Carnaval in Brazil, samba schools and African culture: a study of samba schools through their African heritage

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Carnaval in Brazil, samba schools and African culture: a study of samba schools through their African heritage

by

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A thesis submitted to the graduate faculty
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
MASTER OF ARTS

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Program of Study Committee:
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Dedication

To my parents

in memory
## Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS iv  
GENERAL INTRODUCTION 1  
CHAPTER 1. Carnaval History: Ethnicity and Politics 3  
CHAPTER 2. Carnaval and the Favelas 35  
CHAPTER 3. Samba Schools 39  
CHAPTER 4. Samba Schools: the Politics of Sponsorship 57  
CHAPTER 5. Samba School and Modernization: Globalization of Carnaval 64  
CHAPTER 6. Dance and Music: Eurhythmic Influence of African Culture 70  
CHAPTER 7. Symbolic Representation of Carnaval 76  
CHAPTER 8. The Parallel between Carnaval and Religion 90  
CHAPTER 9. Brazilian Carnaval in Ames, Iowa 96  
CHAPTER 10. Carnaval Memories 99  
CONCLUSION 103  
BIBLIOGRAPHY 107
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General Introduction

The word “Carnaval” came about when the Italians started to call the festival *carne vale* or “farewell, meat,” referring to the abstinence from meat, as well as such worldly things as sex and music during Lent (Eco, Ivanov & Rector 1984). There are different spellings for this festival: in Portuguese and Spanish it is *Carnaval*; for the French it can be called “*carême-prenant*”, (three days before Lent) or more commonly *Mardi Gras* (‘Fat Tuesday’) (Gilmore 1998), and in Italian “it is *Carnivale*, though there are regional variations such as in Naples *karnolevare* and in Sicily *karnilivare*” (Rector 1984: 39).

Some form or other of Carnaval has been celebrated ever since ancient Rome had festivals called Saturnalia and Lupercalia. Carnaval then spread into Europe, and finally crossed the Atlantic, arriving in the Americas. In the United States, Carnaval is called Mardi Gras because of its French origin. In the Caribbean area and South America, the festival is known as Carnaval.

There are differences in practice among most versions of Carnaval around the world, for instance, Carnaval in Brazil and Mardi Gras in New Orleans. While Carnaval is celebrated for 4 days, Mardi Gras begins at Epiphany on January 6 with young women’s debutante balls, as well as over fifty parades, and finishes with Mardi Gras or Fat Tuesday.

Carnaval is a democratic festival; everybody is included. Carnaval also gives one the freedom to live out one’s fantasies. The type of costume worn, if any, is determined by each person participating, but overall Carnaval is just an event to
enjoy. Many people around the world enjoy the Carnaval celebration because it is a fun entertainment; it restores one’s energy and makes one feel alive. When it’s over, participants often find themselves wanting more.

Now a brief overview of my thesis organization: In the first chapter I will give a brief chronological history of Carnaval from its beginnings in ancient Egypt and Rome’s Saturnalia to modern times, finally reaching the Americas. In North America there will be a little history of Louisiana’s Mardi Gras, Carnaval in the Caribbean, including Cuba and Trinidad, and finally South America, including Argentina and Brazil. Chapter two gives a short background of how the favelas or shantytowns started in Rio de Janeiro because many of the Samba Schools are located in the favelas. Chapter three starts with a short history of the Samba Schools, focusing on their cultural aspects, organization, and Samba School parade. Chapter four is about sponsorships of Rio’s Samba Schools by jogo do bicho bankers, State governments of Brazil, and by transnational sponsorships. Chapter five talks about the modernization of the Samba Schools, globalization, social programs that the Samba Schools offer to their communities, and jobs related to Carnaval. Chapter six talks about Carnaval music and dance in the United States, Trinidad, Argentina, Rio, Bahia and Pernambuco. Chapter seven is centered on Carnaval arts, especially costumes, floats and masks. Chapter eight draws a parallel between Carnaval and religion. In chapter nine I visit Carnaval in Ames, Iowa, which is sponsored by the Brazilian Students Association. Chapter ten is a short collection of my own personal Carnaval memories, and finally chapter eleven is the conclusion.
1. Carnaval History: Ethnicity and Politics

**Introduction:** Although the festival called Carnaval celebrates the happiness of freedom and provides an outlet from the pressures of a year of everyday life, Carnaval can also be used as a form of control by the ruling class and local governments wherever it is celebrated around the world. Carnaval is the pagan festival celebrated before Lent, the 40 days preceding Easter when fasting and other forms of abstinence are practiced. One reason for this celebration is the need to experience happiness before the contrast of the 40 days of deprivation during Lent required by the Catholic Church. For this reason, people feel the need to celebrate with joy, sexual abandon and jokes because the imminent Lent is a relatively solemn occasion. Generally, Carnaval falls in late February or the beginning of March, a variation due to the fact that the date of Easter is determined by the lunar cycle.

In Brazil today people from different continents helped to mold the Brazilian culture, but initially only three races formed the culture: Africans, Indians and Europeans. Africans and African descendants, with their natural talent for arts, enliven the Brazilian Carnaval with their musical instruments and their dances, and I want to honor that.

