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## BAIXADA FLUMINENSE IS BANTO RIO DE JANEIRO IS BANTO BRAZIL IS BANTO YES SIR!

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**Abstract:** This paper aims to prove the influence of Bantu culture and religiosity in Baixada Fluminense for its inclusion and visibility in Brazilian education. In view of the fact that the Bantu people, even though spread throughout the Brazilian territory, from the beginning to the end of slavery, remain in obscurity regarding the construction of Brazil and the formation of the Brazilian language. The main theme is Candomblé Banto Angola. The object was composed of Bantu yards in the Baixada Fluminense region of Rio de Janeiro, which was chosen because of its higher concentration of black people of Bantu origin, from the time of colonization to the present day. The methodology used was the pragmatic paradigm, the methodological approach followed was quali-quantitative with a descriptive nature, the sampling was non-probabilistic by quotas, and the variables were the leaders and sons of saint. We carried out interviews, participant observations with reports, photographs, recordings, filming, etc. The internet was also used through social networks, websites, blogs, etc., because the Bantas culture and religiosity are based on orality. In addition, it was supported by a thorough bibliographic review of the authors cited throughout the text. As future results, we intend to develop a material of historiographic and pedagogical contribution, to be applied in basic education, and also to contribute to the formation of teachers of public and private education networks on this theme. 10.639/2003/PR. This way, it must provoke, the Brazilian society to dive into itself, seeking to understand what has not yet been well understood due to the neglect of knowledge about Africa and the scattered Africans.

**Keywords:** Candomblé. Bantu influence, Baixada Fluminense, Inclusion. Teaching.

## INTRODUCTION

The Bantus were the first slaves to be

introduced, and spread throughout the Brazilian territory (from the 16th to the 19th century). However, practically, nothing is officially known about their role in the construction of Brazil and in the formation of the Brazilian language. It is a very lacking area of research, in view of the rejection and negative academic labeling, since the first studies on blacks by the so-called precursor of the study, Nina Rodrigues (1896). According to his disciple Ramos (2001), he ignored the Bantu ethnic-linguistic elements introduced in the Brazil, from the 16th to the 19th century, in favor of the Nagô ethnic-religious elements, which arrived in the 18th century, a fact that reinforces the Bantu presence, in the three hundred years of enslavement.

Clues point to facts that lead the traditions and cultural references of this people to have been fundamental in the construction of the Brazilian identity. This set of traditional and cultural values remains alive in the daily lives of families, in Candomblé yards, in the streets, in markets, as well as in any other place of Afro-descendant human concentration, mainly through its language, dance and musicality. These expressions, however, are not identified as to their countries of origin. They are generalized in the classrooms of Baixada Fluminense, as well as, in other regions of Brazil, as "African". Thus, the idea of reducing the African continent, the cradle of civilization, to the condition of a country like Brazil and Portugal remains.

This work, in addition to identifying the differences between Candomblé Banto dos Candomblés Jêje/Nagô, presents itself as a contribution to a society that, despite having a determining influence of Bantu cultures in its language, cuisine, housing, musicality and other aspects of social life, day and night ignore them. Thus, this work is above all a provocation of Brazilian society to delve into itself, seeking understanding for what has not

yet been well understood due to the neglect of knowledge of Africa and dispersed Africans.

As teaching policies, the content on Candomblé Banto from Law 10.639 can and must be applied in classrooms, history, arts and artistic education, geography and African literature classes. As for the dialogue with educational public policies, the same can serve for the continuing education of teachers. Hence, later, thinking about the inventory of Bantu Candomblé houses, as support for educational public policies in the regions to be studied.

## METHODOLOGY

It can be said that the scientific paradigm followed for methodological choices was pragmatic, which facilitated the identification and description of Bantu culture in the African diaspora subordinated to the South Atlantic trade. since it began with the collection and measurement of demographic data of the African population that brought the religious culture of the Bantu peoples to Brazil. The sampling carried out was non-probabilistic by quotas, and the variables were the leaders and sons of saints. In a first phase, it was necessary to build a bibliographic survey, in order to organize an environment for dialogue with researchers who had previously studied the subject. Then, a phase of data collection through the collection of written sources, especially documentation on the majority of the African population in Rio de Janeiro, which, in turn, had its origin in Bantu ethnicities. In this case, the documentation available in newspapers from the 19th century deposited in the National Library, as well as the civil and religious documentation about the times of enslavement, deposited in the National Archive were fundamental for this process.

