

In addition, I engaged in informal interviews and conversations with Brazilian activists, residents of Bahia, and laypeople (beauticians, taxi drivers, teachers, professors, students, and artists). I also use narratives from an afro-aesthetics course offered in the community. All interviews were conducted entirely in Brazilian
Portuguese, digitally recorded, transcribed, and then translated for analysis. I analyzed the data manually using close readings, organizing and coding data throughout the data collection process.

In addition to in-depth, semi-structured interviews, I spent over 9 months in the selected families attending family celebrations (birthdays and childbirths), religious and cultural events, observing day-to-day family activities, and participating in neighborhood interactions. When possible, I also visited their places of employment and observed informants interact with co-workers and customers. I observed families approximately three times a week. When there were holidays or celebrations, I would spend several days in the community, sleeping over in the home of a key female community informant. I taped formal interviews and informal conversations while observations were notated in a field notebook during and directly after important events occurred. Core families lived in close proximity and often interacted with each other daily as part of a broader neighborhood family. This meant that I was sometimes observing two or more families as they interacted with each other. In some cases, when I met extended family in the homes of these core families I travelled to their homes to conduct interviews and observations. Interviews with extended families were rare and pursued only when an invitation was extended. The data collected from extended families is mainly based on interviews and observations as they interacted with core families.

Research participants were targeted using non-probabilistic (“purposive sampling”), focusing on families in Lua Cheia. A key community contact helped to

5 Observations of the place of employment occurred with informants in five families. One of the women worked for a large company providing lunches for employees. I visited her job several times. Two other women sell food from their home so I scheduled times to observe them during that time. Another informant worked in a school so I visited the middle school and even spoke to an English class (no one understood my English). Another was a nurse and I visited her office and observed her with patients and co-workers. These observations were much more sporadic, but they were used to get a sense of the entire lives of my informants outside the family. I was interested in observing differences in how women functioned in the private and public sphere (deMattia 1985).
identify the poor/working class community in the Lower City of Salvador and served as a central point of introductions between the families and myself. My initial contact with the informant, Luana, began as a casual, friendly relationship when I observed her cleaning an apartment building where I lived. After numerous conversations, she invited me to meet members of her family and introduced me to other families in her neighborhood. She, fortuitously, lived in the Lower City in a neighborhood that fit the specifications of my study. In her neighborhood, I met many of the families who would serve as the core of my research. Confused about why I would want to study them, yet interested in being a part of the study, they agreed to be informants. My connections to this initial community key contact were crucial, as she introduced me to the first families. Using snowball sampling, I contacted other potential families.

1.5 Methodology

This project is a qualitative and inductive study that uses a symbolic interactionist approach to study process and meaning in families (Blumer 1969; Denzin 1994). While there are several ways that researchers can become involved in a community, I adopted a highly active membership role where I participated in the community and neighborhood as a researcher and adopted other roles as they became available, which included: homework helper, hair braider, and English instructor (Adler, Adler, and Rochford 1986). I initially envisioned conducting observations in a “naturalistic” setting, as an observer occupying a more peripheral space (Lareau 2003). This strategy was simply untenable in Brazil where hospitality is prioritized and where Brazilians comfortably slip between the blurry boundaries of family, friends, and researchers. Negotiating these social contexts and positions to study racial socialization in families required my own “resocialization” into the rules and norms that guided these spaces (Emerson, et. al 1995: 2). As a condition of my presence in their homes, families wanted to engage me and wanted me to be involved in family activities. In fact, my
participation and involvement with the family served as the basis for which they trusted me with narratives about private areas of their lives. In this section, I explain my methodological approach focusing on how I chose to incorporate grounded theory as my analytical strategy.

Grounded theory offers useful strategies for qualitative data collection and analysis. Developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967), contemporary modifications have expanded the family of grounded theory methods to include Straussian (Strauss and Corbin 1990; 1997) and Constructivism grounded theory (Charmaz 1983; 2000; 2006). Even with the developments of grounded theory, its foundation remains rooted in simultaneous data collection and analysis, constant comparative method, and an emphasis on theory construction. The tradition in which researchers situate themselves is largely a function of how they understand the interpretive role of the researcher, their orientation towards "objectivism"/positivism, their views about constructedness of reality, and to a lesser degree the technical aspects of coding. As a researcher rooted in a symbolic interactionism and interested in investigating how structural inequalities and ideologies impact microsocial interactions, I rely on constructivist grounded theory to examine how informants make meaning of racial socialization, racial stigma, and phenotype and translate these meanings into practices (Charmaz 1983; Miller & Salkind 2002). This project emphasizes narratives and the subjective day-to-day lived experience of informants, which is why Constructivism is useful (Essed 1991).

Preceding formal interviews and ethnographic fieldwork focusing on families in Salvador, I spent several months with Brazilians in informal settings in order to learn the ‘lay of the land’ (including the racial and color lexicon, social norms, and etiquette). During this time, I also learned how my racialized and gendered body was given

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6 Regardless of where a researcher situates herself with regards to the three main models of grounded theory, coding can vary significantly within and between these models. Generally, classic ground theory relies on a coding system that is more rigid and much more systematic than Constructivism.
meaning and how those meanings would influence my contact with families and shape my day-to-day experiences in Salvador. It was through these informal experiences that I met Luana and the other Brazilian researchers who assisted my first contact with families. I sampled broadly targeting men and women but encountered significant barriers to interviewing men because of their violations or perceived violations of professional interview standards.\(^7\) In addition to making initial research contacts, this pre-interview period was essential in helping me to meet other researchers (Brazilian and North American) with whom I could discuss my research and who could facilitate my integration into research institutions in Salvador and surrounding areas.

My ethnographic fieldwork includes narratives and semi-structured interviews in families. A semi-structured interview approach provided the flexibility to address core themes while allowing me to pursue new data as it emerged. Drawing on some of the analytical strategies of grounded theory, major categories and conceptual codes were created and re-evaluated throughout the data collection process and continually incorporated into my interviews. The initial interview schedule was designed as a general guide and I quickly determined that the extended list of questions about race, color, and family could not be asked in the context of formal or informal interviews. In fact, the very scheduling of formal interviews and direct questioning destabilized my role by framing me as an impersonal researcher. This role was considered distant and not at all consistent with the relaxed informality of social relations in Salvador.

In Salvador where there are ambiguous lines separating work and family, scheduled interviews and family visits were difficult. For example, informants preferred to meet and chat spontaneously over a beer and not at a predetermined time. They also preferred that I visit spontaneously and not make pre-arrangements. The

\(^7\) Rules of machismo require men to flirt or make otherwise sexually inappropriate comments. The perception that this behavior did or could occur in private interview settings threatened my most valued relationships with women and mothers. Early on in the research, I significantly decreased and later stopped including men in the study.
interview schedule was updated significantly, in terms of the order of the questions and the wording in order to accommodate the informality of the informants. Moreover, interviews often included exchanges of information and were not unidirectional. In the end, many of my initial questions were eliminated and others were elaborated based on the informants. I organized my semi-structured interviews based on core themes instead of fixed questions. In addition to changing the tone of my approach (from formal to informal), I was more flexible about where I conducted interviews. At times, interviews and observations occurred in their homes, other times they occurred as we walked around the neighborhood, or sat listening to the rolling beach waves.

I have included the initial interview instrument in Appendix A, which includes numerous questions that I had intended on asking informants. As mentioned, this was not useful; and so, I relied on a thematic guide rather than specific questions. The thematic interview instrument served to guide interviews and offered much more informality and flexibility (Appendix B). My thematic interview schedule was updated continuously reflecting the emergence of new concepts and themes. By the last third of the interviews, I had learned how to maximize my interview time not simply as a function of my language fluency but as a result of understanding questions of timing and appropriateness. I spent much less time clarifying confusions and, hence, could discuss key themes more deeply. Towards the end of the research period, I had virtually memorized the order of how I addressed themes and learned when and how to ask questions. When I began to be able to accurately predict my informants’ responses, this is how I knew I was arriving to the point of theoretical saturation.

While I, admittedly, entered the field with some theoretical leanings and general ideas, I was also insistent on creating the space for concepts to emerge organically from
my ethnographic fieldwork (Glaser 1992; Charmaz 2002).8 Hence, during the first stage of my research, my observations and field notes were prolific, as I collected and recorded impressions and general observations about families and interactions in the community (Adler & Adler 1994). I conducted interviews and collected field notes with families, simultaneously and scheduled “off days” to both translate critical portions of the interviews and perform the initial coding of the interviews and field notes. During this initial phase, my family visits were more spaced out, providing me with time in between to process the data. Once I had collected general observations about main actors, the settings of socialization, and the families, my field notes focused less on impressions and more on observations of practices, events, and relationships that were thematically relevant or “incidents of interest” (Emerson, et. al 1995: 40).

Coding was an essential element used to organize key concepts and themes - I used a three phase coding process: open, axial, and selective coding (Burton et. al 2009; LaRossa 2005). Key concepts consisted of single words or labels, whereas themes were phrases that were suggestive of process (i.e. hair is a concept, while ‘modifying hair’ is an analytical theme). The first stage of analysis involved open coding (with an emphasis on ‘sensitizing concepts’) based on line-by-line readings of my field notes and translated interviews in order to identify broad concepts (Blumer 1969). For example, open coding was used to identify concepts and themes related to how mothers used explicit messages to engage in phenotypic differentiation. Comments including, “why didn’t I marry someone with “good hair?,” “we need to pinch her nose down,” or “straighten it well enough to hide my roots” were coded as indicators of phenotypic differentiation. Using axial coding, I emphasized how situational factors impacted when and if mothers engaged in these practices (Burton et. al 2009, LaRossa 2005). And so, as it relates to phenotypic differentiation, I assessed what criteria were used to determine good/bad

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8 In this way the project is perhaps more accurately described as both deductive and inductive, though it is more inductive than deductive.
hair, as well as how age and gender impacted how phenotypic features were managed. Selective coding was used to relate maternal practices involving phenotypic differentiation to racial socialization. Therefore, this category included the behaviors and verbal messages involving phenotypic differentiation that more broadly comprised racial socialization.

I created a codebook that included an extensive list of constructed categories, codes, and sub-codes (Emerson, et. al 1995). With each iteration of data collection and data analysis, I combined codes, added new codes, removed codes, and developed or refined my themes (LaRossa 2005). This strategy of constant comparison and constant revision and refinement of categories is the hallmark of grounded theory. My data analysis was an iterative process facilitated by my use of short memos or statements in which I used to make clear theoretical connections with the data. While in the field, I wrote six formal memos and numerous private memos or even short statements that allowed me to engage the process of developing my theoretical commitments. These memos were important for isolated events, specific practices, and making sense of “incidents of interest,” which included the birth of a child, conflicts, and family arguments (Emerson, et. al 1995).

After data collection, I reorganized major concepts and codes and organized my observations and informant quotes thematically. Some quotes and observations appeared numerous times if they were relevant to one or more thematic areas. I selected quote(s) that were most representative of the informants, but also attempted to juxtapose them in the empirical chapters to illustrate the complexity of families and individuals.

I translated all of the interviews myself into the appropriate English translation. In some cases, translations in English lose some of their original meaning. In cases when the original Portuguese quote or word conveys an idea that the English cannot
adequately convey, I include the Portuguese translation, as well. I leave the terms *negro/preto* (black) untranslated in cases where the subtle differences in terminology significantly change the meaning.

In addition to the data that I gather from interviews and observations in the families, I rely on a wide array of secondary material and sources including novelas, newspapers, television shows, magazines, and narratives from an afro-aesthetic course to understand and illustrate the context of Salvador. This is important because while the family is the core social institution examined in this study, my argument is that racial socialization in families is part of a broader system of white supremacy and racial hierarchies. Hence, connecting racialized family practices to dominant representations of race, cultural movements, the use of social space, popular celebrations, and cultural events in the city, is essential to understanding the social context in which racial socialization in families emerges.

**1.6 “Second-Sight” or Double Vision? My Subjectivity as a Transnational Scholar**

“We were white to the degree that we spoke English and refused to speak Portuguese properly, since it reinforced our status as foreigners. We were black to the degree that we seemed Brazilian. This bifurcation of the subject position was to become more complex in Bahia” (Gilliam & Gilliam 1999: 72).

As a researcher, I situate myself as part of the contemporary wave of blacks from the U.S. who conduct work on race in Brazil. Insights from earlier researchers have played an important role in preparing me for my research. They reveal that when conducting transnational research in Brazil, black scholars from the U.S. find themselves in a precarious predicament. They are often straddling racial categories, disrupting national boundaries, in addition to occupying “web of interlocking social categories,” on “multiple levels,” and simultaneously (Caldwell 2007: xv). As I prepared for fieldwork, I relied on many of the insights and strategies of black female Brazilianists from the U.S.
to position myself to understand: how my insider and outsider status might both advantage and disadvantage me (Caldwell 2007; Gilliam & Gilliam 1999); how my nested identities would shape my access to information (Twine 1998; 2000); and how to mute my U.S. “lens” in order to be able to make new insights and contributions (Butler 1998: 218; Hanchard 1994). Yet still, I was unprepared for what these nested identities would really mean for me practically and the extent to which intersectionality and my American-ness would so thoroughly come to shape my experiences in Salvador. True to what I had read, I was never simply black, never just a female, never just a researcher, or just American – I never occupied any single identification uniquely. How my body and other signifiers were given meaning and interpreted was as much a testament of my colliding identifications, as it was confirmation of the centrality of race, gender, and “body politics” in Salvador (Caldwell 2007).

Within my first month, I could travel around Salvador indistinguishable from natives of the city.9 But this required a linguistic fluency, as well as a body fluency, the ability to physically incorporate o jeito brasileiro in my self-presentation (Brazilian style). I had learned all the major bus routes and schedules (as much as their unpredictability would allow), dressed the part, and felt perfectly imperceptible on the streets. It was the same type of invisibility that I felt in Rio de Janeiro that left me with the feeling that in Brazil I was at home. Standing at bus stops, Brazilians would approach me asking for directions or help with which bus to take. It was when they asked and I was able to tell them where to go and how to get there that I knew that I was completely camouflaged. To everyone around, I appeared Baiana.10

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9 My first few weeks, men would walk by blowing kisses and saying, “I love you” with horrendous English accents. My performance of Brazilianness was failing me. Within weeks of first arriving to Salvador, I was told on the streets that it was obvious that I was American because, “You walk with too much pride.” Based on these appraisals, I made changes: replaced my wardrobe with colorful dresses, slowed down the pace of my walking, stopped pacing and looking at my watch when waiting at the bus stop, and mimicked the demeanor of my Brazilian friends and colleagues.

10 A Baiana is a term used to refer to a woman from the state of Bahia. The folkloric image of a Baiana is represented by a dark-skinned, black woman with a wide hoop skirt and a head wrap. In the tourist areas
On one hand, my invisibility offered a type of freedom: I never felt vulnerable to the assaults and safety concerns of my white American colleagues. In fact, as I walked around with them in Rio de Janeiro, homeless children would hold out their hands to them and completely ignore me. At the same time, the invisibility of my American-ness came with an exchange: I was assumed to be a black Brazilian. Hence, my cloak of invisibility left me with a different type of vulnerability: I was sometimes ignored when I walked into stores, spoken to crassly, disregarded or skipped as I waited in line, and sometimes not allowed to enter my apartment building by the doorman who was “protecting” residents. Yet, these were minor incidents that paled to many others that I experienced, including the horror of having the military police aim a long rifle at the side of my head and order me out of a car because they thought I was a prostitute with drugs. However, the ineffable way that people’s eyes literally changed when they discovered that my blackness was an American (read: better) blackness reminded me that I was still privileged. Despite my solidarity and shared experiences with Afro-Brazilians, I also acknowledged how my national privilege served as a point of difference that I could and did deploy in order to escape the (mis)-treatment that many Afro-Brazilians face without recourse.

Dubois writes about blacks’ divided identities in the U.S. and describes how their “two warring souls” can be the source of tremendous insight, which he labels “second-sight.” My subjective experiences did not represent two warring souls, but rather

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11 In this incident, there are two officers, one black and one white. When I exit the vehicle, the black officer is insistent that I have drugs and that my bags be checked thoroughly. He repeatedly tells the white officer to check my bag. Not thinking, I answer all of their questions in Portuguese but explain to them that I am American. My friends yell at me to speak in English (to prove my nationality) but even after doing so the black officer angrily says, “She is Baiana! She cannot be American. She is Baiana!” Finally convinced of my Americanness after viewing my I.D., they lower their rifles and apologize profusely. The white officer says, “Our apologies. When you go back to the U.S. we want you to be able to go back and tell him that Brazil’s Military Police treated you well.” I was traumatized and mumbled a few unintelligible words back. He shook my hand and told us we could leave.

12 Dubois 1903[1996] states, “After the Egyptian and Indian, the Greek and Roman, the Teuton and Mongolian, the Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in this
multiple warring identifications that functioned like an off-kiltered seesaw: shaky and unpredictable. Eventually I learned to manage them and use them to my advantage in the field. Community members were interested in speaking to me because of my “charming American accent” and also because they had a number of questions about life in the U.S., Barack Obama, and popular culture. Often, I was objectified and introduced as “minha amiga, uma Americana” (my friend, an American) with my actual name only mentioned later. This introduction provided status to the person who introduced me, but was also meant to let others know to use different rules of engagement, since by virtue of being American I was a negra fina (a refined black woman). Once my American-ness became known, children were the most enthralled and vocal by what they felt were contradictions between my race and my nationality: “But, you look just like us!” one wide-eyed young black girl could not stop repeating. The children often tried to prove that they were cosmopolitan by showing me how many U.S. songs they knew by singing Rihanna, Beyonce, or Chris Brown.

Overall, informants responded to me in ways that extended U.S. privileges and status to me. Informants accepted me relatively easily and would include me in their responses to interview questions. With skin color and phenotype, they often used me as a comparison point by stating someone is “morena, your color,” explaining a person is “black like us,” or asserting someone has “bad hair like yours.” In addition to racialized features like color and hair, other parts of my body were embarrassing topics of conversation for me, but considered normal conversations for my informants. When older women gathered to talk, they would reminisce on their younger days and call me over so that as they talked they could point to my features to show what they used to

American world, --a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness, --an American, a Negro; two warring souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.” (5).
look like. Female informants would sometimes ask me to pull up my shirt to show them my stomach, some would try to pull up my shirt themselves, and others would ask how to get their stomachs like mine. My body was, at times, a point of positive reference and at others a point of critique. For example, a mother of six saw that I had chipped toe nail polish and exclaimed, “Elizabeth, come here! I never want to see you walk out of your house like that again. Let me repaint your toenails!” In a country and community where families struggle to pay their rent and buy food, that my chipped toenails was such an important detail spoke volumes about the importance of body, beauty, and gender in Salvador.

Men were also part of this evaluation process. On the streets, intrusive stares became words, words became awkward one-way conversations, and verbal exchanges lead up to being followed uncomfortably close by white men, particularly through tourist areas. As Foucault (1977) predicts "there is no need for arms, physical violence, material constraints. Just a gaze. An inspecting gaze … which each individual under its weight will end by interiorizing to the point where he is his own overseer" (155). Before long I had learned to fall in line with the rules of gender performance and started disciplining my own body for protection and normalcy. Comments by both men and women lead me to pursue theoretical connections between race, body, and beauty, particularly because of how comments about my hair and skin color differed from comments about other parts of my body. In a Goffmanian way, I was observer turned actor, researcher turned subject, a conscious producer and observer of self (Goffman 1969). My body was a stimulus for social interaction. And, I was, indeed, my own overseer: refashioning my body for intentional “identity displays” but refusing to compromise everything … especially not my hair (Candelario 2007).

Some Afro-Brazilian women viewed me with skepticism, some admitting that they thought that I was metida (stuck-up), until they spoke to me. But these negative
evaluations and exchanges were, in part, because of how partnered women rightfully view unattached women as potential threats. This is the case because men openly engage in extra-marital affairs. As an American foreigner with much less perceived permanency in the community, I was viewed as more sexually available and, by virtue of my American-ness, more heavily pursued by men.

White Brazilians were a peculiar group in that they coveted American blackness while rejecting and degrading Brazilian blackness. They spoke to me about “dirty negros who smelled and did not bathe,” as though I was not also black. And to them, I was not negra, at least not in the same way as black Brazilians. To them, I was an honorary white, so they viewed it as a compliment to tell me that, “Blacks are ugly! But your blacks are better-looking than our blacks.” With them, I could retain the benefits of this status as long as I did not mention racial inequality, which did not last long. I learned early on that discussions about racism quickly deteriorated into uncomfortable conversations that convinced them that not only was I negra but (in their eyes) a beautiful, albeit racist black American.13

These experiences are central to my research. In fact, like other researchers, I used some of my own experiences to contribute to my inductive theory building (see Cialdini, 1980). Remaining in researcher mode in order to learn from each experience was beneficial but challenging for me personally. It often meant that I could not jeopardize my research by responding to blatantly racist, sexist, or offensive comments or intervene if family members were insulting a child or family member. This weighed heavily on me because of the relationships that I had developed with informants. In the same way that social interactions are characterized by ambiguity of work and family in

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13 At a party, a white Brazilian who had visited the U.S. calls me from across a room full of people by yelling, “Hey nigger, come here!” (in English). I assume he has heard this word on the radio and does not really understand that it is offensive. I calmly explain that the term is highly offensive and racist. I suggest that he never use it again to refer to a black person. In return, he explains that it is I who does not understand and he proceeds to call me a “discriminatory racist” arguing that only a racist would object to being called a nigger.
Brazil, I myself also struggled with resolving the difficulties that these ambiguous boundaries imposed. Informants with whom I had spent a significant amount of time would ask me for money and I had to find ways to work around those situations. I did not want to reproduce problematic relations of patronage that some of them had with wealthier Brazilians, where our relationship would be viewed as part of an exchange for economic support and protection (Butler 1998). At the same time, I also needed to recognize the rules of reciprocity in Brazil that required embracing elements of patronage, but I needed to do so without violating ethical boundaries. When requests for borrowing money were made, I had to say no. But I did buy services from informants like lunches they were selling from their homes or invite them to lunch, and buy birthday gifts out of respect for the social and moral code of reciprocity.

The depth of my ethnographic immersion involved witnessing and hearing about traumatic experiences of abuse and exploitation. These narratives and family observations paired with my own personal experiences of racism in Salvador left me feeling deeply troubled and profoundly anxious about my research. Burton, Purvin & Garrett-Peteres (2009) discuss the ethical and methodological issues involved when ethnographers are exposed to traumatic narratives of domestic violence during the course of their research. Consistent with this research, my informants welcomed our conversations and after completing interviews that involved traumatic narratives, they would often thank me for proving them with a cathartic experience.14 However, while listening helped those who had never previously spoken about their traumas and abuse, when the interviews ended, their narratives stayed with me, and with each traumatic

14 Unlike the violence studied by Burton, Purvin, & Garrett-Peteres (2009), traumatic experiences in this study typically took the form of physical and emotional abuse. One of my informants, Corina, thanked me for allowing her to share memories about the physical abuse that she experienced by her mother. After the end of our third formal interview at her home she stated, “I want to say thank you, Bete. I have always wanted to go to a psychologist, like those women do on television. Because I have had a lot of trauma, you know? Things that nobody knows. But now you know. I like talking to you because talking helps. It’s better to talk about it right? You’re like a psychologist for me, so thank you, Bete” (Corina smiles with tears in her eyes and hugs me).
interview my anxieties accumulated (Etherington 2007; Dickson-Swift et. al 2006). For months after returning from the field, I avoided my advisors, shelved my field notes and memos, lost sleep, and above all, refused to re-play the interviews. I struggled with having to re-live my own traumatic experiences in Salvador, which were shaped, in part, by the weight of having both elicited painful memories and having observed violent practices in some homes. Along with the anxiety came the guilt that informants had entrusted their narratives to me and, yet, I needed distance and time to recuperate. For all of these reasons, this project is an intellectual endeavor and also a deeply personal project.

1.7 Dissertation Organization

My dissertation is organized in the following manner: Chapter 2 provides a literature review of studies on the social construction of race, racialization, racial socialization in families, stigma, and the family systems paradigm. In addition, it outlines my conceptual and theoretical framework concluding with a description of Bahian culture and Salvador.

In Chapter 3, “All in the Family: Explicit and Implicit Racial Socialization,” I discuss how racial socialization in families transmits messages about color and racial classification and categorization, racism, and social space. Implicit forms of racial socialization are explored by examining the strategic use of color terms and participation in presumably non-racial cultural activities including novelas, soccer games, Carnaval, and celebrations related to Afro-Brazilian culture.

In Chapter 4, “What’s Love Got to Do With It? The Stigma of Racialized Features, Affect, and Socialization in Families,” I explore how racial socialization in families

\[15\] As further support of their observations about ethnographers’ responses to narratives of violence in the field, Burton et. al (200) cite Pearlman and Saakvitne’s (1995) study, which examines the impact of traumatic narratives on interviewers and transcribers. These researchers coin the term “vicarious traumatization,” which is a ‘process through which the inner experience of those empathically engaged with clients’ trauma material, is negatively altered’ (31).
responds to and helps produce racialization through discourses, practices, and differential affective responses that convey a hierarchy of racial phenotype. I examine how colorism and differential treatment based on racial phenotype (nose, hair texture, eye color, etc) impacts family dyads such as parent-child and sibling relationships, as well as extended family and romantic relationships in Afro-Brazilian families. I argue that the transmission of negative affect and stigmatization of racialized features in families shows how the affective realm of family is one way that the internalization of racial hierarchies impact family processes and practices.

In Chapter 5, “Black and “Blue”: Racial Stigma and Well-being,” I connect the practices of racial socialization and differential treatment based on phenotype to social psychological outcomes. The chapter operationalizes wellbeing broadly so that it encompasses experiences or exposure to violence (physical, emotional, and symbolic), compromised self-esteem and sense of belonging, as well as reports of depression and suicidal ideation.

In Chapter 6, “Pigments of the Imagination: Beauty, Body, and Racialization,” I examine “racial rituals” that focus on the surveillance of racialized features and frame elaborate rituals as evidence that black bodies are controlled and abjected. In addition, I examine how Afro-Brazilian women negotiate the unique challenges that racial and gender hierarchies pose for beauty and self-presentation. Lastly, I examine the emergence of the afro-aesthetic movement and its effectiveness at combating hegemonic racial and beauty hierarchies.

In Chapter 7, I highlight three exemplary cases that illustrate how Afro-Brazilian families engage in resistance and accommodation to racial hierarchies. The strategies that these families employ are framed as creative and counter-hegemonic, though I illustrate that practices of resistance exist alongside evidence that the families also reproduce racial and color hierarchies.
As the concluding chapter, in Chapter 8, “The Ties that Bind,” I weave together key research findings in order to summarize how racial socialization in families may function in complex and contradictory ways that resist and reproduce the dominant racial order. I conclude by identifying the limitations of this study and outlining how future studies should continue to theorize about the relationship between racialization and racial socialization, explore the complex role of racial socialization and affect in families, and work towards the development of a multi-level theorization of global white supremacy.
2. Literature Review

In this chapter, I will provide a literature review of studies on the social construction of race, racialization, racial socialization in families, stigma and the body. In addition, I will outline my conceptual approach and theoretical orientation. I conclude the chapter with a descriptive section on the city of Salvador, Bahia, Brazil.

2.1 Crafting a Social Order: Race and racialization in Brazil

Race is defined as a social construction - an organizing principle of society based on superficial differentiation created mainly to legitimate a hierarchical social order (Harris 2008). In keeping with its hierarchal purpose, “the race ascribed with the superior position enjoys social, political, economic, and psychological advantages over the group or groups ascribed with inferior position” (Bonilla-Silva 1997: 899). Given the emergence of race during the age of European imperialism, race has been predicated on the ostensible superiority of selected features and cultural characteristics defined as white (Frederickson 2002). These selected physical features that are racialized and used in determinations of race are referred to racial phenotype, which includes skin color, hair texture, eye color, lip and nose size, etc. Race does not emerge objectively but is created through a racialization process that attributes meanings to people’s bodies, traits, and characteristics. The most compelling evidence that race is a social construction is the tremendous variation in how racial group membership is constructed around the world.

Brazil’s national specificities gave rise to a racial system that has been characterized as fluid, particularly when compared to a rigid, bifurcated system in the United States (Davis 1991; Daniel 2006). A major contrasting feature that distinguishes these two countries is the classification of their multiracial and physically diverse populations. Rather than being unique, most racial systems around the world are characterized by fluidity, rather than rigidity. In Brazil (as in the rest of Latin America),
racial classification is based primarily (though not exclusively) on appearance, but race in the United States is based primarily upon ancestry (Davis 1991; Wade 1997). Whereas the one-drop rule has historically classified people with any known black ancestry as black in the U.S., in Brazil the population has been differentiated into pretos (blacks) and pardos (browns), though Brazilians more often define themselves using color terms rather than racial terms (Davis 1991; Daniel 2006). Additionally, in the U.S., white racial classification is based on the notion of “racial purity,” while whites in Brazil often acknowledge that they are also of African-descent but receive privileges based on their phenotype. The flexibility of race in Brazil cannot be interpreted as evidence of a less brutal system of slavery or racism, but rather it emerged as the most viable way to implement a racial project that could accommodate the demographic reality of the country and preserve the interests of mixed-race Brazilian elites (Omi & Winant 1994; Santos 2002).

2.1.1 Toward the Idea of a Phenotypical Continuum

In Brazil, the relationship between appearance and racial categorization makes racial appearance (phenotype) a salient factor in social interactions. While 95% of Brazilians overwhelmingly classify in one of four racial categories white (branco), black (preto), or brown (pardo), the 100 terms that Brazilians employ when asked to describe their color (côr) reflects the range and significance of phenotypic variation in Brazilian society (Telles 2004; Hellwig 1992). These numerous terms do not merely code for skin color but many terms including sarará, galego, and cabo verde describe different combinations of skin color, hair texture, and facial features (Hellwig 1992). The terms are similar to euphemisms essentially representing “degrees of whiteness,” a

1 Daniel (2006) discusses the emergence of “tri-racial isolates” (Louisiana and South Carolina) and argues that they consisted of mixed-race people of African descent who were allowed to occupy an intermediate space in the local context. This racial order is similar to Brazil’s tri-partite system and represents an exception to the way that the U.S. system has been described as binary.
2 In fact, Telles (2004) suggests that many members of Brazil’s white elite would be considered light-skinned mulattoes in the U.S.
construction used to perpetuate antiblack racism against individuals who physically and culturally approximate blackness (Twine 1998; Sheriff 2001; Pinho 2006: 40).

Despite their racial histories and contrasting systems of racial classification, the U.S. concept of colorism, defined as “discrimination against persons based on their physiognomy, regardless of their perceived racial identity,” can be used as a conceptual frame to understand differential treatment in families (Harris 2008: 54; Russell, et. al 1992; Wilder and Cain 2010). Colorism in the U.S. is framed largely as an intra-racial phenomenon in the U.S; hence, direct application of the term is more complicated in Brazil, where côr (color in Portuguese) is translated as race. In order to avoid the conflation of colorism and racism, I emphasize that a phenotypic continuum exists that anchors Brazil’s racial structure and is characterized by a “bedrock reality of racial polarization and opposition,” flanked on one end by whiteness and other by blackness (Skidmore 1993; Sheriff 2001: 57). Colorism is conceptualized as an important element of a broader racist social structure.

Phenotypic distinctions are not merely secondary to racism, but as Harris (2009) argues colorism and racism are distinct, such that “hierarchies of color can destabilize hierarchies based on race” (1). A “pigmentocracy” describes a society where racialized physical features have meaning in day-to-day interactions informing social expectations, social scripts, and social treatment (Craig 1992; Glenn 2009). Though the terms ‘pigmentocracy’ and ‘colorism’ suggest the primacy of skin color, other phenotypic features including hair texture, hair color, eye color, lips, nose, etc are also quite meaningful. In some cases, hair texture can be more decisive than skin color in racial classification (Burdick 1998). Racial phenotype or appearance allows race to take on a relational quality while continuing to reproduce a white supremacist ideology by rewarding proximity to whiteness (duCille 1996; Bonilla-Silva 2003).

Pinho (2006) identifies numerous negative stereotypes that are associated with
features racialized as black/African in Brazil. She states, “thick noses and lips were/are considered as *grosseiros* (grotesque),” and repugnant body odor and bad hair (also associated with blackness) are viewed as needing to be tamed (271). Using this logic, the thinner one’s nose or lips the closer one approximates whiteness, the better. Colorism has also been conceptualized using the Weberian or status paradigm where individuals and groups are organized not merely by their racial classification, but based on their access to and ability to use symbolic capital (Harris 2009). This capital can take the form of a wide array of racialized phenotypical features including hair texture, hair color, nose shape, etc (Hunter 2005; Harris 2009: 3). In Brazil, racialized features that approximate those associated with whiteness are more highly valued and can be exchanged not merely for class or social mobility but for affection in families and romantic relationships.

2.2 Blinded by White: Whitening & Racial Socialization in Families

Gilberto Freyre’s book, *The Masters and the Slaves* (1933), was a historical revisionist work that popularized portrayals of Brazil as a “racial democracy” by reducing brutal race relations during slavery to images of enslaved Afro-Brazilian women lovingly nursing their master’s children and racially mixed children playing together indiscriminately (Twine 1998). Contemporary misconceptions and distortions of Brazilian family life have been largely a product of the enduring legacy of this work. At the same time, contemporary “cordial racial relations” and high levels of interracial interactions create a context where racialized color terms are used freely and frequently with subtle modifications, diminutives, and slight inflections that change meanings (Sheriff 2001; Sansone 2003). But the ease with which people use these color terms can be misleading.

Telles’ (2004) theory of the horizontal axis of race relations suggests that the prevalence of high interracial social relations illustrates that racism plays a less
significant role in interactions among racially diverse Brazilians. I argue that by taking this position he repeats some of the same mishaps of the older generations of scholars that he critiques. As he mentions, previous researchers dismiss interracial sociability and focus on structural inequality, or they only emphasize the social sphere using interracial interactions as evidence that racism does not exist. Neither generation adequately captures how hegemonic whiteness organizes seemingly egalitarian relationships between racially and phenotypically diverse Brazilians. Nor does this work explore racial socialization as an important intermediate process linking structure to interaction and the development of a racialized self.

2.2.1 Studying Racial Socialization & Family in Brazil with U.S. Research

Sociologists and family researchers have historically been invested in examining the family as the first sites of racial socialization. Some of the most well-known and earliest studies of black families in Brazil were produced by American social scientists Pierson (1939), Frazier (1942), and Herksovits (1943). These scholars were motivated by their interest in understanding how histories of slavery impacted the development of black families and emphasized the question of African continuity. Contemporary sociologists in the U.S. have considerably expanded beyond this. In Brazil, studies on race are numerous but racial socialization research in Brazil is not well developed, particularly in sociology.

Racial socialization research in Brazil is limited because it either highlights the problematic dynamics that impact traditional interracial relationships or focuses on racial socialization from a heavily psychological (Souza 1983) or educational perspective (Brito 2003; Cavalheiro 2000). These works do not address how overarching hegemonic whiteness leads to a phenotypic continuum that impacts all families. Hence, the breadth of racial socialization research conducted in the United States is instructive in addressing
some of these shortcomings, but it has a limited capacity for elucidating the unique
dynamics that emerge in Brazilian families. On the other hand, because the color
continuum in Brazil coexists with practices of bipolar racialization, it is possible that
Brazilian families may actually be much more similar to the U.S. case than has been
initially theorized (Frazier 1942; Skidmore 2003; Daniels 2006).

The racial socialization literature in the U.S. is expansive and multi-disciplinary
straddling among many areas sociology, psychology, and developmental studies. Racial
socialization is defined as “verbal and behavioral messages transmitted to younger
generations for the development of values, attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs regarding
the meaning and significance of race and racial stratification” (Scottham and Smalls 2009:
807). Researchers in the U.S. are at the forefront of examining racial socialization,
particularly as it relates to caregivers in black families (see McLloyd et. al, 2000; Lesane-
Brown, 2006; Burton et. al 2010; for comprehensive reviews of socialization research
from the past two decades). In summarizing major research on racial socialization,
Scottham and Smalls (2009) find that most of the racial socialization literature focuses on
the types of messages conveyed in families, which they group into four main categories:
egalitarianism, racial group pride, racial barriers, and participation in African American
culture (c.f. Hughes et al, 2006; Thornton, et al, 1990). They find that of these four
messages, racial egalitarianism is the most common and this is characterized by
assertions that all racial groups are created equally (Hughes et al, 2006).

Despite differences between the U.S. and Brazil, researchers have been
compelled to generalize about black family dynamics and racial socialization in Brazil
largely through the lens of the black U.S. family. While contemporary researchers
highlight the unequal power dynamics and racist practices that undergird interracial
marriages in order to challenge the idealized portrayal of race relations in Brazil
(Goldstein 1999; Petrucelli 2001; Moreira, & Batista 1994; Berqué 1991), others have
downplayed these dynamics. As a result, the myth of the racial democracy still functions as a powerful cultural and social ideology that shapes family dynamics and racial socialization (Twine 1998; Sheriff 2001; Sansone 2003). Indeed, classic works by Donald Pierson (1969) and Carl Degler (1971) address “color prejudice” but their level of analysis focuses mostly on larger national and regional trends and they do not link “color prejudice” as being rooted in racism. Other researchers do briefly address the relationship between race, color, and differential treatment in sibling and child relationships (Burdick 1998; Caldwell 2007; Scheper-Hughes 1993), but much more work is needed to systematically document the mechanisms of hegemonic whiteness.

The application of research on U.S. black families in Brazil has to be done cautiously. The concept of the black family is burdened with a North American notion of race that may be misleading for the Brazilian context, considering families often consist of white, black and brown members within both primary and extended units. On the other hand, some researchers argue that the color continuum in Brazil coexists with practices of racialization that center on categorizing individuals into bipolar categories of whiteness and blackness (Guimarães 1995; Skidmore 2003; Caldwell 2007). In this way, the diversity seen in Brazilian families may actually be much more similar to the U.S. case than it initially appears.

2.2.2 Mothering in Families

As it relates to black families, seminal works on socialization focus intensely on mothers. They extol the multi-faceted role of black kinship ties in providing material, economic and psychological support (Stack 1974), recognize the effectiveness of black mothering patterns and informal adoption (Gutman 1976; Campbell 1989), and emphasize the centrality of the black family in developing racial consciousness (Hughes 2003). These earlier works, which focus heavily on black women, set the stage for the

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3 This is further complicated by the fact that many whites are afro-descended, but in Brazil physical appearance is more decisive than ancestral heritage.
future framing of racial socialization in black families as protective and the valorization of the “power of motherhood” (Collins 1994; 1997).