Here in my thesis, I am interested in the Africanization of Carnaval in the Americas, and especially in Brazil. For my research, I studied books and journals on Carnaval Literature, and I read Brazilian newspapers online every day for over two years. I also used field observation and participation in Brazilian Carnaval in Ames,
IA, interviews, and my own experiences growing up celebrating Carnaval in Rio de Janeiro.

1.1 - Carnaval in Antiquity

Some authors (Castro 2004; Rector 1984) suggest that Carnaval was born in Egypt. According to Egyptian mythology, the God Osiris told the Egyptians to learn how to cultivate wheat and to eliminate their practice of cannibalism (Watterson 1984: 74), and Osiris showed them that there was lots of wheat after the flood of the Nile River. He also, discovered and taught his people how to make wine and “to brew beer from barley where grapes didn’t grow” (Watterson 1984: 74). Thus, according to the myth, Osiris spread civilization throughout the world. For years to come, the Egyptians celebrated the season of the harvest as a festival with dances and happiness.

Coincidently, this celebration took place during the same time of the year as was later used to observe Lent in the Christian calendar (Myśliwiec 2004). After the death of Osiris, a ritual was performed in his honor at the end of the flood season. This festival “remains unknown, [though] it is likely that during the Greco-Roman Period they were similar to the Eleusian mysteries – rites of an agrarian nature that were celebrated in Greece to worship the goddess Demeter” (Myśliwiec 2004: 60). Myśliwiec also argues that this festival lasted for two weeks and “consisted of episodes reminiscent of the rites and ceremonies observed by Christians during Holy Week” (2004: 60).
Egyptians who were enslaved in Rome brought not just their culture and religions but also their festivals, such as commemoration of the abundance of the harvest for the god Osiris and the goddess Isis, his sister/wife. Immigrants from other cultures also celebrated their own festivals. All of these festivals were celebrated in Rome before the Christian era.

During the expansion of the Roman Empire (figure 1.1) through “four centuries of wars” (La Piana 1927: 189), people from many countries in Europe, Asia and Africa (mainly Egypt) were brought to Rome as slaves. La Piana suggests that slaves in Rome from other European countries would have made good soldiers but bad laborers. The Romans, both free and slaves, were allowed to practice their own religions (La Piana 1927). As a result, Rome was one of the first cities in Europe to have people from different ethnic backgrounds and with religious freedom.

Figure 1.1 - Ancient Map, from www.teachinghearts.org, 2006
At that time, it was important for the higher government of Rome to keep the military and the immigrants, both free and slave, happy (La Pina 1927) by providing parties with food and drink, because the Roman population was big and culturally diverse, and could easily fall into chaos and rebellion if the people were not kept content. In reality, Romans “insisted on their right, acquired during the civil war, to be fed and amused by the government” (La Piana 1927: 198).

Rome had a festival called Saturnalia, which commemorated the Kingdom of Saturn, the god of planting. Saturnalia was celebrated with feasts and pleasures; it was viewed as “the period of license and excess” (Hyman 2000: 9), thus making it an ancient Carnaval (Frazer 1920), although the dates are different since Saturnalia was celebrated in December “before Caesar’s reform of the calendar” (Frazer 1920: 345).

For the Roman Saturnalia celebration, a man was elected as the King of Saturnalia, though it seems that this “King” was sacrificed afterward. Also, the Greeks celebrated Bacchus and the Romans celebrated Dionysus, the “gods of wine and debauchery, which correspond to the festivals of Bacchanalia and Lupercalia” (Gilmore 1998:10).

Although the Roman court enforced a lot of rules and policies during the Carnaval celebration, Carnaval was a social event, and also an inversion of social classes and gender. During ancient times, Carnaval was a celebration where people made fun of each other, slaves were able to mock their masters and violent games were common. Besides, Carnaval was an excuse to criticize the government about things like high taxes. Lower class people used the period of Carnaval and religious
festivals to forget the hardships of their lives, which included shortages of food.
Since this freedom of Carnaval was for only a short time, they used it in ways that
were not against the laws (La Piana 1927; Frazer 1920).

While role reversal was, and is, a feature of Carnaval, at the same time a
certain unity is shared and celebrated. David D. Gilmore states that “[r]itual brings
people together physically and expresses in powerful symbolic terms common goals
and shared values” (1998: 27). This is a component of Carnaval: bringing people
together with common interests, one of the most basic of which is having fun.

Carnaval in Venice was a “beauty, romance, and artistry [that] transcended
every other” (Schindler 1997: 14). When going out and about, people would wear
masks, which were mainly re-creations from famous Greek and Roman comedies
(Schindler 1997). Schindler also argues “[t]he Carnival of the Bourbons embraced
those of Rome with French style” (1997: 14).

In France, “the Parisian “Bals de l’Opéra grew in magnificence” (Schindler
1997: 14). The balls and masks were forbidden during the French Revolution (1789 -
1799) because it was considered unwise to let potential enemies hide behind masks.
It was left up to Napoleon Bonaparte to reestablish the fun of Carnaval around 1805
(Schindler 1997).