In addition, there have been field visits to traditional yards, and interviews with their

leaders, as well as participant observation, including the use of electronic resources, such as a camera and recorders, all previously authorized by the respective leaders. Because Candomblé Banto relies on orality, we tried to make it our working tool, using reports via the internet, through social networks and other means such as websites, blogs, etc. Added to this oral wisdom was a bibliographic review of authors cited throughout the text.

Thus, two problems are identified that become the main focus of this work: a) discrimination against Afro-Brazilian religiosity and the growing religious intolerance in Brazil in recent years; b) the invisibility of Bantu cults within the hegemony of candomblé and its resistance strategies. Thus, this work has been structured around investigating the origins of the different nations and ethnicities of Bantu origin that arrived in Rio de Janeiro since the times of the Atlantic slave trade, as well as the process of settlement of people from Central-West Africa in city of Rio de Janeiro and its surroundings, especially in the region recognized as Recôncavo da Guanabara, that is, a part of what is currently known as Baixada Fluminense.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This is a little-known theme, and very little explored, given that even though the Bantus were the first black branch introduced in Brazil in the 16th century and from there, until the end of slavery in the 19th century. Raimundo Nina Rodrigues, the precursor, published in the Brazilian Magazine, four chapters entitled “The Animism Fetishist of Blacks Baianos”.

In the IV Chapter of that magazine, Rodrigues declares (1896, p. 104):

In vain I looked among the African-Bahians for religious ideas belonging to the Bantu blacks. To this day, I don't know a single black person who has any idea what morimô or Unkulunkulú, of the Amazulus, is. I do not pretend that Bantu blacks do not exist in

Bahia, but only that, judging by the persistent religious forms, they did not constitute the main origin of the blacks imported by the slave trade.

Disciples of Nina Rodrigues, such as Arthur Ramos and Edson Carneiro, followed in the master's footsteps, maintaining this thought of superiority of the Sudanese, who arrived later, to the detriment of the Bantu (SILVA, 2010). However, Arthur Ramos, even agreeing with his master, regarding the lack of richer cosmogonic elements, aesthetics in general, and other elements, in his work, "O Negro Brasileiro", confirms the Bantu presence in Bahia at that time.

According to Ramos (2001, p. 85):

And such was the influence of the Sudanese in Bahia, due to the number and richness of its mythical elements, originating a kind of general jêje-nagô religion, that Nina Rodrigues herself had her sights diverted from any other black religious theme that was not jêje-nagô, although Bantu blacks, mainly Angolans, had also entered Bahia.

Continues Ramos (2001, p.85):

So, we got at this curious and apparently paradoxical result: on the one hand, the richness of linguistic contributions of Bantu origin to the detriment of similar researches of Sudanese origin; on the other hand, the opposite formula – studies of religious ethnography of Sudanese elements and nothing or almost nothing about Bantu religions and cults.

Edson Carneiro in his book "Religiões Negras" (1936) mistakenly refers to Candomblé Bantu, as Candomblé de Caboclo, (Carneiro, 1936. p. 87):

It was the very poor myth of the Bantu blacks that, merging with the equally poor myth of the Amerindian savage, produced the so-called caboclo candomblés in Bahia. Contrary to popular belief, the Bantus arrived here in considerable numbers. Mainly from Angola. Regional folklore is heavily impregnated with Bantu elements,

the cacumbis, samba, capoeira, drumming and ranchos do boi, but only later, possibly at the end of the 19th century, did Bantu mythical-religious survivals come to the fore, under the current form.

Candomblé Banto, once labeled Candomblé de Caboclo by Edson Carneiro, was discriminated against by the Jêje/Nagô nations, mainly because its adherents were incorporated by Caboclos. However, from 1950 onwards, Caboclos began to be adored and worshiped by these nations of Fon and Yoruba origin, in a surprisingly luxurious way through magnificent celebrations, without, however, in their testimonies, not hiding a certain contempt for Candomblé in Angola and its respective caboclos.