Continuing in this legacy of emphasizing the positive role of racial socialization, contemporary researchers have been concerned primarily with the benefits of racial socialization studying: how it transmits messages about the social meaning and consequence of race (Banks-Wallace & Parks, 2001; Thornton et al, 1990), conveys the importance of cultural difference (Hughes 2003; Hughes & Chen 1997), prepares children for prejudice (Kofkin et. al 1995), conveys affirming messages about cultural heritage and racial pride; instructs on how to deal with discrimination (Hughes & Chen, 1997; Phinney & Chavira, 1995; Thomas & Speight, 1999) and plays a role in self-esteem and well-being (Hughes & Demo 1989; Thompson & Keith 2001; Wong, Eccles, & Sameroff 2003, c.f. McLloyd et. al 2000). Outside of the racial socialization literature, health researchers also connect the importance of family embeddedness to increasing one’s sense of social connectedness, while they also note its “stress-buffering” effects (George 1996).

In addition to exploring the four types of messages conveyed, researchers have also investigated how individual caregiver and child attributes can influence racial socialization (Suiitor and Pilemer 2006; Stocker 1995). Previous research suggests that daughters may be the recipients of more racial socialization than sons (Brown et al, 2007). Moreover, substantively, girls receive more socialization about racial pride, while socialization for boys tends to fall into the categories of racial barriers and egalitarian messages (Thomas & Speight, 1999). The age of a child also determines the socialization messages that/her or she receives (Hughes & Chen, 1997). The gender of the caregiver is also relevant as mothers and fathers socialize children differently, influencing which socialization messages are conveyed to children (Bowman & Howard, 1985; Sanders Thompson, 1994; Stocker 1995). While racial socialization typically refers to verbal or
behavioral messages, when discussing racial socialization, researchers seldom focus on parents’ behavioral differences as it relates to favoritism among children. However, there is an entire body of research that shows that differential treatment can occur in parent-child relationships and can impact important developmental outcomes, impacting the quality of sibling relationships (Volling & Belsky 1992) and fostering sibling antagonism (Brody, Stoneman & McCoy, 1992).

Developments to family research that highlight differential treatment and the importance of child and caregiver attributes have been beneficial to the area of racial socialization, because they illustrate how mothers and fathers shape important psychological, emotional, and racial identity outcomes for their offspring (McHale, et. al 2006; Hughes and Johnson 2001). These studies might be used to address calls for a more complex portrayal of racial socialization in families both to illustrate family complexity, but also because refusing to do so has a “cost [that] has far too often been paid by African-American women” (Collins 2000: 88; Burton et al 2010). Strong arguments supporting the “power of motherhood” have lead me to emphasize mothering relationships and examine how they are constrained by structural factors (Collins 1994; 1997). The racial socialization literature overwhelmingly features ways that socialization is positive and beneficial, but mothers function in a much more complex manner. The literature on differential treatment may provide hints about how to complicate this one dimensional construction.

2.3 The Stigmatized Body and Well Being

“Black women (pretas) are the most rejected group in Brazil.”
(Nina, 32 years old, student)

The phenotypic continuum that characterizes Brazil offers very little flexibility for those who are situated at the extreme poles. Given the importance of beauty and appearance for women in the Brazil, very dark-skinned women with features racialized
as African or black are structurally disadvantaged and stigmatized. Goffman (1963) argues that racial phenotype is a personal attribute that may function as a stigma that is “deeply discrediting” by others (3). Over time, the members of a society who possess stigmatized features are vulnerable to structural inequalities (historical exclusions, media misrepresentations, and discriminatory treatment) and negative interpersonal relations that concretize associations between the possession of racialized features and stereotypes (Link and Phelan 2001). Furthermore, Goffman (1963) suggests the “relationship between an attribute and a stereotype” may potentially lead to a negative or “spoiled social identity” so that racial stigmatization reflects and reproduces the structure of a broader racially stratified social order (3).

Moreover, social psychologists in Brazil have used a language of “social humiliation” and “traumatic conflictive situation” to convey the omnipresent psychological threat that results from living in a society where access to basic necessities is denied, where one is seen as socially invisible, and there is chronic exposure to various forms of social inequality and systematic exclusion (Gonçalves Filho 1998; Podkameni & Guimarães 2006). These terms have been used specifically to describe how stressful social conditions undermine black women’s mental and physical health (Sampaio 2009). In many ways, these negative psychological outcomes are also connected to sociologically-based inquiries of social stigma, gender, and race. Given that a “woman’s self-concept develops, in part, from observing and internalizing what others think about her,” constant exposure to negative images, discursive insults (jokes, nicknames, etc.) and structural inequality can contribute to a hostile living environment (Ward 2000: 91). This is exacerbated in a society where perception of attractiveness factors in to one’s self-appraisals and shapes marital and employment opportunities. Additionally, the effects are likely compounded when “the treatment [a woman]
receives within her community of origin, the black community, is consistent with the negative and self-deprecating messages doled out by the larger society” (Ward 2000: 91).

Parents, caregivers, and close family members are among the first to shape notions of belonging and self-valorization and “it is in the family that blacks learn to see whites as the standard to be achieved and whites learn to see blacks as the standard to be negated” (Gomes 1995: 120). Moreover, negative affect can result in feelings of worthlessness, disconnection from family and negativity about the future (Wickrama 2008). Consistent with the life-course perspective, negative parental affect in childhood and adolescence, can create a “successively contingent process” (Wickrama 2008: 471) whereby earlier disadvantages lead to and compound later disadvantages. These are significant consequences, yet the extent to which negative affect is associated with race or racialization processes in ways that can lead to a longing for acceptance in the face of social rejection is still understudied (see Souza 1983; Fanon 1967 for exemplary exceptions).

2.4. The Family Systems Paradigm and Emotions

In order to understand how stigma and affect are transmitted through family interactions, this research employs a family systems paradigm. At its most general level, “family systems establish boundaries that define the nature of contact between the overall family unit and others outside of the family, sets expectations for behavior, both explicit and implicit, that govern day-to-day interactions within the overall family unit” (Henry 1994: 447-448). As an ecological approach, the status and experiences of an individual or relationship (such as the marital dyad), impacts all other relationships, whether they be sibling subsystems or parent-child dyads (Stocker 2007). Additionally, the paradigm provides a frame to understand how family members respond to external

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4 Souza’s (1983) work Tornar-se Negro is one of the most well known books on black psychology in Brazil. Souza’s tragic suicide represented a devastating loss to the research community in Brazil. Coincidentally, two informants provided names of black activists and researchers that had committed suicide.
pressures and bring their extra-familial experiences, emotions, and prior socialization to bear in family relationships.

Socialization practices do not emerge spontaneously, but as Arnette (1995) notes, parents and caregivers are “likely to follow to some extent the role requirements for parents in their culture, which they have learned as a result of their own experiences of socialization (619). Hence, caregivers are influenced by their own socialization and pass these socialization messages and values to family members. But, in addition to explicitly transmitting messages and values, family members also transmit emotions and affect (Larson and Almeida 1999). Stated differently, the emotions and affect of one family member impacts others in the family system. Yet, emotional disruptions or negative affect have a differential impact on the family, which drives some of the differential experiences that family members report in families (Daniels & Plomin 1985; Stocker 20007). Previous research suggests that there is a “hierarchy of emotional influence in families, with fathers’ emotions having the most impact on other family members (Almeida, et al 1999). Mothers’ emotions are the second most powerful and typically their impact is unidirectional being transmitted to offspring rather than vice versa (Larson and Almeida 1999). This project, however, is less invested in charting the path of emotional transmission. As an analysis of racial socialization, it is concerned with how the presence of affective responses to racialized features, racial images, and even phenotypically diverse family members may impact the overall family system, socialization practices, and well being.

Family systems researchers identify two dimensions of parental behaviors: support and control, and each plays a role in either encouraging behavior that is consistent with expectations or punishing/discouraging behaviors or qualities that are antithetical to family expectations (Peterson & Leigh 1990; Henry et al 1987). Understanding that racial socialization and racialization processes function in cyclic
interactionism, a family systems approach can be used to explain how racial stigma and negative (or positive affect) is elicited and is transmitted through families (Stocker 2007; Stocker et al 1989). Which racialized features elicit negative affect and are stigmatized, the intensity of the resulting affect, and the corresponding practices illustrate how families negotiate race and phenotype in the context of the family system. Additionally, beyond providing insight into how the family system functions within the constraints of a racialized society, research findings suggest that there are significant emotional and developmental implications of differential treatment and the stigmatization of racialized features in families (Volling 1997).

2.5 Conceptual Framework

For this project, a re-conceptualization of approaches to racial socialization is essential as few works adequately address how racial phenotype and colorism influence family processes (see Wilder and Cain 2010 for a recent exception). Critical race scholars have critiqued extant racial socialization literature for its failure to adequately incorporate racialization, colorism, and gender into their research (Burton et. al 2010; DeReus, et. al 2005). In order to adequately incorporate intersectionality and perspectives of critical race feminisms in this study, racial socialization must be evaluated with an emphasis on how it negotiates broader racial hierarchies, secondary systems of racial stratification (based on phenotype/colorism), as well as how it interacts with hegemonic patriarchy to resist or promote notions of femininity and beauty (De Reus, et, 2005). Traditional conceptualizations of racial socialization tend not do this and are, instead, rather static. They begin with the assumption that people have race, that they belong to a family unit of that same race, and they receive socialization that shields them from discrimination and emphasizes racial valorization. However, how families negotiate secondary systems of phenotypic stratification is inextricably connected to race and illustrates how racial socialization contributes to racialization,
instead of merely responding to race.

My dynamic and intersectional approach to understanding the racial socialization process argues people do not just have race, but they are racialized through a process. When race is conceptualized as attached to a racialization process, we can understand how racialized features (color, hair texture, eye color) are differently valued and help to produce race. At the same time, the value attached to racialized features, as well as their social consequences are moderated by gender, as white supremacy and patriarchy function together to create standards that differentially impact women (de Casanova 2004; Hunter 2005). Racial hierarchies give racialized features meanings (that vary by gender) and, in turn, racial meaning (and stigma) is (re)-produced through cyclic interactionism between racialization and socialization processes. These processes are orchestrated by an overarching hegemonic whiteness and patriarchy. Families can then respond to these structures in complex and contradictory ways that reflect both “resistance and accommodation” to hegemonic structures (Weitz 2001).

2.6 Theoretical Framework

How and why racial socialization resists and accommodates broader systems of inequality can be understood using an overarching theoretical frame of hegemony (Gramsci, see Hall 1986). Gramsci’s concept of hegemonic dominance, which Hall (1986) summarizes, is as follows:

Hegemony has a “multi-dimensional, multi-arena character”... it is not simply imposed or dominitative in character. Effectively, it results from winning a substantial degree of popular consent. It thus represents the installation of a profound measure of social and moral authority, not simply over its immediate supporters but across society as a whole (15). Hegemony is sustained, not exclusively through the enforced instrumentality of the state, but rather, it is grounded in the relations and institutions of civil society”(9).

Gramsci’s notion of hegemonic dominance suggests that white supremacy and patriarchy function as formidable and totalitarian forces exerting tremendous pressures on every aspect on society. These aspects include the two main levels of analysis that is
of interest to the project: the family (intermediate level) and the development of self (individual). Because of their dominance in orchestrating society, the value systems and ideologies that accompany hegemonic whiteness are seamlessly woven into classification systems, affect, rules of interaction, and ultimately impact the meanings that people attach to their own bodies. That is, the most intimate areas of human interaction are especially organized by patriarchal and white supremacist ideas.

Hegemony is sustained by practices that endorse it (conscious or unconscious) and is most effective when it elicits non-coercive and normalized compliance – in this, the family provides one of the most effective forms of legitimacy. The ideologies and practices of hegemonic dominance/whiteness are not merely important for parent-child and sibling relationships, but are consequential for the formation of peer groups, coupling and all family relationships. As Gramsci’s writings suggest, the power of hegemony is that the practices that accompany it are normalized and, worse, viewed as socially and morally desirable.

Symbolic interactionism is a perspective that provides a bridge between hegemonic structures and the development of self and social interactions. While varying in its theoretical orientation, at its core are three major premises about the way meaning is established and sustained in social interaction:

"Human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings they ascribe to those things”; 2) "The meaning of such things is derived from, or arises out of, the social interaction that one has with others and the society.” 3) "These meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretive process used by the person in dealing with the things he/she encounters”(Blumer 1969)

Given the centrality of the body, or more specifically, the “embodiment of race,” a symbolic interactionist perspective will be used to explore how meaning making is accomplished in part from how the body is experienced as a social object (Waskul and Vannini 2006). That is, I am interested in how our concept of self is driven by
interactions with others. Because it both signifies and communicates, the body functions as a site of racial negotiation, reproduction, and contestation, and is absolutely central to the ways that people make sense of structure and oppression (Waskul and Vannini 2006). Racial stigma does not exist objectively, but is the product of the intersections between structure and interaction. Furthermore, the meaning attached to the body determines which practices are deployed to “discipline the body” and body modifications reflect how people embody inequality (Foucault 1977). From a feminist perspective, gender hierarchies create disciplinary norms that are oppressive to women, in part because they are designed to control and inhibit them (Butler 1990; Bordo 1997). When intersectionality is considered, the hegemony of white supremacy and patriarchy means that black women occupy a tenuous position forced to negotiate their sense of self against ideologies and structural constraints that are inherently antithetical to self-affirmation and valorization (Collins 2000).

2.7 The Racial Rubik Cube – Salvador, Bahia, Brazil

The city of Salvador was the first capital of Brazil and its selection was, in large part, based on its significant role in the trans-Atlantic slave trade in Brazil (Kraay 1998). In the national imaginary, the city of Salvador is a culturally distinct area, yet simultaneously is viewed as the cradle of Brazilian cultural identity (Armstrong 1999). Popularly both Brazilians and researchers may use the term “Bahia” (the state in which Salvador is located) even when they are speaking specifically about Salvador because the city is such a key feature to the region. Exaggerated constructions of Salvador as completely distinct from other regions in Brazil have its roots in the politics of race and culture in Brazil. However, there are, in fact, important regional differences that exist and should be considered in an analysis of race, in light of Bahia’s cultural history.

Slavery in Bahia was characterized by expansive plantations where it was normal to have upwards of 500 African slaves working in differentiated positions on a fazenda
Slavery in Bahia was an exceptionally profitable and equally brutal institution. The sheer number of Africans and Afro-Brazilians in Bahia shaped how race relations unfolded in the region. Brazilian elites wary of inciting massive resistance among blacks, carefully and selectively repressed African cultural practices (Kraay 1998). Not only were there frequent raids on Candomblé houses but even the lauded art form of capoeira was originally criminalized and its practitioners villified as "dangerous delinquents" (Butler 1998). In the period following Brazil's late abolition in 1888, "Bahia's elites struggled to disassociate themselves from the African-based culture so characteristic of Salvador" (Butler 1998: 185). Fears about the Africanization of Brazil were centered around concerns that its very large black population would ultimately stifle Brazil's advancement towards modernity (Butler 1998; Albuquerque 1999).

Indeed, demographically Bahia is distinct from the Southern region of Brazil (where São Paulo is located), which is a region that is considered the whitest, most European, and most modern (Santos 2002). These differences are not coincidental, but rather are the result of a specific racial history and differential government investments and legislative efforts to whiten the country by subsidizing the immigration of over 4.6 million Europeans to Brazil in the early 1900's (Santos 1997). During this period, in the context of a growing eugenic movement, political leaders believed that Brazilian's modernity depended on the "refinement of the race" and Aryanization (Seyferth 1985: 96). This investment in European immigration was an overtly racist act framed as a necessary strategy to combat "African barbarism" caused by browns and blacks. They were viewed as lazy or "lacking the stimulus of having to maintain a civilized standard of living" (Santos 2002: 64-65). The southern region of Brazil became the destination for European immigrants and it became whiter. Bahia remained the most stigmatized region with a darker population that served as a constant and visible reminder of the history that the country preferred to forget (Santos 1997). If one were to use the
metaphor of a national family to describe Bahia, it could arguably be considered the
dark child of the nation, receiving less government investment, subject to racialized
insults, and struggling to construct an identity that is valorizing.

Bahia’s regional distinctiveness is racialized and is the subject of *brincadeiras*
(jokes) that are used throughout Brazil. In my visit to Rio de Janeiro, I was discouraged
from visiting Salvador, Bahia with uniform warnings that “there are thieves
everywhere,” and that “Baianas are dirty.” More subtle Brazilians never directly spoke
of Bahia, but referenced Bahia in jest, stating that they had committed a “*baianado*” when
they did something wrong, stupid, or absent-minded. Still others encouraged me to
explore Salvador, stating that I would feel right at home and would be able to party
every day “because in Salvador there is always a party every night,” (suggesting that
Bainos do not work), but warning I should avoid the “devil stuff” (a reference to Afro-
Brazilian religion). Hence, Bahia is racialized and continues to be associated with anti-
modernity, as its residents are framed as backwards, lazy, unintelligent, though fun-
loving.

When discussing Brazil’s immigration policies, Paschal (2008) notes that the
process of European immigration is typically framed as whitening (*embranquecimento*);
but that in Bahia it was implicitly a process of de-blackening. Not only were Europeans
subsidized but blacks from the United States were actively prohibited from immigration
as their presence was viewed as counterproductive to the racial project (Albuquerque
1999). It is not until the 1930’s with the emergence of Getulio Vargas’ presidency that
Brazil experienced a cultural revitalization that highlighted Afro-Brazilian contributions,
but it did so only as a ”well-executed strategy to win popular support to develop a
specific political agenda” (Paschal 2008: 429).

Currently, in a reversal of its earlier antagonism and repression of African
culture, the state of Bahia is selectively embracing and re-packaging African continuities.
With the creation of Bahiatursa, it is investing in marketing Salvador as the Afro-Brazilian center and it proudly heralds elements of Afro-Brazilian culture as the centerpiece of its cultural allure. Popular festivals including Carnaval and the *Lavagem of Bon Fim* which were, at various historical points, criticized or prohibited because of their African retentions, are now money-making cultural machines that attract tourists. African Heritage tourism is at the base of the tourism industry in Bahia, driven by black U.S. tourists. This is ironic given that in the early 1900’s, black North Americans were denied entry to Brazil when their presence was considered as introducing a negative racial element and stifling whitening processes (Hellwig 1992).

Given this history, researchers have been critical of the superficial "re-Africanization" of Bahia, basing their critiques on how Afro-Brazilian culture has been "symbolically integrated" into the image of the state, while structurally Afro-Brazilians continue to suffer from racism (Santos 1998; Pinho 2010). Not only do they argue that the cultural realm only superficially valorizes blackness, but they suggest that the image of cultural integration significantly detracts from discussions about the significant structural barriers that Afro-Brazilians face. For example, in all major indicators education, employment, social mobility, and health, blacks and browns significantly trail whites (Telles 2004). Researchers have studied how the particular framing of Brazilian culture and nationalism has undermined race-based (Hanchard 1998; Butler 1998).

Moreover, Butler (1998) argues that difficulties in forging racial consciousness in Brazil are exacerbated in Bahia where collective activism has historically not occurred, in part because of bounded familial ties, early retentions of African networks that undermined racial solidarity, the prominence of patronage that provided other avenues of mobilization, and the development of social societies that were not politically-minded (166-167). Few studies address how on the social level, colorism and phenotypic hierarchies also lead to distinctions between *pardos* and *pretos*, which contribute to racial
fragmentation and undermine race-based solidarity.

And so, in 2012, Salvador in all of its enigmatic glory remains a racial Rubik cube where an African presence is “at once residual and dominant,” and the Afro-Brazilian majority suffers from considerable structural and white (off-white) rule (Hanchard 1994: 173). This study of the practices of racial socialization in Bahia represents an attempt to unearth the secrets of this complex racial society, by examining how Baianas are socialized in their families to negotiate structural constraints, understand the internal logic or race and color in their society, and construct a sense of self in a society where blackness is commodified and abjectified.
3. “All in the Family”: Implicit and Explicit Racial Socialization

3.1 Chapter Preface

Loud pagodé and its musical cousin forró sails out and over the houses along the path that leads to the neighborhood of Lua Cheia. Before I can see anyone, the music always set the tone for what I can expect from the neighborhood. As each step brings me closer, the music pulses louder and the blurry outlines of very light brown to dark brown bodies start to take form. Corina is always among the first to be seen. She is a very light-skinned woman with naturally straight dark hair that is cut into a short style. She is outside washing her clothes in a sink and pinning the freshly washed shirts and sheets on the clothesline. She takes pride in her reputation as a good woman who is neat and clean and can be counted on by everyone who lives in the community. She lives with her two white children, an on and off again black boyfriend, and a large family of phenotypically diverse siblings who visit her regularly.

Two doors down from Corina is Sonia, a very dark-skinned (negra) mother of six who has a chair placed outside the door of her home so that she keep an eye on her children. Her daughters one slightly darker and one with slightly longer hair than the other wisp by me in their bathing suits yelling “Beeeteeeee!!,” their voices trailing behind them.1 Her two sons are dark-skinned with very low haircuts. They are shirtless with a faint outline of their ribs showing as they run behind their sisters with their thin arms flailing. Her youngest son, Gabriel is a medium to dark skinned one year old and walks around naked. He hides behind his mother as I walk by with one eye peeking around to see me. As I make my way closer to the center of the neighborhood, Carolina can often be seen through her open window and translucent half curtains. A single woman in her

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1 Bete is the nickname that Brazilians uniformly give me. It is a shortened version of my full name in Portuguese, Elizabete.
50’s, she is seldom without her hips swaying back and forth to the music that blasts from a huge, high tech stereo that she is proud to call her own. She often has a cigarette dangling from her mouth and a beer hanging casually in the other. She lets the strings of her tank top fall casually down her bronzed shoulders helping it along with a flirtatious shrug of her shoulders. Her colorful flip flops flap awkwardly as she twirls around at the entrance of her house, floating out her door to grab a passerby for a few comical seconds of a hip jolting and sensual dance of forró.

Damiana is the self-proclaimed neighborhood beauty, light caramel skin with a flawless complexion, thin nose, and naturally straight hair. She is a businesswoman and seven months pregnant. She is often carrying groceries, selling beers from her home, or making a snack that she can sell to her neighbors. Her pregnant belly seems larger than life, a protruding bulge in a tight fitting summer dress. Her growing belly is an indication to her excited neighbors that her delivery will be soon. Her daughter Regane with the same caramel complexion but with coarser and curlier hair is often running around the neighborhood or playing in the main plaza. An only child, she views Sonia’s daughters as her best neighborhood friends and is often playing down the street with them. Today Regane must have had a late start; she walks out of her house stretching her arms in short shorts and her tight half top revealing her entire stomach. “Hope you aren’t going out like that!” her mom yells while laughing as she stands either cooking or washing dishes from the kitchen.

These were the moments. Moments like these where diverse Brazilians appear to interact seamlessly, sharing a common space, ostensibly without regard for race, color, or phenotype. Everybody is smiling and happy: Corina offers her neighbors delicious coffee with cookies, others later offer to buy each other beers at the neighborhood bar, and Damiana offers a freshly made fruit salad or even a cool popsicle to quell the heat of a scorching day. The women laugh with each other telling stories about the past week,
offering advice on what to cook during the weekend, and otherwise making small chat about the daily happenings.

What this one slice of *Lua Cheia* does not show is that Corina is in a bitter family rivalry with her siblings because of her racial appearance, a pregnant Damiana (and her daughter Regane) are anxious about the racial appearance of the unborn baby, and Ana goes on alcoholic binges to dull the pain of mistreatment in her family. The cheerful ambience is seductive but as Corina reveals early on, “I am laughing on the outside but inside I am suffering.” This sentiment would be echoed by a number of the young Brazilian girls and women in the neighborhood.

In this chapter, I will focus on five main features of racial socialization in Afro-Brazilian families. First, I examine how racial socialization contributes to the understanding of racial and color systems. Secondly, I illustrate how racial socialization impacts family interactions within and outside a familial context. Thirdly, I analyze explicit racial socialization messages about racism. Fourthly, I examine how exposure to and discussions about racial images in the Media are incorporated into racial socialization. Lastly, I examine how participation in cultural activities implicitly conveys ideas about race and color, while fostering national identity and de-emphasizing racial identity.

### 3.2 “Strategic Ambiguity” and Color Inconsistencies

Racial mixture has been the hallmark of race in Brazil and Latin America (Wade 1997). Different from the United States, where racial classification is rigid, in Brazil there are color inconsistencies and racial confusions. While based on past research we might anticipate that racial socialization takes on an important role in developing a strong racial identity (Hughes, et. al 2006), in Brazil racial socialization fosters ambiguity and inconsistency rather than crystallization. Given the diverse ways that both color and racial categories are used in Brazil, a number of studies have focused on deconstructing
racial terminology and examining the internal logic of color classifications (Degler 1971; Kottak 1992; Harris 1993; Sheriff 2001; Sansone 2003). However, their work varies in the extent to which these categories are viewed as situational. At the extreme end are the researchers that argue for the almost complete situational quality of color classification, arguing that their use varies based on: place, time of day, familiarity, degree of relatedness, desire to show respect, age and generation (Sansone 1993). While I appreciate the importance of considering how multiple contexts impact how these terms are used, in this study, the extensive variation in color terms was not observed to the same extent. However, it is clear that the logic of color classifications emphasizes “strategic ambiguity” which is responsive to how individual attributes and context influence how Brazilians talk about race and color (Candelario 2007).

Racial socialization is operationalized to consist, in part, of how family members classify themselves and the extent to which they discuss these classifications among themselves and consider them important. The beginning of exploring this process begins with the question: “What is your color?” Table 1 illustrates how informants answer this question with responses represented as the percentage of informants that identify themselves in the six major color categories given. Table 2 provides a qualitative list of all of the responses given by informants. Over 73% of informants identify their color as either moreno or negro. Despite previous claims that Brazilians use over a hundreds of color categories, there were a total of fourteen different terms used throughout the time I spent in Salvador.
Table 1. Color Categorization by Percentage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Color Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moreno (Neutral) - Moreno</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White - Branco</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black – Preto (color)</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brown - Pardo</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black – Negro²</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (Mestiça, Mulata, Mista, Sarará, etc)</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Summary of the color terms used in interviews and observations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Color Categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moreno/Moreninho</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pardo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preto/Pretinho</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarará</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morena escura</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morena clara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morena total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Torradinho</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India Negra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caboverde</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mulatto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Branco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mestiço</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Yet, more relevant than informants’ final responses about color are the interactions accompanying their responses. The majority of informants have to arrive at their final response through a process that involves contradictions, family interventions, and confusions. This is particularly evident for children. Hence, during the interviews, I observe informants making sense and grappling with the meaning of color and race. Below are two representative responses from children who respond to questions about color and race. The first example takes place with Natalia a member of the Batista family:

² The term “negro” is used as a political term that was created as an umbrella term to refer to anyone who is brown or black. In the past, this term was offensive, but over time it has been embraced as a signal of political and racial consciousness. However, using the term negro for color and/or racial classification does not necessarily imply high racial identity salience or a particular racial consciousness.
Elizabeth: What is your race?
Natalia: (hesitates, shrugs her shoulder) Mestiça? I don’t really know.
Elizabeth: What is your color?
Natalia: Morena
Elizabeth: Ok, so your race is mestiça and your color is morena?
Natalia: No, no (with giggles)
Elizabeth: But that’s what you said (smile). Oh ok, what is your color?
Natalia: Morena
Elizabeth: What is your race?
Natalia: (silence)
Elizabeth: (awkward silence) It’s just that you described yourself with several different words, and I want to make sure I understand. What is your race?
Natalia fiddles with her hands and giggles nervously, she says “negra” slowly and softly.

From the first question about race, Natalia not only responds that she does not know her race, but she shrugs her shoulder and has a blank facial expression as though the question is irrelevant. It is only when she is asked to think about color and race together that her body language changes. Natalia is familiar with color categories so she initially and intentionally uses the intermediary category to define herself. Returning to the race question, she exhibits nonverbal behavior and a lowered voice, which convey a type of resignation that she has to admit she is negra. This response and her reluctance to classify herself as black is consistent with what has been documented in previous literature (Sheriff 2001, Twine 1998; Burdick 1998)

For Leo, a light-skinned nine-year-old boy with straight hair in the Fernandes family, his response is slightly different. He replies confidently that his color is moreno. However, to the question: “What is your race?” he is horrified and responds, “What? Race? You mean like a dog?!” In Brazil, the term raça has historically been defined as breed. However, contemporary developments including growing research on racial inequality and the black movement in Brazil have emphasized the social significance of race. Brazilians now increasingly associate the term raça with something quite different than breed (Telles 2009). However, at 9 years old, Leo has not learned what race means nor can he provide a response about his racial classification. His ignorance suggests that in his family racial socialization has not cultivated a concrete understanding of race or a
racial identity that he can reference. But, the absence of socialization is just as important as the presence of explicit racial socialization.

The Fernandes family is among the largest and most phenotypically diverse families in the study consisting of both very light-skinned and medium brown skinned members. Leo’s mother and uncle are very light-skinned with “almost straight” hair, but they have a third brother that is a few shades darker with a darker, but light-brown complexion and wavy hair. The three all proudly self-identify racially as black (negro), even though they define their color as pardo. Despite the racial consciousness and color classification of Leo’s mother and uncles, when Leo is asked if there is anybody in his family that is negro he replies:

“My mom’s brother is negro and his wife is morena and they have two that came out really black and the other that came out white. Two took after him and one took after her.”

The uncle that he refers to as negro is only slightly darker than his mother and uncle, but he is also currently serving a prison sentence and does not have the same economic resources as the others. These additional factors are likely why Leo classifies his uncle as negro. While status and other characteristics influence racial categorization, it is still odd that Leo does not include his mother, Alberta, or second uncle as negro, particularly given his mother’s strong racial consciousness. Alberta states,

“Look, my skin is this color (taps her forearm), but I am black! We are black. I put lotion in my hair if I want to comb it too. So, girl, I am black!” (Alberta, mother of two, 48 years old)

For Alberta, her race is obvious and non-negotiable. Moreover, she views her hair texture as a much stronger indication or evidence of her race than her skin color. However, this racial consciousness has not been passed on to her young son, as one might expect. Not only is his racial identity not cultivated, but his ignorance about how his family understands their racial heritage becomes evident in a conversation about
Leo: Do you know what we are learning in school?! (before I can answer he continues). We are learning about African-descendants!

Elizabeth: That is pretty interesting especially because I am an African-descendant.

Leo: What?! You? You are an African-descendant? (He looks at me with a huge smile and surprised eyes). Now maybe I can interview you (he laughs).

Elizabeth: Well, yes, I am! (I also laugh at the comment and his facial expression, because the rest of his family has spoken about their African heritage).

Leo: I can’t believe it (smiling broadly). I know an African descendant! I actually know an African descendant.

Elizabeth: Leo? You know that I am also not the only African descendant around here?

Leo: (His excitement begins to fade) What do you mean? (slightly frowns)

Elizabeth: Leo, I think you know many other African descendants.

Leo: Wait, what do you mean? You don’t mean in my family do you? Because my family is from Europe, that’s what I always heard (poking his chest out and rolling the “r” in Europe).

Elizabeth: Oh, ok.

Leo: But wait, do you think … No, Elizabeth, I’m not. I’m going to ask! (Leo runs into the living room where he finds his mother, a cousin de consideração, and his grandmother’s sister).

Paola (his great-aunt): Yes, we are African descendants, your great-grandfather was preto!

Leo: But, but grandmother always said that she was a beautiful Indian!

Paola: Well, that may be but … (her voice trails off with a chuckle)

Vanessa: (darker-skinned cousin de consideração): Child, of course you are an African descendant! We are all blacks! Our skin color may be different but we are all black.

In this interaction, Leo reveals that he has, in fact, received some socialization about his heritage. He has strong affective attachments to his understanding that he is European. Despite his deceased grandmother’s assertion that she was a beautiful Indian, even if that were the case, he strongly identifies as European. This is consistent with documented tendencies of families to highlight Indian heritage instead of African heritage as a form of lightening, if not whitening (Twine 1998; Caldwell 2007). Leo’s anger is initially puzzling because he had already informed me that there are negros in his family, I assumed he knew there were African descendants in his family. This disconnect is also observed in conversations with other children and many adults because I learn that blackness is not understood as being connected to Africa. When respondents were asked: “Where did blacks live before coming to Brazil or before

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3 A cousin de consideração is a type of fictive kin or ‘play cousin.’ It is a person who is not biologically related but is considered family because of their close relationship.
slavery?” To this question over half of the respondents answered places located outside of Africa, if they provided an answer at all. Most informants did not know (claimed not to know) that blacks came from Africa.

At the same time, gender and class also play a role in the willingness to define other family members as negro/a (Sansone 2003). Curious about race, at a later point Leo asks me about my race and I tell him that I am negra. To this he responds:

“No, no you are not negra. Elizabete, you are not negra. You are morena … Well, you are morena escura, but you are not negra. Now your husband … he is a little bit black (um pouco negro).

Referring to someone as black is considered an offense because of the intensely negative connotations of blackness. But that Leo applies it to my husband reflects the intersectionality of gender and race. His resistance to label me as negra and his articulation of my husband as just “a little bit black” is consistent with previous research highlighting that strongly racial terms are avoided when they refer to women. Telles (2004) argues, “Brazilians may seek to avoid offending dark-skinned women of high status by labeling them as black … to refer to a woman as preta is especially demeaning and nearly inconceivable in the case of a high-status woman.” To Leo, my husband is unambiguously negro, which Leo recognizes but he lightens the weight of the term by stating that he is just “a little bit black.” His construction offers evidence of the statement of another informant who states frankly, “we call ourselves morenos so that we do not have to say negro.”

Through this discursive strategy, Leo shows that he has learned racial and color etiquette, but he is also sanctioning me for not following those rules. While he initially accepts that I am an African descendant and recognizes that I am dark-skinned, the term negra, even though it is not as strong as preta, is not available to me. Curiously, it is a term that he uses to describe his cousin de consideração, though she is several shades
lighter than I am. When I ask him to explain why she and I are categorized differently he cannot explain why, but then continues by explaining that his “cousin” was poor and came to live with his aunt when she was young. Even though he does not state it explicitly, it appears that both her color, phenotype, and class status (and perhaps also her Brazilianness) has influenced his decision to label her as negra.

Similar to Leo, other children also reported not discussing race with their parents and described their own families in terms very different than their parents. All of the children provided answers to questions of race and color, but none of the children answered questions about race confidently. They were more confident, though not certain, about color classifications. Some changed their answers and others simply said that they did not know. Roseane, an 11-year-old brown-skinned girl with wavy hair in the Matos Family responds to the question “What is your race?” with the most creative reply, “Gemini” her zodiac sign. Roseane’s mother, on the other hand, has very clear notions of her own racial identity, which she refers to as “negra.”

This racial consciousness has not been transmitted to Roseane who sincerely does not know I mean by the term race.

However, in the majority of families seven of the ten core families, family members vacillate between color and racial categories and often answered questions with questions. Even when one family member or parent is certain of their race or color classifications others seem to be completely unaware of theirs. As a result, there is seldom consensus and instead there are color inconsistencies among family members. With regards to race, there are eight racial terms used by informants, but 83% of informants identified as either black or brown as evidenced in Table 3. While there are several color categories that family members use, racial categorization is the source of less debate. The extensive list of racialized and color nicknames in Table 4 suggests the

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4 Her mother is one of two people that question my authentic racial identity. She argues that I am not as black as she is, even though she is several shades lighter than me.
prominence of these terms in everyday life in Salvador.

Table 3. Summary of responses to the question: What is your race?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Racial Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black - Negro</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brown - Pardo</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black - Preto (color)</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White - Branco</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (I don’t know, Human, Gemini, Mestiça, Moreno etc)</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. List of all color or racial nicknames used by informants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Racialized Nicknames (and Insults)</th>
<th>Black (diminutive) - Neguinho/a</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Black/Honey - Nego/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Big black woman/man Negão/Negona</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Toasted/Burnt ones - Torradinhos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Black (diminutive) - Pretinha/o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Black - Negrinha (offensive)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Black from Candomblé - Preta do bozô (offensive)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very White - Branquela (offensive)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very White - Branco (with heavily rolled “r”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pretty people - Gente bonita</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ugly People - Gente feia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Milky – Parmaleitisinho (offensive)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coffee with Milk - Café com leite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Milk - Leite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very white/big white woman – Brancona</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Purple – Lilais</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jambo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, children’s responses were drastically different than the responses of adults and teenagers. All informants over the age of 13 years old understood the concepts of color and race, even if they were not certain how to classify themselves. Contrary to interviews with the children, there was much less uncertainty and sometimes even bold pride (though this was less likely). Daniel, a 57-year-old taxi driver and father of three responds in the following manner:

Elizabeth: What is your color?
Daniel: Pardo. Pardo on the outside, negro on the inside!
Elizabeth: What is your race?
Daniel: Negro!
Daniel is representative of those who even while using an intermediary color category proudly identifies racially as black or as Daniel states, “negro on the inside.” Daniel assumes his blackness, even though he mentions that based on racial appearance people might initially expect him to say that he is white. He later reveals that his wife is negra and adds that he has always been more attracted to negras, to evidence his racial loyalty. In the neighborhood, he is known for having “filhos bonitos” (pretty children) and has passed his racial consciousness on to both of his children. Giselle, his daughter is very light-skinned with wavy hair, but has stopped straightening her hair because she is politically active in the black movement. She is a negra assumida meaning that she has embraced or assumed her blackness, which is significant act for Brazilians who might otherwise be read as not black. However, expressions like Daniel’s of racial pride were rare, as it was much more common for there to be confusion when asked questions about color and race, to the extent that other family members were often called in or asked to intervene to reconcile questions.