1.2 - Modern Carnaval in Europe

As time passed into the modern era, an evolving Carnaval incorporated new
elements such as new technologies, like the sewing machine, and new materials for
costumes, but at the same time kept most of the values of the ancient festivals. As
an example, Carnaval in the ancient period had a strong connection with religious beliefs: “Carnival is a pagan festivity, with a Christian flavor” (Rector 1984: 39). Today this is still very much the case in many countries, mainly where the Catholic faith is present. In fact, Laudurie states, “Carnival was, after all, a Catholic phenomenon” (1979: 196), and “[a]s early as the middle of the second century, the Romans observed a Fast of 40 days” (www.americancatholic.org 2/8/2006). LeRoy also suggests that Lent was a preparation for Easter (1979).

Another view of Carnaval is that “[i]f the ancient, religious carnival was limited in time, the modern mass-carnival is limited in space” (Eco 1984: 6). That is, the ancient view was that the Carnaval should be limited to a very few days each year. The laws and rituals of society must be followed the rest of the time, otherwise the contrast is gone, and the wild abandon and transgression don’t seem as enjoyable. Modern Carnaval can be said to have forsaken the time rule to some extent: there are big industries built around Carnaval that are very busy all year in preparation. However, as Eco says, the new limitation is space: modern Carnaval has certain designated areas: “it is reserved for certain places, certain streets, or framed by the television screen” (Eco 1984: 6).

The evolution of Carnaval in Europe has progressed on down through the centuries. The Greco-Egyptian culture in modern Rome during Carnaval is not as strong as it was during ancient times with the celebrations of festivals of gods. Another reason for changes in Carnaval celebration is that Rome is not considered the center of the civilized world anymore. The Greco-Egyptian culture today can be observed during the Carnaval celebration mainly through the costumes.
From Rome, forms of Carnaval spread to other countries in Europe (figure 1.2). Each country observed Carnaval according to its own cultural customs, but most of them shared the same religious and political values. These values could be found represented in parade-like processions, with symbols and costumes relevant to each country.

In France, there were theatrical operas with characters such as Harlequin and Pierrot, and masquerade balls, mainly for the bourgeoisie, which made the French Carnaval one of the most famous in the world through their fancy costumes and masks (figure 1.3).
Carnaval in Portugal was called *Entrudo* (entrance), and was celebrated every year at the same time, commemorating the beginning of the spring season. Following the schedule of Christianity, the celebration of Carnaval started on Fat Saturday and lasted through Ash Wednesday (Queiroz 1999). In the early 1900’s the Entrudo Carnaval was succeeded by a more elegant and refined event, losing, for instance, the barbaric custom of water and even body wastes being thrown on the audience. By this time, the effort was concentrated on the construction of nice costumes as well as of the carriages used to transport the nobles during the Carnaval parade (Queiroz 1999). In addition, Portuguese Carnaval started to mirror the French Carnaval or Mardi Gras.

Little by little Carnaval in Portugal changed and diminished. It appears that with Antonio de Oliveira Salazar’s dictatorship (1926-1974), and in particular the creation of the New State through the constitution of 1933, which “emphasized order
over freedom and attempted to ‘neutralize society through the use of censorship, propaganda, and political imprisonment’ (www.britannica.com 2006), the entrudo Carnaval could not survive, at least in cities such as Lisbon and Coimbra. Besides, the country of Portugal lost human capital when citizens went to other Portuguese colonies and to other European countries because of economic crisis (www.britannica.com 2006).

Today, Carnaval is celebrated in many European countries, each having its own style. Carnaval has become such an important festival in Europe that there is a Carnaval confederation (see www.carnavalcities.com 2006) that convenes from time to time to give seminars and share information in other ways about what is going on with Carnaval in their various countries (figures 1.2; 1.4).

Figure 1.4 - Carnaval in Cádiz, Spain, from www.en.wikipedia.org, 2006
1.3 – Americas

1.3.1 - United States


The location of Louisiana close to the Gulf of Mexico facilitated the entrance of many different ethnic groups to New Orleans. Many of these groups came from the Caribbean area, such as Cuba and Haiti. Other groups were French, Spanish, Creole (a mixture of Spanish and French) and later the Anglo American.

Carnival in New Orleans officially begins on the Feast of Epiphany or Twelfth Night, January 6, and continues until the midnight of Fat Tuesday, the day before Ash Wednesday (www.nola.com/mardigras 2007). New Orleans’ Mardi Gras was first celebrated in the early 1800’s by the Creoles, who dominated the festival with their krewes, or clubs organized just for the purpose of preparing for and celebrating Mardi Gras.

Black people had no permission to participate in Carnaval balls that were celebrated in clubs, and a few years before the end of the 19th century, the city of New Orleans adopted Jim Crow Laws, forbidding public racial interaction (Schindler 1997).

Then, in 1850, white Americans started forming their own krewes and celebrating Mardi Gras in New Orleans (Schindler 1997). In contrast to this “official”
Mardi Gras is the tradition begun later by the non-white population of New Orleans in imitation of the established white Mardi Gras. Barbara Bridges states that “between the 1860s and 1870s the free black population of New Orleans formed their own Carnival clubs and began to participate in Mardi Gras” celebrations (1988: 157).