And the most interesting fact is that these yards of Sudanese nations, in these celebrations for Caboclos, strip themselves of their Jêje/Nagô rituals to adopt the Bantu liturgy, from the opening of the works until the end of the party, forcing themselves to play, singing and dancing Candomblé de Angola (Banto) however, by acting this way, they reveal the same mistaken opinion of Edson Carneiro (Carneiro, 1936, p. 92), at the beginning of his studies on the subject, when he classifies Candomblé as Bantu Nation as Candomblé de Caboclo. Thus, the precursor and his disciples already mentioned, in a way, ended up "decreasing" the marginalization of Bantu culture and religiosity, in favor of the Sudanese aspects, later arrived.

Then came the importance of this research, of a national and international nature, which, due to its Atlantic diasporic nature, becomes original and relevant, given the lack of studies on the Bantu influence. The study of black people in Brazil began at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, culminating in labeling the Jêje/Nagô culture and religiosity as the wisest, or most complete, to the detriment of the Bantu culture. So, for a better foundation in this investigation, it

was decided here to record the opinion of the precursor Nina Rodrigues, about black people in Brazil, and those of his followers, seeking, from there, to analyze in detail, between the lines, and mainly in the forms implicit, the preponderant participation of the bantu black that had been denied to him.

Therefore, an attempt was also made to bring to the dialogue authors seen throughout the text, with different opinions, who even sometimes tacitly in their theoretical references, bring traces that lead to an understanding of the preponderant role of Bantu blacks in the formation of the Brazil and in the construction of our language.

In the classic “Raízes do Brasil” Holanda (2011, p. 48) cites:

The former inhabitants of the land were helpful collaborators in the extractive industry, in hunting, in fishing, in certain mechanical trades, and in cattle raising. They hardly accommodated themselves, however, to the painstaking and methodical work required in the sugarcane fields.

It is also implicitly perceived in this speech by Holanda (2011) the presence of the Bantu, in the question of the transition at the beginning of colonization, of agricultural labor between Indians and Bantu blacks, since they were the first to be introduced into the sixteenth century to work, mainly in sugar cane plantations.

In relation to our language, what is lacking is the awareness that the African words that are part of this construction come from Kimbundu and Kicongo, Bantu languages spoken in Angola. As an example, we quoted: band; mess; mess; wasp; gherkin; okra; Scarlet eggplant; butuca; hominy; Greengrocer; slave quarters; oil palm (CASTRO, 2011).

Even more so, according to Castro (2011, p. 1):

In this vocabulary, it is necessary to distinguish the old contributions - the majority coming from Angolan languages

-, which entered the Portuguese language in the colonial era and are now completely integrated into its linguistic system, from which they form different derivatives with prefixes and suffixes (esmolambado from molambo, sambista from samba, lumped from calombo, marijuana pothead, cursing from cursing, umbanda from umbanda).

Given these clarifications, it becomes simpler to understand Gilberto Freyre's expressions in “Casa Grande e Senzala”, where he implicitly mentions the presence of the Angolan Bantu black, in the words, dendê, okra, from the Kimbundu language, which are part of the Kulambella (sacred cuisine of the Akisi who, in turn, are deities of Candomblé Banto Angola). Says Freyre (2006, p. 541-542):

An important trait of black culture infiltration in the Brazilian economy and domestic life remains to be emphasized: cuisine. The African slave dominated colonial cuisine, enriching it with a variety of new flavors[...]. In the Brazilian diet, the African contribution was confirmed mainly by the introduction of palm oil and chili pepper, so characteristic of Bahian cuisine; by the introduction of okra; due to the greater use of bananas; for the great variety in the way of preparing chicken and fish.

Considering the range of subsidies presented so far, the relevance of the Atlantic diaspora of African peoples is added to these. During the Portuguese slave trade to the new colony, three African strands were introduced in Brazil, chronologically, during the colonial process. The first, from the 16th to the 19th century, came from Central-West Africa, the Bantu: word, according to the translation of the Capuchins of Ambaka, Ba prefix of the Quimbundu language that means many and untu corresponds to body, man, individual, people or tribe (Costa and SILVA, 2006).