3.2.1 Family Interventions in Racial Classification

Family interventions were sometimes pursued when there were racial confusions, but even these conversations sometimes only reveal the extent of racial and color inconsistencies. This was evident even in slightly more educated informants. A one-on-one conversation about color and race often becomes a convoluted conversation exemplifying racial confusions. My interview with Walter, a very dark skinned, 19 year old, high school student who wears his hair in an afro evolves in the following way:

Elizabeth: What is your color?
Walter: My color is negro ... preto
Elizabeth What is your race?
Walter: No, my color is preto, my race is negro. On my dad’s side, I have an uncle and he and my dad look just alike except my uncle is white. My dad is bald, around this height (using his hands), but my uncle is white. So they look just alike even their beards. It’s only in their skin color that they are different. (Só pela côr que se ve a diferença.)
Walter continues to offer an excessive amount of information about his genetic history focusing on his father and his uncle. He seems to be focused on trying to distance himself or counteract his own color categorization by mentioning his multiracial history (Twine 1998). Though he is black, he attempts to show that his family has a variety of phenotypes including many who are not preto like him. He attempts to further explain the racial conundrum between his uncle and father, but finds himself hedging, stuttering, and pausing consistently throughout. With reference to his uncle he explains:

"I ... I don’t know. I would say that he ... if you are looking ... I think ... I don’t think he would say that he is black. He would say something else. It’s that you never know what a person might say. One day they say one thing, the next day something else. What color is my mom? This thing is tricky. She is preta (black) because brown doesn’t exist. She is negra with a lighter skin tone. On my birth certificate it says pardo. On my mother’s birth certificate it says parda. I don’t know if it stayed parda or not. I could check it for you. It’s something so variable that I cannot say that a person who is darker is going to be negro because it’s so variable. This business of pardo is pointless. My professor says that pardo is the color of ‘papel da bunda’ (literally translated as ‘butt paper’, vulgar term for toilet paper, which is gray in Brazil)”

Particularly interested in how young people understand race and color, I allow Walter to continue his response in order to hear him work through his own questions and doubts. His reply that categories have complete fluidity and are variable is consistent with the dominant narrative about racial fluidity in Brazil, which has come under intense scrutiny (Skidmore 1993). Yet, even while he recognizes the situational and variable quality of color and race, his understanding of race is white and black, as he views pardo as a “pointless” category. Walter initially confuses his race and color, does not know how to classify his parents and relatives, and adds that his birth certificate says that he is pardo. He is the quintessential example of receiving mixed messages about race and color. When he asks his mother to intervene, she begins deconstructing their family history again focusing on the non-black relatives, but to the questions of color and race she answers preta and negra, respectively.
Similarly, when Larissa does not know how to respond to questions about race her brother intervenes:

Elizabeth: What is your color?
Larissa: Morena
Elizabeth: What is your race? *(David walks into the room)*
Larissa: Huh? Raça? What do you mean?
Elizabeth: Whatever it means to you.
Larissa: (silence, shoulder shrug) um, um *(few seconds thinking)* I don’t know.
David: (interrupts as he grabs a drink from the refrigerator) : “You are negra! We are negros me, you, and Elizabeth! Negros! Black hair, black skin, white teeth! *(we all laugh)*

This interaction further illustrates the incongruity in how family members classify themselves. It is not that race and color are difficult issues to discuss, but that they simply are not considered important enough to discuss explicitly through racial socialization. In this family as in others, racial socialization is characterized by a de-emphasis on rigid racial and color categorizations and ambiguity. David’s intervention becomes a teaching moment and he is surprised that his sister does not know how to answer the question about her race. While it may seem like a gratuitous joke that David adds an extra phenotypical signifier of race by referencing our white teeth, this happens very often in interviews and is an important detail. Several informants use white teeth as a phenotypic signifier for blacks, if they want to characterize a person as an attractive black person.\(^5\) Racial categorization is never based solely on skin color alone, but is considered in conjunction with other status and racial indicators. As will be discussed, there is a remarkable number of physical features determine one’s ultimate color and racial classification and influence valuations of beauty.

3.2.2 Will the real white person please stand up?

The importance of phenotypical features as racial signifiers emerges in a number of interviews. It is an important factor that is connected to both whiteness and blackness. Larissa distinguishes between her white friends by referring to them as

\(^5\) Please refer to chapter six aesthetics for an analysis of why other features are important in the aesthetic assessments of Afro-Brazilians.
branco (white) or branco de cabelo liso (white with straight hair). Informants used these distinctions to emphasi

ze the difference between someone who is ‘legitimately’ white versus someone who has very light skin but is understood as off-white. Previous researchers have referred to this group derogatorily as “brancos da Bahia” (Bahian near-whites) to signify that their claims to whiteness might be challenged once they leave the region (Pierson 1967; Borges 1995; Butler 1998). Similarly, but much less often, the phrase, “preto de cabelo duro” (black with hard hair) was also used to describe a distant relative, such as a grandparent or great grandparent when there is a desire to emphasize a slave heritage. Walter’s mother describes his great-grandfather as “black, black with nappy hair, a legitimate black” (preto, preto de cabelo duro, negro legí­timo). The additional modifier suggests that it is hair that ultimately determines that a particular ancestor is an unambiguous or “negro legí­timo” (legitimate black).

In Afro-Brazilian families, they often referred to the lightest members of families in white color terms (white), while offering a disclaimer that by white they mean skin color only not race. In other families, the darkest members of the family were sometimes referred to as negro, preto or Negão even if everyone in the family is considered negro. That is, in a family of medium to dark skinned negros, the family member who is lightest could be called branco and the darkest might be called negro, even though the entire family is structurally situated and categorize themselves to be negro. Marcos, a man with a light to medium complexion and self-ascribed “bad hair” explains that in his family being the neguinho (Blackie) was a good thing:

“In my family I was called Neguinho. But wait, wait a minute it wasn’t like a racist thing (laughs). It was just my nickname it wasn’t anything racist. I was the neguinho of the house. That meant that everybody loved me, everyone treated me well I was the neguinho.”

The relative use of these terms resonates with Sansone’s (2003) analysis of alternate meanings of the same words based on context and use of the diminutive. The term still
has a racial origin, particularly based on how Marcos explains it. Historically, the origins of his particular use of the term *neguinho* may be traced back to when young black boys were adopted to be live-in male companions for white children. Black boys in these situations were very well treated because they exchanged full-time labor for food and shelter. Historically, these young black boys were cared for but considered more like a pet rather than as a person.

On the other hand, lighter-skinned informants were adamant about articulating strict boundaries for classifying who is a “real” white person and who is not. Even when they use the term white to signify lighter skin, they often make it a point to compare themselves to whites in other regions of Brazil as evidence that are not really white. In fact, most white Brazilians (outside of this study) tended to resist asserting their whiteness and preferred to call themselves *morenos*. Below Andrea, a white mother struggles to confront questions of whiteness, race, and color. She is married to a black man and has two light-skinned daughters who have almost straight, dark hair. Andrea is very light-skinned and has very light, straight hair. She describes her daughters as white and then the following conversation unfolds:

Andrea: My daughters are white.
Elizabeth: What does it mean to be white?
Andrea: If I were white, I would have eyes that were blue or green, and I should be blonde with blue eyes and blonde hair. But I’m morena. Well, I am not morena morena, am I morena?
Elizabeth: I don’t know.
Andrea: I am not morena. And my daughter well she is too. I think that she is not white, she is parda. She is not white, she is parda. Wait, I was wrong. Here in Bahia it is called mulatta. No, mulatta is darker so it is not that. What is it called? (she is thinking) Ok, there is negro, branco, pardo, did you know that there is even ruivo (red head). You know what that is?“

Ultimately, the mother does not reconcile the racial classification of her daughter and attempts to introduce red-haired as a racial category in order to avoid answering the original question about her race. Her discomfort is, in part, a function of her ambiguous status and the association of whiteness with racial power that she would rather not
assert at least not to me. Downplaying articulations of her whiteness may also be important because she lives in a neighborhood with other blacks. Her daughters decline interviews with me, so I am unable to explore this further with them.

3.2.3 There are no whites, we are all black!

In Salvador, families relied on a number of color terms, but they were more consistent in their racial categorizations. Observing that Bahians used a racial logic that is based on a black-white conceptualization of race is surprising, but it has been illustrated previously (Sheriff 2001). Informants used a number of color terms to describe themselves or other family members, and while they did not know how to classify themselves color-wise, there was a near consensus that there is a two-category racial system. However, categorization as black occurred as a default and was not attached to racial consciousness. If the racial system is black and white, they reported that they were black because they knew they were not white. This is very different than racial categorization based on an internalized black racial identity and consciousness. These two responses are representatives of the statements that convey how respondents understand race:

“Negro is a race and within that race is a variety of colors” (Sophia, 65 years old, retired, ‘negra assumida’)

“Either the person is black (negro) or white ... or the person is Indian. I understand that parda means mixture but its not an adequate word (uma palavra suficiente). It’s something that people are afraid to talk about. I’m not afraid to talk about it, I’m proud.” (Walter, 19 years old, student)

In the most extreme cases, not only is race understood as being a question of black or white, but also informants grouped everyone in Brazil as negro. Ideologically, this represents a divergence from how researchers have written about whitening in Brazil, and provides evidence to support the idea that the two racial systems are converging and expanding to include all Brazilians since everyone is of African descent (Daniels
2006). The discursive and ideological shift from the notion that ‘we are all Brazilian’ to ‘we are all Black’ is significant (particularly, if this is observed outside of Bahia). Examples of how informants articulate this new formulation of racial categorization is evident in the selected examples:

“For me no one is white. Here in Brazil, everyone is black” (Vanessa, 31 years old, call center)

“Brazil doesn’t have whites. We are all afro-descendants.” (Sandro, 48 years old, mechanic)

“I have a sister who is negra. Because I think that in society a white person has to be white. Either you are white or you are black. Either a person is white or in society he is black.” (Liliane, 44 years old)

In fact, the most recurring statements about race that are given by informants are:

1) Racially, there is just black and white and 2) We are all black. One of the major goals of the Black movement in Brazil has been to socialize Afro-Brazilians to unite under a broader afro-descendant identity (Burdick 1998; Hanchard 1994). This effort is reflected in the development of public campaigns in Bahia that discourage Afro-Brazilians from identifying as white by demanding that they, “Não Deixa a Sua Côr Passar em Branco: Responda Com Bom C/Senso” (Don’t let your color go blank(White): Respond with good (Census) sense (Nobles 2000). Broader and popular acceptance of the conceptualization of Brazil’s racial system as a white-black binary support arguments made by researchers that a negro category is appropriate for analyzing racial inequality in Brazil (Telles 2004). At the same time, racial categorization as negro is not always accompanied by a political racial consciousness. Moreover, using negro as a universal term to describe all Brazilians has serious limitations that will be discussed in the conclusion.

3.3 Race and Space

Larissa is sincerely stumped with the question about her race. When her half-
brother interrupts the conversation, his response demands that she assume her blackness and that we all (me included) recognize ourselves as negros. Whether Larissa defines herself as morena or not, the reality is that she is treated as negra, particularly in her larger extended family. This is clear from observations from her cousin’s birthday party.

Larissa’s cousin, Paulinha is very light-skinned and is a “branca de cabelo liso” (white with straight hair). Paulinha has her 14th birthday celebration at a restaurant and we are all invited. As we walk in, everyone takes their seats, including Paula’s cousins and school friends. Paula invited a number of friends to the party all of whom are unambiguously white and wealthy. Larissa enters the restaurant with her best friend Monick who is light-skinned with African features (sarará) and sits at the same long table but with space separating herself from Paulinha and her friends. The phenotypical differences that separate the two friends become insignificant as they are clearly demarcated as the negras of the group, phenotypically, and socially.

Paula and her friends laugh with each other, reaching over the table to tease each other and joke. In the meantime, Larissa and Monick are placed at the other end of the table and seem to cower into one another glancing nervously at the group as if trying to find a way into the conversation by laughing and smiling. Their efforts are not acknowledged and the group continues to interact while ignoring them. I observe them continually adjusting and readjusting their straightened hair and constantly pulling down their bangs. I am also placed at the end of the table with them, along with their dark-skinned cousin Lucio. The gulf that separates us from the lighter group is immense and occurs with no cross words or contestation. All of the dark-skinned relatives are placed at one end of the table and despite the privilege that sometimes comes with being a Black American, I find myself there too. Regardless of Larissa’s refusal to classify as negra the rules of racial and class interaction still apply to her.
3.3.1 Tudo no seu lugar – (Everything in Its Place)

In Salvador, space is racialized and the rules that convey how family members should negotiate space tacitly reinforce racial hierarchy and perpetuate inequality (McCallum 1995). Racial socialization as a tool of hegemony is most effective when it is normalized through practices and expectations that unfold or are learned naturally (Hall 1986). The example above illustrates how interactions between phenotypically diverse family members can reflect and reinforce racial inequality. Other families provide instruction to family members about how to navigate race and space in the outside world. This implicit socialization dictates where to do go, places to avoid, and offers general warnings about safety. Some families rely on explicit racial socialization to guide family members about spaces that can be racially hostile or dangerous (Hughes and Johnson 2001). In Bahia, the majority of families often enjoy entertainment in majority-black settings so that they never have to address the question of race and class. As Washington states, in his family, race and color discrimination were never discussed, but they also only went places where blacks were in the majority:

“No one ever talked about discrimination or racism, ever. Because ... it is really because ... well, the places ... today it’s possible that discrimination exists since we are part of ... well, in the past we didn’t go to places where whites were because we did not even have money to go to those places. But now you have this [racism]. But as children we did not have this because we only went to black places. But today, no it’s different.”

Washington is socialized in ways that allow him to avoid racism by only going to events where there are other negros. The relationship between class and race means that this can occur relatively easy. However, now that his family is earning more money this has started to change and has forced him to deal with experiences and situations where he is the only black person. Because of these experiences, he reports that he now discusses with his family some of the racist situations that he has encountered both in college and in his previous jobs. He reveals,
“At work, they would say things like “Ah, that Neguinho does not know how to program.” Things like that. In college, I have had experiences with professors who said things like “that dumb Blackie.” But because I was paying to go there, I reported him to the college administration because he treated me in a discriminatory way saying, “That dumb Blackie does not know anything.”

In his job setting, racial insults are trivialized as brinca deiras, but protection from these uncomfortable social situations and the negative feelings that they elicit is a contributing factor to why some Afro-Brazilians actively avoid encounters with whites. Washington’s shifting class status exposes him to racism in ways that he has never had to experience (Santos 1983; Figueiredo 2002). When the protection of an all or majority Black spaces is no longer available, he is much more conscious of and exposed to explicitly racist commentary. The vast majority of Baianos inhabit racial spaces that are majority Black and uniformly shared with those from the same class background. Their experience with the white elite is severely limited not simply because of class differences, but also because of strategic efforts by members of the White elite to avoid spaces that are coded as Black or low class. For Washington, what makes the situation worse is that at his job he feels he cannot and should not respond to racism:

“I sat there and didn’t say anything. Because if I would have said something I may have lost my job. The boss wouldn’t think that I was right plus my boss was White!”

There are a number of spaces that are racialized and one of the most obvious examples is the shopping malls in Salvador. Shopping Iguatemi is large, new mall located in one of the business centers in Salvador. The top two floors are considered floors for the white and wealthy and the bottom floor is for everyone else. Once again the spatial arrangement of the mall, much like the Lower and Upper areas of the city have symbolic and racialized meanings (McCallum 2005). As one moves from one floor to the other, the stores become more exclusive. In a conversation about how much she hates racism, Paula (white, 14 years old) recalls feeling angry at seeing a group of moreno teenagers being harassed and followed by the police in the mall. These are precisely the
uncomfortable moments that blacks avoid. Afro-Brazilians are also socialized to avoid areas that are known for their wealthier and whiter clientele, even seemingly mundane spaces:

“You can go to the gas station, there is one in Amaralina and Pituba. Blacks do not go to the one in Pituba ... it is not that none go there but they do not use it often. They go to Amaralina instead because they know that everyone here is of the same class and they will not be discriminated against. White people, it is like this: when you are poor ... 90% of blacks here are poor, whites like to interact with blacks when they are their empregados (employees) or with a black women when she is beautiful they want to just use her... like for sexual pleasure.” (Marcos, 35 years old)

For Marcos, both class and racial considerations shape a decision as mundane as where to pump gas. The two stations that he refers to are located only minutes apart but the clientele is drastically different. Afro-Brazilians eventually internalize these rules of spatial negotiation and the behavior very seldom gets interpreted as being connected to class, much less race. These rules are not merely a matter of convenience but they become a matter of safety to avoid encounters where violating a tacit rule of racialized space could mean that they are viewed as a threat or suspicious. Encounters with the police can be dangerous and deadly for Afro-Brazilian youth.⁶ However, outside of the practical concerns and the dangers of lingering in white spaces, there is an additional affective aspect that Afro-Brazilians express. The best example of how this emotional factor influences how Brazilians negotiate racial spaces and interracial interactions is perhaps best illustrated by how the events of Sonia’s 30th birthday unfold.

Sonia’s neighbors, particularly the women, have been discussing her birthday celebration for weeks. They complain about having to bring their own meat to be grilled during the *churrascaria* (barbecue). But they agree to do so and the day of the party, all of the neighbors dance and take pictures until a large group of eight white people, who are referred to as “gente bonita” arrive. Upon their arrival, special chairs are set up in

⁶My personal experiences with the police outlined in the introductory chapter suggest how transgressing racialized spatial boundaries can be dangerous.
an area separate from everyone else. There are no signs, no formal rules, but a special section is arranged just for them. I watch as the residents slowly dip back into their homes and shut their doors. Curious about what is happening I begin asking and each informant responds with some variation of “You see all those pretty people \textit{gente bonita} that Sonia invited!” The residents feel uncomfortable interacting with the white family, who they refer to as pretty people, rather than white people. While some state that they are no longer interested in the party, others directly attribute their retreat to the presence of “\textit{gente bonita}” (pretty people). Not all neighbors completely retreat from the outside party, others continue to dance but keep a close distance from the group. The children follow suit, though they sometimes break the tacit rules and are forgiven. Even Corina who defines herself as white feels the weight of the guests’ presence because it threatens her relational race and status, so she retires to her house. In interviews, she refers to herself as white but is significantly darker than the “\textit{gente bonita}” who arrive at the party.\footnote{Sonia is eager to introduce me to the white family because she wants to show off the fact that an American is attending her birthday party. The white family are also interested in speaking to me, so they invite me over to sit down and have several drinks with them. I sit for a while with them, but I have to negotiate this carefully, as other neighborhood members might view this interaction as betrayal or may even become jealous of my special treatment.}

\subsection*{3.4 Explicit Socialization Messages?}

Racial socialization has been often associated in previous research as being associated with specific messages that prepare children or family members for bias or discrimination (Thomas, et. al 2010). However, in these families, messages connecting prejudice and discrimination to racial inequality were rare. Instead, racial socialization was implicit and had to be inferred from messages that usually reflected universal ideas about equality. The mothers below are representative examples of how this unfolds in families. When Diana is asked about what she teaches her children about race, she responds in the following way:
“I also always tell them not to lower their head and never stop chasing your dreams, do not let people insult you or discriminate against you because that will leave you feeling run down.” (Diana, negra, 40 years old married woman with three other children)

For Diana, racial socialization is not viewed as something that needs to be explicitly addressed. Her socialization is couched as universal, non-racial messages. Like her, other mothers report instructing their children to stand up for themselves in situations where they feel they have been discriminated against. In four families, mother’s framed this lesson in the exact same way stating, “we should never lower our heads” (a gente não deve baixar a cabeça). While not obvious, this message is a distinct type of racial socialization. The imagery of lowering one’s head is connected to the deferential behaviors that blacks displayed towards whites during and after slavery to illustrate submission. Hence, the mothers offer a message with content that gestures to race but they do not explicitly mention it.

Diana’s insistence that her son not let himself be insulted or discriminated against is vague. She instructs her children to have a positive attitude, but gives them no indication of how not to “let yourself” be discriminated against. Without further discussion about strategies or even the types of discrimination that they might face it seems unlikely that this will happen. However, her son Sergio proudly recounts that he confronted an older white woman who “made [him] feel like trash” when she clutched her purse after he asked her for the time. He directly links his response to socialization from his mother about not allowing people to insult him.

Similarly, the instruction that Janete receives emphasizes not feeling inferior to others. She reports that her mother teaches her:

“Never feel lowered, each person has their own abilities. To lower oneself means never to feel less than other people.” (Janete, 13 years old)

This particular way of advising family members is used often in families and was a
common way for parents to guide the behavior of their children in racist situations, without actually mentioning race.

For Afro-Brazilian families that had lighter children, their socialization messages have little to do with responding to racism and more directed at their roles as potential discriminators. Andrea replies that this is what she teaches her two daughters who have black fathers:

“I tell them you don’t have to discriminate against anyone. Never discriminate against anyone because we are all equal, right? In the eyes of God, we are all equal and we are brothers.” (Andrea, 62 years old)

Andrea’s racial socialization is universal, but it also reflects her anticipation that her daughters will be potential discriminators and not the victims of discrimination. That she never mentions that she teaches them never to feel lowered is connected to their whiteness and expectations about their future.

Universal messages like those used to combat discrimination are also used when referring to self-acceptance. In the front of their house, eight-year-old Dania a dark-skinned girl with very curly hair is whining and begging her mother to straighten her hair. Referring to a previous conversation that she has had with me about the importance of transmitting positive messages of self-acceptance to her children, Sonia proudly states,

“See, this is what I mean. She wants me to straighten her hair. But, I tell the girls to accept what you have and what you look like. God made you like he wanted to, your hair, everything. Don’t try to change these things. But, Bete you really should straighten your hair. Haven’t you ever thought about it? Don’t you want straight hair? I could do it for you.” (Sonia, homemaker, 31 years old, mother of six)

While there is an explicit message of self-acceptance, implicit in her interactions with me is that self-acceptance has its limits, particularly where gender, hair, and beauty are concerned. Sonia’s comment about my hair illustrates how women “hold themselves to a different standard of attractiveness” in comparison to young girls
(Candelario 2007: 253). While the natural hair of a young girl can be accepted, this acceptance is tentative and entrance into adulthood requires socialization into dominant aesthetic rules and hierarchies. Sonia offers affirmation about the importance of self-acceptance, but at the same time, according to internalized beauty hierarchies and social norms, beautiful hair is straight or straightened hair. I graciously decline the offer for her to apply a relaxer to my hair.

3.4.1 Educação é salvação: Education is salvation

In all families, education is valued as the key to social mobility and future success. Dona Elena offers a pithy version this idea by socializing her children into the same message that she received from her father: “educação é a salvação” (Education is salvation). She socializes her children to fight against racism and discrimination by acquiring as much education as possible. This advice provides little consolation for her son who after receiving his college degree still faces racism. Other mothers who also socialize their children to take advantage of educational opportunities echo Dona Elena’s approach. As Sonia reports she socializes her six children to:

“Never give up on your dreams, study because today public school is not much and if a student is not really interested, sometimes he doesn’t learn anything at all. So, with this little instruction that the government provides they have to take advantage of it. Because if we had money to put them in a private school (escola particular) they would not be in the government one. Government schools are very weak. The fundamental base, literacy there is no base, so it falls on the parents to reinforce [things]. Those with money put them in private school.” (Sonia, homemaker, 31 years old, mother of six)

Mothers believe that education is the only way that their children will achieve mobility. They specifically link education to class mobility and downplay explicit references to racial disparity or barriers. Parents’ racial identity and political views shape the messages that they convey to their children (Hughes, et. al 2006). Considering class-consciousness is much stronger than racial consciousness and the belief that racism is simply a social problem, class mobility through education is viewed as the solution.
While studying and excelling in school is articulated as being important for boys and girls, in six of the ten core families homes there were no books in the house. Despite little resources, the socialization message about education was internalized, particularly among the girls who were often interested in incorporating educational games in their play. One evening, five of the young girls in the neighborhood asked me to play school with them. Curious about what this meant, I agreed. They excitedly scavenged through their houses to find a book that they could use to read. When they could not find a single book, they suggested taking turns reading from my field notebook (This was, of course, completely out of the question). Eventually, the only book that they found to read in all of the houses was a tiny, green pocket bible with tattered pages and minuscule print. Even still, everyone huddled around the small green book, passing the bible around to read it. They each read their favorite passages, stumbling over words, asking what words meant, discussing what they thought the passages meant, and applying parables to comical real-life situations. Their interest in learning was clear, but the lack of a single book in six homes severely undermined their efforts.

Lourdes, a 17-year old Afro-Brazilian confides that she always knew that she had to perform well in school as a question of class mobility, and also a reflection of her race, gender, and phenotype. She explains that unlike her cousins because she was dark-skinned, she was told that if was to be successful she had to do well in school. In school, the boys did not like her, they rejected her and made fun of her. She explains that this happened because she was always among the darkest in her class and she had “kind of bad” hair. For Lourdes, education is viewed as her only ticket to social mobility, but it was one of the few ways that she thought that she would be able to gain recognition in her family. Not being able to exchange beauty in the marriage market, she relentlessly studies and takes English classes with me twice a week. Her hope is to gain admission into the university and travel to the United States.
3.4.2 Reading Bodies, Not Books

Even while parents, particularly mothers convey strong lessons about education, schools can be a difficult space for black students who are often the target of racial insults from their peers and racialized name calling from teachers. Cavalheiro (1999) documents the common use of racial terms to refer to the students, which she argues is itself not a problem, but in the context of a pervasive racial hierarchy in Brazil can be distressing for students. Moreover, teachers are known not to respond to racial insults and their silence serves as an implicit racial socialization for the students (Gonçalves 1985).

In Brazil, students often only spend about four hours a day in school with the option of attending class in the morning or the afternoon. The majority of the children in the study attended class during the 7 – 11am period. In a small focus group involving five of the girls in the community, all report being called or hearing racist names including nega do cabelo duro (nappy-headed black girl), cabelo de bombril (brillo head), and a number of terms and phrases that reference race and phenotype. Regane is particularly affected by the comments because they build on the anxieties that she already has because of her mother’s comments about her hair and skin color. Yet, even after having previously participated in an interview where she is nearly brought to tears by talking about how badly her friends tease her about her “bad” hair, she jokingly asks me, “Have you ever considered cutting your hair and selling it as a scouring pad?” That she is now using the very same language that made her cry to insult me is powerful. She does so, in part, because the texture of my hair makes me the only person against which she can use the words from a superior position. On the good-bad hair continuum, my hair is classified on the extreme end and hers is more towards the left. She relishes in the joke, proud that relatively speaking, her hair is better.

Despite the racially hostile environment in schools, mothers hold very tightly to
the hopes of what education can provide for their offspring. While they hope that 
education can help them to avoid future racism, they do not address the racism that the 
children currently face in the schools. With six children, Sonia is the exception. She 
claims to engage in racial socialization as it relates to preparing them for the future. 
When asked how she prepares her children for racism she states:

“Everyone is prepared for this. Of course everybody has to prepare. By talking, like this 
nowadays blacks are ... everyone is prejudiced, the majority of people. Large companies 
and business people are made up of white people because they think that only white 
people are rich. But their blood is red just like a black person’s blood. His blood is not 
white, so this is ignorance. For me, that’s it.”

Sonia frames racism as an individual problem of ignorance, but she reports that she 
discusses racism with her children. However, none of her children report having talked 
about racism or discrimination at home.

3.5 (Racially) Mixed Messages and Quotas

Previous researchers have linked racial identity to political participation in Brazil 
(Bailey 2009; Mitchell 2011). In families, racial categorization exists alongside color 
inconsistencies and this has important implications for political participation since, “a 
racial or ethnic identity becomes not only a lens through which individuals interpret and 
make sense of the world around them but also a starting point for social action” (Daniel 
2006: 199). A key question for families was how they viewed the quota system in Brazil, 
particularly considering their individual-based views on racism. As it stands, the quota 
system is part of affirmative action in Brazil intended to facilitate the entrance of Black, 
indigenous, and students of lower socio-economic status in all racial categories into 
college (Guimarães 1999). In Brazil, public universities are free for all students and they 
are considered the best universities in the country. In order to gain entrance into public 
universities, students have to pass a difficult vestibular exam, which many students can 
only do after taking an expensive year-long cursinho (pre-exam course). Students who
attend the free public secondary schools in Brazil are predominately poor and black. They often have mediocre teachers, sub-standard school facilities, little educational resources, and their families do not have the resources to pay the expensive fees associated with the *cursinho*.

While public universities were developed because, in theory, all students should be able to attend college, it ultimately provides free education to students who come from wealthy, white families. A large number of Brazilians, disproportionately Afro-Brazilians with dreams of attending college are forced to attend private universities where they take on significant debt and still end up graduating with degrees that are less valued on the job market. Hence, after long struggles led by an effective black movement and activists, a quota system was passed in order to make public universities more accessible to a larger number of underprivileged students.  

Among the families, overwhelmingly education was viewed as the secret to success and mobility but this belief did not translate into support for the quota system. In the entire study, only seven people in all of the families stated that they supported the quota system (less than 10% of respondents!). After additional probing, I find the rationale of the majority of informants suspiciously identical. The main argument against the quota system is the negative impression it gives of black competency. Consider the following responses:

“I am against quotas. I think the same way that I can study others can study. When you are black you have … If I am black and you are white, the spot is mine. This is saying that a black person doesn’t have the capability to get in on his own. I agree with affirmative action for public school students, but not racial [quotas].” (Walter, 19 year old student)

“I don’t think I agree with that quota system because it is saying that blacks do not have the capability to enter into the university… But I might be wrong.” (Tais, 17 years old)

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8 Arguments against affirmative action are in some ways similar to the arguments that have been heard in the U.S. It has been discounted as reverse racism or special preferences to black students. The argument that distinguishes the two is that in Brazil opponents argue that it is difficult to know who is actually black and who is not. To this, Vilma Reis, a militant black activist argues that the police doesn’t seem to have difficulties determining who is black.
Informants problematized the quota system because of their perception that it unfairly privileged blacks by indiscriminately allowing unqualified black students to enroll in college. Not only does the quota system not give unqualified black students a “free pass” without regard to academics, it is also not a program targeting solely black students (Astor 2004). Researchers counter these arguments by emphasizing that if any group has received preference during the several centuries long existence of universities, it has been and continues to be wealthy white Brazilians (Bernardo and Galdino 2004; Guimarães 2003).

A black student who will soon be entering into college offers a very common response to questions about quotas and race-based mobilization. Not only does he disagree with quotas, he resents black organizations in Salvador that try to highlight racial inequality against blacks:

“What I don’t like is this thing that exists right inside of many black institutions because they themselves promote prejudice. Saying things like, ‘Aw because the black is discriminated against, ah because black people are oppressed,’” you know things like that.” (Walter, 19 year old student)

He is speaking principally about the Steve Biko Institute in Salvador, which is recognized as an influential institution in Salvador and has played a pivotal role in advancing legislation to end racial inequality. It is an organization directed towards using education to help Afro-Brazilian families and students. In the quote above, the informant expresses anger at Steve Biko and also frames legitimate concerns about discrimination and oppression as themselves racist or prejudiced. He has received socialization about the importance of combating discrimination and mistreatment defined generally. However, while speaking up in interpersonal situations is acceptable, linking racism to systemic inequality and organizing to combat it is viewed as prejudiced behavior, at least as it relates to blacks. The informant continues by stating that quotas for indigenous people are different. Both the timbre of his voice and his
words reflect his “affective disposition,” which is one of deep sympathy is a result of his understanding of historical narratives of indigenous people (Bonilla-Silva et. al 2004: 559).

“Sometimes I feel like I see the indigenous population is disappearing and I feel so bad for them. So there should be a plan to continue their culture, of course they need to develop but their history is almost gone.” (Walter, 19 year old student)

Not only are Blacks overwhelming framed as the group most undeserving of “special treatment,” they are juxtaposed to indigenous people who are viewed as legitimate victims of racism and colonization (French 2009).9

Men and fathers are seldom part of my interviews; however, once the quota system was broached everyone wanted to contribute. The vast majority agreed that quotas are a bad idea and they bonded over their resentment that quotas suggested blacks were incapable or incompetent. The day that the women discuss the quota system, Dito, Sonia’s husband angrily appears at the door stating:

“Blacks can’t blame racism for everything! They have to get up and work for what they want. I get so tired of hearing people say because of racism I can’t do this or I can’t do that. I can’t get a job because I’m black. If you are poor it’s because you want to be poor.” (Dito, 36 years old, father of seven children)

The irony of this statement is that Dito has been unemployed for over a year. (At night, his 11 year old confides that she prays that he will find a job). Dito wakes up very early in the morning to sell ice cream or take odd jobs around the city but has not been able to find a stable job. He is the very example of a man who is working hard, waking up everyday to find work, but is still having trouble supporting his family. Moreover in the over 100 people who I interviewed, I never interviewed one person who “blamed” racism for their unemployment. In fact, the trend was for Brazilians to find alternative reasons for their socioeconomic or employment status, and race was seldom mentioned

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9 French (2009) recognizes the tendency of the state to acknowledge indigenous rights while ignoring the rights of African descendants and the ways that this has impacted identity processes.
3.6 What is racism?

Racial socialization practices in families are a product of how family members both define racism and understand its role in organizing their lives. The moments when families discuss racism are usually linked to an interpersonal experience and less rooted in structural inequality. The definitions of racism that emerge in families are all remarkably similar. Their understandings of racism can be divided into four principle responses that emerge early on and eventually become predictable. Informants explain racism in one of the four ways: “Racism is when: 1) a white person calls a black person black, 2) a white person thinks they are better or prettier than a black, 3) when a black man marries a white woman when he becomes rich, and 4) when a black person does not like other blacks or thinks he is not black.

In families, racism is defined using an individual or prejudice model as though it is a sickness that exists within individuals (Twine 1998; Daniel 2006). Therefore, examples of racism were almost always connected to interpersonal relationships (conversations, interactions, or offensive words). For example,

“[Racism] it comes from inside the person themselves.” (Nora, 48 years old, mother of five)

“[Racism] comes from the family, home training, education level, in the high schools they don’t really touch on this issue – racism blocks them from thinking in a different way. They are raised with these ideas.” (Dito, 26 years old)

“My family on my mother’s side is racist – very racist. They are prejudiced. For example, they didn’t want my mother to marry my father because he is black.” (Vanessa, 34 years old)

In each of these examples racism is defined as an individual or family-derived individual problem. There are a number of examples that family members could have provided to questions about racism that address disparities in education, employment,
representation, and/or politics. But, they did not do so. Oddly, one of the few mothers that defined racism in a way that acknowledged structural inequality is Andrea who defines herself as parda, but not afro-descendant. She connects racial inequality to slavery by mentioning the overrepresentation of black women as maids. Moreover, she cites the government’s failure to fund public education as a driving force for racial and class inequality. She has a sophisticated understanding of race, but she does not situate herself as being part of the Afro-Brazilian community.

3.7 Media and Culture

“Black woman with nappy hair? They should sing about beautiful black woman, black woman with a big butt, intelligent black woman, wonderful black woman. There are so many words that you could put next to black woman, right?! (Daniel, 57 years old, taxi driver speaking about the song ‘Black Woman with Hard Hair’)

The socialization that occurs in families does not occur in a vacuum, but is inherently connected to the broader society. For this reason, racial socialization researchers have considered cultural participation as an important measure of implicit racial socialization (Hughes and Chen 1999). In Brazil, this is also an important source of socialization because it conveys what is culturally valuable, illustrates the commodification of race, and contributes to the development of nationalistic sentiments, which directly impact notions of race and racism. Cultural events including soccer, Carnaval, novelas, and participation in Afro-Brazilian cultural activities occupy a substantial role in the lives of families. Researchers argue that the centrality of these cultural activities to family life in Brazil is not coincidental, but reflects “the intentional project by the state to create an inclusive national identity above ethno-racial identity.” (Paschal 2008: 428).

I quickly discovered this when I had to continually change my interview schedule to accommodate cultural events, parades, and soccer games. For example, my interviews had to be scheduled around the afternoon novelas, I did not travel when
there was a soccer game because buses stopped, and during Carnaval I avoided trips to Cidade Baixa because of endless traffic. During the times when I scheduled interviews during novelas, the sound of the television would drown out the family in the background and informants would conspicuously split their attention between answering my questions and commenting on the dramatic storylines. Initially, I naively dismissed novelas as obstacles to my research, but soon realized that they were absolutely fundamental to how Brazilians learn and situate themselves in broader society. Similar to novelas, watching soccer and participating in Carnaval were all events that struck nationalistic chords and contributed to the development of affective ties to national identity. This is important in Latin America as previous research has linked having a strong sense of nationalism to lower levels of racial identity (Hanchard 1994; Butler 1998; Nobles 2000).

3.7.1 Novelas

In Brazil, novelas are a national phenomenon traversing gender, age, racial and color barriers, as the majority of Brazilians watch and become emotionally invested in novelas. Watching novelas is an important diversion for families and its cultural relevance rests in their ability to contribute to Brazilians’ pride and “passionate patriotism” for the national family (Sommer 1993). With a poor public education system, lack of books and reading materials at home, and ambiguous conversations about race, Brazilian history and race relations as told on the novelas is accessible to even the poorest family. The objective of novelas is not be accurate, instead they entertain and simultaneously present (mis)-representations of the world for their audience to respond to and enjoy (Joyce 2010). It is a particularly powerful source of implicit racial socialization as it was customary for every home to have a television, sometimes even a flat screen television. Television served as the primary source of family entertainment, and so the investment is considered worthwhile. With popular
layaway plans, families can divide payments over a year until the balance is paid off.

Engagement with the dramatic storylines of novelas is a normalized part of what it means to be Brazilian. During my interviews with children, it is apparent that the novelas are socializing agents on issues ranging from fashion, beauty, and romance to the history of race in Brazil. When asked about if and how racism is discussed in the family, the answers below reflect representative answers:

No, they don’t talk about that [racism and slavery]. I learned about slavery from the novela. There was a program that showed how whites beat on blacks and they punished them when they wanted them to work. You know there is a novela that comes on about slavery, what is it called? It’s called Sinha Moça! They have lots of blacks on that novela. (Melissa, 9 years old)

My mom taught me some things, but a lot [I learn] from television, they have lots of shows talking about this. A lot of stuff I learned on TV and many other places. (Marilda, 11 years old)

At least eight children in the study reported using novelas to understand the history of slavery in Brazil. Many others were observed watching Sinha Moça, a novela set during slavery, with their families on a daily basis as a form of family diversion. However, this novela like others are often fraught with inaccuracies and silences, particularly around issues of race. Joyce (2010) references the film, “A Negação do Brasil” to suggest that Afro-Brazilians play inferior and “demeaning roles, as slaves, or in marginal positions such as villains, and in a situation of servitude (28).” When I ask children about what they know about slavery, they excitedly recount narratives of slaves being brutally whipped or punished. In some cases, they act out these brutal scenes happily and laugh as they pretend to be tied to a whipping post to be beaten. It is as though the dramatization of slavery has left them desensitized to slave imagery. Slavery is connected to a very distant past and it is framed as existing completely outside of the realm of how they understand themselves.