In New Orleans, the Europeans oppressed the Native Americans and blacks, and there was “much to draw Indians and Blacks together spiritually: the Indians’ perceptions of themselves as nations and the Africans’ as kingdoms” (Bridges 1988: 162). With this common attraction, they began to intermarry. Therefore, nothing was more natural than that the black participants, whether they had Indian blood or not, becoming well known as Black Indians, and “black carnival must be understood in the light of its history of suppression” (Fiehrer and Lodwick 1990: 14).

Since African Americans were not permitted to participate in white Mardi Gras in New Orleans, they created their own Mardi Gras with groups closely imitating the white krewes; one of these groups which is still around is called Zulu. In the Zulu parade, the participants have their faces painted with black makeup, in much the same style once used by white actors in blackface vaudeville acts in the U.S.

The New Orleans Carnaval celebrated by European descendants to this day receives aid from the municipal government: the street where this white Mardi Gras parade takes place is free of fees on the day the city allows their parade. No such arrangement is made for the black Mardi Gras (Parent 2006), which must take place on a different day and in a different location. In other words, the black Mardi Gras festival takes place “outside the ‘official’ season” (Fiehrer and Lodwick 1990: 14). So the New Orleans Mardi Gras was divided from the beginning along lines of economic
class, political power and ethnicity (DaMatta 1991; Fiehrer and Lodwick 1990; Parent 2006).

Nowadays, there are many Mardi Gras groups that parade during their respective Mardi Gras’, such as Rex and the Cowbellions in the white Mardi Gras, and Zulu in the black Mardi Gras. Barbara Vennman, speaking about the white Mardi Gras, argues, “New Orleans Carnival performance, in its larger cultural context, involves a complex hierarchical model of elitism” (1993: 81). In addition, Wayne Parent states “Mardi Gras began as a festival wherein elite groups from private, exclusive krewes parade in the streets…and throw trinkets to the screaming poor masses” (2006: 103).

1.3.2 - Cuba

Cuban Carnaval follows Catholic festivals with connections to Día de Reyes or Day of the Kings, on January 6th. Carnaval in Cuba is mainly organized in clubs called cabildos according to the different African ethnic groups represented and is called “Black Carnaval” (Nunley and Bettelheim 1988: 140). Nunley also states that “[t]he predominantly Afro-Cuban population strengthened their neighborhood organizations, especially during the political turmoil of the Ten Years War, the War of Independence, and the U.S. interventions” (1988: 143) (figure 1.5).
1.3.3 - Trinidad

Trinidad’s Carnaval has been celebrated “[f]rom the founding of the Spanish colony, and later through the settlement by French and English planters, [because] Europeans celebrated from Christmas through Lent with fancy balls and masquerades” (Nunley 1988: 85). Later, other cultures such as African, Chinese, and East Indian blended their traditions with Carnaval in Trinidad.

In the beginning, however, Africans and African descendants were forbidden to participate in the Carnaval celebrations. But slaves in Trinidad, as well as other parts of the New World, worked on sugar cane plantations. Sugar cane is a large grass, or Graminea, from the same family as corn, but it looks like bamboo (Mintz 1985; Costa 2006). During the harvesting of the sugar cane, the field is burned to get rid of the leaves before cutting and gathering the plants. During this burning
process, the slaves sang and marched while carrying torches. As the African-descended Trinidadians were assimilated into the celebration, this dancing and singing with torches became a part of the modern Carnaval in Trinidad (Nunley 1988, Adams 2007).

In about 1927, Chinese and Chinese descendents in Trinidad started to participate in Carnaval (figure 1.6), particularly those educated in music (Chang 1988). Also, Native Americans, as well as Hindus and Muslims are represented today in the parades through symbols and costumes, among other things (Nunley 1988; Adams 2007).

Figure 1.6 - Carnaval in Trinidad, from Rhythm & Release: Trinidad Carnival (TIDCO) 1996
Sometime after these ethnic infusions into Trinidad’s Carnaval, black Trinidadians developed the rhythms of calypso music, which at first was considered by the white elite as lower class music. This was also the case later with the development of the steel drum bands. Today, both musical traditions are enjoyed in Carnaval and celebrated by everybody as national symbols (www.geocities.com 2006; Adams 2007).

During World War II Carnaval was banned from Trinidad, as Carnaval celebrations were banned in many other countries on both sides of the Atlantic during the war. But the United States sailors’ uniforms made such an impact that they were used as a costume motif in Carnaval after the war when the ban was lifted. The Jason Griffith Carnaval group carries on the U.S. sailor motif in their costumes to this day (figure 1.7) (Nunley and Bettelheim 1988).

Figure 1.7 - Jason Griffith members, from John W. Nunley and Judith Bettelheim, Caribbean Festival Arts: each and every bit of difference, 1988
1.3.4 - Argentina

Argentina’s Carnaval around 1900 was mainly celebrated in Buenos Aires; it was an “excited buzz of a thousand conversations: exclaiming over costumes, gossiping about dances and parties, arguing [and] flirting” (Seigel 2000: 56). Because of the small capacity of the building in which it was held, many people could not get inside. The police forbade this large overflow crowd to stay on the street, but they stayed anyway (Seigel 2000).