That said, concludes Costa e Silva (2006, p. 212):

It seems that those who spoke Proto Bantu were food producers. They had words for

oil palm, legume, fig tree, broad bean, olive oil, mushroom, guinea fowl, goat, dog. And perhaps for ox, although the same term meant buffalo. They had a name for thicket and thicket, but not for meadow or pastures.

The second strand was that of the Jeje or Fon, coming from the territory where Benin is located, which was occupied in the pre-colonial period by small tribal monarchies, of which the most powerful was that of the Fon reign of Dahomey. The Portuguese established outposts on the coast, then known as the Slave Coast. Captured blacks were sold in Brazil and the Caribbean. Introduced in Brazil in the middle of the 17th and 19th centuries, initially in the slave markets in Bahia and from there they spread throughout the Bahian Recôncavo and, later, throughout the Brazilian territory (COSTA E SILVA, 2006).

The third strand, the Nagôs came from Togo, Nigeria and Benin, already in the 18th century We have our language formed by the Tupi Guarani of our Indian (Brazil country) added to European Portuguese (Portugal country). And, why, instead of the black, do we not mention the African country where he came from and what is his language? Why do we simply say black African, when Africa is a continent? This is the reason for the title of this article, which identifies the black part that formed Brazil.

Candomblé Banto, as it is known today, is the oldest expression of Afro-diasporic culture still preserved in Brazilian society. Although arising from a long temporality of clandestinity, the gods akisi (plural of mukisi) in the Kimbundu language, also known as Jinkisi (plural of Nkice) in the Kikongo language, have been worshiped in Brazil since colonial times. First with pluralism and religious syncretism still in the times of slavery, then with the persecution and discrimination of the first republican times and, currently, in an inexplicable struggle for respect and

dignity, due to a social intolerance that must already be obsolete in full XXI century.

Thus, the main problem of this work is detected, which is nothing more, nothing less, than the prejudice and discrimination against the Bantu cult, by the candomblés Jêje and Nagô.

This way, given the dialogue provoked between the researchers, it was possible to previously identify the Bantu black and his country of origin, and not generalize him as an African black. Even because Africa is a continent, it is formed by countless countries with different cultures, different religions, and different regions.

It is also known that Rio de Janeiro was a place of great expressiveness in the emergence of candomblé during the post-abolition period. In addition to this, samba and other expressions of culture found in the port region of the capital a geographical reference within the city. Some works have already demonstrated the presence of drummings and candomblés in the Court of Rio de Janeiro, during the 20th century, Possidônio (2015).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

According to Table 1, approximately 12,570,000 Africans were traded through the Atlantic slave trade. It is also possible to identify the proportions of each African region within this process. Moreover, it is plainly visible that almost half of this large number of human beings were shipped from ports in West-Central Africa. Which means that almost six million people came from the coastal cities of Angola, such as Benguela, Luanda and Cabinda, and from areas located further inland in that region, such as Cassanje, Massangano, among others (BEZERRA, 2011, p. 28).

In view of this, Table 1 shows:

According to Bezerra (2011), of the almost three million enslaved people who entered the

<b>African Regions</b>	<b>Numbers</b>	<b>%</b>
senegambia	756,000	6
Sierra Leone	389,000	3.1
coast of mine	337,000	2.7
gold coast	1,209,000	9.7
benin bay	1,999,000	16
Bay of Biafra	1,595,000	12.7
<b>West Central Africa</b>	<b>5,695,000</b>	<b>45.5</b>
Western Africa	543,000	4.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,570,000</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 1:

Volume of Africans traded during the transatlantic slave trade (1501 – 1867)

Source:Slavevoyages (2017). Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database. Available at: <[www.slavevoyages.com](http://www.slavevoyages.com)>.

ports of Southeast Brazil, 80% were of Bantu origin. Soon they were predominant in all areas of slave life in Rio de Janeiro. It was not difficult to see them on the streets as urban workers, and especially in the countryside, living the rigors of slavery in the fields of sugar cane, coffee, cotton and other foods such as corn, cassava, rice, among others. But wherever they were, they were always attached to their gods of Bantu tradition, secretly meeting in their Calundus, later Candomblé Banto Angola, as a form of resistance.