The dominant hegemonic narratives of Brazil’s history shape the portrayal of

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slavery in the novels. In the novela *Sinha Moça*, blacks are shown as slaves in the fields, but they are filmed working in slow motion and always with pleasant, relaxing music playing in the background. This perpetuates historical portrayals of Brazil as having a less brutal form of slavery, where punishment is exceptional and reserved for bad slaves (Freyre 1933). These types of novelas feature the most number of black characters and the story lines are predictable. There is often a love triangle involving the usual suspects: a racially mixed woman (usually a mulatta) and a white man. The white man feels torn between slavery and his love for the slave, but eventually ends up the white savior. There is also the requisite evil black person who is jealous of the relationship between the mulatta and her white boyfriend and tries to destroy the relationship. The novelas construct simple dichotomies between good and bad, underemphasizing race and whiteness as much as possible (Araújo 2000). The socialization that Brazilians receive from novelas is not just about slavery, but also about race, color, and desire. In virtually all of the novelas, whites are predominately the object of blacks’ romantic affections, while whites mainly have relationships with other whites (Araújo 2000). A novela that features a couple composed of two Afro-Brazilians is rarely produced.

In the novelas that aired during the research period, *Viver a Vida*, Tais Araújo, played a starring role. She is considered the most popular and among the most beautiful black Brazilians. In the novel, she plays a model, Helena, who dates a much older white divorced man. Helena ends up having to beg forgiveness from her lover’s ex-wife for an accident that Helena is blamed for. In the apology scene, Helena is stripped of all makeup, wears tattered rag-like clothing, is barefoot, and falls to her knees with her hands clasped high and head lowered to ask for forgiveness.¹² In what might be

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¹² The entire scene is shrouded with racial symbolism particularly her clothing, the bareness of her face and feet, and the image of her pleading on her knees with perhaps the most understood gesture of racial inferiority “a bowed head”
considered the ‘hit heard ‘round Brazil,’ Helena is slapped across the face by an angry white woman and says nothing as the woman turns and leaves. Adding insult to injury, this episode aired during the week of Black Consciousness Day, November 20th in Brazil. Black activists were indignant about the portrayals of Helena, and focused on how her body was staged in ways that resonate with the deferential posture of slaves. The one character that young black girls reference as an attainable role model is reduced to a silenced slave. As with scenes of slavery, the children are often so immersed in the dramatization of the scene that they do not respond to the scene other than by letting out surprised gasps, and covering their mouths in anticipation of the next episode.

3.7.2 Re-telling National Tales

National tales, including the story of Brazil’s “discovery” and representations of slavery, socialize Brazilians into dominant national narratives about race that trivialize the brutality of slavery and portray Brazilians as equal members of a larger national family. As evident in the preceding section, novelas contribute to racial socialization by transmitting the dominant national narratives about racial oppression and (re)-presenting Brazil’s history of slavery in a less threatening manner (Araújo 2000). Stories are political to the extent that historical storytelling and personal narratives “often reproduce power relations, as the specific stories we tell tend to reinforce the social order” (Bonilla-Silva, et. al 2004: 556). While historical narratives are different from racial stories in that they involve historical rather than personal experiences, the historical narratives that informants provide can, nonetheless, be analyzed for their role in promoting a particular reading of historical events. Freyre’s (1933) historical revisionism played a fundamental role in downplaying racial stratification in order to reinforce the image of Brazil as a racial democracy. Hence, national tales can be fundamental in perpetuating racist ideology, but the content of the stories is only one aspect of a more elaborate “interpretive repertoire consisting of frames, styles, and racial
stories” that once analyzed can reveal how racial ideologies influence how events are recreated and interpreted” (Bonilla-Silva, et. al 2004: 556).

Informants report learning about the history of race and slavery in Brazil from novelas, and the historical knowledge that they gain influences their consciousness and shapes what they believe about their origins (Somers 1994). To my request, “Tell me about the beginning of Brazil,” several informants begin in an almost scripted manner with the following phrase, “In the era of the great voyages, Pedro Cabral…” (na época das grandes navigações). Their nearly identical and formal phrasing of their historical account suggests that they have memorized a similar storyline of exploration and discovery. Though the specific details of their narratives vary, their approach to the question is one that idealizes discovery, rushes through slavery, and focuses on the post-abolition creation of a new race-less Brazil. Both the precise details and the style of their historical storytelling reveal much about the affective ambivalence that some Afro-Brazilians feel towards this history. Below I will deconstruct narratives of “discovery” that are representative of the types of responses that children, teenagers, and adults provided to questions about the beginning of Brazil.

The youngest informants consistently report not having learned about or discussed Brazil’s history of slavery with their parents. They often stated that they gained their knowledge from the novelas (watched mainly at home), lessons at schools, and from other sources. When Tati, an 11 year old, is asked to explain the beginning Brazil, she offers the following historical account. She states,

“The Indians came first and then whites, blacks, and then racism. Whites came here on ships and boats. Blacks came on cells at the bottom of the ships that’s where the white people tossed them. They were here to work for whites and did not receive money. After slavery ended, life was easy for blacks and there are many wealthy blacks now. [Where are they?] I don’t know, in various places. Like Helena and her godmother.” (speaking about two actresses from the novela) – (Tati, 11 years old)

Tati offers a historical narrative that correctly acknowledges the three main groups
that have played a major role in Brazilian history: blacks, whites, and indigenous groups. She does not suggest that their initial encounter is a friendly one. Instead, she associates the encounters of the groups with racism and highlights the harsh way that whites “tossed” (jogaram) blacks under the ships and exploited them when they arrived. However, Tatiana rushes through the uncomfortable first three sentences and continues with a sense of relief once she reaches the point where “slavery ended.” Her rapid progression through the narrative parallels how popular representations of Brazil’s history briefly acknowledge the horrors of slavery and emphasize a post-slavery era of racial equality. According to how she understands this history, the end of slavery signals the beginning of a new era and what she calls an “easy life” for blacks. In Brazil, the absence of legal segregation or the Jim Crow Laws after slavery has been used to suggest that racism was and is less brutal in Brazil. Tati’s story concludes with an assertion about Brazil’s racial egalitarianism, which she establishes by referencing the presence of wealthy blacks. When she cannot provide information about this vague group of wealthy blacks, she uses the fictional characters on the novela as evidence of their existence. To the 11 year old, the two fictional characters, Helena and her godmother on the show, are real. For Tati, as is the case with many younger Brazilians, it is difficult to separate the reality from the fictional dramas of the novela.

When the precocious, Alberto an 8-year old boy, is asked about the beginning of Brazil, he begins with the common storyline and a loud voice, “in the era of the great navigations …” He continues by elaborating on the motivations behind the voyages focusing on the exciting search for gold and spices. Particularly interested in talking about the shiny gold and jewels, the majority of his historical account describes the large rubies and colorful jewels that the explorers bring back to the royal family. In Alberto’s narrative, the beginning of Brazil does not include a history of slavery. He does not mention blacks until I directly ask him to explain, “How do blacks enter into the
history?” For his age, Alberto offers a sophisticated reply,

“Blacks arrived here through slavery. In the past, the whites had more power than blacks and more money. So they took blacks from a place called a chapel, I mean the slave quarters (senzala). That is where he got blacks and put him to work. The negroes didn’t get paid anything and if the negro didn’t want to work they would tie him up to a stick and beat him. But time passed and Princesa Elizabete appeared. So Princesa Isabel, thought, thought, and thought and with Don Pedro II decided to end slavery. After this, they started to earn money, their life started to become a little easy, they started to build houses, get married, have children. Before they just dated, they weren’t able to get married.”

(Alberto, 8 years old)

Similar to Tati’s account, Alberto is familiar with Brazil’s history of slavery and frames the past as though it is drastically different from the present. He states that (back then), “whites had more power than blacks and more money.” He, too, acknowledges the physical abuses of slavery and excitedly offers to show me a demonstration of what it was like for a slave to be beaten (I decline the demonstration). As is clear from both his account and Tati’s, the violence of slavery is used to show the extent of Princess Isabella’s benevolence. She magically “appeared” and after thinking hard about it makes the moral decision to end slavery. There is no indication of black resistance, no black agency at all in the abolition of slavery, only a morally upright, white princess who becomes the savior of the passive oppressed black masses.

Other children have less sophisticated accounts of history and can only offer brief snippets of their understandings of Brazil’s beginnings. According to Regane, blacks were not slaves. She states, “Blacks sailed on ships to get here. They were sailors.” Ana Luzia, an 11 year old, argues that not only were blacks not brought over as slaves they lived in Brazil peacefully with Indians. She states, “Blacks and Indians lived here together until white people came.” I expected to hear varying accounts of Brazilian history from children particularly because of how slavery is portrayed in the novelas and because it is only partially addressed in schools.

However, adults also offered varying accounts of Brazil’s beginnings and while some demonstrate a lack of historical knowledge, others provide accounts that contain
traces of counter hegemonic narratives. Sonia, a mother of six is uncertain about how to answer questions about Brazil’s history and this becomes increasingly evident during our interview:

Elizabeth: What did you learn about how blacks came to Brazil? What do you know about this history?
Sonia: What they say in the books, you know blah, blah, blah (We laugh)
Elizabeth: How did they arrive?
Sonia: Um ... sheesh ... um (pauses several seconds as she is thinking)
Elizabeth: Well, how do you understand this story?
Sonia: Let’s me see ... well, like this ... let me see how will I tell you ... Wait a minute, my brain is slow today (laughs). You want to know how blacks arrived to Brazil? (pauses) I don’t know.
Elizabeth: Did you learn about this in school?
Sonia: It’s like this … You mean like this when the Portuguese came and blah, blah, blah (in a sing song voice)
Elizabeth: Yes, that’s what I mean (We both laugh)
Sonia: You mean like, ok, In the 1500’s blah blah and the negros blah blah and Princesa Isabela gave them freedom with the Golden Law. Yeah yeah so they freed them. (in a sing song voice)
Elizabeth: They freed them? They freed who from what?
Sonia: From slavery because according to blacks they were slaves. Well not according to blacks, according to everyone the slaves, the books, everyone, the people talking, the soap operas. The blacks were the slaves. So maybe blacks are ashamed because in the past the Black was a slave. Right? And now today they don’t accept themselves, maybe one thing has to do with the other ... (as I prepare to ask another question) Alright Bete that’s enough for today.

Sonia stumbles uncomfortably as she tries to piece together a historical narrative about the beginning of Brazil and the arrival of blacks to the country. She repeats the question, stutters, and laughs uncomfortably as she realizes she does not have an adequate response. But even between her long pauses and uncomfortable laughter, she reveals the little that she has internalized about the dominant narratives of history. When considered together Sonia’s initial account can be summarized as providing the following historical fragments: the Portuguese, the 1500s, Princess Isabela, and the Golden Law freed “them.” The “them” is initially unnamed, but she has correctly named the actors that are framed as most important in Brazil’s history. Similar to other narratives not only is black agency and resistance not recognized, but blacks’ are not even initially acknowledged as slaves until I ask for additional information. After she
recounts this history, she links the history of slavery to a previous section of our interview when she discusses the question of black self-hatred. She previously argued that self-hatred comes from within, but after talking about slavery she begins to ponder the possibility that the negative associations with blackness may have something to do with slavery. Before she can fully think through the possibility, she abruptly ends the conversation by stating that she has had enough for the day. Never one to end a conversation early, I interpret the abrupt ending as indication that she feels uncomfortable with our conversation.

As I mentioned, other adults offered a more subversive account of history. Felipe who is 34 years old and works with computers states,

“For me there was not really a discovery. Pedro Cabral and the rest came and really they were looking for other places but they stayed here. There wasn’t really anybody living here. It’s like this, the countries and places that super-developed are the direct result of the exploitation of other regions. The captains divided the land because there was all this land that wasn’t being used. The Indians, they didn’t last long doing hard labor so they targeted Blacks. I think they got blacks from Europe.” (Felipe, 34 years old, works with computers)

Felipe’s account of the Portuguese explorers as confused travelers challenges portrayals of them as knowledgeable and brave voyagers. Moreover, he provides a sophisticated critique of Brazil that is reminiscent of arguments of prominent scholars such as Manning Marable and Walter Rodney, which emphasize the super-exploitative relationships between core and periphery countries and populations. However, Felipe ends by suggesting that the Portuguese targeted Blacks, but he does not use the language of slavery to describe these relations. He also reveals that he does not know where blacks lived before they were brought to Brazil. In this way, his account is then characterized by counter discourses as well as historical inaccuracies.

Surprised about how seldom informants mention Africa, one of the questions that I begin to ask is, “Where did blacks live before they were slaves?” My informants’ answers are amazingly diverse and include: “Portugal,” “Europe,” “Spain,”
“Quilombos,” “I do not know,” and Blacks and Indians always lived in Brazil. Only ten informants identified Africa as the continent where blacks lived prior to coming to Brazil! When further asked, “What happened to the Indians?” there is relative consensus among the informants. Indians are described as culturally very different than blacks in that they were “born to be free” and were not used as slaves because “they did not want to be slaves.” In informants’ narratives, Indians are given much more agency and they are juxtaposed to blacks in ways that suggests that blacks passively accepted enslavement or were not “born to be free.” This is further perpetuated by the failure to acknowledge the consistent and quite significant resistance efforts organized by blacks in Brazil.

Despite their differences, the most striking commonality of all of the storylines and historical narratives is that everyone knew how the story ended: Princess Isabela signed the Golden Law, freed the slaves, and ended slavery. Alberto reflects on the history and calls it a “happy story” due in large part to Princesa Isabela’s actions. Indeed, if historical narratives are tools to perpetuate the racial order, then the most important message that they need to convey is one that de-emphasizes racism and highlights racial egalitarianism. In Brazil, these non-racial hegemonic narratives are pervasive.

3.8 Conclusion

Racial socialization has often been framed in terms of explicit messages, conversations, and practices that help family members learn about who they are, how they are situated in their society, and what they can expect from the future (Lesane-Brown 2006). Indeed, the framing of racial socialization in this way suggests that researchers can directly observe and catalogue intentional moments of racial instruction. In the field, I found that these moments of explicit, or rather intentional instruction were rare. The explicit racial socialization that has been associated with child rearing in the U.S. was simply not a model that characterized what I observed in Afro-Brazilian
families. In these families, racial socialization is marked by the absence of intentional messages of racial heritage, minimal conversations about racial discrimination, and few instances of explicit racial pride. Parents did not use explicit racial socialization to teach their offspring the internal logic of color classifications, and this often resulted in confusions between how color categories were used and understood. This is true despite the fact that racialized color terms were omnipresent in day-to-day life both within and outside of families. In some ways, the absence of direct socialization was itself implicit socialization into the variable ways that color should and can be wielded in Brazil.

At the same time, a large number of informants showed an insistence on recognizing phenotypic differences while asserting that everyone is black. In some ways, the conceptualization of race as a bifurcated stratification system can be viewed as revolutionary, when considered in light of how blackness has historically been avoided. While racial categorization as black was a major goal of the black movement, how it is used as an umbrella term for everyone, irrespective of color, potentially threatens efforts to mobilize or document racial inequality. If everyone in Bahia who has a distant African ancestor, this conceptualization ignores the structural differences between those who have a “foot in the kitchen,” and those who, as an informant aptly phrases it, have their “entire bodies in the kitchen.” This is particularly true because, in Brazil, the majority of whites will acknowledge they have African heritage. Understandings of race in Bahia imply that because whites in Bahia would not be considered whites in other regions, they are not white. However, the relational quality of whiteness means that they do not need to be ‘as white’ in order to be relatively positioned and differentially treated as white in Bahia.

Caldwell (2007: 38) notes that the phrase, “foot in the kitchen,” is typically used by a white person to acknowledge African ancestry. The use of the term kitchen is suggestive of domestic labor and the history of slavery. That only a foot is in the kitchen suggests that only a small part of their history can be traced back to slavery.
There were moments of explicit racial socialization, but even these took the forms of generalized or universal ideas about respect and egalitarianism (not necessarily racial egalitarianism). When mothers claimed that they socialize their children about racism, their children sometimes reported not receiving these messages. The majority of mothers and respondents recognized that racism exists, but their definitions were narrow, focusing on individual-level understandings of racism that focused on interracial relationships and racial name-calling. Their constructions of racism as an individual phenomenon shape their political commitments and explain why political policies including affirmative action and quotas are viewed aversely.

While implicit racial socialization is the principal form of socialization in families, it also entails an important affective layer. Schools provide a social milieu that is generally antagonistic to black students as evident in racist textbooks that reduce the contribution of Africans to the folkloric realm and racial insults that are both used and tolerated by teachers and students. Previous research illustrates that in schools Afro-Brazilians are treated in ways that suggest they are incompetent, less desirable, less intelligent, and even less worthy of affection (Cavalheiro 1999). Again, silence and the absence of critical commentary have a role in normalizing racist representations and legitimating differential treatment of children in schools.

Similarly, cultural participation also provides an important form of implicit racial socialization. In the cultural realm, watching novelas is a daily family activity but messages and images perpetuate racial hierarchies through negative portrayals of blacks and the absence of a counter-discourse. As well, the novelas that focus on slavery serve not only to desensitize children to the horrors of slavery, but reinforce notions of white saviors and the virtues of *mestiçagem* through interracial relationships (implicitly framed as blacks seeking white partners). Finally, even participation in some of the most popular cultural forms like soccer and Carnaval help to foster “passionate patriotism,”
which ultimately serves to provide a temporary affective reward, while only symbolically integrating Afro-Brazilians and Afro-Brazilian culture. This symbolic integration happens because it is profitable for the state, but it only occurs once cultural practices have been made palatable for an international audience (Santos 1998). Overall, this chapter illustrates that racial socialization in Afro-Brazilian families takes the form of implicit socialization and is characterized by the reproduction of racism with sporadic moments of resistance against broader racial hierarchies and ideologies.
4. What’s Love Got to Do With It? : The Stigma of Racialized Features, Affect, and Socialization in Families

“Our race problems. Sometimes they start inside the home.”
(Dona Teresa, 71 years old)

“Everyone must break through the wall of denial that would have us believe hatred of blackness emerges from troubled individual psyches and acknowledge that it is systematically taught through processes of socialization in white supremacist society” (hooks 1995, 131).

4.1 Context

All major social institutions are complicit in reproducing dominant racial norms. Racial socialization in phenotypically diverse families provides the opportunity to analyze the role of the family as the first site of the reproduction of dominant racial hierarchies (Gomes 1995). In this chapter, I show that racial socialization explicitly teaches the relational values of racialized physical features (colorism), and that an analysis of the affective realm illustrates how racial stigma is produced and transmitted in family relationships. Previous research focuses mainly on how racial and color hierarchies influence interracial pairings and sexual relations (Twine 1998, Burdick 1998; Goldstein 1999; Telles 2003; Rebrun 1999). I expand upon studies of race and color in Brazilian families by highlighting how racial socialization emerges in a wide range of family relationships and I draw on the conceptual frameworks of stigma and colorism to theorize about how racialized features are processed and transmitted through families. While previous research suggests that favoritism and differential treatment within families may occur (Volling 1997), there are few studies that investigate how or if differential treatment based on race and phenotype impact family systems and processes. I argue that concrete practices, affective displays, and the language used to respond to phenotypic differentiation offers compelling evidence about the multiple
ways that families help construct racialization and function as a vehicle connecting macro level racial ideologies to microsocial relations.

4.2 The Hand that Rocks the Cradle: Mother-Child Relationships

“You have some that were just asking to be born ugly, just asking to be born ugly. Look, I am realistic. Some ask to be born ugly. [Elizabeth: What do you mean?]. They are poor, black and ugly … and they don’t like to study.” (Marcus, 19 years old, unemployed)

In Afro-Brazilian families, the legacy of racial mixture has led to the presence of a particularly wide array of phenotypic combinations and features. The totalitarian scope of hegemonic whiteness means that well before a child is born, its potential phenotype is visualized and openly discussed in the family, “the most intimate and inescapable realm where one’s physical appearance is interpreted and classified” (Pinho 2009: 39). This is true for exogamous and endogamous pairings because the relational quality of race and phenotype in Brazil privileges “degrees of whiteness” so that phenotypic difference has meaning for all families (Pinho 2009). Not only do valued racialized features function as “symbolic capital” that can be exchanged for economic and social mobility, this study shows that they can be exchanged for affection in families, as well (Harris 2009).

When individuals possess racialized features that deviate significantly from an idealized (or even relative) whiteness, the affective responses to their devalued appearance can produce stigma. Far from being an isolated response, stigmatization of family members can reverberate throughout a family impacting the family system and core relationships that form part of the sub-systems. The confluence of race, color, gender and motherhood means racial anxieties emerge in the selection of a marital partner, but become more real once a woman becomes pregnant. In this context, message, affective dispositions, and concrete practices observed early as pregnancy may carry the suggestion of racial stigma and serve as harbingers of future racial socialization and colorism (Hall et. al 1992; Wilder and Cain 2010).
4.2.1 Harbingers of Racial Socialization – Babies

Damiana is a 28-year old pregnant mother with caramel brown skin and naturally straight hair. She identifies as “uma mulher negra” (a black woman) and often discusses the vivid dreams she has about her unborn child:

“I have dreams about what she will look like. Sometimes she is white and sometimes she is morena. I hope she gets her nose and straight hair from me. That’s why I sit here all day and watch gente bonita (pretty people) on television. If an ugly person walks by I try not to even look in their direction.”

Her statement and others like it reveal that racial phenotype is a central preoccupation for the pregnant mother. Watching pretty people may be initially interpreted as a non-racial activity, but because the phrase is colloquially understood to mean ‘white people’, her participation expresses the normalization of whiteness and the conflation of beauty with whiteness (Pinho 2006; Adelman and Roggi 2008). Her desire to secure a favorable racial phenotype for her baby and minimize her racially stigmatized features explains why she watches the novelas as a preemptive measure. And as she watches, she makes explicit comments about the beauty of actresses’ focusing on their hair and noses and the comments continue even during commercials. According to Damiana, the baby’s skin tone might vary between white and brown, but her brief comments and references to skin color suggest that it is not a major concern. Instead, it is the baby’s nose and hair that are the indicações (racial markers) that she constantly discusses and will garner the most attention and comments by others. They are perhaps also the focal points because unlike skin color, they are viewed as more easily correctable. As a female, racial features will be decisive in influencing her future prospects (Hill 2005).

Seemingly race-neutral phrases like ‘pretty people’ effectively mask the racial and gender undertones that are inherent in constructions of beauty, and in doing so give racist evaluations that privilege whiteness an objective character. Other phrases are
similarly framed as race-neutral, yet as part of the socialization process they promote the devaluation of blackness. For example, curious neighbors, who circulate whispers that Damiana may have a “barriga suja” (dirty womb/stomach), exacerbate her anxieties about the baby’s racial appearance (Patai 1998). This is a pejorative phrase that describes a woman’s tendency to produce dark-skinned babies (Burdick 1998). This phrase normalizes gendered racism by placing blame on women who have dark babies, and constructs blackness as contaminating. The term may be racially derisive, yet it is not interpreted in racial terms, and is instead understood as a question of good appearance, not race (Twine 1998). Damiana does not protest the racist underpinnings of the phrase, she simply agrees that she, too, hopes she does not have a dirty womb.

This phrase “barriga suja” is not used for all mothers, but is applied specifically to women who could possibly have a lighter child, that is if one person in the couple is significantly lighter or darker than the other. A father and several mothers recall hearing the phrase “barriga suja” used in reference to another family member or themselves. Not everyone passively accepts the phrase “barriga suja” without critique. In fact, two informants illustrate how they resist such comments:

[They say] “Oh, she has a clean stomach. Look at the color of the baby! They [the parents] are really dark and he came out white.” Now he really was white and fat (referring to her nephew). People said this (she laughs hard). Oh my, what ignorance! Imagine how ignorant it is to think that if a woman is black and her husband is lighter that if she has a clean stomach the child will be born white and if her stomach was dirty it will be born dark. Lord have mercy!” (Rebeca, 51 years old, retired teacher)

I have heard this many times as a child and as an adult. [Elizabeth: How do you respond?] Well they say this and I say, “no, nobody has a clean or dirty stomach. Everybody is born like God wants and it’s good.” (Daniel, 57 years old)

These moments of resistance do little to relieve the concerns that some mothers feel. Fears of racial stigma are encoded early on in the mother’s expectations and desires, and upon the baby’s arrival they come to shape her actual interactions and affective responses to her children and her baby. Damiana experiences a extremely
positive affect response to the arrival of her baby. She is ecstatic when she ultimately delivers a baby girl who is unanimously viewed as pretty: white skin and straight hair. As a result, she is eager to display her baby to the neighborhood. Her insistence that I accompany her to introduce the baby to the community is a gesture that resonates with Frazier’s (1942) classic study of Afro-Brazilian families in Bahia, where he notes that when babies were born lighter and with “white” features they were strapped to the front of the mother’s chest. In contrast, those with stigmatized “black” features were hidden on mother’s back. The baby must be displayed and Damiana wastes no time to do so.

Public visibility and displays of the body are pursued or withheld based on racialized systems of valorization (Adelman and Ruggi 2008). In the hospital, Alberta of the Fernandes family recalls the joy of delivering her baby boy whose appearance was the talk of the entire maternity ward. She recalls,

Girl, Leo he was born with the perfect nose! I mean the perfect nose (She turns her head to show her profile and then slides her finger down the bridge of her nose and taps it at the end). All the nurses came to see and they all said he was born with the perfect nose. You should have seen it! Even now, my son has the perfect nose. (Alberta, 42 years old)

These acts of surveillance, display, visibility are not limited to childhood but can continue into adolescence, where a child’s racial appearance is a status symbol for a mother and father (Burdick 1998). For instance, Juliana is a 52 year-old mother who insists that her family be included in the study. She walks me over to a group of girls and eagerly introduces her teenage daughter Adrielle. While complimenting Adrielle’s light skin and eyes, she encourages me to stroke her daughter’s hair. Nearby stands a brown-skinned, wavy haired teenager with a lowered head and her hands folded across her chest. Though she is standing close enough to Juliana and Adrielle to suggest that they know each other, the girl is completely ignored. At the end of our conversation, as I am walking away, I inquire about who the young girl is and Juliana replies indifferently and with a swipe of her hand, “oh her, she’s my other daughter.” The
treatment of the two girls is markedly different and the dismissal of the daughter with the darker appearance helps to produce her racial stigma and reinforce her devalued status in the family.

For others, the importance of race and phenotype does not manifest in how mothers treat them, but rather in how they witness their mothers treating others. Liliane recalls,

My mother did not like pretos. She never lied about it to anyone. She thought the saddest thing in the world was for a black child to step foot in front of her. She would say “take it way, take it way”. She had children but she did not like pretos. If he is black, he is not a person, take him away. She did not like them. If I were to invite you to her house now, she would say, “Oooh, child you what a beautiful woman you are” stuff like that, hug you. But as soon as you left, [she would say] “You bring that black devil around here?” (Liliane, 48 years old, searching for a job)

The negative affect that this mother expresses towards the racial phenotype of black children is perceived by her offspring and given studies that suggest that negative affect impact siblings and children, this can potentially shape how they feel themselves and others (Larson and Almeida 1999; Stocker 2007). What this example illustrates is that family members learn the logic of phenotypic hierarchies not merely based on explicit comments about their bodies, but also through how families respond affectively to their surveillance of other bodies. It is important to note that in Liliane’s quote, not only is blackness devalued, but in addition, being black and dark-skinned (preto) makes one “not a person.” This statement is consistent with how historically phenotypic features racialized as black have been used as evidence to support racist arguments about the sub-humanity of Africans. Hence, interactions like these where a mother is witnessed rejecting preto non-biological children, help produce the stigma of racialized features. While the comments are not directed towards her own children, the mother’s affective aversion to others still conveys messages about racial and color hierarchies that her own children learn and reproduce.
4.3 Like a Good Neighbor

Racialized features are a point of comparison between siblings, and neighbors function as an extended family participating in racial socialization by policing racialized bodies, legitimating colorism, and (re)-producing racial stigma. As non-biological members of the family systems, their messages, behaviors and affective response have considerable ramifications for family members. Neighbors’ comments and their racial surveillance continue throughout the life course and can be the source of tremendous anxiety, particularly for mothers. A number of informants state that their phenotypically diverse family was the source of scrutiny and surveillance by neighbors:

“In my family there are only two people who do not have straight hair: my younger brother and sister. And this thing comes up when you have family portraits and people from the outside often ask, “Does everybody have the same dad?” We felt really uncomfortable because they often asked this.” (Deborah, 26 years old)

Similarly, while Damiana’s neighbors dote on the newborn baby, they also lament her unfortunate features:

“She’s beautiful. But you know you really have to do something about that nose (laughs) that wide nose (nariz achatado) of hers. You will definitely have to fix (afinar) that nose. You need to pinch it down. There’s no way around it.” (Everyone nods and laughs loudly) – (Marta, 34 years old)

The complimentary comment about the baby’s beauty is immediately undermined by advice about how to modify her problematic (black-looking) nose. For babies, racialized features are immediately identified, evaluated, and subject to modification. Once again, the value and meanings associated with racial features are naturalized so that comments that might normally be construed as insults are viewed as mere commonsense evaluations of objectively undesirable characteristics. Their loud laughter normalizes the comments and constructs them as non-racial despite their racist implications (Goldstein 1999). But the laughter also suggests that the statement might
have been sincerely stated in jest. As we are leaving the store, a male friend laughs as he tells her that she needs to buy a *pegador* clamp for the baby’s nose. As we exit the store, Damiana is still laughing and I ask whether or not she will buy a clamp for the baby’s nose. She replies as though the suggestion is preposterous, “No, Elizabete, there’s no way I’m going to buy a clamp for her nose … I’m just going to use my fingers!” I soon discover that the suggestion that the baby’s nose be pinched is not merely a joke.

At the risk of inhibiting the baby’s breathing, Damiana follows the advice of her friends and actually does engage in a ritual where she pinches and holds down the baby’s nostrils for a few seconds daily with the hopes that it will become thinner.

Damiana’s young daughter, Regane, reports this practice to me in a private interview. As she describes the process to me, she uses her own nose to illustrate what the ritual involves, pinching down her nostril and using her free hand to count to five. She says that her mother does this several times a day and Regane has decided to confide in me because she is afraid that the baby cannot breathe and that her mother might be hurting her baby sister.

Damiana’s decision to participate in the ritual is not based on mere individual preferences, but instead it is connected to an entire system of social rules that requires mothers to discipline the bodies of their children based on race, gender, and phenotype (Fanon 1952; Pinho 2006). She receives reinforcement to engage in the nose-pinching rituals from her family and friend. Moreover, her neighbors’ comments frames her decision to participate in the ritual as a question of being a good mother. Her neighbors suggest the ritual is important not only to eliminate these stigmatized racial features but they also remind her that when a child is born with stigmatized features that “a mother has to take care of it.” Researchers have provided extensive evidence suggesting that mothers are routinely blamed for problems or difficulties that a baby has (Blum 2007; Arendell 2000). Here a wide nose is a problem that as a mother Damiana must correct.
The practice of modifying the nose is reported as a practice that mothers are both aware of and participate in in four other families. They explain the logic of the ritual stating that babies have skin that is more pliable and flexible so that pinching serves as a type of “conditioning” that can reshape it. In other families, modifying the nose is not simply a process involving pinching the nose with a finger but it involves a more extreme process with fire:

“I remember my mom doing this to my sisters. She would light a small candle and warm her fingers over the flame and then she would pinch the baby’s nose and hold it. They said it would correct the nose. Who wants a wide nose? I remember the women, our neighbors would shout to us from their windows: “Don’t forget to pinch her [the baby’s] nose!” (Tais, 49 years old retired teacher)

Engagement in this dangerous practice reflects the embodiment of race and embeddedness of notions of racial stigma in family practices. The purported success stories that are discussed among the women are considered reasonable motivations for at least trying to modify this feature. As Marta, a light-skinned woman with two daughters informs Damiana,

“I have two children and I did it and my mom did it to all of us so they wouldn’t have o nariz que o boi pisou (a nose that the bull stepped on).” (Marta, 34 years old)

Neighborly advice to refine or correct the nose reminds mothers that their children’s’ bodies are on display. As well, framing the ritual as a corrective practice constructs a broad nose as a legitimate problem that needs to be fixed and forces a mother to act so that she is not viewed as neglectful. The neighbors’ interventions offer socialization message that support the legitimacy of the ritual and perpetuate hegemonic whiteness.

While core families often interact with their neighbors more than their own extended families, members of the biological extended families also provide comments and suggestions that are consistent with the type of racial socialization that family
members receive from neighbors. Lidia recalls her father interacting with his grandchildren in ways that transmitted ideas about racial hierarchy and phenotype:

“My father God bless him, he cannot stand to see a nose ... My sister has a big nose and she got it from my father but he has a big nose that is kind of narrow (filado). My father talks so much about it that he seems to be racist. He forgets that he is black! We tell him, “Dad you are black you just have light skin. Do you remember your dad’s nose? Your dad had a nose it was flat and your daughter got it from him and got it from you. Your nose is narrow (filado) but it is enormous.” When a grandchild is born he says, hey look he’s going to clean the race, clean the race. And when he says it we let him have it. And we say, “Don’t laugh and smile too much because when they are one year old and this color at 2 years old they end up ‘pretinho, pretinho’ (black, black).” This can only be to bother us. It’s not possible for him to be racist, right?” (Lidia, 54 years old, retired)

The notion of “cleaning the race” has elements of racial contamination, but also speaks to the notion that the race can be improved (McClintock 1995; Santos 2002; Skidmore 2003). In Salvador where families are more racially diverse and distant from a white somatic image, socialization practices develop with the goal of (re)-positioning oneself on the phenotypic continuum. While whiteness may not be attainable, a phenotype that approximates the image of morenidade is increasingly popular (Sansone 2003).

Morenidade is considered a more attainable approximation of Western whiteness characterized by light brown skin and soft brown hair that bounces. Researchers argue that the idea of morenidade is simply an updated version of mestiçagem which uses the allure of racial mixture as a way to either eliminate blackness or value only acceptable versions of blackness that are closer to the white somatic norm (Nascimento 2003).

While a nose is viewed as correctable, other babies are born with features that are viewed as unsalvageable. Dona Vera, a 68-year-old black woman describes the birth of her daughter, whose nickname is Neguinha (translated as Blackie or little black one):

When Neguinha was born she was totally black, I mean really black. When I came home from the hospital and her father saw her he said, ‘Ugh! Where did you get that black baby? Take her back!’ (Mrs. Vera laughs) – (Vera, 68 years old, retired)
The delivery of a very dark-skinned baby dampens a normally joyous occasion. Though both parents describe their race and color as black (negro and preto, respectively), their child’s even darker appearance leads to a negative affective response. Laughter is used again to deflect the husband’s repulsion, a response that is consistent with his internalization of the broader meanings and values attached to a very dark skin color. From birth, their daughter Neguinha has been exclusively referred to by her nickname to the extent that very few community members even know her legal name. At the age of 37, her skin color comes to define a large part of her identity.

4.4 Mama’s Baby is Daddy’s Maybe

As mentioned, mothers are often considered ‘to blame’ when children are born with devalued racialized features. In fact, Western societies more broadly “hold mothers responsible for child outcomes and thus for the health of families, future citizens, and the nation” (Blum 2007: 202). Blame for a child’s phenotype is closely connected to the honor/shame complex where a women’s sexuality is embraced, yet monitored for its adherence to sexist rules of behavior (Pitt-Rivers 1977). In Brazil, women are framed as more sensual, particularly in comparison to women of other nationalities (Gregg 2003). But a woman’s sexuality is labeled as “good” as long as it is expressed after she leaves the home of her father and as long as it is limited to the confines of marriage (deMatta 1985; Gregg 2003). In the same way, wombs are good or clean as long as they produce a baby with light or white features. Women are then not only defined by their sexuality but are also judged and defined (as good or bad) based on the racial product of their sexuality (Sarti 1995). And even still, a mother (and her child) may suffer from intense sexual stigma or considered “sexually suspect” if the offspring’s appearance is not consistent with expectations (Rebhun 1999: 159).¹

¹ This shares unexpected connections to mothers of children with disabilities who feel as those they share in the stigma of their disabled child (Blum 2007).
Corina provides a narrative of how her in-laws responded to the racial appearance of her unborn child and she described the material consequences of her son bearing a racialized feature: black ears.²

“You know that when a baby is born it is sometimes born dark (pretinho) with really dark ears. The day his grandmother came to see him [her son], his mom, she asked, “Why does my grandson have these black ears?” And I say, “Because in my family there are morenos, my grandfather is preto. This comes from my family. My daughter is morena because she got it from my mother’s side of my family.” They thought he was someone else’s son because he was born with black ears. I guess she was used to seeing white ears I don’t know. (laughs) I didn’t understand. The first thing that she said in the hospital when she saw my son she said, “Why are his ears black?” She was angry about his ears. So he [my partner] waited for 2 years to register him.” (Corina, 56 years old)

In Corina’s situation, the child was born lighter, but his dark ears carried the suggestion that he might actually grow up to be darker. Her partner in an effort to save face with his family decides not to officially recognize the child as his own which stigmatizes both the baby and the mother. Corina expresses her sense of relief when her partner decides to give her a “dignified name” once he decides to marry her and recognize their son. Her name is considered “dignified” because her partner challenged her honor when he decided not to recognize their son. For Corina’s moral and economic status is jeopardized by the suspicions created by the baby’s racial appearance.

Similar to Corina, Dona Vera’s situation involves similar sexual suspicion when her baby girl arrives,

“The first thing people look at is the color to see if the baby looks like anyone in the father’s family. This one right here his mother (pointing to her grandson) he was born really really white. And his family said, “Ah no, it’s not possible! It is not possible, this girl right here is not yours.” But as she got older she became darker, darker, and darker…”(Dona Vera, 68 years old)

When a baby is delivered, the features are immediately evaluated and racial features are a particular source of suspicion. Even in Dona Vera’s case, a baby that is too light can also be viewed with suspicion. Dona Vera’s experience suggests that even when a

² Candelario (2007) explores the notion of “black behind the ears” as a phrase that suggests that a person has hints of black heritage.
woman produces a baby with an appearance that is considered racially or
phenotypically desirable, a mother’s sexual fidelity is brought into question, particularly
if the child does not match expectations. Hence, mothers are subject to stresses and
anxieties over features that they have no control over and these examples illustrate that
they can have economic and social consequences, impacting how much financial
support a woman receives from her child’s father and social recognition by the father
and his family.