Argentineans consider a criollo to be, “a person of pure Spanish descent born in Spanish America” (Webster’s Dictionary 2003: 296). Criollos in Argentina used the festivities of Carnaval to express their feelings toward Argentina as a nation. Seigel suggests, “[i]n a period of massive European immigration and immigrant assimilation; amid a tide of rising restrictionist sentiment against working-class, trade unionist, and anarchist immigrants…carnival extended a site for the negotiation and contestation of sifting national boundaries” (2000: 58).

The street Carnaval in the early 1900’s was celebrated mainly in Buenos Aires, and there was a group called Cocoliche, which was composed of Italian immigrants (Seigol). Chasteen states that from the viewpoint of the established Argentineans, the Cocoliche (figure 1.8) wore strange clothes and spoke with broken Spanish and incomplete sentences (2004). In turn, the Spanish, the Cocoloche and other European immigrants together marginalized the indigenous and African-descended people.
There was yearlong struggle and conflict between social classes and ethnic groups, which became more evident during Carnaval (Seigol 2000) because lower classes felt free on this occasion to protest against the rules. At that time (1900), white Argentines were trying to “whiten” the country in the same manner as the white elite tried in Brazil (Chasteen 2004; Castro 2004; Seigol 2000). African descendants were left behind during Carnaval because of the rules made by the elite, which could be either “written or unwritten” (Turner 1977; Seigol 2000). Blacks ended up being
excluded not just from Argentina’s Carnaval but eventually from the country itself; they were expelled from the cities, and most, if not all of them, ended up moving to Paraguay and Uruguay (Seigol 2000).

1.3.5 – Brazil

Before talking about Carnaval’s History in Brazil, we need to talk about ethnicity, and I need to step back in time. During the European (and in the case of Brazil, Portuguese) expansion into the New World, Europeans developed a “triangle” system of trade. They would go from Europe to Africa and give trinkets (for example, England offered rum made from molasses) in exchange for slaves. Then they went to the New World and exchanged the slaves for sugar, which they took back to Europe. The Africans and the sugar (figure 1.9) were considered high commodities (Mintz 1985, Fryer 2000).

Figure 1.9 - Sugar Cane Plantation in 1823, from www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USAS.sugar 2007
The Portuguese discovered Brazil in 1500; slavery in Brazil ended in 1888. During these almost four centuries of slavery, 4.5 million Africans were “imported” to Brazil, and in the early 1800’s, 60% of the Brazilian population was of African ancestry (Bueno 2003; Vincent 2003). In fact, Fryer states “Brazil has the second largest black population of any country in the world” (2000: 6).

The Africans, Portuguese and Indios or Amerindians made up the Brazilian society. Its culture was formed, not through industrialism, but rather by the paternalistic domestic system, a system the Portuguese came to know well during the Moors’ domination of the Iberian Peninsula from 712 A.D. to 1344 A.D. (Camara 1997; Fryer 2000; Vanden and Prevost 2006). In fact, Arabs used slaves in Northern Africa for sugar cane production; the Portuguese “copied the Arab use of slave labor” (Vanden and Prevost 2006: 32).

The first Carnaval-like party in Brazil happened in the 1600’s with a week of celebration for the coronation of Dom João IV as the King of Portugal (Tavares de Sá 1955). And in 1723, Carnaval in Brazil was based on the Portuguese Carnaval called “Entrudo” (entrance) a party that was celebrated in Portugal in the sixteenth century just before Lent (O Estado de São Paulo, 2002).

The Entrudo “was a violent game, which spared neither old people, women, children nor the infirm” (Castro 2004: 65). Entrudos would parade around throwing water, urine and other filthy things on people. It was unsafe to be on the streets during the parade. Indeed, Carnaval celebrations in Brazil took place on the streets, originally with mostly white males. There were fights; eggs and flour were thrown on the audience. Lots of practical jokes were played, such as putting salt in someone’s
coffee (Castro 2004). For the first few years there was no music, but later someone had the great idea of playing a drum while people followed him around the neighborhood. At that time, Carnaval for Brazilian middle and upper classes was so violent that only men participated.

By 1822, Carnaval in Brazil had become more civilized, as European Carnaval influenced the new elite in Brazil. This elite crowd, located in Rio de Janeiro, was composed mainly of nobles who went there with Dom João VI, the king of Portugal, who had arrived on March 8, 1808. Dom João and his entourage had fled from Napoleon Bonaparte’s invasion of Portugal in 1807 (Bueno 2003). From their arrival, the Portuguese elite complained that the city was savage, underdeveloped and smelly. Artists from France, including Jean-Baptiste Debret, were commissioned to improve the city’s aspect (Bueno 2003; Globo Television Network 2007).

For all these reasons, Carnaval in Rio was influenced by the French style, since Carnaval in France was considered modern and the best in Europe. So Carnaval was becoming more civilized, and by 1840, when Rio’s first Carnaval ball took place, women had started participating by watching dances from the balconies of theaters such Rio’s Teatro Municipal (Eneida 1958).