In terms of clarification, the Bantu deities (Akisi or Bankisi) are presented here, including other names used in other Bantu regions, although they are the same deity. In addition, they appear followed by the references of their respective researchers, as to their Bantu origin, as well as their spiritual functions. This way, it is intended to make it clear that it is a religion with a belief totally opposed to religions of Nagô origin. They are people from different regions and countries, different cultures, different uses, customs and traditions. Therefore, analyzing it sensibly, it is not appropriate to replace Akisi [(plural of Mukisi), or Bankisi (plural of Nikisi), Bantu languages: Kimbundu and Kikongo], with Orixá (Nago language). Considering that, according to the foreign researcher R. Thompson (1982), among others, who studied these African religions, those of the Yoruba language are called ancestry, because at some point they had human life, for example: Xangô Rei de Oyó, Ogun Rei de Onire, Odudua Rei de Ifé, etc. They passed through Earth as people.

While, in the Bantu liturgy, the Akisi and Bankisi represent the elements of nature: Fire, Water, Air and Earth, as well as their phenomena: forests, rivers, waterfalls, rocks, sources, types of beds and mouths of rivers, meeting of the fresh waters with salt waters, crossroads, gates, lightning, storms, rains,

sun, dawn, dusk, dawn, days and nights, among others. They had no human life. Therefore, they are called Deities. In some Bantu tribes, when incorporated, they use the Mukange (mask) symbolizing the occult, the mystery through the mask, where all attention is turned to the mask that dances! (CARISE, 1980).

After saying this, the Deities appear:

**Aluvaia Alu-vuya** was recorded by Carneiro (1936) as of Congolese origin and is one of the guardians of the Bantu houses of worship.

**Inkoci** is a deity of Congolese origin with great reference in the cultural area of Cabinda. Very feared deity along with Nkondi, both very used by “soul-eating” sorcerers.

Lopes (1996) records Hoxi Mucumbi as Roxo Mukumbi and gives its origin as Kioko, an Angolan ethnic group from Lunda Norte.

**Mutakalambo** is presented by Ribas (1958), as a deity linked to underwater hunting, with an alligator as guardian. Lopes (1996) claims its origin in the Kimbundu language, complementing Ribas. Carneiro (1936), closes with the two on the origin of the Mutakalombo Divinity.

**Kabila** he is presented as of Ambundo origin by Carneiro (1936), as a shepherd of Mutakalombo. When hunters are having difficulty hunting, they ask Kabila for help, who to help them steals some game from Mutakalambo and allows the suppliant hunter to kill them. In return, he receives the tails of the slaughtered animals and, after the hunt is cleaned and quartered, he demands that they be shared among those present.

**Katende** is cited by Carneiro (1936) as the deity of leaves and forests. His name means title of nobility in the land of Congo. But there are those who say that in Kimbundu Catende means small lizard. It is, according to traditional Bantu orality, a deity respected throughout the universe, due to its dominance



among medicinal herbs.

**Ngongobila** it is the deity known to us as Congombira, a young hunter that Lopes (1996) registers as Quicongo. According to the author, his name is Ngóbila plus Nkongo. Edson Carneiro (1936) also registers it as part of the candomblé panton in Bahia at the time.

**Kaiango** which finds references from various authors such as Lopes (1996) giving its origin as being from the Congo. He also explains that the word derives from yungu, plus a diminutive, or from the noun Nkai which translated would be grandmother. It also registers the Caingo form as old, sick, weak and debilitated. Oscar Ribas (1953) places Kaiango in the linguistic area of Kimbundu, therefore Angolan,

As for Ndanda Lunda, only Nei Lopes (1996) explains the meaning of that name. According to him, Ndanda comes from the quicongo meaning older person and nda from the quimbundu meaning noble woman.

According to Nei Lopes (1996) Samba Kalunga in Kimbundu means courtesan, court lady, noble woman. Samba, therefore, a lady of high nobility, plus Calunga, the sea. Sea Queen. Divinity of marine nature to whom they are dedicated, both in Angola, specifically in Luanda and here in Brazil, intense worship and annual parties. Divinity of Ambundo and Tchokwe origin.