4.5 Racial Roulette and Sibling Rivalry

Parental favoritism of children based on phenotype, as evidenced above with
Juliana can be the source of life-long, strained sibling relationships. Using the family
systems paradigm, differential affective responses of a mother to racialized features can
be learned by other family members and impact sibling sub-systems, as it “predicts the
quality of sibling interactions, relationships and adjustment” (Volling 1997: 228; c.f.
Volling & Belsky 1992; Stocker 1995; Larson and Almeida 1999). While these studies
have typically related differential treatment to age and birth order, phenotypic
differences may also be the basis of differential treatment.

For Regane (self-classified as morena and hesitantly as negra), a precocious 9-year
old girl, hearing her mother’s dreams of having a white baby with straight hair leads to
a series of behavioral changes. Regane begins to neglect her hygiene, refusing to comb
or wash her hair at all. Her mother punishes her by roughly combing her hair outside
on the porch while loudly exclaiming, “I hope the baby’s hair isn’t like this!” For
Regane who is already teased by neighborhood kids for having nappy hair, she is
deeply embarrassed. The importance of hair-combing interactions between daughters
and mothers as a source of racial socialization has been well documented (Lewis 1999).
Her mother’s constant comments about the hair of the white women who appear on
television makes Regane even more self-conscious about her hair and this exacerbates
her negative feelings. In an act of defiance and self-affirmation, Regane ties a tattered piece of long orange cloth around her head and pretends to have long straight hair, but she must run from neighborhood kids who eventually manage to snatch it off.

Damiana chuckles as she informs me that upon seeing the newborn baby for the first time, “Regane cried all day.” This is potentially a quite natural response to the uncertainty of how a younger sister might impact family dynamics, particularly in light of studies that emphasize differential treatment based on age (Stocker 1995). However, Regane’s interview clarifies that her concerns are rooted in a specific issue:

Elizabeth: “What happened yesterday? How does it feel to have a sister?
Regane: (pause, looks down) … “I ran in the house and cried all day.”
Elizabeth: Why did you cry?
Regane: Because I am afraid of losing the love of my parents. (whimpers)
Elizabeth: Why do you think this will happen?
Regane: (looks at me incredulously) Because of the baby! You saw her didn’t you?! She was born limpinha [clean] and with straight hair. I’m afraid they will love her more … her hair won’t give them as much trouble… Everybody is saying it. She will get everything and I’ll have nothing.” (She then covers her face with her hands and sobs)

Even as a young girl, Regane understands the value of racialized features and how readings of her skin color and hair texture may lead to differential affective treatment in her family. Her reference to the baby’s light skin as “limpinha,” or clean illustrates that she has also internalized the conflation of whiteness with cleanliness. Her fears that she will be compared to the baby are substantiated when she hears her mother agree with a family friend that, “at least the baby’s hair didn’t turn out like hers.”

Regane refuses to talk and is inconsolable for days. Weeks after the birth, she resents the baby and monitors any changes in her baby’s sister skin color and hair texture based on her mother’s peculiar assurances, “Don’t worry, she’ll get darker.” But, Regane does worry and these anxieties begin to shape how she interacts with her sister. Her mother’s assurances implicitly suggest that if the baby does not become darker then there will be reason for her to worry. The echoes of several influences including her mother’s racialized desires for the new baby, her mother’s emphasis on her own beautiful straight
hair, taunts by the neighborhood kids, and the images of *gente bonita* plastered on the streets, magazines, and television are all powerful forces against which Regane attempts to construct her sense of self. The idea that her younger sister might approximate the idealized white somatic appearance is both scary and anxiety-inducing for Regane.

4.6 She’s just my (pheno)Type!: Romantic Love

“Sometimes they are really attracted to each other. Sometimes they are not even looking at color. Sometimes there is chemistry and they become involved with each other. There is chemistry between a man and a woman. You know opposites attract and that is it. Or it may even be a coincidence. But many times, I think it is about status. As though a white woman represents status.” (Alberto, 48 years old, janitor)

Researchers have long been interested in questions of sex and romantic pairings in Brazil, particularly the question of how racial politics influence these relationships (Goldstein 1999; Telles 2004; Petrucelli 2001). The question of affect in these relationships is not merely a question for those directly involved in the relationship, but it also includes how the rest of the family responds to romantic pairings. Consider the following example:

Vanessa: My family on my mom’s side is racist. My mom is not because she married a black man, right? But they [my family] are prejudiced. For example, they didn’t want my mother to marry my dad because he is black.
Paulo: She [Vanessa] went to introduce me to her grandmother and I sensed it.
Vanessa: I didn’t say anything to him about it. I hadn’t said anything. But you know when my grandmother saw pictures of him she said he is a moreno bonito, bonitinho (cute). Well, if he were white she would have said, “Wow, he is beautiful (lindo)!”
Paulo: [She would have said] What a beautiful man (*homem lindo*)!
Vanessa: But she did not say what a nice looking black man or what a nice-looking moreno.
Paulo: She said “he is a little cute one” (*ele é bonitinho*), it is always in the diminutive. You are always less.
Vanessa: I really like my grandmother and my godmother.
Paulo: Look, I like your grandmother too but she is really racist. (*laughter*)

In this example, Vanessa notices how the interactions between her partner and family clearly illustrate that her family is unhappy with her choice of a partner and views him as less ideal than a white partner and perhaps “less” overall. Both are aware of how references to appearance while seemingly positive are used to make subtle racial slights...
without explicitly referencing race and seeming racist. Their emphasis on the use of the diminutive and the importance of the construction of words is relevant in Brazil where slight changes in words are tied to significant differences in meanings (Sansone 2003).

For Liliane, her family’s reaction to her boyfriend is disgust because as she states: “For them he was ugly, he was black (preto).” The stigmatization of racialized features and negative affect can be used to control the actions of family members (Peterson & Leigh 1990; Henry et al 1987). In Liliane’s family as well as others there is a standard agreement that the ideal partner is not be someone that has three strikes against them: “preto, pobre e feio” (poor, black, and ugly). Though these are stated as independent characteristics for many families the terms are understood to be essentially synonymous.

Similarly, Laila reports that:

In my family, the majority of people are black. I was told I could not date a negro, I had to date a branquinho. But I fell in love with my boyfriend and he is negro. He is beautiful and he is black. I got home and I introduced him to my mom and my grandmother. My mom loved him. It was not her it was my older aunt who said “ok” with a look of disgust. She waited for him to leave and then she said, “Oh Laila you left milk to be with coffee with milk?” And I said, “Yes its because I discovered that coffee with milk is better than plain milk. I discovered that coffee with milk is much better than just milk.” Her response, “You disgrace.” And I said, “A disgrace is a person who does not realize that it is not a person’s color or their job that matters it is who the person really is.” (Laila, 23 years old)

Despite being part of a family where “the majority of people are black,” Laila is socialized to avoid black partners because she is very light-skinned with long hair. This is why she experiences backlash from her older family members who are disappointed and confused about her decision to date a negro. She is called a disgrace not only because she does not agree with their racist views, but because she articulates a forceful counter argument that is evocative of black male sexuality. Her statement strongly challenges her aunt’s devalorization of her partner, but also has traces of reinforcing essentialist notions of Black hypersexuality, the vulgarity of which may only function to exacerbate the already negative views that she has of Laila’s partner based on race.
4.6.1 Race and Romance

Romantic relationships do not exist separately from the social structure in which they occur. In documenting how race and racial phenotype impact romantic relationships, researchers argue that whiteness is used as a valuable commodity or “symbolic capital” that can be exchanged for love, fidelity or economic security (Harris 2009: 3). For dark-skinned women and those whose bodies do not conform to traditional beauty norms, they have much less “symbolic capital” to exchange and in a patriarchal society and this can have social, emotional, and material outcomes (Hunter 2005). For this reason, romantic exchanges have often been framed as occurring between wealthy Black men and white women. Consider the following from Sonia,

“Like this, today you see a big business owner who is negro. He is not going to marry a negra. He is going to marry a white woman and why would a white woman marry him? Because it’s obvious, he has money and he is a business owner because if he were like this black without money she would not marry him. Her? She is beautiful, blonde, white, you think she is going to marry him? I think in situations like that, that is not love. And him, he is prejudiced against himself. Her, well it is not that she is not prejudice. I think it is very rare for a white woman to fall in love with a black man. It happens yes with many, but it is rare but mainly if he has money. Because nowadays money really does count, right?”

Both women and men who are interviewed cited interracial relationships between wealthy black men and blonde women as examples of racism, portraying these romantic relationships as superficial negotiations of economic status and whiteness. Narratives or experiences related to relationships involving black women and white men are particularly rare. Given research that suggests women exchange their beauty for status, black women’s location on the beauty hierarchy almost immediately eliminates them from these exchanges unless the black woman is considered exceptionally beautiful or exceptionally talented (Burdick 1998; Hunter 2005). In case she falls in this exceptional category, she may be able to exchange her beauty/talent for whiteness or status.
This is perhaps the case of Marcia and David. Marcia is a very dark-skinned woman who is married to a very light-skinned man who refers to her as a *Negona*. Their relationship is among one of only four married couples that I meet in which the wife is significantly darker than the husband. David explains that he loves *Negonas* and highlights that Marcia has two college degrees in chemistry and sociology. David is very proud of his wife often bragging about her education and credentials. Meanwhile, he works as a janitor in the elementary school. In this example, it is impossible to completely attribute the marriage to social exchange, but the individual attributes of each partner provide the ideal example of how social exchange might function in a relationship.

Cecilia’s black sister, Gabriela similarly believes she can engage in a similar exchange based on her exceptional beauty, but ends up disappointed:

“I have a sister who is negra. She went to work in a store where she was hired on the spot. The owner of this store liked her but she told him that she was just interested in the experience. He was a black man and had a beautiful color. But she was also pretty, I mean really pretty, very pretty face, you should have seen her. To go forward in her career, she depended on him. He fell in love with her. He was *preto*, so that was the end of that. She ended up meeting a manager of one of his stores who was my color, not even, he was not white … She chose him because of his color. I am certain of it she did not even have to say it. She has had boyfriends that were bank managers. Why did she choose him? It wasn’t passion. Now she is suffering. She was a virgin when she met him, ended up pregnant and found out he was already married. Now she is fat and cannot afford to get in shape. I think the worse thing in the world for a person is the pain of regret.” (Gabriela, 37 years old)

In this case Gabriela could have exchanged her attractiveness for a relationship with a well-to-do black owner of several stores. Instead, she pursues the much lighter but less wealthy manager who engages in a sexual relationship with her. When she discovers that she has lost her virginity and becomes pregnant from a married man she is devastated. The pregnancy signals that she has lost both her moral reputation and her status (Gregg 2000). While her beauty might have been exchanged for status, she was
manipulated and lost both. Now that “she is fat and cannot afford to get in shape,” the likelihood of her exchanging her good looks has significantly decreased.

The social exchanges that occur within the context of an interracial relationship are not governed only by questions of beauty and economic status. They can become complicated negotiations that involve exchanges of beauty and whiteness for loyalty (Burdick 1998; Telles 2004). In the example below, a black partner provides unconditional love to his lighter partner even after he finds out she cheated on him and one of their children is from another man. His daughter tells his story,

“For years I thought that my dad was a fool, he lived with her like he was her slave for years. But he did not want to separate from her. He was so in love with her. She was light with very long black hair. He was very much in love. And my brothers none of them are married to black women. Even though they are unhappy and they complain about their lives, at least she is white.” (Liliane, 44 years old)

Liliane’s suggestion that her father was his mother’s “slave” offers a persuasive metaphor of how beauty can be exchanged for “greater diligence, devotion, class status or other benefits provided by the dark spouse” (Telles 2004: 231). Her father’s love of light-skinned women has also influenced his sons who Liliane suggests tolerate being mistreated and unhappy in exchange for the status that being married to white women affords them. Different from black men who rely on economic status as a good that can be exchanged in the marriage market, black women have much less “symbolic capital” available. Given how both patriarchy and racism function, they have much fewer options for marriage or commitment, even while they are viewed as ideal sexual partners. In the tourist areas in Salvador, such as Pelourinho it is very common to observe very dark-skinned Afro-Brazilian women with white, European men. Marcio explains this phenomenon stating, “For black women, for them to have an opportunity it has to be with a foreigner. Foreigners love black women.” In these relationships, a black woman’s exceptional attractiveness may be attached to her being viewed as an
exotic Other. While long-term marriages may result, these relationships tend to be casual sexual relationships.

4.7 Discussion

In families, women including mothers, daughters, and extended female family members are central to practices of racial socialization that involve the surveillance and evaluation of gendered and racialized bodies. As Hill (2002) suggests, racialized features including skin color, hair texture, hair color, eye color, etc have “more bearing” for women than for men. They are more important because women are judged based on their appearance, and also because society frames mothers as responsible for their offspring’s health and racial appearance. Struggling with two sets of hegemonic systems, female caregivers and family members are left to negotiate being policed and policing others through racial socialization. But they often do so implicitly rather than explicitly through conversations about their racial anxieties and insecurities, evaluations of the appearance of family members and neighbors, and active surveillance of other bodies, which convey the values of the dominant racial hierarchies. Their practices of racial socialization, affective responses to racialized features, and discursive associations that valorize whiteness illustrate that racial socialization and racialization are mutually constituting. The examples in this chapter show how family (broadly framed as biological and non-biological) serves as an intermediary institution connecting structure (ideology and hierarchy) and interactions through affective responses and discursive messages. Families not only help construct race, but are actively involved in producing and minimizing racial stigma.

Affective responses, verbal messages, and concrete practices all have a decisively gendered element. The parental anxieties that are discussed in the beginning of the chapter are best described as maternal anxieties, as the responsibility for children fall squarely on the shoulders of women. When mothers (and other important family
actors) respond negatively to racialized features, this affect can be internalized and/or shape future interactions within the family system (Larson and Almeida 1999).

Critiques by other women serve as the impetus for or reinforcement of practices that manage the racial appearance of their children. While under surveillance themselves, mothers both monitor their children’s racialized bodies; meanwhile, their affective responses to their offspring’s phenotype serve as a reflection of internalized hierarchies and their sense of responsibility for them (Candelario 2007). In all families except one, the father only plays a secondary role in children’s upbringing and racial socialization. Fathers, however, make their presence known as evaluators of a mother’s racial product and as the protector of a mother’s perceived fidelity, which he determines in part by the racial phenotype of the child.

Gender also plays a significant role in the reference groups that mothers and siblings use for self-comparison. While the majority of families have sons or male cousins in the family, racial and phenotypic comparisons are normally expressed as within-gender comparisons between female siblings, cousins, friends, and neighbors. Even when brothers are phenotypically different from sisters, these differences are rarely mentioned. Theories of social comparisons suggest people are more likely to compare themselves to similar others though there is some agency in determining who these similar others are (Rosenburg 1986). In this study, women view each other in complex ways as collaborators, competitors, and evaluators.

While mothers are central to socialization processes, I focus on a wide array of family relationships: mother-child, father-child, sibling, extended family (non-biological and biological), as well as romantic relationships. I highlight this broad range of relationships in order to reveal the pervasiveness of hegemonic whiteness and its ability to infiltrate the spaces that are considered sacred and safe. Evaluations of racialized characteristics emerge at various stages of family relationships. In these families,
phenotypic characteristics can be exchanged for affection or experiences that foster positive affect. Similarly, in romantic relationships there are numerous negotiations and social exchanges that occur in which phenotype functions as “symbolic capital” that can be exchanged for the promise of love, loyalty, and status. The intersection of hegemonic notions of beauty/status, race, and gender means that racially unambiguous looking black women are severely disadvantaged in these romantic negotiations (Hunter 2005; Thompson & Keith 2001).

Overall, the findings suggest that in families light skin tone is not a “neutral standard, but something that functions as a symbol of status in Brazilian society;” it is elusive but still aspired to (Pinha 2009: 40). Beyond providing confirmation of this conclusion, I illustrate how affective responses and verbal messages transmit ideas of racial hierarchy that focus on skin color, but also give meaning to hair texture, hair color, and nose shape. In addition to explicit and implicit socialization messages, as well as overt sibling comparisons based on phenotype, the language of racial difference is a more subtle and effective strategy of transmitting the value system of a racial hierarchy. The use of the terms or phrases including: “barriga suja” (dirty womb), “limpinha” (clean), limpando a raça (cleaning the race), gente bonita (beautiful people), or even the use of the diminutive form to describe the attractiveness of a black person all serve to conflate whiteness with cleanliness and goodness. On the other side of this dichotomy is the association of blackness with contamination. These discursive constructions illustrate the normalization of a hegemonic discourse that inherently valorizes whiteness and devalues blackness. The naturalization of these terms lends itself to an evaluation of racialized features that is seemingly objective, but is embedded in racial hierarchy. Moreover, the development of a ritual designed to correct a wide nose shows the power of hegemonic discourses and racial hierarchies to shape parenting strategies and behaviors. Even the term “chato” which is used to describe a wide or a broad nose (nariz
*chato* is used colloquially to also refer to a person or event that is boring or overall disagreeable. In this way, racial hierarchies are embedded in the language itself.

In conclusion, we know little about how racial socialization and racialization processes function together and few studies have examined both the positive and negative affective sentiments that can be associated with racial socialization in families. Evidence here presents compelling data that hegemonic whiteness and patriarchy work together to stigmatize racial bodies in ways that have differential consequences for mothers and daughters vis-à-vis fathers and sons. While the hands of mothers are responsible for disciplining racialized and gendered bodies and mothers are the actors who engage most visibly in differential treatment, it is critical to re-emphasize that mothers act within the constraints of hegemony. In fact, many act with the desire to “help” their offspring and not hurt them, particularly because phenotypic capital may translate into economic and social mobility (Telles 2004; Hunter 2005).

In a tearful plea for others to understand some of the difficult decisions that she has made regarding her children, Gloria states:

“People just don’t know how hard it is to be a black woman. People don’t understand the decisions that we have to make. We do what we have to do. We do the best we can but nobody understands.” (Gloria, 63 years old)

The complexities of their decisions and actions should be situated in the context of the racist and sexist society in which they live. For these mothers, their differential affective responses to racialized features and their participation in rituals to modify racialized features can be re-interpreted as logical and perhaps even as limited resistance or agency in a society that uses the racialized and gendered body as tool of power and oppression. To the provocative question posed in the title of this chapter, “What’s love got to do with it?” This research suggests that in families, there is love … BUT what love looks like often depends on what you look like.
5. Black and “Blue”: Racial Stigma and Wellbeing

“We cannot value ourselves rightly without first breaking through the walls of denial, which hide the depth of black self-hatred, inner anguish, and unreconciled pain” (hooks 1992: 20)

“When my father would come over he would ask me how I was doing and I would start to cry because my mother mistreated me. Psychologically, I don’t know why I didn’t go crazy. This is really interesting. Because today if you were to analyze things everything that you say to a person if you compliment one without complimenting the other it creates trauma. It creates trauma. It creates trauma so I think it has to be equal.” (Corina, 56 years old)

In a white supremacist and patriarchal society where Afro-Brazilians are constantly inundated with normalized racist images, messages, invisibility, structural inequality, and experience differential treatment at home based on phenotype, the emotional and psychological toll can be significant. In this chapter, I address how the unequal distribution of affection, differential treatment in families, and racial experiences impact subjective well being. In this study, well being is evaluated based on an analysis of informants’ statements and narratives related to their sense of belonging, self-esteem, psychological distress, and traumatic experiences.

5.1 Incog-negro: Abandoning Blackness

In her work discussing the process through which black women negotiate their racial identity in Brazil, Caldwell (2007) cites work by Moura (1994) that documents how negative racial socialization within families can lead to an “alienating symbolic reality” and “identity fragmentation” (113). While Caldwell (2007) mentions that these experiences can lead a woman to actively assume a black identity, they can also lead both women and men to pursue a trajectory of racial distance and abandonment of one’s own family and even children.
The Pereira family is composed of a father and three sisters all of whom are dark-skinned, unambiguously black, and identify as negros. Tania and her sisters recall that their father abandons them, in part, because of their race:

My father was really bad. Just horrible! He drank a lot … When my mother died, he started staying out late with a lot of different women. As little as we were, little girls, he left us at home by ourselves. He decided to marry one of the white women he was dating, so he split us up and gave us away to other families so he could have children with her. I was six years old … the new family treated me like a slave. He didn’t take care of us but he took care of his new white family.

In this example, the pursuit of forming a white or whiter family leads a father to abandon his three black daughters. If it is unclear whether race and color differences are the driving force behind his abandonment, they are convinced of it when they observe him with his lighter-skinned grandkids praising them by pointing and saying, “Look, now he’s limpando a raça (cleaning the race)!” For these sisters, differential treatment based on phenotype and their father’s desire to form a whiter family impacts their sense of self-worth, but also leads to years of vulnerability and abuse.

As a result of their father’s abandonment, Tania and her two sisters are given away and endure several years of exploitation, physical, and emotional abuse as “filhas de criação” (raised daughters) in “adoptive” homes. This practice is not uncommon, particularly in the Northeast of Brazil. As raised daughters, Afro-Brazilian girls are informally adopted and raised in homes of wealthier (often white or lighter) families where they provide labor in exchange for food and shelter (Twine 1998; Fonseca 2002).1 Tania is sent to live with a wealthy couple, Benedita and Antonio, who are married with no children. Rebeca is “adopted” by a married couple that has a toddler, a young baby, and plans for more children. When she first enters her new home, Tania is asked to call her new family members aunt and uncle; similarly, Rebeca is asked to call the matriarch in her family godmother. The naming process is an important step in their socialization,

1 In Twine’s (1998) work the term criada is used to describe young girls who are informally adopted in Rio de Janeiro. In Bahia, they are more commonly referred to as “filhas de criação” (Fonseca 2002).
because it creates the impression that they are full members of the family. However, they soon learn that these names are given to create the illusion of family, rather than to indicate their actual status in the family. For example, when Tania is asked to provide details about her childhood as a *filha de criação*, she states:

“The truth is … if I were to speak honestly I did not have a childhood, I did not have an adolescence. I considered myself an adult ever since I was a child because of the type of life we had. [I did] everything, everything, everything! I washed, ironed, cooked, cleaned, and went grocery shopping.” (Tania, 54 years old)

Tania rattles off the list of responsibilities effortlessly, vividly recalling the hefty tasks that were assigned to her as a 9 year old. She recalls that her responsibilities began immediately upon her arrival in the home and were all-encompassing, leaving little time for enjoyable activities. She recalls being required to go to school but only because her aunt disliked uneducated people (and *negros*, as I would later learn). Hence, Tania’s education is encouraged not because it considered a right but because her aunt prefers that the people who surround her be educated. Even though schooling provides opportunities for both education and socializing, Tania is required to come straight home after school and is prohibited from having friends or dating well into adulthood.

Elaborating on her feeling of having lost her childhood, Rebeca, Tania’s older sister describes in detail that she is required to raise her host family’s children at the age of 10 years old. She states,

“I wanted to study and my godmother didn’t really let me. She didn’t want me to do my homework. She would say, ‘This house is full of ‘normalistas‘ (students). She was trying to say that we weren’t working. But we did everything and she didn’t do anything and that house was big wasn’t it? She taught school and left everything for us to do. Back then Anastacia was a baby and Anastacia’s mom said, “No, you are only going to school only once you have put Anastacia to sleep.” So, I went to school after I put Anastacia to sleep. If she didn’t go to sleep, I didn’t go to school. My responsibilities were to take care of them [Anastacia and her brother]. They slept with me. I woke up in the middle of the night to give them *mengão*. When Anastacia cried during the night I had to get up to warm her up a bottle. [Her mother] She slept. It was me who had to get up. I was an adult-child (criança-adulto). I went all around Salvador with Rafael and Anastasia and I had to do it all.”
Not only is education viewed as a privilege rather than a right for Rebeca, but she is also socialized to prioritize servitude over her basic education. As she prepares the older children for school by bathing them, dressing them, and doing their hair, she remains uncertain about whether she will be allowed to go to school. In Burton’s (1997) review of inconsistent role expectations within economically disadvantaged families, she notes “a pattern in high-risk communities concerns inconsistent expectations between parents and social institutions regarding the role of children and teens” (213). The life circumstances of Tania and Rebeca reflect the extreme manifestations of this reality as they are expected to be obedient and docile at home and school, while they simultaneously adopt adult roles as caregivers for children and responsible for the upkeep of an entire house.

In biological families that are high-risk, researchers notes that these experiences often lead to a “premature transition to adulthood,” but they also implicitly suggest that siblings take on these responsibilities to help their struggling families out of concern for their young siblings (Burton 1997: 214). However, for both Tania and Rebeca, their inconsistent role expectations emerge in a middle class environment in families where mothers or adult could intervene, but choose not to do so. In particular, Rebeca laments having to negotiate competing role expectations, and is visibly angry as she recounts how she sacrifices her childhood raising Anastacia and Rafael, as their mother rests soundly at night.

When asked to speak about the specific ways that she is treated differently, Rebeca focuses on her extensive list of domestic chores:

“I had to clean the apartment. Sometimes at night after Rafael went to sleep. I had to clean the bathroom. When it was time to sleep I was cleaning the bathroom. We would have to wake up at 4 or 4:30 in the morning to carry water, clean the house, clean up after the dog, and everything else. It was me and Tania when we lived closed to each other.”
Rebeca resents having to fetch and carry huge barrels of water as a child. She recounts how she and her sister crossed several streets, very early in the morning to bring water from a community well so that the family would have water for baths and cooking. Rebeca is particularly perturbed when she recalls that though everyone needed the water, the adults slept or sat on the porch watching as the girls took several grueling trips to the well to retrieve water. Moreover, despite providing water, everyone else bathed first and only if there was enough water left, were the young girls were allowed to bathe, as well.

In contrast, for Tania, the emotional and affective realm is what she focuses on when she is asked to explain the differential treatment that she experiences. For Tania, narratives about her life de-emphasize her labor at home and rather revolve heavily around her experiences of isolation, her feelings of extreme sadness, and abuse. She states,

“You feel the distance in the way that you’re treated, the way you are insulted and humiliated. All of this stays with you. Humiliation in front of other people, cursing at me, hitting me … it really leaves you with your face on the floor. What stands out most are the things that were said. The words, the insults like “find your lowly position,” “tramp”, phrases [like] “you have nothing”, “you will never have anything”. You realize that you are really property. I can beat my property, I can ask it to do anything, I can do anything to it.”

Tania’s chilling statement that she is “property” illustrates how her personhood is undermined, her desires are irrelevant, and her existence is merely to serve others. This resonates with why scholars have linked this practice to slavery (Twine 1998). Quite different from her sister, Rebeca, who is called an “ingrate” by the family because she leaves the family after she becomes engaged, Tania continues to live with her “aunt”

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2 Original Portuguese: “A gente sente a distancia na maneira de tratar, a maneira de ofender, de humilhar, tudo isso fica. De humilhar em frente de outros, de me xingar, de me bater... e deixar você assim com a cara no chão mesmo. Marcante eram as coisas ditas, as palavras, as humilhações, procura sua baixa posição vagabunda, frases, sabe da frente de outras ... você não tem nada, não vai ter nada. Percebe que você é uma propriedade mesma. Na minha propriedade posso bater, posso pedir, posso fazer qualquer coisa.”
Benedita. In this way, Tania’s narratives of violence, abuse, and exploitation are perhaps even more devastating because she has endured this relationship for over four decades.

Throughout our interview, Tania works to resolve the contradictions of being told that she is an “adoptive daughter” and feeling/bein treated as though she were a maid. This leads Tania to bitterly reflect,

“I didn’t get anything for it. I did everything but I didn’t earn anything, nothing. I only got money to take the bus to school. I worked more than I rested. I felt like I was a maid. It wasn’t even the fact of having to do everything around the house. It was the difference in how I felt. We had a conversation and she said: “You are not my maid, I do not pay you a salary.” What’s the difference? (pause) The difference is that I was working to pay for food and the money to catch the bus to school. That’s the only difference. Truth be told, it was an exchange. I paid. I did it for a place to live, school, the food that I ate, the clothes that I had, it wasn’t free, right? I paid with my work … and it was very well paid.”

Perversely, the lack of monetary compensation is deployed as evidence of her status as an authentic family member; and so, her tenuous family membership is mobilized to explain and justify her exploitation. It is not until Tania is 30 years old and she begins to work outside the home that she develops friendships. She works as a teacher during the day and returns home and continues her same domestic responsibilities for her “aunt”.

Tania reflects on her experience working in the school and recalls that it is the first time she feels that she has some importance and that people respect her. She states,

I was a different person, a totally different person outside of my house. Like this, one day I went to the bank to get money out of my account and the woman at the desk said my signature was too different that she wouldn’t normally accept the form. But, because she had seen me there before she allowed it. Girl, my handwriting had even started to change! (she chuckles) Even my handwriting was changing.

This freedom is only partial because she continues asking her aunt for permission to go out with her friends even after she is 30 years old. And even when she is given permission to see her friends they are not her own friends. Many are decades older than

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3 Original Portuguese: “Qual é a diferença? A diferença é que trabalhava para pagar comida e dinheiro para transporte a escola. A única diferença é essa… Na realidade, foi uma troca. Eu paguei eu fiz por onde morar, a escola, a comida que comi, as roupas que eu tinha, não é de graça. Pagava com meu trabalho … é muito bem pago.”
she is and were introduced to her by her aunt precisely because they would be unlikely to “put idea’s in [her] head” about leaving. As a result, Tania subversively rejects being called an adoptive daughter in public and refuses to forget the pain that is inflicted on her. She states,

“It’s very easy to open your mouth and say: “She is my adoptive daughter”. But you’re not treated as a daughter. I think that to feel that you have to feel affection. You have to receive affection, get attention, like a daughter! I don’t feel that. I don’t feel it because you can’t change the way you think or the way you see the things that happened to you and what you heard and then place a cloth on top of it and say, “No, she is my daughter.”

Once Tania begins working and saving money from her job as a teacher, economic dependency is no longer a constraining factor. However, the sense of debt and moral responsibility to her aunt significantly shape her actions. She does not leave even though she has the resources to do so. As an older woman in 2010, Tania finds herself confused, asking herself why she still remains with her “aunt”. She states,

“It’s like I am making decisions against myself. I don’t know why ... I’ve lost the best years of my life. I’m 50 years old and I still don’t have my freedom, but I don’t have the heart to leave her.”

Despite everything, she still remains forever tied to the person and family who she views as both the source of both her survival and bondage.

As mentioned, Rebeca manages to leave her “adoptive” family and marries. After stating that she never receives the respect that she is due for taking care of Anastacia and Rafael, she can only laugh as she reveals that the family called her years later for one more request. Rebeca recalls with an ironically sad smile that after she gave her childhood and adolescence to the family, “até o meu leite eu de” (I even gave them

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4 Original Portuguese: “É muito fácil abrir a boca e dizer assim: “É minha filha adotiva.” Mas você não está tratada como uma filha. Acho que para você sentir você tem que sentir carinho. Você tem que receber carinho... receber atenção. Como a filha! ... Eu não sinto... Você não pode mudar sua maneira de pensar, de ver as coisas que você passou que você ouviu e você botar um pano encima disso e dizer “Não, é MINHA FILHA ...”
my milk). She provided breast milk for a cousin of the family who delivered a premature baby and could not produce milk.

Apart from these sisters, the only other case where filhos de criação were sent away due to color and phenotypic difference is in Camila’s narrative about her mother’s life. Camila reports that her mother is sent away from her biological family because of her race. She explains,

“When she was 6 years old, they sent her to live with another family. You know what my mom was? Her father was Spanish and she was born with white skin. She couldn’t stay in the community where she lived because it was in a quilombo. So she went to live in another family to give the children in that family company. She lost the notion of what it meant to be black because she was not raised with blacks.” (Camila, 67 years old)

In the example, Camila’s mother is displaced based on her phenotype and goes to live as a playmate in a family with white children. Her mother does not choose to abandon blackness but perhaps it can be said that blackness abandons or expels her. Through this experience not only has her mother “lost the notion” of blackness, but Camila recalls her mother socializing her to avoid blacks and cultural practices that might convey her blackness. Camila eventually rejects the racial socialization that instructs her to distance herself from other blacks.

However, other informants provide accounts of knowing blacks who embrace an approach that does abandon blackness. Larissa, a 12 year old states,

A friend of mine was like that. A racist black person. She was black but she only liked whites. So much so that I was not very close with her. She felt rage at her own race, you see what I’m saying? My friend was like that. She would always say that she did not like her color, and no she did not like her color and she always said it. She was my color. She always hung out among white people and they accepted her. [Elizabeth: Where do you think she got these ideas?] I do not know. Sometimes it’s from your own family? We don’t talk anymore since she left school. You can often find blacks who do not like other blacks.

Examples like these were among the most common narratives that informants provided when asked to give an example of racism. Informants describe self-hating blacks as
suffering from shame and rage at their race (Sheriff 2001). Why the person mentioned above is framed as engaging in black-on-black racism and being self-hating, while those who express the desire to clean the race “limpar a raça,” engage in nose-modification, or practice differential treatment among phenotypically dissimilar offspring are not, will be discussed in the final chapter.

5.2 When Racial Roulette is Violent

As illustrated in chapter four and in the previous section of this chapter, violence in families can be symbolic and emotional and have long-lasting effects. At the same time, responses to racial stigma in families can also lead to physical violence. This violence is often directed at family members who are black or possess black-like features. As David describes with regards to his relationship with his brother,

“There was always tension. It’s always there between brothers, you know. But my father kicked my brother out of the house when he was only 12 years old and I think it had a lot to do with him being dark. They never got along. They always fought. My mother was white and my father was black. I don’t think he wanted dark children. He treated my brother very differently.”
(David, 36 years old)

When they were young, David reports they he and his brother Gabriel often would get punished for misbehaving, but his brother was also beaten and punished more harshly. This is why, he explains, they always fought. In this family, internalized racism leads a father to reject his darker son, which not only destroys both the parental and sibling relationships, but also has material and psychological consequences. David’s brother is now homeless, does not receive an education, and becomes involved with illegal activities. David links the beatings and the constant fighting to his father not wanting a black child. Not only is Gabriel physically punished more harshly, he struggles with the emotional consequences of being abandoned by his family.
While previous examples illustrate the abandonment and abuse of family members based on color or phenotypes, there are also narratives of physical abuse against lighter family members. Consider the following example by Corina:

“My mother mistreated me. She always mistreated me. She would hit me all the time. Whenever I did something … even a small thing, she would slap me across the face … I’ll never forget the day (long pause) … when she punished me by throwing scalding hot water all over me. I asked her, “Mama, why do you do these things to me?” (pauses to cry). But I knew why. I had the color of father’s skin his straight hair, I was white and she hated me. She was jealous of me, her own daughter … For my birthday … What do mothers usually buy for their daughters birthday, Bete? Well, she brought me a tight dress and high heels because she wanted to prostitute me out to an old man from São Paolo. That’s how she saw me, a prostitute.” (Corina, 53 years old)

In racialized societies, all members participate in the reproduction of racial hierarchies. In this case, a mother struggling with her own devalued status in a society that overvalues whiteness brutalizes her lighter daughter out of anger and jealousy. Corina is punished at home by her mother and becomes estranged from her black siblings, who have only recently begun to rekindle their relationship with her. Their anger and jealousy of Corina is likely an extension of their mother’s treatment of her and may also be, in part, a result of how they are differentially treated outside of the family. For example, Corina complains about the difficulties that she has in finding a job but does not acknowledge how her phenotypic capital shapes her prospects and the favorable view that people have of her. In explaining her search for a new job, she states,

“The woman who was blonde did not want me to work in her house because I am white. Because I was white she did not want me to work there. She couldn’t accept it because I was same color as she was. So I think that was prejudice against me because she said I had a face more like a madame than a maid. She said I don’t have a face of a maid. That I had another type of posture, a way of speaking. She said all of this in the door of her house, she didn’t even let me in. I swear to God. My mom and my children know this, that somebody discriminated against me. It is not just blacks that are discriminated against. I always thought it was just blacks that were discriminated against. But the fact is that in my family there are black people (because my grandfather is black, my mom is sarara) because my mom comes from a family that is black and white. So, I thought at that moment when she said I had a face that was more a madame than a maid that I would never go back trying to find a job as a maid in a family house.”
Many dark-skinned women would welcome the opportunity to be considered for jobs outside the area of domestic service because of the stigma that is attached to domestic work and because of it involves hard labor, long hours, and very low pay. The stigmatization of domestic work is evident by potential maids who sometimes forgo the benefits that they should receive by not having their worker registration card signed out of fear that having maid listed as a previous occupation is going to dirty their work registration (sujar a carteira). This language of contamination is connected to the way that this type of work is considered black women’s work. Corina sees herself only as a victim and never acknowledges how her “symbolic capital” makes her ill suited for low status, ‘black women’s work.’ Because readings of her racialized body come to advantage her this is likely the source of the jealousy that her siblings feel.

5.3 Depression, Trust, and Trauma

As mentioned, differential treatment in one’s private life can lead to internalized racism and racial resentment that have negative consequences for articulations of well being as it relates to depression, trust, and trauma. As Burdick (1998) notes in his examination of the relationship between race, color and family, “it is precisely because of the strength of emotion present in families, of the high expectations within them for love, unconditional acceptance, and affection … that experiences of differential treatment within them create deep psychic wounds” (Burdick 1998: 43). For Yasmin, experiencing differential treatment in her family as a child and then later being confronted with similar issues as an adult leads to depression:

“I was entering into a depression and by luck I happened to discover that from a person who was close to me. I felt really cold, I didn’t know the symptoms of depression included feeling sleepy. So my friend who works in the area of health called me and she said, “You have to get out of this you are entering depression.” I entered into depression. I thought that I was going to go crazy. I did not have any friends outside of my family. My family was everything to me, they were the people that I loved the most. My family was everything for me. The truth is, they were not anything. They only wanted to destroy me. Everybody was against me.” (Yasmin, 41 years old)
After experiencing decades of mistreatment in her family because of her racial phenotype, Yasmin reports going through a period where she distanced herself from her family and stopped leaving her house. She struggled with reconciling why she was an outcast and how it was possible for the people who she thought cared about her to betray her. Even though she managed to survive her depression, her experiences in her family shape her encounters with others:

“I don’t want any more friendships. I just want the ones I have to last. I don’t trust anyone anymore. I don’t want to invite anyone in my house ever again. Where I live I say good morning, good afternoon. People call me stuck up but I don’t care. Whenever I walk by I greet everyone. I do my part by treating every person like a citizen.” (Yasmin, 41 years old)

Negative affect and differential treatment in her family has created so much distress that Yasmin is unwilling to pursue friendships or let others get close to her. Similar to Yasmin, several women reveal how the negative psychological consequences of differential treatment in their own families led to suicidal ideations and left them feeling as though their lives were not worth living. These are three representative examples of these statements.