Then finally, in 1852, street Carnaval was born. The Carnaval group, or bloco, called Zé Pereira made lots of noise in the streets by banging on pots, pans, cans, drums, and anything else they could find (Castro 2004). There are different explanations for the origins of the bloco Zé Pereira. Some authors suggest that a
Portuguese man named José Pereira Paredes introduced this type of street Carnaval in Rio (Eneida 1958; Rector 1984: 42).

Because of the government's prohibition of Carnaval groups such as Entrudo and Zé Pereira, the common people organized Carnaval groups that reflected more discipline (Sangalo 2002). The Brazilian elite, on the other hand, established a Carnaval that was celebrated in clubs only for one racial group: whites. This Carnaval was considered "a belle époque party with corsets, petticoats and starched collars" (Castro 2004: 69).

Again, "[d]uring the 1850s, 1860s and 1870s, Rio's festival was dominated by elite carnival societies, the so-called Great Societies (Chasteen 2004: 35). These Societies had parades with “sumptuous allegorical floats pulled along by pairs of horses” (Castro 2003: 64). This was an opportunity for the white elite to show off their fancy costumes. The Great Societies performed a mock battle, but this time they used flowers instead of water or human waste.

On the other hand, black people in Brazil had always held Carnaval-like parties, ever since the time of slavery. History tells us that people with African ancestry were not allowed to participate in celebrations made by the white folks, so they found a way around the rules. Their musical ability took them close to Carnaval, particularly in the drumming that originated in the African religion of Candomblé.

Since 1639, blacks in Rio de Janeiro started an irmandade (brotherhood) organization connected to the Catholic Church (Fryer 2000). This was a way they found to preserve their culture and escape persecution. As Peter Fryer states, this
was "a decisive, step forward in the acculturation process" (2000: 56). This irmandade organization lasted until 1817, when it was outlawed (Chasteen 2004).

Blacks always were practicing dance in Rio. Chasteen states that as in Congo Square in New Orleans, in a downtown Rio neighborhood called Campo de Santana, black Brazilians were allowed to dance on Sundays (2004). The dances of African origin were played with the instruments from the Candomblé religion, such as “atambaque drums, agogô double bells and agué (xequerê) large gourd shakers” (Fryer 2000: 23).

The police enforced many regulations to try to keep black Brazilians from participating in street Carnaval, partly out of fear of the concentration of black people; it is estimated that at this time blacks outnumbered whites in Rio de Janeiro. It was feared that unregulated Candomblé ceremonies plus the massive black population could lead to revolt (Guillermoprieto 1990). The police were thus concerned that they could lose their control over the blacks. In fact, as Alma Guillermoprieto argues,

After the abolition of slavery in 1888, the African rituals [Candomblé] sprang back: hybridized adaptations of Nigerian, Dahomean, Angolan and Portuguese traditions, they became Brazilianized under the names samba and candomblé, and their power was undiminished (1990: 8).

Unlike in the United States, where slaves were forbidden to play drums or celebrate African religions, slaves in Brazil could do both with certain restrictions. So the Candomblé and its drumming were permitted, but controlled and limited.
Another reason for trying to control or contain the black population was that the white Brazilians with legislative power wanted to “whiten” the Brazilian population by attracting immigration from Europe. The white immigrants received government subsidies, including land, while the freed slaves did not have access to education or receive any kind of help from the Brazilian government to get on their feet (Guillermoprieto 1990; Nascimento 1995). Yet the efforts to whiten were not terribly effective throughout the 1800s because of Rio’s massive black population, both slave and free, celebrating their heritage no matter what (Castro 2004). The “extreme social stratification between the upper and lower classes” (Camara 1997: 115) made difficult the assimilation of the “minority,” most of whom were of African descent, into the Brazilian economic sector.

1.3.5.1 – Rio de Janeiro

Many of the blacks living in Rio de Janeiro “had migrated to Rio from Bahia” (Jonas 1992: 186), since Bahia had been one of the main ports of entry for slaves into Brazil. There were many different groups of people from different African regions observing Carnaval in different neighborhoods around the city of Rio de Janeiro. Mangueira website says that poor people (mostly black) danced in organized street Carnaval groups called Os Cordões. Then in 1893 another organized group called Ranchos came about. Ranchos gained notoriety for creating music that was easily sung by the foliões (people who dance at the Carnaval). Both Os Cordões and Ranchos were predecessors of the Samba Schools (www.mangueira.com.br 2006).
In the same way that African instruments such as drums became the essential sounds of Carnaval, it was natural that the black Brazilians in Rio de Janeiro would create the Samba in 1917 as a style of music and dance. The Samba was born in the house of Tia Ciata (1854-1924), who was originally from Bahia. Ciata, born Hilária Batista de Almeida, moved from Bahia to Rio de Janeiro in 1876 (Chasteen 2004: 34; Castro 2004). Aunt Ciata was an important figure in the terreiro or Candomblé temple. She had a spacious house in the downtown area of Praça Onze (at that time known as “Little Africa”), and she used to invite people to her house for parties in her back yard (Guillermoprieto 1990; O Estado 2002; Castro 2004).