**Kaviungo** also known as Kavungo is a deity of Congolese origin, recorded by Lopes (1996), also highly worshiped in Bantu Candomblés.

**Nzazi** It is a divinity widely known throughout the Bantu linguistic universe with a few different names, but with the same principles. He is the thunderbolt, the God of Justice. Traditional Bantu orality teaches that when lightning strikes a person, a house or a village, it is some measure of divine justice. The origin of its name comes from the Kikongo linguistic universe. Registered like this, by Nei Lopes and annotated by Edson Carneiro in

the Bantu Candomblés of Bahia.

**Hongolo** known among the santo people as Angorô, it was also registered, by Carneiro (1936), as a feminine form called Angoromeia. Both forms are located in the linguistic area of Kimbundu, however this deity is revered throughout the Candomblé Bantu world, from Oiapoque to Chuí.

Lopes (1996) registers the Tempo version: KItembu, Ntembu, Tembu. According to him, Tempo belongs to the Kikongo linguistic universe, where the spelling is Témbo (Tembwa). In Portuguese the translation is violent wind. The Kitembu (Tempo) version, also known in Brazil, is of Kimbundu origin and also means wind. Tempo is considered the King of the Nation of Candomblé Banto.

**Ndandazumba** known as Zumbarandá is presented by Edson Carneiro (1936), as of Quikongo origin. For Lopes (1996) Nzumba means "Girl" in that language. This way, the idea that Nzumba is an old and broken deity as seen until then is undone. However, the term Nzumba has been found in the Kimbundu dictionary to designate the purple color of the moon during a lunar eclipse, which would explain the purple color of its ritual beads.

Ribas (1953) teaches that Nvunji is a specialist in matters of justice and helps in cases of procreation and complicated deliveries. However, in the Kikongo-French dictionary, Nvunji is found as a shepherd of sheep and as a shepherd of souls. In Brazil, Vúnji is considered a child deity.

**Nlemba**, according to Lopes (1996), is from the Quimbundo nation that speaks the Umbundo spoken in the central-southern region, and in many urban environments. Carneiro (1936) found Lemba in the candomblés of his time. It is a deity known throughout most of the Bantu world.

After these deities, there is still the part of ancestry (they had an earthly life), which are divided into three modalities: 1) deified

ancestors, known as Tata Mane, are those who, after their passing, were promoted by merit, to a higher plane. superior just below the Deities. 2) Enchanted deities that are the Caboclos. In this case, these ancestors inhabit the space outside the body of the practitioner who receives them during incorporation, only being released when they leave back to their homes. Bloodline ancestors, family members who the longer they have been dead, the more powerful they will be. In short: Looking from this angle, diversity is an antonym of equality, so the nagotization of Candomblé Banto Angola, is nothing more than an appropriation of Memory, Heritage and identity that caused the erasure of the Bantu people in the History of the construction of Brazil and in the formation of the Brazilian language.

## **FINAL CONSIDERATIONS**

It was possible to bring up, through their religion, a bit of the history of a people, who, despite having played a leading role in the construction of Brazil, and in the formation of our language, have been relegated to ostracism over these almost 500 years. These people,

who thanks to their first religious expression here in Brazil, called Calundu, remain, until the present day, in the form of Candomblé, keeping their religiosity alive through the spiritual and consanguineous family, as one of the main ways to resist the oppressive judgment.

It was extremely important to seek academia, transforming the university and the Bantu yard into a two-way street, filling this secular gap in the history of Brazil. This fact could unfold in ever-increasing proportions, following the path of Bantu dispersion throughout Brazil, in order to awaken more and more academic interest in the subject. This work does not claim to be the best writing on the subject to date. It just presents itself as a contribution to the studies of young Afro Brazilians about the Bantu people in Brazil, including for those followers and practitioners of Candomblé Banto and even those who do not give up the denomination Congo-Angola, and Nagotization. It is also hoped that it will arouse the interest of other researchers, in order to create new lines of research in relation to this theme.

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