“There were times when I said, “Oh God, I am going to give up” But I have a friend that says that God does not give you more than you can bear. Everything that you are going through is because you have to go through it. I had such a great attachment to my family. With all the suffering that I had gone through, I wanted to leave but I didn’t have the courage.” (Liliane, 44 years old)

“Why am I even living? I sometimes ask God why did he make me (pause). Sometimes I just want it to be over. I do, Bete, sometimes I wish I could just end it.” (Ana, 52 years old)

“If I did not have my religion I do not believe I would be alive. So many people could never go through what I have gone through. They would have ended it. Thrown themselves out of a window, I have thought about how I would do it.” (Corina, 53 years old)

While none of the women succumb to these suicidal ideations the fact that differential treatment in their families push them to this point reveals the depths of their
pain and despair. They all frame their ability to overcome by highlighting their religious backgrounds, as each of these statements suggests that religion is fundamental to helping them cope with these emotional difficulties. Throughout the interviews with these women, Catholicism and Spiritism are mentioned as being important to their survival. Consistent with past research in Brazil, religion has been shown to serve an especially important source of support and racial affirmation for black women (Burdick 1998).

5.4 Pretty Please?!: Beauty and Self-Esteem

Se pudesse pedir uma coisa, pediria ter cabelo grande, loiro e olhos azuis. Mas não quero ser branca, não. (If I could make any wish, I would wish for long, straight blonde hair. But I don’t want to white)

Ribeiro (1996) argues that white beauty norms for Afro-Brazilians are dangerous because they can lead to “an unfavorable self-image and a humiliated self-esteem … It will tend to build a distorted image that will seek refuge from its physical reality and stimulate mechanisms of negation and compensation” (1996: 171). For young girls, “identity fragmentation” is exemplified through how they come to understand themselves through messages and interactions with others. Beauty, inevitably, is at the center of their constructions of self. The quote above is from Regane, a 9-year old who makes a wish that Iemanjá, the sea goddess and Candomblé deity, grant her long, blonde hair, and blue eyes. That she wishes to acquire all of these features that are racialized as white without actually being white encapsulates the tension between internalized racial hierarchies, recognition of beauty standards, and efforts to valorize her racial reality (Candelario 2007).

Over the preceding weeks, as the resident hair braider, I had enthusiastically combed Regane’s hair, twisted it, braided it and styled it in ways that garnered compliments and even made her smile when she looked in the mirror. Admittedly, against my normal approach, with Regane I offer just a few words of affirmation stating,
“You know, I think you have great hair and I like braiding it.” She turns and looks at me with a slight frown and confused eyes. Her head is slightly tilted to the side as if she is trying to figure out why I am lying to her. In light of her socialization, my adulation has to be a lie - it challenges everything she has seen, heard, and feels about "cabelo bom" (good hair) and "cabelo ruim" (bad hair). It is an implausible suggestion that the messages that she is receiving from her family and society are wrong and that simply cannot be.

Throughout the data collection period, young girls consistently report that they pray for secretly (or not so secretly) wish for straighter hair, including Natalia and her best friend Carla:

Natalia: If I could change anything about myself it would be my hair. I would love to have really really long hair to the floor (pauses). So long that ten people would have to help me with my hair so I could walk!
Carla: I would want long hair too, but it doesn’t need to be that long, just a little longer than it is now and brown. A little lighter than it is now ... and in waves.

For Natalia, long hair is attached to a somatic fantasy that she visibly enjoys pondering. Carla’s assertion, though not as exaggerated as Natalia, represents a seemingly more realistic compromise and perhaps an effort to partially resist aesthetic norms. She does not want blonde hair or even straight hair. Instead, her desires are framed as modifications to her hair that are just a “little longer” and a “little lighter,” reflecting her nuanced negotiation of what she has in comparison to what is viewed as attractive and desirable.

For Joana, who is a dark-skinned black woman with straightened hair, she realizes that her appearance will not change. She has a lighter skinned boyfriend and looks embarrassed when she admits that her friends and people on the street matter-offactly ask, “What does he see in you?” When I ask Joana if she thinks that she is pretty, she pauses and says, “I am nice.” When asked again about attractiveness, she shrugs and repeats that she is nice. “Nice” is usually how Brazilians describe a person when
they want to comment on their looks but cannot say that they are attractive. Her use of “simpática” to describe herself is at best a very weak and ambiguous way to compliment herself. While her decision to exclusively date lighter-skinned men could be a coincidence, her responses to other questions suggests her preference in boyfriends may be rooted in something deeper.

One of the most puzzling and disturbing observations that I make occur while attending classes at a community center for youth in a diverse but predominately black neighborhood. During one of the classes, I observe young Afro-Brazilian girls stroking the hair of their straight-haired peers during instruction time, during classroom breaks, and during lunch. Even as they participate in conversations with peers and teachers while talking or sitting, they continue stroking the straight hair of their female peers. During bathroom breaks, the young girls run to the bathroom and douse their hair with water in order to achieve a “look” that is wet and wavy (a way to signify that one’s hair is not “bad”) and then return to class. Their straight-haired peers, the objects of their attention, do not respond to the attention and everyone continues to act as though none of this is going on including the instructor. The site is peculiar, confusing, and disturbing.

The subjective realm of desire is one that is difficult to measure but not any less important to examine. The young girls in the core families as well as those who I observed outside of the study are all very aware of standards of beauty, aware of how they do not fit them, and struggle to figure out how they can navigate oppressive systems of race, gender, and beauty. It is a process that some are more invested in than others. Notwithstanding, all of the young girls find themselves at a crossroads feeling the pressures to produce a self that is acceptable and beauty. For some the ticket out is a hair relaxer, for others not even straightened hair is enough. For those in the latter case, they seek valorization through motherhood or through other avenues.
5.5 We (Don’t) Belong Together …

One of the critical psychosocial benefits of family membership is the feeling of belonging and security. These are the same emotions that the nation also tries to elicit from its citizens because they effectively develop affective bonds and loyalty. In families where one sibling is born darker than the other, this has the potential to create a series of serious psychological and subjective consequences. From a developmental perspective, this can be especially detrimental as maternal and paternal differential treatment significantly impacts sibling relationships and wellbeing (Brody et al 1987; Brody et al 1992; Volling 1997). Given that sibling relationships are the longest lasting relationships that people have, among the consequences of compromised sibling relationships is the diminished sense of belonging in the family and an inability or reluctance to develop future relationships with others.

Because of the stark phenotypic differences between them, Liliane states that her darker-skinned sister Margarete struggled with her color and would often ask her mother, “why was I born this way?” The question is not merely posed because of phenotypic differences but also because of the antipathy with which her mother talks about blacks. In retrospect, Liliane claims to now understand the tension in their relationship and forgives Margarete for her cruelty by stating,

She is a bitter, bad person, and an angry person. And it is because she never had love. She never had love because my mother never liked blacks.

When Liliane talks about blacks she does not use the term negro she uses the term preto. This is an important distinction because while all of her family is black, preto is a color term not a racial term used to describe darker-skinned, black family members. Not only does Margarete disproportionately feel the wrath of her mother’s disdain for blacks, but she experiences differential treatment even when she is with her sister in public, as well.
When we would go shopping together and we wanted to go into a store to look at things, she would be like, “Excuse you do you have that in this color?” And the salesperson would say, “Did you see the price?” And then she would say, “I did not ask you the price, I asked you if you had this color.” She experienced things like that. Why did they ask her the price? Because they thought that she couldn’t pay for it. She has gone through this my presence.

These negative experiences of racism reinforced in public and private spheres only heighten the tension between them. While an option might be to completely reject her mother’s racist comments, Margarete internalizes these ideas but has started her own family with a black (preto) man. Anticipating the problems that her nieces will face Liliane states,

“My sister hates black, unfortunately, all of her kids are black. She married a black man and had black kids. I asked her “why did you marry a black man and have a black child if you know you do not like blacks?!”

One wonders if or how the racial rituals in chapter 4 will come to shape her interactions with her children, particularly her daughters.

Though a compromised sense of self and belonging has been studied as a phenomenon most relevant to women, men too must negotiate racial hierarchies, and the consequences seem to have implications for subjective feelings of belonging. Corina reveals:

“My son has psychological problems because sometimes he says, “Why was he was born with nappy hair (cabelo duro)?” and my daughter was born with straight hair. It’s been a few years since I’ve talked to him about it and he first started to accept it and liking it. I said to him, “that isn’t what’s important. What’s more important are our feelings.”

As Corina provides details about her son’s predicament she mentions aesthetics is part of the issue, but she frames his “psychological problems” mostly as being related to feeling that he does not belong, particularly when he is standing near her and his other siblings. That his mother relies on a universal message that “what’s more important are our feelings” to console him seems to miss the point that that he is speaking about
feelings: how he feels about himself and how others feel about him. In Brazil, feelings do matter but hair matters as well impacting racial categorization, attributions of attractiveness, and one’s life chances. The strategy of denying its importance in order to foster a sense of belonging is likely not very effective.

Similarly, for João, surveillance and vigilance from the neighbors about his skin color contribute to his insecurities. Both parents report having to work to get him to “accept himself”:

“One day I was going to Leo’s mother house and ran into a friend who I hadn’t seen in a long time and she said, “Ah, Alberto looks just that his dad, but João does not look anything like him.” This is because João is darker than Antonio who looks more like his dad. His dad is darker than your hair. To get him to accept this about himself, we have to tell him that his grandfather, his father’s dad, was really dark and he took after his grandfather.

For this family, fostering self-acceptance is connected to affirming that a child gets his looks from another family members. In doing so they hope to assert a sense of belongingness and pride, but the reassurance for the son is not that he is beautiful or attractive, but instead that there is a genetic reason for his racial appearance. Perhaps as a male, the question of belonging is much more significant than the question of attractiveness or beauty.

5.6 Discussion

The internalization of racist hierarchies and colorism can lead to practices that can severely compromise affective ties and well being in families. Hegemonic whiteness not only disproportionately distributes material rewards based on proximity to whiteness, but it also dictates the distribution of affection, which is considered an internal family resource (Henry 1994; Stocker et. al 2007). Racial socialization and differential treatment represent how macro-level ideologies and structures interact in ways that impact Afro-Brazilians on an individual level. Previous studies of family systems suggest that parental support when it communicates “warmth, concern,
encouragement, physical affection or praise can have a significant impact on life satisfaction, particularly for adolescents (Peterson & Leigh 1990). On the other side of this, Wickrama et al. (2008) argues that “negative parental affect including rejection, hostility, and reduced levels of parental support and warmth” can function as a chronic stressor and source of “identity disruption” (Thoits 1995). For all of the reasons that family can function in such a profoundly positive way in providing social capital, fostering pride and sense of community, it can be equally devastating when these relationships are strained or are completely absent.

Building on a concept of the “everyday wounds of racism” (Essed 1991), the narratives highlighted in this chapter give voice to some of daily trauma of differential treatment and illustrates how family practices and family behaviors can have long-lasting consequences. Perhaps even the phrase “everyday wounds” underestimates the extent to which explicit and implicit racial socialization paired with differential treatment are internalized as traumatic, ongoing events and not merely wounds. Informants’ narratives illustrate how mothers and fathers may abandon their children, engage in implicit and explicit messages that are symbolically violent, and mistreat or physically abuse family members based on phenotype. While researchers that use a family system model emphasize how bonding or developing strong emotional ties to one’s family offers an emotional base that older children and adolescents use in their future interactions, the alienation and stigmatization of family members based on color or racial phenotype can undermine these positive consequences (Gecas & Seff 1990; Stocker et al. 2007).

Additionally, as it relates to the narratives of the filhas de criação that are presented here, their life histories offer a riveting and compelling commentary into how colorism or differential treatment based on racial appearance can initiate a trajectory of life-long suffering and exploitation. Not only does exploitation within the context of
adoptive families lead to a compromised sense of well being, but the women’s reports of losing their childhoods, wasting their lives, along with emotional and physical abuse are evidence of both distress and trauma. Their experiences represent an extreme version of what Steinberg refers to as "exploitation of the whole person," which is a term he uses to describe the condition of European maids the U.S. in the early 1900s. In Brazil, I argue that *filhas de criação* are exploited under a context of “whole person-whole life exploitation” because their servitude and “debt” is never completely paid. In situations where women are able to leave their adoptive families, many still retain ties to the family out of external and internalized sense of obligation and gratitude.

In Tania’s case, in addition to losing her childhood, she also loses the opportunity to date and start her own family. In fact, she remains a virgin for a significant portion of her life. Perhaps the most subtly nefarious aspect of this exploitative family relationship is that Tania has so thoroughly internalized her socialization that she feels a moral obligation to remain in the home despite the abuse and exploitation. She argues, “we have to be grateful.” Given that hegemony functions to ordain and legitimate dominance, the moral obligation that Tania feels is part and parcel of the rituals of domination. These same rituals of domination are what allow Silvia of the Amado Family to nostalgically and happily sum up the experience of the *filha de criação* who was passed on like property through three generations of her family in the following way, “She had everything … except her own life.”

Throughout my time in Salvador, there were ten women and two men that I interview who have lived or continue to live in non-biological family arrangements as *filhos de criação*. Most of these arrangements occur as the result of family tragedies and poverty, and not as result of differential treatment based on racial phenotype.

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5 Their experience is labeled “whole person exploitation” because the women were live-in domestic workers, were on call 24 hours a day, and were also expected to uphold moral fortitude.
The majority of their narratives are not included in my dissertation but will be addressed in a separate manuscript addressing how racial socialization in non-biological family structures can reinforce racial hierarchies through affective manipulation and economic exploitation. I argue that their conditions are scarcely different from slavery, but rely on affective bonds rather than coercive domination to sustain exploitation. In Salvador, some of the wealthy adoptive families consider themselves Afro-Brazilians, but they are always lighter than their “adoptive” daughters. In this way, this phenomenon represents the fragmentation of both class and racial categories and neo-slavery.

It is important that this chapter be situated within the structural context, so that families and individuals are viewed as complex institutions. Highlighting internalized racism and the effects of racial socialization is critical because it can “explicitly identify individual selves, families, and subaltern communities as permeable sites (rather than sources) into which racism, as both a structural and ideological force, penetrates” (Sheriff 2003: 129). Families and individuals constantly negotiate these formidable structural constraints and individual conditions, so that experiences are not uniform between individuals or even within an individual’s lifetime. For instance, the filhas de criação have strategies of resistance that might manifest in the decision to leave as is the case for Rebeca or as Tania’s direct challenges to the discursive language of family that trivializes her exploitation.

While being phenotypically different from other family members can have a number of negative outcomes, parents can and do combat negative comments in ways that show how they also protect family members. Moreover, individuals demonstrate that they have agency and illustrate this by proactively searching for mechanisms to cope with their lives. While religion is one coping strategy addressed in this chapter, 

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6 This manuscript is tentatively entitled, “Family Bonds and Bondage: Pseudo-adoption and Unpaid Servitude in Salvador.”
there are a host of creative and diverse strategies that families and individuals use to resist hegemonic structures and discourses. In chapter seven, I highlight three families to show precisely how, even within the constraints of hegemonic whiteness and racism, families can and do to resist these powerful structures.

Eu prefiro ter cabeça do que cabelo!
(What is in my head is more important than what’s on my head!)

In this chapter, I examine how Afro-Brazilians are socialized into norms and social rules that encourage self-surveillance and foster self-consciousness about their bodies and their racialized features. Beauty hierarchies that are both raced and gendered are particularly antagonistic to Afro-Brazilian women who internalize the hierarchies but struggle to conform to them. Drawing on Foucault’s (1979) notion of “disciplining” of the body, I begin by illustrating the intense scrutiny that all bodies in Brazil receive and the oppressive way that black bodies are meticulously catalogued and ordered. I offer field note observations reflecting how readings of my own body helped me to understand the complex relationship between beauty, race, gender, and body. Among other characteristics, hair is highlighted as a principle feature driving the racialization process. I argue that the diverse ways that Afro-Brazilian women manipulate their hair reflects how they negotiate racial and gender hierarchies. I end by analyzing the effectiveness of the afro-aesthetics movement in resisting negative images and evaluations of blackness.

6.1 The Bodies Exhibit

While walking through the commercial area of Salvador in a colorful dress and sandals I can hear that I am being followed. I hear the person’s pace quicken behind me and I turn around just as the blue-eyed elderly man taps me on the shoulder and states, “You are beautiful, you are so beautiful. With legs like those, I would love to see you in heels. Promise me the next time you wear that dress you will be wearing heels. You really have to wear heels!”

In Salvador, the shouts from construction men, bus drivers, and passersby serve to reinforce the objectification of women and remind women that their bodies are on display and available for evaluation (Adelman and Ruggi 2008). Men assert their status
in public and private arenas making unsolicited comments such as “linda” (beautiful), “gostosa” (tasty/sexy), “morena” (dark generic), and “Deusa de Ébano” (Ebony Goddess) not in hopes of a date but as a display of masculinity. The stranger’s actions and comments are presumptuous, yet common. But the stranger’s comment is also a sanction wrapped in a compliment, hinting to the unspoken rule that high heels be worn as a matter of standard fashion protocol to accentuate my body and gratify him and other men. Through interactions like these throughout my time in Salvador, I learn to expect to be evaluated and the preparation for these comments begin to influence how I present myself reflecting the “hidden persuasion of an implicit pedagogy,” that teaches me to conform or be sanctioned (Bourdieu 1990: 69).

From interviews, I learn that girls begin to hear these comments from men at an early age. Larissa remembers riding a bus home from school at the age of 10 years old and as she is exiting the bus, a man whispers “gostosa” as she walks by. She runs all the way home and tells her mother about the comment. This experience prompts her mother to explain that she is now a woman and that from now on she should expect these comments, but ignore them. Mothers, yet again, are at the forefront of playing a role in socializing young girls about self-presentation, disciplining their bodies, and protecting them from unwanted advances (Arendell 2000). These lessons are important because social interactions revolve around the body and with time, I would discover the truth that "not one part of a woman's body is left untouched, unaltered. No feature or extremity is spared the art, or pain, of improvement" (Dworkin 1974, 113-114). But, judging the female body is also deeply embedded in racial hierarchies, where what is beautiful is white-like. Not merely a question of gender, but a question of deconstructing socially significant racialized features, the centrality of the body lead me back once more to babies.
6.2 Hands, Feet, and Ears, Oh My! Racial Rituals

“They say this little black boy has such fine features. And I say, what do you mean fine features?” (Daniel, 57 years old)

In the previous chapters, I discuss how the stigma attached to a baby’s racialized physical features can lead to practices and affective sentiments that produce stigma and reinforce white supremacy. In Chapter 3, I discuss “racial rituals” which are used to characterize the modifications that are made to baby’s nose. However, given previous research, I anticipated that these rituals may also be part of a broader system of practices and rituals (Candelario 2007). Curious about how the bodies of newborn babies are evaluated, I consult, Dona Teresa, a 71 year old elderly Baiana and cultural expert in the community. Our conversation reveals the astonishingly elaborate system of racial rituals that has been created to police and modify a baby’s racialized appearance beyond skin, nose, and hair.1 These rituals are significant because they are indicators of the oppressive and systematic ways that black bodies are controlled by practices that discipline the racialized body. Dona Teresa begins our conversation by confirming matter-of-factly that she is very familiar with the nose modification practice:

“There is a history that when a baby is born with a flat nose that the mother early in morning before giving the baby a bath has to light a candle, heat her fingers close to the candle flame and place it over the baby’s nose three times. Three times. Three times over the nose of the baby pulling it so that it will be thin (fino) like a white person’s nose. What happens is a type of quote-unquote physical therapy. If you have any type of problem and every day you massage that area, eventually it will start looking different. So it is the same thing, every day, every day.”

Not only does she offer confirmation of this practice, but she explicitly links it to racialization and the desire to approximate white features. Her framing of the practice as physical therapy or conditioning suggests that the practice and technique is nearly

1 See Synnott (1993) for early sociological theorizations of the body including the relationship between face and body, but with an emphasis on gender not race.
medicalized as a necessary intervention to a problem.\textsuperscript{2} Though her commentary begins with noses, it quickly progresses to lesser-known rituals of the “black community” that discipline the body. She moves along to the hands of the baby:

“They take the baby when the baby is born. They do this ... give me your hand (she takes my hands and looks at my palms). Look right here (tracing the inside of my palms). If this part is dark he will be born black. So they look and they say, “ah, this one is going to be black” And it goes on from there. Well you know that generally this happens more for blacks than for whites. Whites have to conform much less but the black has to. But this is real. This happens a lot in Brazil.”

Dona Teresa’s insights are valuable because she reveals the practices and articulates her understanding about the relationship they have to white supremacist ideas and social pressures. Given the power of domination and the privileged position of whites, somatic conformity reflects the influence of broader ideologies and hierarchies. Baran (2007) suggests that his ethnographic studies reveal a similar preoccupation with interpreting early indicators of race, noting that informants “remarked on how a baby’s skin color changes, how they are born with light skin that darkens with age. To tell what color a baby’s skin will turn out to be, you have to look under the fingernails” (388). So, Dona Teresa’s insights are consistent with and expound upon findings from previous studies. From hands, she moves on to feet:

D.E.: Oh! What about the feet? The feet! Closed toed shoes so they do not end up with long feet like a black person’s foot
Elizabeth: Wait, what is a black person’s foot like?
D.E.: They say its long and the white person’s foot is thin.

The body is the site of racial control through imposed rituals of body modification. In this case, closed toed shoes are used to control the excessively large size of a black person’s feet. The racial associations of large feet are consistent with and reinforce other racist portrayals of black features, such as lips, noses, and sexuality as

\textsuperscript{2} The medicalization of the practice by deploying the terms “conditioning” (similar to another informant who uses the term “massage”) connote an almost scientific aspect that gives the practice legitimacy. A broad nose is like any other “problem,” whether it a sore muscle or joint that needs to have “conditioning.”
exaggerated, vulgar, or grotesquely large (Pinho 2006; Collins 2000). Dona Elena continues by remembering that there is more:

“So the child is born, the father is black, mother is black, and the child is born white. It is white, but it is not really white. It is just that he is born really light, really light. So they turn him to see if on his butt there are these little things (negoçinhos) to see if he has black marks on his bottom.”

Previous researchers have written about how the presence of dark spots on a baby’s buttocks are used to predict whether a child will develop a darker or lighter skin color (Candelario 2007; Frazier 1967). This is considered an important ritual because a baby’s initial skin tone can be drastically different from its final skin color. Finally, her last observation is that for boys a penis can also be problematic:

“There is another thing too! If the baby is born with a large, dark penis really dark and big they say to take the baby and face it towards the door on a Friday you say this. You put your hand over the penis three times and say, “Comegato, Comegato, Comegato.” (Cateater, cateater, cateater!)

I cannot contain my confused laughter and I ask her to repeat the ritual because surely I have misunderstood. She laughs a hearty laugh and replies, “I do not know what to tell you. I do not know what to tell you. I am tired of seeing it done.”

There are most certainly generational factors to be considered when situating these racial rituals in the context of contemporary Salvador. I only observed one of the rituals directly, but other mothers also confirm the rituals, and Dona Teresa claims to have seen and participated in several of them herself. Even if the majority of these racial rituals no longer take place, their existence provides tremendous insight into the centrality of the physical body to racialization processes. This institutionalized system of evaluation and modification illustrates the “extreme devaluing of Afro-Brazilians and the way in which black people’s bodies have been abjectified as bad or unpleasant and identified with ‘nature’ and ‘primitive sexual impulses’”(Adelman and Ruggi 2008: 559).
Once racialized bodies are framed as vulgar, beauty is unattainable. Beauty implies goodness, goodness implies morality, and morality is framed as white.

The discussion of these racial rituals reminds Dona Teresa of her own family and she states that phenotypic variation is a “serious problem for a mixed family.” She reveals that people used to call her racially diverse house the “lavanderia e Tinturaria (laundry and dry cleaner’s) because each her siblings looked very different.3 When taken together, Dona Teresa’s insights and those of others illustrate the social significance of color and racialized features.4 Efforts to identify and modify these features begin at birth, continue throughout life, and extend to other features. For women this is exacerbated because of the differential pressures of beauty and attractiveness that apply to them (Hill 2002).

6.3 Hair-itage

“Acho todo cabelo ruim. Se fosse bom, se comeria!”
_I think all hair is bad If it were good, we would eat it!_ (Larissa, 12 years old)

Per Brazilian beauty protocol, I walk into a local beauty salon for a manicure and a pedicure. As I wait to be serviced, a light brown woman with long, straight hair sits in the adjacent room and is having a hair relaxer applied. After the cream has been applied, the light brown beautician with short straightened hair circles the client’s head with a space-age-looking bright blue laser! Instantly intrigued, I ask the beautician what the laser does and she replies, “it makes the hair look prettier, straighter.” When the beautician finishes, the women in the salon look at the young lady approvingly, nodding and offering compliments. This was “Photo Hair” a process that uses a laser to accelerate the absorption of hydrogen peroxide by the hair strands and shortens the time

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3 Dona Teresa reveals, “In the old days, the owners of the Tinturarias (Dry Cleaners) in Bahia were Chinese and so by the entrance you could identify one from the other because each had a rainbow of different colors to identify which laundry mat would wash a certain type of clothes and colors.”

4 In a less methodical way than Dona Teresa, David mentions that his grandfather used to say, “when the whites of a black man’s eyes are really white it means he is a coward.”
that it takes to straighten the hair and, most importantly, makes the straightening last longer. Given the importance of hair in Brazil, this sophisticated contraption and expensive process is growing in popularity around the country, particularly because of its promise to straighten hair for longer periods of time.

As evident from each of the previous chapters, hair is a topic that is continually discussed and socially relevant in Salvador, particularly for Afro-Brazilian women. This is not merely an issue in Brazil but has been given significant attention for all black women in the African Diaspora (Collins 2005; Caldwell 2007; hooks 1999). As Gilliam and Gilliam note, “of all the physical characteristics, it is particularly hair that marks ‘race’ for women … and the differential social coding of race and ethnicity” (1999: 68-69). The relationship between hair, racial stigma, and white supremacy is visible in the private sphere, particularly in the realm of socialization and beauty rituals. But these rituals are part of a broader structure of white supremacist ideas, which fosters the preoccupation with racial appearance and promotes the normative degradation of features that have historically been considered “black.” The racial hierarchies that determine which features are attractive and unattractive are represented on television, magazines, and also discussed in the public arena. These beauty standards function as a trap for Afro-Brazilian women, and also heavily influence how young men construct notions of beauty as well. A small group of three Afro-Brazilian male cousins explain the relationship between beauty and race,

“‘The prettiest women in Brazil are light-skinned or white. It’s rare for a black woman to be pretty … unless she’s like, like, what’s her name? Like Tais Araújo! Yeah, but she is like an improved black woman (they laugh).’
(Carlos, Marcelo, and Luiz, age 23, 26, and 28 years old)

Tais Araújo is considered improved because she has light brown skin, “fine” features, and full spirally loose curly hair. She is not white, she identifies as negra but has features that place her towards the middle of the phenotypic (and by definition) beauty
continuum. That she is considered abnormally attractive only further reinforces the abjectification of black women, which is a common theme in Brazilian popular culture.

Over a decade after its production, in 2012, Sony was ordered to pay $1.2 million dollars because the song “Veja Os Cabelos Dela” (Look at Her Hair), written and recorded by Tiririca was considered racist (Wilson 2012). Considered the largest settlement for an infraction of racism, these lyrics have been heavily critiqued because of the injury that they have caused to black women (see Caldwell 2007 for an analysis). The lyrics are as follows:

Veja veja veja veja veja os cabelos dela (4x)
(Look look look look look at her hair) (4x)
Parece bom-* de ariá panela
(It looks like a scouring pad for pots and pans)
Parece bom-bril*, de ariá panela
(It looks like a scouring pad for pots and pans)
Quando ela passa, me chama atenção
(When she goes by, she catches my attention)
Mas os seus cabelos, não tem jeito não
(But her hair just isn’t right)
A sua catinga* quase me desmaiou
(Her stench almost made me faint)
Olha eu não aguento, é grande o seu fedor
(Look, I can’t take it, her smell is so bad)
Veja veja veja veja os cabelos dela
(Look look look look look at her hair)
Parece bom-bril, de ariá panela (2x)
(It looks like a scouring pad for pots and pans) (2x)
Eu já mandei, ela se lavar
(I told her to take a bath)
Mas ela teimo, e não quis me escutar
(But she’s stubborn and doesn’t listen to me)
Essa nega fede, fede de lascar
(This black woman stinks, she stinks horribly)
Bicha fedorenta, fede mais que gambá
(Stinking beast, smells worse than a skunk)

What makes this song particularly offensive are both the lyrics and the attempts to justify the lyrics. The author of the song argues that the lyrics are not racist because he wrote the song in reference to his black wife and claims the terms that he used can be applied to whites or blacks. His involvement in an interracial relationship is hardly a valid argument against his racism. Moreover, his references to hair using the term “bom-
“bril” and descriptions of her odor using the term “catina” belie any effort to de-racialize this song. In my interviews, several young Afro-Brazilian girls and boys describe their natural hair being made fun of in school and in the neighborhood by being called bom-bril (a scouring pad). The term is obviously rooted in white supremacist readings of the black body. Similarly, the term “catina” is even more incendiary. When I ask Dona Teresa, “What does catina mean?” her reaction alone speaks volumes about the offensiveness of the word. Upon hearing my question, she quickly shushes me, puts a finger over my mouth, and ushers me over to a private corner. She looks around uncomfortably checking to see if anyone has heard me say catina out loud. She leans in close and angrily whispers:

“Where did you hear that word?! Who said that word to you? Tell me! Catina is a horrible, horrible word that describes the smell of a dead animal, but people use it to describe the way that they think blacks smell. Catina … it’s it’s it’s a horrible smell, like the smell of several dogs left rotting in the street for days. They say that is how blacks smell. Never say that word again.”

A putrid bodily stench is used as a defining feature of blacks and this fits alongside other racist representations that portray blacks as inferior, wild, and sub-humans (Pinho 2006). As further evidence of the centrality of body odor in the racialization of blacks and its relation to social relations, Cavalheiro (1999) interviews a Brazilian school teacher who actually attributes racial prejudice to blacks’ body odor. He states,

“racial prejudice, if you think about, generally, it’s all about body odor. A black person, their skin, the melanin makes it so that their smell is much stronger. Nowadays this prejudice is decreasing because there are modern products – deodorant, creams. These types of anti-perspirants take away the odor. When the odor is gone, there is no longer a reason for whites not to talk to blacks and vice-versa.”

Notions of cleanliness have historically been an essential element to racialization processes, as they are closely connected to discourses of contamination (McClintock 1995). Reproducing these ideas, black respectability politics in Brazil, focused on

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5Author’s translation
cleanliness and body odor as a way to ‘help blacks’ avoid racism (Pinha 2006). This approach not only frames racism as an individual problem, but the circular and nonsensical argument frames blacks as the cause of racism and reduces racism to a mere question of conformity. This ignores how racial stereotypes are used as tools in the racialization process and it undermines the importance of racism as a system of oppression.

6.3.1 The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

Discourses about hair tend to predominate discourses of race, body, and beauty even more than skin color, as it functions as a major signifier of race and criteria of beauty in Latin America (Rahier 1998; Candelario 2007). Socialization of family members into normalized dichotomies of cabelo bom and cabelo ruim (good hair and bad hair) encapsulates how racist ideas are inscribed on the body and perpetuated. Unlike informants’ responses to questions about racism and Brazilian history, when informants are asked to define good and bad hair, all informants are knowledgeable and provide remarkably consistent responses. The responses below best capture the high level of consistency and internalization of these ideas:

“Bad hair is black people’s hair. Our hair, your hair is bad hair.” (Sonia, 31 years old)

“Bad hair is your hair. Your hair is bad. Black people’s hair is like this, so you have to value it because it is different.” (Daniel, 57 years old)

“Good hair is really really straight, white people’s hair. Bad hair is hair like mine.” (Marcos, 26 years old)

“Good hair is straight hair, is it not? In my case, I have bad hair. Good hair is white people’s hair. There is good hair and there is bad hair.” (Luisa, 52 years old)

The use of “good” and “bad” terminology reflects the ongoing juxtaposition of black and white, tightly coiled versus straight, European and African, civilized and wild
(Banks 2000). Even though there is a continuum of hair texture, in Bahia, if hair is not straight it is not good hair (Pinho 2006). Racialization of features is not merely a question of aesthetics it is a reflection of power, the authority to name and judge (Hunter 2005). Part of the insidiousness of the construction of beauty is how it becomes linked to morality and later to other characteristics like competency or trustworthiness (Wade & Bielitz 2005). The best example of how racial features can translate into positive attributions is the belief by an informant that lighter babies (by definition) do not cry as much as dark skinned babies. Lighter babies are not only considered more beautiful, but they are also considered better behaved. While I expected to observe additional examples of racial phenotype informing personality or character attributions in families, I did not observe other examples of this directly (Boyd-Franklin 2003).

6.4 The Roots of Resistance: Afro-Aesthetics

In Brazil, the emergence of an Afro-Aesthetics movement represents an attempt to create a new model of black beauty that addresses the stigmatization of black hair and it is based on imagined ideas about Africa. In Pinho’s (2006) preeminent piece on afro-aesthetics in Bahia, she notes that the “afro” prefix is attached to a variety of objects in order to connote a particular African/black aesthetic, including clothing, make-up, jewelry, and even nails. While afro-aesthetics has a wide-reaching impact on culture, it is most visibly seen in hairstyles, including hair braiding, dreadlocks, and the growing market for products designated as “afro” in Brazil (Pinho 2006). Black activists, who for decades have been emphasizing the importance of self-acceptance, hope that the afro-aesthetics movement can foster revised notions of blackness. In this way the afro-aesthetic movement builds on the “Black is beautiful” movement in the United States (Craig 2002; Banks 2000).

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6 This observation was only made in one family, though they claimed that it was an idea that was accepted throughout their family.
The Afro-aesthetics movement uses the body as the site of racial resistance and decolonization. Not merely promoting natural hair, it aims to address the reality that both racialized features and cultural “blackness” have been undervalued in Bahia (Santos 2000; Figuereido 1984). In order to address both issues it embraces natural hair, but also promotes the use of elaborate hairstyles and/or fabrics that might be considered culturally “afro” based on colors, patterns, and shape (Pinho 2006). On the streets, on buses and in public areas the use of these afro hairstyles can be easily observed. That the movement addresses both hair texture and hairstyles is important because of how they have historically been viewed. Dona Teresa reveals,

“Me, I am 71 years old, and I felt it in my own skin. My mother never braided my hair when I was younger and I would love to see the children with braids who were blacker than me. She would say, “No, that is criolo, it is criolo. I don’t want it!” They were the small braids, you know. But no my mom would curl my hair so it would look like Shirley Temple. Just like Shirley Temple. I felt this. I remember my father didn’t let me comb my hair with his comb. Because he said that I had black people’s hair.”

Certainly times have changed since Dona Teresa was a young girl, but what has been enduring is the disdain with which afro-textured hair and hairstyling have been viewed. Criolo is a derogatory term used to describe blacks in Brazil and because braids have a historical association with Africa, they were not an option for Dona Teresa. For Dona Theresa, the idealized image of beauty and femininity was the young, white Shirley Temple. Even with a “white” hairstyle, she cannot escape perceptions of the inferior quality of her hair, of which her father’s actions remind her. This narrative is based on experience several decades old and the generational time gap raises legitimate questions about whether or not such issues continue to shape the experiences of Afro-Brazilian girls.

My observations of families illustrate that elements of the movement have slowly been incorporated into socialization practices in families. The afro, called Blaque, (pronounced Black-EE) in Brazil is a hairstyle that has increasingly been gaining
popularity in Brazil. It has become one of the symbols of movement’s effort to promote the embrace of natural hair. It is also attached to a broader personal style and identity as Walter explains,

“Blaque when we say Blaque here it is not only a question of color. Blaque is a way of … it is a style that the person has. How they do their hair. That loose hair, that full hair, that is the Blaque style. Nowadays, many people want to have an afro but they can’t.” (Walter, 19 years old)

Binho, an 18 year old with a penchant for theater, has an increased consciousness about race through this movement and this has lead him to adopt a race-specific artistic nickname:

“My creative name is Blaque. I love my color and I like afros. When I went to make my brand … when I was taking a class, a professor told me that I had to choose a trademark. At that time, I was wearing my hair a little longer on the top and there was a song that had just come out that was saying afro hair and braided hair were great. So I like my afro, but I did not like the idea of talking about negros and pretos. I named myself Blaque and everyone knows that it means black.” (Binho, 18 years old)

For Binho, he is inspired by songs that valorize the emerging afro-aesthetic and he incorporates it in his own artistic identity. A major struggle for black activists in Brazil is convincing Afro-Brazilians to *assumir-se* or assume their blackness, so Binho’s act is potentially revolutionary (Hanchard 1994; Telles 2004). However, the remaining part of his quote validates the fear that the movement will or already has become co-opted or reduced to stylistic preferences without a radical or political grounding (Pinho 2006; Banks 2000; Santos 1998). He wants to adopt the hair style and aesthetic, but does not want to discuss race or racism. While cooption is sometimes viewed as the inevitable conclusion to an aesthetic movement, ideally it occurs after considerable political mobilization and gains have been made (Leeds 2002).

The effectiveness of the Afro-aesthetic movement at fostering racial consciousness is further challenged by Edna’s perception about how black hairstyles are used in her family:
“You see people wearing their hair in braids more during the time when Carnaval is coming. After it is over, everybody goes back to straightening their hair.”
(Edna, 36 years old)

Thus, even when Afro-Brazilians wear their hair in braids they do not necessarily internalize racial consciousness. That blackness is considered suitable to be performed only one week out of the year reinforces the exploitation of blackness as a commodity (Santos 1998). Similarly, other informants note that the meaning that is attributed to synthetic braids also potentially undermines ways that aesthetics can challenge dominant racial hierarchies. For example, some women report using synthetic braids primarily as a way to avoid doing their own “bad” hair, rather than out of any specific interest in “afro-aesthetics.” Others report that braids provide them with a way to achieve the bounce that “good” hair has. At the same time, I am also cautious about criticizing the use of hairstyles broadly because the introduction of any new hairstyles seems to challenge the pervasive normalization of straight hair. Perhaps the use of alternative hairstyles even without consciousness may mark at least a step towards visibility of a black aesthetics or reflects how women are actively participating in negotiating and re-defining beauty hierarchies (Banks 2000; Leeds 2002). However, afro-aesthetics can easily devolve into an empty fad that reproduces white supremacy under the superficial guise of black valorization in the same way that it has happened with other cultural movements that focus on Afro-Brazilian culture (Santos 1998).