In fact, it seems to be a pattern for people associated with Candomblé or African-origin religions to congregate at some member’s house. Since Ciata was an important figure at a Candomblé temple, apparently she was a helper of mãe-de-santo (mother of saint) or pai-de-santo (father of saint), who were the priest and priestess of the Candomblé temples. Consequently, she would have filhos and filhas de santo (sons and daughters of the saints, or actually priests and priestesses in training) at her house much of the time. Besides, she was well known for her food, which by itself attracted a lot of people. When not on duty on the terreiro, she worked selling sweets and some other special dishes from Bahia on the street (figure 1.10).
Tia Ciata also liked to dance and there was *samba de roda* in her back yard. In samba de roda people stand in a circle, singing and clapping hands and, one at a time, taking turns improvising dance steps in the middle (Chasteen 2004). Because samba was a dance generally forbidden by Rio’s authorities, black people had to request special permission from the police for their samba parties. It was easy for Ciata to make samba parties because her husband worked in the police station and she was respected. Also, many famous white as well as black artists from the favelas frequented her house. As a result, the first samba originated from these encounters. And even before the term had been officially adopted as a label for the
music, “[t]he name samba was used by newspaper reporters to highlight the street dancers” (Chasteen 2004: 45).

In Rio today, Carnaval dance and costume contests are held in social clubs and fancy hotels. Most of these hotels are located along the beach, and the most famous contest is held at the Copacabana Palace Hotel on the Avenida Atlantica. The Carnaval dances in the hotels are very expensive, making for a very white and tourist Carnaval. As Jon S. Vincent states, “[c]ostume balls cater to the wealthy at the opposite end of the economic spectrum from samba school” (2003: 88). But many of the participants in the balls also like to appear in the Samba School parade, the reason being that everybody is watching the parade, and they want to be seen to market themselves. The parade works like a store window.

In Rio, the main attractions are the Samba Schools, each one of which has about four thousand participants. Samba Schools are organizations like clubs, which will be discussed later. Some of the biggest and best-known Samba Schools are Escola de Samba Estação Primeira de Mangueira, Acadêmicos do Salgueiro, Escola de Samba Beija-Flor de Nilópolis, and Portela. Additionally, there are Carnaval balls at social clubs in Rio’s suburbs, making it possible for the lower classes to enjoy the Carnaval festivities. In the same way, Rio’s government and city hall organize and decorate the main praça (plaza) of many of the city’s neighborhoods with colorful figurines and paper ornaments and add sound equipment playing very loud music to bring the spirit of Carnaval to people to dance.

In addition, street Carnaval can be found in most of Rio’s neighborhoods with smaller Carnaval groups which can be described as “blocos de empolgação, great
masses of people wearing the same costume that parade in one solid block and dance energetically” (Shaw and Dennison 2005: 315). Some of these blocos are well known, such as Cacique de Ramos (Ramos’ Chief), Cordão do Bola Preta (Black Ball Cord), Bafo da Onça (Jaguar’s breath) and Chave de Ouro (Gold Key).

There are also groups called bandas, which are smaller and less formally organized than the Samba Schools. The most famous is the Banda de Ipanema, many of whose people like to be part of the parade, and some of whose men dress as Carmen Miranda (figure 1.11).

Figure 1.11 - Man dressed as Carmen Miranda, from Helmut Teissl, Carnival in Rio, 1999

Carnaval as a cultural festival is celebrated all over Brazil, and “[u]nlike the United States, many countries in the hemisphere that once held large slave
populations now make carnival a national celebration” (Fiehrer and Lowdwick 1990: 65). The best-known Carnavals in Brazil are in Rio de Janeiro, Salvador and Recife.

1.3.5.2 - Bahia

Carnaval in Salvador, Bahia’s capital, attracts Brazilian and foreign tourists who come to take part in the famous street Carnaval, where “Each year an estimated 2 million people crowd into Salvador’s narrow streets to dance” (Shaw and Dennison 2005: 314). Among the main attractions in Salvador are the bands called *Trio Eletrico* (figure 1.12). A Trio Eletrico (actually bigger than a trio) is a band with sound equipment and musical instruments, whose members play and sing popular songs, all on the back of a flatbed truck driving slowly through the streets. The music they play is predominantly from popular bands from Bahia, with their characteristic drumming rhythms (sounding like reggae) which make people sing and dance in the streets: they jump like popcorn. The blocos spread energy wherever they go, and the audience follows behind, dancing and singing.

Bahia also has dance societies, less formal than Rio’s Samba Schools, such as *Afoxè, Olodum* and *Filhos de Gandhi* (figure 1.13). Some of these groups do not wear fancy costumes, but simply T-shirts with the group’s color and name. The participants in the Filhos de Gandhi group are mostly black males. The group was inspired by Mahatma Gandhi’s peace philosophy. Filhos de Gandhi is considered an *afoxé* group, defined as a street Candomblé because most of the members belong to a *terreiro* or Candomblé temple. During the Carnaval parade, these groups present music with dances that resemble Candomblé rituals. In doing so, “[s]everal
blocos in Salvador are dedicated to preserving Afro-Brazilian heritage” (Vincent 2003: 88).