For example, most recently, the Secretariat of Tourism of the State of Bahia, building on the momentum of afro-asethetics and the increasing interest in Afro-Brazilian culture, has invested in the creation of “African Heritage Tourism in Bahia.” The initiative is expected to raise the profile of Salvador and attract significant tourist dollars to the city. One of the major targeted populations are African Americans who have historically engaged in transnational relationships with Brazil since the early 1900’s
– first as scholars and later as heritage tourists (Hellwig 1992). The publication produced by the State of Bahia to promote this initiative features high-gloss, high-quality pictures that idealizes Afro-Brazilian culture and portrays Candomblé as the exotic Afro-Brazilian centerpiece of Salvador. However, while Afro-Brazilian religion represents at least 25% of what is represented and discussed in the State of Bahia’s tourism book, Candomblé and other Afro-Brazilian religions are very much still stigmatized, if not demonized in Salvador. Marquinho, a teenage practitioner states:

Candomblé is not viewed very well in Salvador. They only talk about it to “chamar turista” (to get tourists) because it is totally different. (Marcus, 19 years old)

Further support of the stigmatization of Afro-Brazilian religions is observed among younger informants who report that one of the worst forms of insults is being called a preta do buzô. Buzô refers to the offerings that are made to the Orixás or gods of Candomblé. Hence, preta de buzô is considered a particularly negative insult. When calling someone preta (black) is not considered bad enough, the “do buzô” is added because in the eyes of the other person, it is even worse to be black and associated with the evil, “black magic” of Candomblé. As policy student Michel suggests, “There exists a scale of insult: white is good, black is bad, and preto do bozô is even worse.” The logic of racial hierarchies is even present in the specific way insults are formulated.

6.4.1 Hide my Roots! Afro-aesthetics and Cultural Movements at Home

How do other families respond to changes in how Bahia is being portrayed abroad, the growing emphasis on Afro-Bahian culture to the rest of the world, and the Afro-Aesthetics movement? Data suggests that there is a significant disconnect between international portrayals of Salvador and the lived experiences of poor Afro-Brazilians. Patricia, a 28 year old woman, who is getting her hair straightened orders her cousin not be afraid of using the straightening comb. She holds her ear down and flinches a little, while laughing and demanding, “girl, even if it burns me, hide my roots!” She prides
herself on her hair and brags that she can get any man because she is black with Indian hair “*negra com cabelo índio*.” While natural hairstyles are common on the street and among those who are part of the middle class, in my families, this is not a popular choice. Daniel who is a father and cab driver in this study has met hundreds of tourists and provides an insightful commentary,

“*They [blacks] are not as valorized as it seems, it’s just an image. I think that nowadays, he has to valorize himself. The world is starting to see that the black in Salvador is arriving, he is going to arrive. If you see tourism, there is space. If he wants to do art and dance there are spaces, the musicality of blacks is being valued and some of it is sincere. Tourists come they think the women are beautiful they fall in love and take them back to Italy ... but sometimes they prostitute them.*”

Daniel, like many *Baianos*, embraces the opportunities that a developing tourism industry brings to Salvador and the potential ways that blacks can use their artistic and musical abilities to capitalize on this. His comments also reveal a tenuousness about what Bahia’s changing image represents. These changes have not translated into opportunities for Afro-Brazilians to move into the role of business owners and entrepenuers, instead they are limited to being framed as cultural performers. Of valorization, he states, “*some of it is sincere*” but he notes that some elements of cultural valorization are feigned. Santos (1998) employs the concept of “symbolic integration” to emphasize how the state suppresses and mobilizes blackness at strategic times and for certain purposes. The new initiative to rebrand Salvador is seen as part of a strategic effort to make profits but may not reflect any true commitment to racial valorization or translate into concrete opportunities for mobility for blacks (Paschal 2008).

For families in this study, the Afro-Brazilian cultural heritage that is promoted at an international level and heralded by the tourism industry in Bahia is not viewed in the same way in their homes. Having already documented that few linked the origins of blacks to Africa, there are few cultural practices that are consciously marked or discussed as black/African or Afro-Brazilian. Cultural celebrations including the *Festa*
*de Iemanja*, which theoretically celebrate the *Candomblé* goddess of the sea, are celebrated by many as a secular holiday and re-framed as Brazilian rather than Afro-Brazilian (Paschal 2008). In the parade that accompanies the celebration, Iemanjá is represented as an enormous statue that is carried down the street, but she has white skin and very long black hair. Even the tradition of making an offering to her is done out of tradition not religious conviction. In fact, many of the same informants that celebrate the festival of Iemanjá wince at the mere mention of Candomblé or respond with looks of disgust if not fear.

While black dolls are sold in bulk to tourists in a number of stores around the city, they are almost completely absent in the Afro-Brazilian homes that I visited (Santos 2000). Additionally, when I attempt to introduce coloring books and crayons, the young girls do not color the faces brown. When I convince them to at least outline a face in brown, they insist on using yellow crayons to color the hair. This is no surprise considering how proudly they show me their book bags, which bear the image of a blonde-haired, blue-eyed Barbie. The few dolls that they have at home are all white. To the parents’ defense, in shopping centers and stores, I rarely see a dark-skinned/black doll. The only black dolls that I observe are the very dark-skinned dolls and figurines sold for tourist consumption not for actual children in Salvador. Even a course on Afro-aesthetics that I attend uses a white and blonde mannequin to train women on various hair-braiding techniques!

Many of the major museums and cultural sites that are featured in the African heritage tourism book are free to the public to enjoy but many of my families are so marginalized from the cultural center that they have never been to these locations.⁷ Some have never been to the crowning jewel of Salvador ironically named “Pelourinho” (translated to mean the whipping post). These cultural sites represent inaccessible

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⁷ There are initiatives requiring schools to incorporate Afro-Brazilian culture and history classes in school and to phase out racist books that portray blacks as offensive caricatures.
locations because the cost of transportation is prohibitive and awareness of activities and happenings there is limited. So, while foreigners are enticed by the image of an exotic and brown Bahia, for families in the study, their own self-references are overwhelming white. Essentially, the city and state have invested in an initiative to bring Afro-Brazilian cultural heritage to foreigners when many of its own citizens are not even socialized to valorize it. Moreover, those that profit most from tourists are not Afro-Brazilians, but rather the numerous foreign investors who own the major restaurants, hotels, and bed and breakfasts that dominate Bahian tourism (Paschal 2008; Christian 2011). While this re-Africanization of Bahia was initiated with the expressed goal of valorizing Afro-Brazilian culture, it has and “can paradoxically reify the myth of racial democracy” by subsuming or absorbing African culture under a large umbrella of Brazilian culture (Paschal 2008: 423; Santos 1998).

Women in Lua Cheia do incorporate some aspects of afro-aesthetics into their beauty routines. Informants use synthetic braids and enjoy having me put twists and natural braids into their hair. One of the young girls, Janete, is an aspiring hair stylist who uses her friends in the community to practice her trade. Given that tourists enjoy having their hair braided as part of the Brazilian experience, Janete’s mother is very encouraging of this career goal. At the same time, the majority of adult the women maintain their one-month hair appointments for hair relaxers or to have their hair blow-dried straight. This is easy to do considering that hair salons seem more numerous than grocery stores in Salvador. Even Ana who struggles to pay her rent each month prioritizes her hair appointments. She says that she needs to do it because otherwise she feels acabada or run-down. That her monthly hair care visits make her feel better about herself resonates with the importance of self-care and beautification as a means for black

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8 Christian, Michelle. 2011. “It’s so Pura Vida’: Enthnoracial Stratification in the Tourism Global Value Chain.” PhD dissertation, Department of Sociology, Duke University, Durham, NC. In this study, Christian uses global value chains to illustrate that the tourism industry in Costa Rica is similarly characterized by control by white foreigners and white elites, while the indigenous population is relegated to secondary or tertiary roles.
women to express a “sense of entitlement to economic, emotional and social well-being and an effort at its attainment” (Candelario 2007: 254).

6.5 Discussion

In Brazil, concerns about body and appearance dominate every aspect of social life. How can they not in a country where the rules of social interactions are based on being able to quickly interpret and respond to racialized and gendered bodies? As I have illustrated here, the body is important in Brazil because it is both a site of social control and resistance. For all Brazilian women, the relationship between gender and beauty is a trap that heightens their self-consciousness and compels them to engage in self-surveillance and self-modification (Wolf 1994). Hair is not simply about vanity it has a material foundation, as well. Given that businesses continue to make hiring decisions implicitly using a criteria of *boa aparência* (good appearance), attractiveness translates into capital. Beauty is power, it is social capital, and it can also mean respect (Hunter 2005). Intense pressures to conform to beauty norms and sanctions against those who do not are, in part, why Brazil has the second highest rate of plastic surgery in the world, surpassed only by the United States (Edmonds 2011). Beauty is a valuable good, viewed by some as a social necessity, which is perhaps why it is that, “Brazil’s poor is now receiving plastic surgery free of charge” (Bradford 2012). Beauty is no longer a preference, it is considered a right perhaps because it is a requirement (Edmonds 2011).

Afro-Brazilian women find themselves at a crossroads seeking to be validated as women and also aspiring to counter the negative stereotypes associated with the racialized meanings attached to their bodies. The effectiveness of their strategies is not as important as the process itself. The afro-aesthetics movement has, in some ways given a voice to these racial and gender dilemmas and provided alternative avenues for black women to successfully negotiate beauty hierarchies. While the movement has had
limited success at raising racial consciousness, its incorporation of elements of racial valorization do offer visibility and accessibility of new aesthetic possibilities.

However, there are some important considerations that must be taken into account when evaluating why the styles of the movement have not garnered more widespread use. During my time in Salvador, none of the employees at banks, few if any government officials or major television personalities adopted these styles. While these styles are becoming a more popular choice as an expression of cultural diversity, these styles are still viewed as threatening, unprofessional, and can potentially threaten one’s economic opportunities (Figuereido 1984; Banks 2000). Hence, while re-Africanization is embraced on the discursive and cultural level for an international audience, this does not uniformly apply to Afro-Brazilians in their day-to-day lives.

On the other hand, the growing interest in natural hair among the middle class and college students has contributed to increased opportunities for Afro-Brazilian women to become entrepreneurs and start their own businesses that can capitalize on afro-aesthetics and hair-braiding. While the ultimate impact of the afro-aesthetics movement is yet to be determined, research suggests that it may already be well in the process of being co-opted by a broader cultural ideology that tends to absorb Africanness under the banner of Brazilianness (Paschal 2008). Perhaps the true test of afro-aesthetics as a successful movement rests not in aesthetics, but in its ability to encourage Afro-Brazilians to organize for access to resources. In essence, its demise may be the best indication of its success if it fosters the notion that, “Eu prefiro ter cabeça do que cabelo!” (What is in my head is more important than what’s on my head!)
7. “Where There is Power, There is Also Resistance.”

In this chapter, I present evidence from three families to illustrate how families engage in both resistance against and accommodation to hegemonic structures. The notion of “resistance and accommodation” conceptually illustrates the tension between families’ efforts to resist racial hierarchies while simultaneously engaging in practices, discourses, and affective exchanges that undermine or contradict their resistance (Weitz 2001). Resistance and accommodation occurs in all families but these three families are highlighted because of their explicit and exceptionally creative strategies of resistance, which illustrates the complex ways that families use racial socialization to negotiate racial hierarchies. While it is true that “where there is power, there is also resistance,” the totalitarian quality of hegemony means that even resistance is limited by the constraints posed by the broader system. However, racial socialization practices in families are not over-determined by hegemonic whiteness, but rather are constantly negotiated. This chapter focuses on how each of these three families re-define racial and color hierarchies, transgress norms of racial etiquette, and re-define themselves in opposition to the hegemonic discourses and structures that constrain them. I argue that their resistance suggests that families and individuals have agency and that there are vulnerabilities in hegemonic structures.

7.1 Nascimento Family Values

“Come out from the slave quarters and wash the dishes!”

This is what Irma and Fabiana playfully yell to their younger sister Joana as we finish our meal. Neide, their mother has invited me to lunch and she has cooked a special meal consisting of mocotó, rice and, aipim. Mocotó is a decisively Brazilian dish.

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consisting of cow’s feet, stewed over beans and vegetables, served with *aipim* over white rice. A humorous argument ensues about who will wash the dishes and the three determine that it is, in fact, Joana’s turn. All three laugh as Joana playfully pushes them out of the kitchen. While other families have been shown to downplay their African heritage, Neide proudly explains to me the history of this special meal and its origins as ‘slave food’ that she claims everyone in Brazil loves to eat. The racial banter as well as their emphasis on Afro-Brazilian culture is standard conversation in the Nascimento home. As mentioned in chapter three, in families, slavery is seldom mentioned unless it is related to the novelas and even still, it is not mobilized as a social critique as I soon discover it is used here. Neide, however, is insistent that her three daughters and two sons understand the racial challenges that they will face and socializes them not to ‘*confundir a realidade*’ (confuse the reality).

All of the family members of the Nascimento Family are all very dark-skinned and considered unambiguous-looking black Brazilians. However, the “strategic ambiguity” that is characteristic of other families is much less visible in the Nascimento family where family members define themselves more uniformly in color and racial terms as *preta* and/or *negra*, the most unambiguous racial and color terms. They, however, still perceive slight differences in skin color and this is reflected in their descriptions of family members as just a little darker or little lighter than one another. In a casual conversation with her son Roberto, he begins to tell me his color and he is on the verge of saying *moreno* until he glances over in the direction of his mother and corrects himself classifying himself by color and race as *negro*. His mother cannot hear our conversation but her presence and, in essence, her instruction looms closely. Both her sons as well as the father remain distant during my visits, but they are physically present. Neide’s husband is a relatively reserved man who contributes to the
conversation with periodic nods and the occasional comment, but is rarely engaged in
the interviews or observations.

Neide is a cleaning woman at a large company in Salvador, but her work-related
injury means that she is available for hours to speak with me about her life, her family,
and Brazil. She speaks openly addressing a wide range of issues and always finds a way
to weave race and class politics into the interviews. Her interest in discussing inequality
in ways that capture the intersectionality of race, gender, and class is a deviation from
the way that socialization in Brazil is described as using messages to “promote
discrimination while simultaneously denying its existence” (Hanchard 1994: 6). She has
socialized her daughters and sons into a more critical understanding of Brazilian society
as evident by their comments, jokes, and interactions. Not only do they learn explicit
messages about social inequality, but they incorporate what they have learned into their
day-to-day interactions in what they call each other, how they relate to each other, and
how they understand themselves vis-à-vis other Brazilians. These negotiations, at times,
border on theatrical, yet they are often critical and offer a counter-discourse to dominant
discourses and narratives about race in Salvador.

7.1.1 Racial Names

Racial nicknames or names that refer to racial appearance are quite common in
Brazil and can be used as a gesture of endearment (Sansone 2003). In the Nascimento
family, Neide, too, has a nickname that she uses for all of her children and
grandchildren. They are her “‘torradinhos’” (literally translated as little burnt ones), but
her use of the term torradinho is nuanced. When asked about the meaning of torradinho,
she and her daughter Fabiana laugh and reply together that it means, “He’s black, black,
black, black, black!”² That her daughter Fabiana now uses the term to endearingly refer

² Original Portuguese: “É pretinho, pretinho, pretinho, pretinho, pretinho.” The term pretinho is a diminutive
construction for the term “black” – a term that when referring to skin color means unambiguously
black/African looking.
to her baby boy, Roquinaldo suggests that she has incorporated the same language in the socialization of her son.

Within the span of two hours, Neide uses the term more than 20 times as a descriptor of her children, grandchildren and poor blacks in Salvador. She uses it as a conscious critique of how color terms have been deployed as part of the “strategic ambiguity” that allows Brazilians to avoid labeling themselves as black (Caldwell 2007; Sheriff 2001). So, while there is a tendency for Brazilians to categorize or even whiten themselves by using intermediary color terms, her use of ‘torradinho’ functions in the exact opposite way embracing their location at the polar end of the racialized color continuum (located past black, they are burnt). Consider the following conversation about her daughter’s pregnancy with Roquinaldo:

Neide: Fabiana did not want a boy, she wanted a girl. When she went to do the ultrasound, she found out it was a boy. That’s why you should have two, one for mom and one for dad. Your husband is American. So, he [the baby] is going to come out just a little brown with his dad’s eye. They are blue right? Elizabeth: (chuckle) My husband is black.
Neide: He’s black too?
Elizabeth: Yes, he’s black.
Neide: So, then, the baby will be born torradinho like this (points to her 5 year old grandson), with this beautiful skin. Right my black African, my good black boy, my honey, my African. I call him my beautiful black boy. Isn’t that right beautiful black boy? I love African music, if we had the money I would buy a lot of African music.3

Neide has an entire arsenal of racial terms that she uses to refer to her grandson, each of them qualified by a complimentary adjective in order to emphasize the positive associations between blackness and beauty. She adds the qualifier to subvert the potentially ambiguous use of the term as either positive or negative. Instead of de-racializing the term torradinho, she makes the racial connotations even stronger by explicitly linking his beauty to Africanness and her valorization of African culture. In other families, not only do informants not connect blackness with Africa, but they

distance themselves from all things explicitly African, especially Afro-Brazilian religion and physical features (Twine 1998; Pinho 2009). She embraces her grandson’s racial phenotype, links his appearance to Africa, and creates a term to convey his location on the extreme end of the color spectrum rather than towards the middle. For Neide, it is a term of endearment, consciously constructed to embody unambiguous blackness and it is used as another way that she helps her family learn how not to confuse the reality about their color and race.

Neide’s initial assumption that my husband is white with blue eyes is consistent with the assumption of virtually everyone when they discover that my husband is American. For the vast majority of Brazilians, to be American means to be white with blue eyes. Her assumptions about Americanness and whiteness is incorrect, but she corrects herself and then continues by valorizing the fact that my future child will look like her grandson who she praises with compliments that emphasize his dark skin and Africanness. This is in contrast to requests that I consistently received from Afro-Brazilians women to introduce them to one of my American (assumed to be white male) friends.

7.1.2 Race and Privilege

Neide’s inventive strategies do not merely encompass the discursive terrain but they include other creative constructions. Upon meeting Neide and her family, she shows me an end table in the livingroom with picture frames on top and informs me it is “só pra gente branca” or only for white people. Neide states this matter-of-factly, laughs, and then again repeats that it really is only for whites. She jests that she might consider adding a picture of me to the side table considering I have white teeth. Unsure how to interpret this interaction, I document it and plan to ask her about it at a later date. However, the meaning comes to life organically when a white friend and patron of the family comes to visit. As she sits on the sofa with him, they laugh and discuss a
range of issues. Eventually, she tells him to look at the pictures on the end table that it is, “For whites only. Only for pretty people,” and she laughs loudly. She brilliantly uses the side table to mock exclusionary white space and white privilege in Brazil. She forces her white visitor to confront the reality of his privilege and remind him that while they are friends there are significant structural barriers that separate them. It is normally considered completely inappropriate to speak about race as Neide does, as it is a violation of racial etiquette of cordiality. So, Neide lightens the tone of the conversation with an exaggerated laugh in order to creatively accomplish her goal. While laughter has been used to trivialize racist comments, Neide appropriates it to challenge white privilege within the rules of racial etiquette.

Neide’s use of these creative strategies extends to her interpretation of the intersectionalities between race and class in Brazil and her criticisms of U.S. consumption. She states,

“You Americans are fat because you eat food that has lots of fat, like McDonalds. You all like McDonalds there, don’t you? Here, you will only see rich people, you do not see torradinhos in McDonalds. We eat a dessert that we get on the street for .75 cents and fruit juice. When we want a snack, we do the same thing.”

Her statement acknowledges class and racial inequality, framing blacks and wealthy people as mutually exclusive categories. But, in addition, she complements resourceful poor blacks who she claims develop smart and healthy strategies to deal with the reality of their situation. Instead of consuming expensive and unhealthy food, they find an affordable meal and snack for just a fraction of the price. She not only valorizes poor Brazilian blacks, but she valorizes how they navigate a stratified society that forces them into the lower rungs. Her critique of the United States based on
overconsumption and overspending also stands in contrast to other families that tend to idealize the U.S. (except on issues of race where it is construed as racist).  

7.1.3 Beauty

Inevitably, in a family with four women, the question of hair arises. Neide and two of her daughters wear their hair in braids, a style that is considered part of the afro-aesthetics movement. One of her daughters, Joana makes a living braiding hair in Salvador. As previously illustrated, conversations about hair have a distinctly gendered element and seldom are issues for young boys though two men in the study reluctantly admit that they too straighten their hair. On one occasion, Neide’s oldest daughter Fabiana arrives for lunch and begins talking about how she wishes that she had a girl. The conversation unfolds in the following way:

Fabiana: If Roquinaldo were a girl, I would put Mega Hair\footnote{MegaHair is synthetic hair weave that is braided into a person’s hair to add length and thickness. Many Afro-Brazilian women use MegaHair in order to achieve a certain hairstyle whether it braided or loose.} in his head.
Elizabeth: You would really put Mega Hair in a baby’s head, a two year old’s head? \textit{(All of us laugh)}
Fabiana: Yes \textit{(chuckles)}
Neide: The right thing to do would be to go ahead and straighten it.

While all interactions thus far suggest that Neide’s household is one where afro-textured hair is embraced and celebrated, her daughter’s statement suggests that this is not necessarily the case. In fact, Fabiana’s assertion that she would put false hair in her daughter’s head at the age of two seems excessive and contradictory, as does Neide’s further assertion that the “right thing to do” would be to straighten it. At the young age of two this seems premature and inconsistent with the earlier messages that valorize an African appearance. However, it becomes increasingly clear that given how race, gender, and beauty function, the racial socialization that Neide’s grandson receives

\footnote{Two separate informants reference the movie Mississippi Burning to illustrate “bad” race relations in the United States. They did not emphasize the resistance of the black community but focused on the overt displays of racism by whites.}
about his hair is drastically different than the messages transmitted to her granddaughter. This is a function of the differential meaning attached to racialized features and the expectations of beauty that exert more social pressure on females than males (Hill 2002; Hunter 2005). With all the talk about hair, Neide is reminded of her two-year old great-niece (her sister’s granddaughter):

“Oh, you have to see this little girl! She’s just this size, just two years old (uses her hands to show that the girl comes up to her knee). You have to hear her sing, “Beautiful girl with nappy hair, put a straightener in your hair so that it’ll look nice, a straightener will fix it up. Brush it, Brush it, Brush it.” (Neide pretends to have a brush in her hand as she smiles broadly and laughs imitating the way her niece sings the lyrics).

What is jarring about the song is that the line is explicitly derogatory towards black hair and frames it as something to be fixed (Figueiredo 1994; Lewis 1999; Banks 2000). In a separate meeting with the family, I am introduced to the young girl and she is told to perform the song, which she does with the help of her grandmother who sings the lyrics with her and acts out the brushing gestures. The entire interaction strikes me as particularly perplexing in light of the family’s strong racial discourse that valorizes blackness and challenges racial norms and etiquette. However, once I research the lyrics, I discover that the particular lines that Neide loves to hear her niece sing are part of a popular song by Rapaziada da Baixa Fria, entitled Cabelo de Desgraça (Shameful hair).

This song, contrary to the words that the young girl is singing was developed with the intention of validating a Black Aesthetic. The song critiques the internalization of racial stereotypes and norms, and attempts to foster positive self esteem among blacks in Brazil. Though not apparent from the line that she is singing, the song is one about self-love and anti-racism. Below is one few stanza of the song:

This is how I keep my respect  
The hair is curly, the body is black  
You heard right, so why do you  
Straighten, blow dry, and flat irony your hair?
You become part of this farce, denying our race.
Just because they invented the idea that it’s nappy?
The truth is I swear to you,
This is the past, the present the future of those who have a dark body.
But they still think it’s normal.
Straightening makes it look cool.
I prefer mine curly, natural, braided, twisted or in an afro.
Who has never been insulted?
Curly hair, bright eyes,
...

Those who straighten their hair seem to forget that curly hair always grows back
And it is this that is worth knowing that the race persists

I am Black! I am Black! Shameful hair
Shameful hair!6

It is possible, then, that this one line is being used subversively. However, her niece
go on to tell her 2 year old daughter,

“That’s right, brush it, brush it, brush it! Oh, if only I had married a white guy with
good hair and thin nose, then you wouldn’t have that hair!” (she laughs).

At this point, I can no longer distinguish between humor and truth, and now I am
starting to understand how easy it is to “confuse the reality.”

7.1.4 Racial History

Neide is intentional about her discussion of race and her insistence on weaving it
into conversations whenever possible. She initiates a seemingly non-racial conversation
about travelling to the U.S and inquires about why there are regulations that stipulate
that Brazilian tourists can only stay in the U.S for a maximum of three months. The
conversation proceeds in the following way:

Neide: How do they know if I have been there for three months?
Elizabeth: Your passport gets a stamp.
Neide: A stamp? You know in the past, they used iron to brand blacks and I see things
are not that different now. (She laughs)

6Lyrics written by Rapaziada da Baixa Fria, entitled Cabelo de Desgraça. Translated by the author. Accessed
Although the use of a passport stamp has some (tangential) similarities to how iron brands were used to mark ownership of slaves, she uses this conversation as a socialization moment. The comparison is an imperfect and problematic one, but it allows Neide to incorporate her radical applications of racial history into day-to-day conversations. Yet, her daughter is not amused:

Fabiana: Mom, it’s not just for blacks, it’s for whites, blacks, yellow, everybody. Neide: My daughter, let’s have lunch. (She has asked her daughter to come eat several times now but Fabiana continues sitting on the couch talking to me and I have already eaten).
Neide: (in a loud voice) The first people to eat are the masters and then the maid. Now its time to call the slave, the little slave from the slave quarters, but nobody wants to come. Come here right now my ‘torradinho,’ my little black one?7

Neide’s references to slavery offer yet another strategy of educating her children about racial hierarchy and slavery, while also locating her daughter in this history. Both she and her daughters laugh but understand that the hierarchy that she describes is a real one. In the same way that white privilege is emphasized through the side table, black disadvantage is made clear through these slave references.

The closest example of another family using an image or reference to slavery to describe current day conditions was in the Ribeira family. Paulo’s girlfriend states:

“I feel like I am a slave [at work]. I can’t go to the bathroom when I want, when I leave my desk they are watching me wherever I go. 10 minutes to go to a break, they have a paper that says when I can go. If I start feeling badly I can’t go to the bathroom until they tell me I can take a break. If you have to pee you have to hold it until you can take a break. As it relates to color, I think that blacks make less than whites. Mainly, women.” (Vanessa, 34 years old)

In this example, not only does Vanessa link labor exploitation and restrictive rules of behavior to slavery and gender inequality, she directly identifies how whites are privileged vis-à-vis blacks. Vanessa is exceptional to the Ribeira family. She is college-educated and is not actually a member of the family, she is Paulo’s girlfriend. She is

7 Original Portuguese: “Primeiro quem come é [são] as patroas e depois a empregada. É a hora de chamar a escrava … a escravinha da senzala mas ninguém quer ir. Agora aqui meu torradinho, pretinho!”
more radical both in terms of how she views blackness, public policy, and her understanding of how race shapes contemporary Brazilian society. She is among the few to support the quota system, but given her education and class, these differences are not surprising.

### 7.1.5 Internalized Racism

One of the reasons that Neide speaks so openly and often about race is that she wants her children to be prepared to confront situations when they have to stand up for themselves. This is a concern that all mothers have, as mentioned, but it is normally framed as “*a gente não deve abaixar a cabeça*” (we shouldn’t lower our heads). Contrary to the universal messages that other families convey to their children, Neide speaks in direct racial terms and in ways that address race, phenotype, and class. When explaining racism she states,

> “Oh because you are white and have straight hair, and you dress in name brand clothes I am not going to sit down because I am black? I have the same rights as you. I am going sit here because I am a person and I have my rights I am going to sit.”

Not only does she explicitly tell her children that it is important to know their rights and to assert them, she warns them about the negative impact of internalized racism:

> Because you have some people that have racism within themselves. What I mean is they call themselves black but they don’t value themselves. We have to value ourselves. They think that they are inferior. They don’t have much education, they don’t have nice clothes, they don’t think they are pretty, they don’t value themselves. [Elizabeth: Where does these ideas come from?] It comes from themselves.

Neide’s comment acknowledges the existence of internalized racism and acknowledges how education and appearance impact self-esteem (Caldwell 2007; Thompson & Keith 2001). This type of explicit racial socialization is rare but has been connected to fostering positive racial identity in families. However, she does not link internalized racism to
broader racial hierarchies and system of oppression, and instead makes it an individual problem. In this, her response is consistent with the astructural way that other informants explain internalized racism.

Neide’s family while exceptional in some ways is also replete with contradictions. The example of her 2 year old niece is one example of that. Given how she socializes her family, the contradictory moments still come as a surprise. In a final example, I join her daughter, Joana, as she cruises the internet on the family computer in her parents’ room. She is using Orkut, Brazil’s version of Facebook and she is looking at pictures of dark-skinned, black models who are considered very attractive, including Tyson Beckford, arguably the most famous black male supermodel in the U.S. She clicks through his pictures and comments:

“He is very good-looking, but, I would never date a Negão. I prefer lighter men. I’ve always preferred lighter men. My white friends date Black men because they say they know how to work it, but I’m not interested.”

A negão, in the way that she is using it, is a term used to describe a very dark-skinned, large, unambiguously black man. In the context of socialization in this family that is pro-African and pro-black, Joana’s comment are startling and inconsistent. I glance over to her mother because I am anticipating a clever or subversive response. Instead of problematizing Joana’s comments in a way that would be consistent with her earlier assertions about black beauty, Neide looks back at me sincerely and says:

“What? They [dark-skinned black men] seem kind of aggressive and vulgar. Don’t you ever dream of marrying a white man. You know to have children with blue eyes.”

With this comment, Neide confirms that even while she creatively resists racism, racial hierarchies continue impact her consciousness and views in fundamental ways. Resistance much like domination is not totalitarian; and so, Neide’s contradictions are illustrative of the limits and possibilities of resistance.
7.2 Santos Family

Dona Elena is the matriarch in the Santos family, a widow partnered three times, she has nine children. She is a very dark-skinned woman with hair that she wears in a long straight hair weave. She defines herself and all of her children as *negros legítimos* (legitimate blacks) though they vary considerably in phenotype. She asserts her racial identity proudly and the strength of her claims are evidenced by her questioning of my blackness:

D.E.: You, you are a black woman, but you do not have black features (*aspetos do negro*)
Elizabeth: What do you mean?
D.E.: You do not. You have a nose … you do not have a wide nose. You do not have thick lips. You do not have a black appearance. You probably have someone in your family who is not black. Because blacks have what? Thick lips, flat nose. So black beauty has to be that. To be black beauty it has to be that you have to have thick lips and a flat nose. This is what black beauty looks like. You know? Everybody in my family is negro, there is not even one person that is not.
Elizabeth: Are you sure?
D.E.: Black, black, black.
Elizabeth: There is not one person in your family that is not black?
D.E.: Black, black, black (pauses) … well, listen, wait a minute. My great grandmother was an Indian woman and my grandmother never knew her mother. My great grandmother was a slave who escaped. But that is going way, way, back. BUT! On my father’s side everybody is black, coming straight from Africa. So much so that my name is not our name, it is the name of the master. They took the name that came with us from Africa and gave us Ramos. So this name was a given name.”

In previous chapters, I discussed how racial ambiguity and color confusions can reproduce systems of hierarchy. In the Santos family, instead of focusing on mixture there is an alternative narrative of black authenticity. Dona Elena only reluctantly admits that there is an Indian woman somewhere in her family. Her hurried transition from talking about her mother’s side to talking about her unmixed black father’s side distances herself from the non-black contributions of her mother’s family. She does not portray her Indian side with disparaging remarks, but rather she wants to proudly highlight her unmixed African/black side. This is markedly different from the eagerness of other informants to deconstruct their lineage with particular emphasis on white family members.
That Dona Elena links her blackness to Africa and explains how racism shapes the way her family is identified by name shows familiarity with Brazil’s racial history that few outside of these three families illustrate. Moreover, her willingness to proudly center herself and family as part of that history is unique among the sample. Perhaps even more telling is Dona Elena’s version of how Brazil began and her understanding of how blacks arrived to Brazil. She departs drastically from the narratives in other families that begin in a scripted manner, “In the era of the great voyages…” Instead, she explains:

“There were three princesses that came from Africa and founded three houses of Candomblé. There were three that came from Africa and from there they started Candomblé here. This was a long time ago. What else do I think? In Pernambuco there were huge slave ships and when they arrived to the shores white men would say, “The chickens have arrived!” Nowadays they call it Porta das Galinhas, but it was not originally a port. It was where they raped the women when they arrived. You understand? In Pernambuco, it was not Porta das Galinhas it was the port where the women arrived and were raped. Today we, we are still suffering from discrimination but it will never be like it was before like having to sleep with those white men.”

Dona Elena’s historical account is a counternarrative or oppositional story to a dominant narrative of European discovery (Jackson 2002, Bonilla-Silva, et. al 2004). Not only does she center African women at the beginning of Brazil’s history, but she also highlights their importance in bringing African religion to Brazil. The power of national mythologies and narratives is less about their accuracies and how they function to perpetuate broader ideologies (van Dijk 1999). What Dona Elena’s interpretation of Brazilian history does is highlight how both the contributions and violations of black women, Africa, and religion comprise the core of the country’s development. This is a revolutionary revisionist approach to Brazilian history that contrasts the sanitized versions that are popularly retold. A testament to her ability to transmit this consciousness and alternative readings of Brazil to her children is her son Felipe’s her son answers to my questions about Brazil:
You want to know about the beginning of Brazil? Well, look, there are two versions of this. The real one and the fake, which one do you want? (laughs) – (Felipe, 34 years old)

Her son mocks the fake version which involves “the good little Princess who brings freedom to the slaves.” Not only does Dona Elena speak about the importance of talking to her children about racism and slavery, but her aunts also passed on to her important cultural practices including highly decorated embroidery that she proudly reveals have roots in Africa. Dona Elena’s connections to Africa also include her membership in the Afro-Brazilian religion Candomblé. Throughout our conversations, she gives thanks to the Orixás (Candomblé deities) for helping her to get through the difficult times in her life.

7.2.1 Racial Rituals

While she has adopted an essentialist view of black beauty and adopts an alternative reading of Brazilian history, she still participates in racial rituals. When asked about racial rituals, she reveals that not only is she knowledgeable about the practice of modifying a baby’s nose she further states:

“Pinch it! Get a match, light some incense, when the smoke comes up pass a finger through it and pinch the nose. Everyday I did that to thin (afinar) the nose. But that stuff doesn’t even work. It’s a lie! (sucks her teeth). I did it to all of them and they still all came out with wide noses like mine, it did not help. It does not work. No, it does not work! Nowadays people do not do this. Everything has changed.”

Despite Dona Elena’s insistence on an alternative reading of Brazil’s racial history and pride in what she perceives to be her authentically black ancestry, she is not except from the attempt to modify her children’s noses. Her participation in the racial ritual suggests how strongly the racial stigma of a wide nose is and the level of consensus about the importance of controlling racialized features. While some may suggest that nose modification is connected to beauty rather than race, Dona Elena’s earlier reference to a wide nose as being a trait of blackness suggests that the connection for her is a clear one.
Dona Elena is 75 years old but she wears a long, straight hair weave that is neatly done and cascading down her shoulders. With hopes of discussing her hair, I ask her about the meaning of good hair and bad hair in Brazil. She replies,

Our hair, black people’s hair is bad (pointing at both of us). My hair is nappy. Look at my hair, it is nappy. Look at it. (She parts through her hair with her fingers, showing me her roots where the weave is attached). I do not wear my hair out because it takes work to comb it. This is not my hair here (pointing to the extensions). Even though I wear this weave my hair grows a lot. It is the type of hair that grows, I have good hair growth but I don’t like it nappy. Nappy hair? I do not like it. I do not like it. I accept it, but for me no (shakes her head and sucks her teeth three times).

While in the beginning of our conversations she emphasizes blackness and black cultural forms in Brazil, on the terrain of beauty and hair, her view of afro-textured hair is not very different from how it is discussed in other homes. In fact, she explicitly calls it “bad” hair and does not hesitate to lump me into the category as well. The normalization of black hair as “bad” hair, is such that it is not used maliciously, it is instead considered an objective fact (Twine 1998; Caldwell 2007). The contradictions are best illustrated in the remaining portion of the conversation:

D.E: Nappy hair takes so much work. Who does your hair for you like that when you are in the United States? (She is referencing the twisted hair style that I am wearing)
Elizabeth: I do it myself, I did this, it does not take long.
D.E.: Wait, you did that yourself? You, yourself did it?!
Elizabeth: Yes.
D.E.: Wow, how beautiful! But, not for me. Honestly, I love my color. I like my color, you know. But my hair, no. I want to be the dark-skinned black woman (Negona) that I am now except with straight hair. I would love to have straight hair, I do not like nappy hair.

Here Dona Elena’s statements aptly represent the complexities and contradictions of race and hair. Her very dark skin color is acceptable but her hair is the feature that she views as bad and would like to change. Despite his mother’s comments, her son Felipe has a more critical view of what he calls the “business about hair” and beauty:
“We, the truth is, we learned to admire European beauty. If you were to stop and think about Jesus, you will see that the images of Jesus are of a European man. Blue eyes, straight hair, light skin but it has nothing to do with the religion. It’s the image that is being sold.” (Felipe, 34 years old)

It is an image being sold, an image being purchased, but also an image being reimagined. That Elena asserts her strong racial identity, embraces Afro-Brazilian culture, and valorizes black beauty while also lamenting her own “nappy” hair may be interpreted as merely illustrating the reproduction of racial hierarchies. However, Sandoval (1991) refers to these contradictions as the manifestation of “differential oppositional consciousness,” reflecting the complex ways women, in particular, “weave ‘between and among’ oppositional ideologies” of femininity and anti-racism to find self-valorization and liberation from hegemonic power structures (1991: 270-271). She argues that women adopt a “tactical subjectivity with the capacity to recenter depending upon the kinds of oppressions to be confronted” (271). Using this perspective, Dona Elena’s statement at the very least reflects the “expression of consciousness in opposition (271).” In a society that devalues what it means to be a Negona that she wants to keep her very dark skin and black facial features and only change her hair represents a crack in the hegemony of “commonsense” notions that would have her alter all of her features. Her comments reflect the ideological impasse that women face as they negotiate hegemonic notions of femininity and anti-racism and work to create spaces where the two do not have to exist as mutually exclusive. Dona Elena’s partial embrace of her “black features” can be re-interpreted as reproducing hegemonic structures but it is also a signal of the permeability of hegemonic structures.

7.3 The de Jesus Family - The Brazilian Black Panther

Finally, the de Jesus Family is the only family that consistently socialized family members into positive racial messages, illustrated complex understandings of race and color, and linked their racial understandings to political action. To refer to this family as
the Brazilian Black Panthers may seem specious but it is appropriate. In this family, Andres de Jesus is married to Claudia and they have three children together (1 girl and two boys). Andres is a very tall, medium to dark-skinned man with short hair, a friendly face, and a gentle demeanor. His wife is darker than he is with straightened hair. Two of their children are the same deep brown color as Andres and the middle child has a dark butterscotch color and wears an afro.

Early on in my interview with Andres and his family, he gently requests that I call him by his nickname *Pantera Negra* (Black Panther). I am intrigued by his name, especially when he hands me a black business card with the image of a black panther and his contact information listed on the front. During our initial introduction, I assume that Andres is an overzealous Afro-Brazilian with a slight obsession with the 1960’s in the U.S. This soon changes. In other families in the study, the nicknames that were given to families were generic names based on skin color or shortened versions of their original names. However, in this family, Andres has renamed himself *Pantera Negra* (Black Panther) and he goes by *Pantera* for short. Moreover, his children are called *Panterinhos* (little Panthers) and his wife *Panterona* (big female Panther). After perusing a tattered album filled with literally hundreds of old newspaper clippings, legal documents, and pictures of him wearing a large afro while organizing community events, it is clear that he has fashioned himself in the tradition of the radical Black Panthers in the U.S. Not only does he adopt the nomenclature but it is clear that he also adopts their racial politics and emphasis on community action and organizing.

**7.3.1 Brief Life History of *Pantera Negra***

*Pantera Negra* is 55 years old and when asked about his color and race he states, “negro” for both without hesitation, without pause, and with a proud nod of his head. He was born one of 22 siblings in Salvador to a poor black maid from the interior part of the State. His mother much like many black women during her time was very poor and
worked in the homes of white Brazilians. He describes his mother and his birth in the following way:

“My mom had her first child and gave it away to a white family. She had the second child and gave it away. Right after I was born a white family adopted me. But in my heart I am black, I never stopped being black. I am always with my people, which is why I have done social work in the community geared towards improving the living conditions of our people.”

His statement reflects his strong racial identity and sense of racial solidarity, but I am curious about how the remaining 21 siblings in his family identify themselves. When I ask him, “Are your siblings negros?” he responds:

“I don’t know I never asked them. The blackest of the group is me and Gerardo. My dad is without a doubt black. Railda is white. You already saw my mom’s picture. I’m going to grab it. Railda, Sara, Octavio and Paulo are a little lighter. But I’m the only one who is a ‘negro assumido’ but just saying I am black isn’t enough. This is someone who is black and assumes their blackness. I assume it because I am black, I truly identify as an African descendant. You understand? Even if I were a little lighter I am black because that is how I define myself. A person can be white or black but I am black. There is either white or black, I don’t see pardo. I see white or black.”

In just the first few minutes of our conversation, Pantera Negra clearly outlines his position on race and color. He has siblings that are a variety of colors (the lightest he refers to as white), but these color categories are not racial categories. As it relates to determining race, it is not merely a question of being an externally imposed category but he emphasizes that he actively assumes his racial identity as a personal choice and connects it explicitly to Africa. Intermediate categories like pardo are meaningless to him as he understands race in Brazil as bifurcated, black or white. This is consistent with other informants in this study and contemporary research in Brazil (Sheriff 2001).

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8 Original Portuguese: “Mas negro assumindo só sou eu. Sou negro, mas não é só dizer que sou negro, dizer que é negro e assumir a negritude. Eu assumo porque sou negro me identifico como um descendente africano mesmo. Esta certo? Eu posso ser um pouco mais claro mais sou negro porque e como eu vou me definir. Posso ser branco ou negro e eu sou negro.”

9 See the discussion of racial and color categorization in chapter three for a discussion of the relative use of these terms.
Pantera Negra spends the next hour or so bringing out photos and newspaper clippings that document the numerous and impressive community projects that he has organized. He links these community efforts to the importance of giving blacks access to resources and basic infrastructure. One of his major achievements is having restructured the water sanitation system so that clean water would be available to community members. His photos show huge tractors and machinery that he managed to get to city to provide in order to solve the water sanitation problem. Proud of his accomplishments, he shows me pictures of himself posing in front of the new water facilities with his small daughter and his sons working alongside other community members. He mentions that this water project is particularly important to him because many black women support their families using the money that they earned from washing clothes. He explained that when the water was not working properly it meant that the black woman could not do their jobs. This was the impetus for the water project, but he explains,

“But you can’t say this. You can’t tell them what you’re doing. If you say it is something about black woman and jobs, they won’t support it. If you say it as being about having water they will do it. You have to be smart about it. We’re smart people. You have to be smart.” (Pantera, 55 years old, father of three)

Pantera is indeed knowledgeable about how race-based initiatives that also target women are unlikely to be funded. He has a firm sense of intersectionality, revealing how both race, class, and gender are all important considerations in how he presents the community project. Therefore, he strategically subverts the system by framing the project using universal terms, without losing sight of his explicitly racial and gender goal. In some ways, this is similar to the universal socialization messages that parents provide their children. However, an important difference is that Pantera tells his children the actual racial motivation behind the seemingly non-racial initiative and he teaches them how to navigate social institutions in Brazil in a “smart” way.
7.3.2 Explicit Socialization

While race seems to be a topic that is only implicitly addressed by families, I ask *Pantera Negra* about what he teaches his children about race and discrimination. He states,

“It’s like this. The behavior of the family is already teaching them this. In my interview I showed you all the things related to the person who I call *Pantera*. *Pantera* raises his children and his children look up to him. There is no secret. Everything about my life is open and my children participated in every movement. It’s natural teaching.”

For *Pantera* because his children have been so active in the community movements that he has organized and have heard him speak about equality he is less concerned about passing along this instruction to them. The implicit socialization or natural teaching that other families use primarily to reproduce racial hierarchy is used in this family to promote racial activism and resistance to racism. In fact, two of his children are in college and in their rooms are several shelves of books with familiar titles including classic *Franz Fanon* and Dubois. *Pantera* does not have to worry about his children, so he places more emphasis on his notion of the neighborhood family:

“You can’t just be a father to your child but you need to be a father to your neighbor’s son as well. Your child is also your neighbor’s child. When your child goes out, the outside world is there. You are the father of your son fine, ok. What are you going to do? You are going to work, pay for his college, give him clothes, food, protect him. And now he goes out in the outside world and there is your neighbor’s son. Your neighbor’s son isn’t well behaved, if you can do something for your neighbor, do it! When you help your neighbor’s son, you protect your kids too.”

*Pantera* is both practically and philosophically invested in the well being of the children in the neighborhood. He views the future of his children and that of the neighborhood children linked. *Pantera*’s political participation confirms what other researchers have written about the relationship between strong racial identity, racial solidarity and political activity (Hanchard 1994).
Throughout the interview, Pantera discusses in an astonishingly elaborate and detailed manner how structural racism impacts the unequal distribution of state resources in communities, economic and educational disparities, and creation stereotypes in Brazilian society. Moreover, he links racism to historical and contemporary issues in a way that spans an entire century of Brazilian history. His understandings of Brazil’s racial and economic history are enlightening demonstrating his sharp historical knowledge and sociological analysis. In addition to structural racism, he also addresses internalized racism:

“Black against black discrimination is worst than white. And this makes me uncomfortable, that is why I am fighting against this. It exists but for blacks it’s unconscious. He discriminates because of how he was raised and because of the culture of this country. This happens because his own family upbringing discriminates. It has put it in his mind that white is prettier than black. And that when a black has a lighter son it is an achievement. For me, it’s not. It doesn’t matter your color, what is important is the education of that citizen and human being.”

Pantera unlike any of the other informants in this study linked internalized racism to individual, family-level, and structural factors, which he refers to as the “culture of the country.” His analysis is a sophisticated multi-level analysis that is engaging and refreshing. In this, the practices of racial socialization in the de Jesus family are radical, systematic, and have material outcomes.

7.4 Discussion

In this chapter, I highlight three families that offer the best examples of how racial socialization can be subversive and foster critiques of dominant racial ideologies and hierarchies. Though I highlight these three families, all families engage in resistance, albeit at varying levels of intensity, commitment, and effectiveness. When they do so, even in isolated case, these “moments of ruptures” contest hegemonic structures (hooks, 1992: 117). These three families are emphasized because they illustrate how resistance can be more systematic rather than sporadic. The explicitness
of their racial socialization is evident in their rejection of ambiguous color and racial terms, revision of dominant narratives of national history, emphasis on the continued relevance of racism, and valorization of blackness as Africanness. These factors are important because previous research suggests, “developing resistant forms of racial consciousness involves [both] the recognition of how race and racism operate and the development of strategies to resist their influence (Caldwell 2007: 17). I argue that these families are successful at creating innovative strategies of counter-hegemony because they cultivate strong racial identities and emphasize the structural and individual aspects of racism.

These family case studies illustrate that even in homes with some of the most radical discourses and practices, families do not escape the influence of hegemony. Hegemony is defined as totalitarian and multi-dimensional but it is not static and there are ways to shift the balance of power. Foucault describes domination as “relations of power,” so that families and individuals are actors in these relations (Foucault 1982). These three families provide examples of sustained efforts to destabilize hegemonic whiteness in order to become “ideological dissidents” who can re-define racial meanings, re-construct a new sense of self, and forge resistance strategies that have material consequences (van Dijk 1999). For example, Neide’s redefinition is discursive, evident in how she valorizes blackness by employing the use of specific words such as torradinho and her subversive use of racial jokes. Dona Elena (re)-defines hegemonic ideologies through her African-centered narratives of Brazil’s “discovery” and her celebration of her African ancestry. Lastly, Pantera redefines himself by embodying a new identity that uses a consciously racialized black persona to successfully mobilize the community to work towards their social goals. Pantera’s mission extends to the way he understands what his resistance and family mean for the rest of the community:
“Our family is an example for the entire street. They themselves have said this to me... Look at it this way, when you become a reference you are careful not to make mistakes.”

His example of resistance is a form of socialization for his neighbors implicitly and explicitly transmitting a message about the importance of community collaboration to combat racism. Throughout this chapter, I focus on how racial socialization, particularly in the first two cases is characterized by both systematic ruptures and accommodation to racial ideologies. However, the limitations of their resistance are as much a testament to the hegemonic dominance of racial hierarchies as they are evidence of its vulnerability. The presence of resistance suggests that hegemony is not completely totalitarian, that there is room for agency and space for change. In the end, this chapter suggests that though they are constrained by the powerful influences of hegemonic whiteness, their resistance is a glimmer of hope that these oppressive structures are not as impenetrable as they seem.

Though these three families are exceptional within the context of the core families in this study, resistance by Afro-Brazilians in Salvador and Brazil, more broadly, has a distinct history beginning as early as slavery. Marron communities or quilombos, populated by fugitive slaves, were among the first manifestations of resistance, serving as spaces where Afro-Brazilians pursued self-determination through the “creation of parallel and alternative communities coexisting within national cultures” (Butler 1998: 62). Later, the development of the political party Frente Negra Brasileira, in 1931, was among the first efforts to politically mobilize blacks around a race-based identity (Butler 1998; Hanchard 1994). Though unsuccessful in garnering widespread support from the majority of Afro-Brazilians, its creation paved the way the development of the contemporary black movement. This modern movement still faces difficulties in attracting black membership. However, it has been phenomenally effective at challenging the notion of racial democracy, promoting understandings of
race that reflect a white-black binary, and mobilizing both domestic and international resources to achieve legislative policy changes that can improve the living conditions and opportunities for blacks in Brazil (Telles 2004). The history of black resistance in Brazil, challenges to racial hierarchies exhibited by these families, and concrete gains of the black movement in Brazil exemplifies that, indeed, “where there is power, there is resistance.”

8. Conclusion – The Ties that Bind

The preceding chapters explore the practices of racial socialization in Afro-Brazilian families and the mechanisms through which hegemonic systems of white supremacy and patriarchy are reproduced and sustained. I argued that while Afro-Brazilian families engage in racial socialization practices that contain elements of resistance, they ultimately tend to reproduce racial hierarchies in ways that reflect the persistence of hegemonic whiteness.

Chapter 3 builds on racial socialization research in the United States to analyze two of the three broad domains of racial socialization: explicit socialization messages and cultural participation. In families, racial socialization conveys the “strategically ambiguous” logic of color and racial classification, frames racism as individual, emphasizes cultural participation that nurtures nationalism, and engages in the superficial valorization of Afro-Brazilian culture. In this way, racial socialization in Brazil is considerably different than racial socialization in the U.S., because in Salvador messages valorizing racial heritage are rare and efforts to prepare family members for racial bias are replaced with universal messages of equality. Moreover, cultural participation cultivates affective ties to a national family that significantly hamper the development of a racial identity. In addition, cultural participation conveys negative messages that devalue blackness both through the relative absence of positive black figures, overrepresentation of blacks in roles of servitude and portrayals of black criminality, and the selective incorporation of Afro-Brazilian culture.

It may seem contradictory that in a state that has re-branded itself to emphasize its Afro-Brazilianness I argue that Afro-Brazilian culture is not valorized in families. However, there is a distinct chasm between the exported valorization of Afro-Brazilian culture and the continued stigmatization of Afro-Brazilian culture. Afro-Brazilian cultural practices are viewed as acceptable during strategic moments and only after they
have been “domesticated” (Kraay 1998). Moreover, even when Afro-Brazilian culture is valorized it tends to get stripped of important subversive elements and subsumed under the umbrella of Brazilianness (Paschal 2008). In a perverse way, the state and by extension the family nurtures participation in cultural activities, including novelas, soccer, capoeira, and Carnaval as well as traditionally Afro-Brazilian celebrations (Festa de Iemanjá and the Lavagem do Bom Fim) in order to cultivate a national identity based on the “symbolic incorporation” of African culture. This provides Afro-Brazilians with an affective reward (national pride, sense of belonging), but it also serves as an effective strategy for stifling racial identity and minimizing organized resistance against racism.

In Chapter 4, I build on previous research on socialization to expand on how the stigmatization of racial features impacts affect in biological family relationships. If the state uses positive affective ties to the nation to discourage racial mobilization, families rely on the unequal distribution of affection to implicitly transmit the rules of racial hierarchy. In this chapter, I argued that racial hierarchies orchestrate racial socialization in ways that lead to discursive, concrete, and affective responses that stigmatize members with ‘black-like’ phenotypes and compromise the integrity of intimate relationships. In this chapter, intimate relationships are defined as parent-child, sibling, romantic pairings, and extended family relationships. How affection is distributed within these relationships supports the conclusion that colorism (expanded to include a variety of racialized features) orchestrates the affective terrain of the family. Findings support the conclusion that families are embedded so deeply in hegemonic whiteness that the (de)-valorization of racialized features comes to shape fundamental socialization and racialization processes in the family.

Chapter 5 illustrates how racial socialization and differential treatment based on phenotype within families (and in the broader society) has implications for wellbeing. I argued that not only is a compromised sense of well being evident in narratives of
belonging and self-esteem, but differential treatment can initiate a series of traumatic social consequences for the most “black-looking” family members. I implore researchers to consider this chapter and the social psychological outcomes that I discuss because it illustrates that experiences of differential treatment and/or differential affective attachments lead to traumas that can have life-long developmental, psychological, and sociological consequences. These psychological consequences must also be framed as inextricably connected to the ideological and structural pressures of hegemonic whiteness.

Chapter 6 explores how the scrutiny of female and black bodies creates unique challenges for Afro-Brazilian women. I argued that the centrality of the body and beauty in Brazilian society has particularly oppressive implications and manifestations in the lives of Afro-Brazilian women. The emphasis placed on self-surveillance, self-presentation, and the production of self is directly linked to the ongoing struggle that Afro-Brazilian women engage in to negotiate a gendered and racialized beauty culture and overcome the stigma of racialized features. I concluded by suggesting that the afro-aesthetics movement in Salvador is an intervention with the potential to valorize blackness and African influences. However, I argued that its impact is undermined by state efforts and popular interest in symbolically embracing the afro-aesthetics movement as a mere style and subsuming re-Africanization under a broader Brazilian cultural frame (Pinho 2010; Santos 1998).

Finally, Chapter 7 highlights narratives that illustrate the complex and nuanced way that three families engage in creative strategies of resistance against white hegemony. In this chapter, I emphasize agency and resistance, while also identifying how families accommodate racial hierarchies. By re-defining systems of valorization and hierarchies, challenging commonsense racial meanings, and mobilizing against racial inequality, their subversive practices and beliefs undermine hegemonic whiteness.
While I highlight these three families, I argue that all families exhibit moments of resistance that when considered together make small, but significant cracks in white supremacy.

8.1 Limitations and Future Directions

This study makes important conceptual contributions to the way researchers think about racial socialization and racialization in families, but there are limitations that should be considered. This study was conducted with a small sample of families based in one neighborhood in Salvador, Bahia, Brazil. While I travelled to other neighborhoods for interviews with extended families, I did not compare neighborhoods. Moreover, families all belonged to the same class, with few exceptions. As well, males were eliminated from the study early on in the research. Given research on neighborhood, gender, and class effects, these factors should be taken into consideration in future studies. For example, members of the black movement are overwhelming educated and socially mobile black Brazilians. Their experiences may very well be different from those of the Brazilians in this study though Twine’s (1998) study on socially mobile black Brazilians suggests that there are also important commonalities. I chose to study economically disadvantaged Brazilians because the majority of negros in Brazil are poor or working class and their class experience is one that is closer to that of the informants in this study.

To critiques that may emphasize the selection of Salvador, Bahia, Brazil and question the generalizability of the study I offer the following responses. This research was designed as a project that is, at its core, concerned with theory building not generalizability. The practices that I highlighted in these studies are part of a diverse array of racial socialization practices that are deployed by Brazilian families. I hope that additional studies will be produced to broaden our understanding of the diverse forms and consequences of racial socialization with an emphasis on racial phenotype.
Salvador does have a unique history that, in some ways, sets it apart from other regions in Brazil. But these differences seem to only add validity to my argument that emphasizes the pernicious ways that white supremacy orchestrates family relationships in phenotypically diverse families. Given its distinction as the blackest city in Brazil and its emphasis (albeit strategic) on Afro-Brazilian culture, it is a location where one might expect Afro-Brazilians to be shielded (somewhat) from white supremacy. In order to maximize the validity and reliability of these findings, triangulation is highly recommended (Patton 2002). Many of the findings, as they relate to phenotypic differentiation in families, can already be triangulated to other qualitative projects conducted in Brazil (Sheriff 2001; Caldwell 2007; Twine 1998; Burdick 1998), the U.S. (Wilder & Cain 2010; Russell, et al 1992; Frazier 1965) and Latin America (Candelario 2007). These preliminary comparisons provide strong evidence of the broader implications of this study.

Another limitation is that my approach to racial socialization is fundamentally influenced by studies of racial socialization the United States. There are certainly commonalities between the two racial systems, but there is perceptible tension embedded in how I deploy U.S. racial socialization as both similar and different from Brazil. Not only are basic assumptions of racial identity not applicable to Brazil, but the framing of explicit and implicit racial socialization in the U.S. underestimates the complexities of families in the U.S. and does not offer a complete base from which to examine racial socialization in Brazil. While one goal of this project was to reveal the shortcomings of racial socialization research in U.S. and another was to develop a study that directly explores racial socialization in Brazil, I hope that it has also contributed to illustrating how a “dynamic conceptual approach” might capture the implicit, subtle, affective, and strategic forms of racial socialization in Brazil. Given arguments that Brazil is becoming more like the U.S. and the U.S. is experiencing Latin Americanization,
perhaps the dynamic conceptual approach that I am constructing for Brazil will be more applicable for the United States in the years to come.

From a methodological perspective, I would have liked to highlight the role of other social institutions and actors in the socialization process, by exploring churches, schools, and social spaces. This would have allowed me to construct a true ecological model of racial socialization. Future studies should also include interviews and observations with fathers and their children, and perhaps even a more naturalistic approach might offer insight into other practices of racial socialization that were not uncovered here. I also focus on Afro-Brazilian families but I believe that there is a wealth of knowledge to be gained by researching racial socialization and racial exclusivity among white elites in Bahia.

Lastly, substantively, I have emphasized that families engage in the resistance to and reproduction of racial hierarchies. I identify the stigmatization of racialized features as one of the ways that families reproduce these hierarchies. For example, in Chapter six, I highlighted how Afro-Brazilian women chose to “discipline” their bodies as a reflection of their negotiation of race, gender, and phenotypic hierarchies. It is important to clarify, however, that hair styling and even hair straightening does not always reflect the reproduction of hegemonic whiteness. Black women make conscious choices about their self-presentation, and sometimes it is based on calculated decisions that consider marriagability and social mobility, but other times it is sincerely about styling freedom, creativity, and versatility (Tate 2005; Caldwell 2004). The majority of Afro-Brazilian women in this sample straighten their hair because they have internalized racist hierarchies, but women across the Diaspora use their hair to subvert notions of race, gender, and beauty (Tate 2005). That is, women may style and work on their hair in ways that may be constrained by hegemonic whiteness but may also be used to re-imagine an alternative form of Black beauty (Tate 2005; Pinho 2006; Caldwell
2004). These women’s willingness to envision alternative avenues to beauty, even while sometimes reproducing gender and beauty norms, represents a “rupture” in hegemony and signals the possibility of resistance.

8.2 Conclusions

Historically, racial socialization has been studied for its role in responding to race and racial stratification through messages and practices. In this study, I argued that racial socialization not only responds to stratification but also contributes to the racialization process. As families engage in discourses and practices that stigmatize racialized features through explicit (and implicit) socialization, racial socialization functions in cyclic interactionism with racialization processes, ultimately producing race and not merely responding to it. Widespread internalization of the logic and value system of racial symbols in families is necessary for racial socialization to function in this manner. Some researchers may be inclined to conclude that the family dynamics that I deconstruct here suggest that, in Brazil, racism is a question of color prejudice and not “real” racism. This conclusion would be consistent with past researchers who argued that inequality in Brazil was based on a more innocent color prejudice and not racism. But this viewpoint is not consistent with my views nor with how contemporary scholars conceptualize the relationship between phenotypic differentiation and racism.\footnote{See Silva (1999) for a critique of the perspective that color prejudice and not racism is relevant in Brazil.}

Throughout this work, I have emphasized the importance of connecting practices of colorism (extended to include not just skin color, but other features such as hair texture, hair color, nose, lips, eye color, etc) as part of a stratifying system that functions primarily to perpetuate racial hierarchies. In Brazil, and in Latin America, more broadly where race is based on appearance, phenotypic differentiation is an essential element of the racialization process. Its prominence in practices of racial socialization in families allows for a naturalized and “non-coercive domination” that sustains the racial system.
In this way, phenotypic differentiation based on features (colorism) is inextricably linked to racism.

In Brazil, informants often reported that the “worse type of racism is the racism that blacks have against each other.” This assertion was so popular that I considered abandoning this project because I did not want to contribute to discourses that blamed blacks for racism. However, it is because of the popularity of these “commonsense” hegemonic discourses that research that grounds internalized racism in white supremacy is an important intervention. This intervention requires that researchers begin with racialization (not race), identify how hegemonic whiteness orchestrates racial socialization in all social institutions, and then deconstruct the mechanisms through which racial socialization and racialization are mutually constituted. In Bahia, racial socialization in schools and media that represents blacks as inferior and reduce radical, historical actors to inert symbols are important for their roles in perpetuating white supremacy. Superficial cultural integration, co-option of cultural movements, and promotion of nationalism, which silences racial critiques are mechanisms of white supremacy. In sum, families do not act alone but are influenced by and are the products of broader racial ideologies and hierarchies. However, they are also not passive recipients, but rather, they function as creative actors constantly negotiating racial hierarchies and creating new forms of consciousness.

Though racial socialization in families is central to this study, chapter 4 on well being illustrates my concern with the relationship between socialization and well being. I originally designed this project to address critiques that studies which address the complex ways that families process phenotypic differentiation have been marginalized (Burton et al 2010). This research addresses this critique by using a family systems paradigm to show that the transmission of emotion, negative affect, and racialized stigma in family relationships have tremendous implications for racial socialization and
have long-lasting psychological consequences. But there is more work to be done. Research documenting how differential treatment by caregivers impacts “quality of sibling interactions, relationships, and adjustment” might be paired with my research findings in order to investigate how racial phenotype and racialization impacts socialization and well being (Volling 1997: 228).

Expanding the level of analysis to the global level, racial socialization, racialization, and cultivated self-consciousness of racialized features based on white supremacy has reverberating effects around the world. Though this study focuses on a particular region at a particular historical moment, “whiteness must be analyzed both as an interconnected global system and by focusing on its local specificities” (Ware & Back 2002: 19). Therefore, the logic of the racial system that organizes racial socialization in Brazilian families can and should be triangulated to other regions in Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa, and Asia, where oppressive racial ideologies, discourses, and concrete practices continue to maintain white supremacy. This is important because far beyond the families in this study or even families in the Americas, with increased globalization of ideas and ideologies, white supremacy enjoys a global reach.

My research fundamentally resonates with research and reports of skin bleaching in African and Asian countries, ‘browning’ in Jamaica, and ‘ethnic’ plastic surgery that focuses on the removal or improvement of ethnic features (see Glenn 2009 for a wonderful anthology of Global Colorism). Globalization has normalized the hyper-surveillance and evaluation of racialized bodies based on white supremacy and the latest iteration includes (dangerous) bleaching procedures for a lighter and more aesthetically pleasing genital region. In this way, the notion that “not one part of a woman's body is left untouched, unaltered. No feature or extremity is spared the art, or pain, of improvement,” has unique implications for non-white women around the world (Dworkin 1974, 113-114). The racialized practices of body modification, which are
engaged in at a global level, suggest that one of the contemporary forms of colonialization is corporeal, so that the racialized and gendered body functions as a site of colonialization, contestation, reproduction, and negotiation. While the scope of this project does not allow me to fully address the global implications of colorism and racial phenotype, it provides compelling evidence that future research should do so.

Concluding, this research studies racial socialization in Salvador, but spans several levels of analysis and has implications that are international, multi-disciplinary, and ultimately emancipatory. Future research should consider a conceptual approach to racial socialization that emphasizes how families resist and accommodate racial hierarchies, frames racial socialization and racialization as mutually constituting through the transmission of the ideologies and practices that foster phenotypic differentiation based on white supremacy, and highlights how the transmission of emotions and affects is a mechanism of hegemonic whiteness. As I have argued, experiencing compromised affective ties and differential treatment based on racial phenotype in families can be traumatic because of our collective affective and investment in the promise of family. Home is where the hurt is, precisely because of our strong belief that home is where the heart should be.

The multi-arena quality, adaptive capability, and persistence of hegemonic whiteness mean that the struggle against white hegemony and phenotypic stratification involves interventions at the individual, family, institutional, national, and global level. That a theory of global white supremacy must span multiple levels of analysis exemplifies the pervasiveness of hegemonic whiteness, but its dominance is not impenetrable. Resistance is possible though it is inherently rife with contradictions and complexities. Not the least because it involves a struggle that might take us to the far corners of the world only to bring us back to our own front door where we continue to battle our most formidable opponent: the enemy within.
Appendix A: Initial Interview Instrument

In my initial research design, I outlined a thorough list of the types of questions that I wanted to ask informants. During the first three months of my research period, I decided not to use this formal list of question and instead focus on broad themes that would provide the space for informants to disclose information about their lives. I have included the initial questions here, because while I did not ask these questions formally, they provided the general structure of informal interviews. I directed conversations in ways that would eventually elicit answers to these questions.

General
- Daily routine
- Interactions with neighbors and community
- Differences between neighborhood families

Work (How does color/race organize who works and where?)
- Do you work?
- Employment history

School (How does color/race organize academic settings and interactions at schools?)
- Tell me about what school is like.
- What are your friends/best friends like?
- Do you tend to have friends that are a lot like you … do they look like you?

Race (What are the racial classification rules and perceptions of what they mean?)
- In Brazil, does racism exist?
- How would you define who is branco (white)?
- How would you define who is the negro/preto (black)?
- How can you tell someone’s racial identity?
- What is racism? Have you ever heard this word before?
- What have you learned about racism from your family? From friends? Have you ever experienced racism or know someone who has?
- Are you taught about race and inequality in your schools? Does your family ever talk about these things?
- Does race or color ever come up with your friends?
- Do you ever feel like people are not your friends because of your color?
- Do you think that teachers treat students differently based on their color?
- Do you think people, in general, treat lighter/darker people differently? Give me an example.

Family
- Do you have siblings? How many? Do you live together?
- When you think about your family, can you think of any time when lighter skin family members are treated better than darker-skinned family members? Or vice versa? Give me an example.
- Do your parents or people in your community talk about race/color? What have they said?
- Do you ever think that your life would be different/better if you were a different color or if you looked differently? How?
Has anyone treated you badly because of your color? How did you respond? Did you tell your parents/siblings?
Does your family or friends make jokes about people because of how they look?
Do you feel close to your family? What about your extended family, what is that relationship like?
Are there places that your parents tell you that you shouldn’t go because of your color?
A lot of people your age are beginning to become interested in dating, are there any people who you like?
What type of person do you think your family thinks is right for you? Does color matter?
Do you have any friends who have bad luck with guys? Why?
Where does your family hope you will work when you get older? Is this what you want?
What are some of things that you have been taught to prepare for that future?

Gender (How do race/color and gender interact to impact socialization?)
Describe the relationships between men and women in the community.
Are there very any married couples?
Are men and women faithful in relationships?
Do you think it is easy being a man/woman? Why?
What are some of the challenges?
What are some of the benefits?
What does it mean to be a “good” woman/man?
What does it take to be a handsome man/beautiful woman?

Appearance (How do racial/color hierarchies influence beauty valuations?)
If you had to describe yourself to someone who couldn’t see you, what would you say?
What are the characteristics that you think people in Brazil find attractive?
Do people in Brazil/your community find these same features attractive?
Describe the physical characteristics that you find beautiful. Who are some of the people that you think are beautiful? If you could change one thing about yourself what would it be?
Who are the most beautiful people on television?
Do you think that the people on television represent what Brazilians look like?
What do you do to improve your appearance? Why?

Tentative Semi-Structured Interview Schedule – Parents
Work (How does color/race organize workplace dynamics?)
Do you work? Where? How often?
When did you get your first job?
Do you work with people in the community? Who?
What is your job/boss like?
Describe your co-workers.

Kids & Parenting (How does color/race organize parenting and socialization?)
Do you have children? How many? Do all of them live with you?
Tell me about your children.
Which one looks most like you? Describe the other ones.
Describe how you divide chores in the house?
How do your discipline them?
To which are you closest? Why?
Do they go to school? Which one? How frequently?
Do they have lots of friends? Are there some kids that you do not want them to befriend? Why?
Appendix B: Major Interview Topics

I originally began this study with an interview instrument that included over 50 different questions. In the field, this instrument was too detailed and was not useful for interviews that tended to be much more informal. Instead of using formal questions, I engaged informants by addressing broader themes. Below are the major themes that I discussed with informants during formal and informal interviews:

- Settings and actors in racial socialization
- Family and individual racial classification
- Family and individual color classification
- Defining important family actors and socialization sources
- Daily routines
- Participation in “racial rituals”
- Socialization messages in the home (explicit or implicit)
- Role of schools in socialization
- Socialization about Brazilian history and slavery
- Phenotypic Hierarchies: What is good hair and bad hair?
- Participation in Afro-Brazilian cultural activities
- Who is beautiful? / What does it mean to be beautiful?
- Importance of Cultural Participation
- Informal use of color and racial terms and what they mean
- Define racism / Experiences or Examples of Racism
- Perceptions of differential treatment in families (not asked directly)
- Romantic Relationships and ideal partners
- Beauty and self-presentation
- Family Heritage and History
Appendix C: Research Ethnics (English)

Verbal Consent Form

Title of Study: Family Socialization in Brazilian Families
Elizabeth Hordge Freeman, Graduate Student
Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, Primary Investigator

A. Project Description
This study involves research about family socialization in Brazil. It will be used for my dissertation and may be published. I will ask you questions and would like you to answer them. If you do not understand a question please ask me to clarify it. The interview will last approximately 45 to 90 minutes. I will record your answers using my digital voice recorder. If possible, I would also like to observe the daily activities in your family and will take notes. Your name will not be associated with your answers or my observations. Your answers will be saved on a disk and will be kept in a locked and concealed location. Results will be transcribed and analyzed but your individual responses will not be reported.

B. Risks and Benefits
There are minimal risks for you to participate in the study. Given that you will be talking about personal experiences, there may be some issues cause some emotional distress. If this happens you can choose to stop or continue with the interview. A benefit of participating in this study is that you have the opportunity to talk about your personal experiences in your family that you may not often have the chance to discuss.

C. Compensation
You will receive no monetary amount for participating in this study.

D. Confidentiality
Only your first name will be recorded but the record of the interview will be kept in a locked and concealed location.

E. Contacts
If you have questions about the research and your rights, please contact the people below:

Elizabeth Hordge Freeman, Primary Contact Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, P.I.
ehf4@duke.edu ebs@soc.duke.edu
1-919-357-8896 1-919-660-5705

F. Subjects Rights
Your participation is voluntary and refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled. You may discontinue participation at anytime without penalty or loss of benefits.

Do I have permission to conduct this interview?
O Título do Estudo: Socialização nas famílias brasileiras
Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, Investigador Principal
Elizabeth Hordge Freeman, Pesquisadora de contato

A. Descrição de Projeto
Esta pesquisa é sobre a socialização e as dinâmicas dentro de famílias brasileiras. Ela vai ser usada para a minha tese, sendo possível que ela seja publicada. Eu vou lhe fazer algumas perguntas e gostaria que você respondesse. Se você não entender algo, por favor me pergunte e eu vou explicar melhor. A entrevista vai estar aproximadamente 45 a 90 minutos. Eu vou gravar suas respostas e guardar elas num disquete. Se for possível, vou observar sua vida diária e escrever algumas notas. Seu nome não vai ser associado com as suas respostas. O disquete vai ficar numa locação trancada e ocultada. Os dados não serão armazenados publicamente e serão destruídos depois de transcrever eles. Os resultados serão analisados mas suas respostas e as respostas de outros que participarem nessa pesquisa não serão reconhecidos individualmente.

B. Os riscos e benefícios
Os riscos são mínimos de você fazer a pesquisa. Ao considerar que você falará sobre a sua família, é possível que falar sobre algumas experiências que causarem angústia emotiva. Se isso acontecer, você pode parar ou continuar. Um benefício de participar neste estudo é que você terá a oportunidade de conversar sobre suas experiências pessoais que normalmente não pode expressar.

C. Compensação
Você não vai receber compensação para participar desta pesquisa.

D. Confidencialidade
Seu nome não vão ser registrado.

E. Contatos
Se você tiver perguntas sobre a pesquisa ou seus direitos, ou se você quiser entrar em contato com alguém nesta pesquisa, por favor entre-se em contacto com:

Elizabeth Hordge Freeman, contato ehf4@duke.edu
Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, Investigador ebs@soc.duke.edu

F. Direitos das Participantes
Sua participação é voluntária e se recusar participar não envolverá nenhum penalidade. Pode descontinuar participação em qualquer hora sem penalidade ou perda de benefícios. Eu tenho seu consentimento para participar na pesquisa?
Appendix E: Glossary

- **Acarajé**: A popular food sold in Salvador consisting of deep-fried black-eyed peas in palm oil. It usually served with shrimp and is purchased on the streets from a Baiana. It is also associated with Candomblé.

- **Aipim**: A starchy food that is also called cassava or mandioca that is usually cooked into relatively soft.

- **Baiana**: A term used to refer to a woman who is from Bahia. In popular discourse, the term is associated with a dark-skinned black women who wears colonial garb and a head wrap or headscarf. She may be found selling acarajé and other African-derived foods on the streets.

- **Candomblé**: A religion that originated in Africa and was transported with enslaved Africans to Brazil. It is a religion that recognizes several deities or Orixás. It is the largest African-originated religions practiced all over Brazil after it developed in Salvador.

- **Capoeira**: A type of martial art involving dance and music. Initially created as a fighting strategy and form of resistance against slavery, capoeira has transformed into a national sport.

- **Carnaval**: One of the largest parties in the world and the largest tourist event in Brazil. It occurs six days before Easter and in Salvador. Carnaval in Salvador is characterized by large electric floats that play loud music and which are accompanied by participants that pay to march alongside the large float.

- **Moreno**: A generic color term that can accurately be used to describe almost anyone in Brazil.

- **Negro**: A term that was initially considered derogatory but has been re-appropriated by members of the black movement as a political term that includes Brazilians who refer to themselves as browns and blacks.

- **Novela**: The Brazilian version of a soap opera that runs for a designated period of time usually no longer than one year with dramatic plot twists.

- **Pardo**: An intermediate racial term that is used to describe mixed-raced people in Brazil. This is a racial term is included on the Brazilian Census.
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Elizabeth Hordge Freeman was born in Tampa, Florida on August 23, 1979. She received her B.A. in Biological Sciences and Spanish (concentration in Latin American Studies) from Cornell University in May 2001, her M.A. in Sociology from Duke University in December 2008, and received her Ph.D. from Duke University in May 2012. She is one of the co-authors of “Critical Race Theories, Colorism, and the Decade's Research on Families of Color,” appearing in the Journal of Marriage and Family. She has been the recipient of three Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Fellowships, three Duke Graduate School summer fellowships, and two Center of Latin American & Caribbean Studies travel grants. She was also the recipient of the American Sociological Association and National Institute of Mental Health Minority Pre-doctoral fellowship and the Ford Foundation Dissertation Fellowship.