It is said in Brazil that Carnaval in Bahia goes on for at least a month. Carnaval in Bahia has become so famous that Brazilians and people from all over the world want to be part of this popular event. For instance, in 2006, Bono, from the musical group U2, was one of the international celebrities appearing at Salvador’s Carnaval. Bono even compared the Brazilians favorably to the Irish: “[the Irish] just don’t know how to dance” (www.oglobo.com.br 2006).
In Carnaval 2007, some traditionalists in Bahia were concerned, as Samba Schools in Rio were a few years ago, with the infiltration of foreigners into their Carnaval. Since Carnaval in Bahia preserves African heritage, people interested in Carnaval and African culture thought that the invasion of an occasional DJ playing recorded music on the back of a truck in the place of a live Trio Eletrico band would damage the local culture. Besides, Carnaval in Bahia has been attracting international musicians every year, and in 2007 Shakira, Ziggy Marley and Carlos Santana were among those attending (www.estadao.com.br 2007).

1.3.5.3 - Pernambuco

Carnaval in the state of Pernambuco includes African-origin folkloric dances such as frevo and groups such as maracatu (figure 1.14). Maracatu are groups, such as Reis do Congo (kings of the Congo) whose parading in the streets in procession resembles African religious ceremonies. In addition, maracatu groups present Amerindian and Portuguese cultural elements (www.terrabrasileira.net 2007; Shaw and Dennison 2005). Maracatu groups resemble the Cabildo groups from Cuba.

As for frevo (from the verb ferver [to boil]), requires performers to be physically fit, because the rhythm is frenetic, with the dancers moving the legs and bending the knees very often, somewhat like the Russian dance called Hopak. Frevo is a combination of maxixe, Brazilian tango, quadrille and polka-marcha, and in 2007 turned 100 years old (www.recife.pe.gov.br 2007). In Pernambuco there is also a bloco called O Galo da Madrugada (Dawn's Rooster) (figure 1.15). And equally
important is the Carnaval in *Olinda*, also in Pernambuco State, with giant dolls in its parades (figure 1.16).

Figure 2.14 - Maracatu group, Olinda, from [www.estadão.com.br](http://www.estadão.com.br), 2007

Figure 2.15 - *O Galo da Madrugada*, from [www.pousadapeter.com.br](http://www.pousadapeter.com.br), 2006
Figure 2.16 - Giant Dolls, Olinda, from www.pousadapeter.com.br, 2006
2. Carnaval and the Favelas

Introduction: To paint a clearer picture of Carnaval in Brazil, I need to give a little background about the favelas or shantytowns in Rio de Janeiro (figure 2.1). Brazilian soldiers who fought during the Canudos war (1896-1897) established the first favela in Rio. The town called Canudos in northern Bahia had about 25 thousand inhabitants, and their simple houses were built on the hills. According to the Mangueira website, the first favela in Rio was called Morro da Favela and originated around the turn of the 20th century (Bueno 2003, www.mangueira.com.br 2006; www.educaterra.com.br 2006; Guillermoprieto 1990).

In the late 1800’s, there was a place close to downtown Rio called Cidade Nova (New City). It grew fast, and “attracted migrants from other parts of Brazil [mostly blacks from the Bahia State], including freed slaves – and poor Italians and Portuguese immigrants, too” (Chasteen 2004: 21). Cidade Nova included a neighborhood called Praça Onze, which had hills very close to downtown, where some black people already were living. This neighborhood was very alive with music and dance, which led directly to the beginning of Carnaval.

Chasteen, pushing the date slightly earlier than the information at the Mangueira website, states that by 1890, the favelas (figure 2.2) had begun to be established in the hills around Cidade Nova (2004), because the cost of living in the city was too high for poor people. In the hills they could simply choose a space and construct a shack without any legal permission or payment. According to the
Mangueira Samba School website, one of these hills, the Morro da Mangueira or Mangueira Hill (close to Central do Brasil train station) was owned by the Viscount of Niterói, after whom the main street at the foot of Mangueira Hill was later named (www.mangueira.com.br 2006).

The industries where the poor sought jobs were situated mainly in neighborhoods a short distance outside downtown Rio. For example, at the foot of the Mangueira hill, there was a cannery and a hat factory that both provided many jobs for the community. In addition, the trains, bondes (the electric trolleys), and
buses passed close to some of the favela areas, including Estação Central do Brasil or Central Station.

At the same time that poor black and white people were establishing the favelas, wealthy white people were moving to the south of the city, away from the favelas (though today favelas are established there too [figure 2.2]) and close to the beaches, such as the Flamengo, Botafogo and Copacabana neighborhoods (Chasteen 2004) (figure 2.3). At that time, lots of urban improvement was done in those places.

Figure 2.2- Favela behind two buildings in Copacabana, author’s photo, 2006
Today, tourists often see favelas as fun, romantic places, whereas the Brazilians see favelas as dirty, violent and threatening. Some foreigners consider the favelas to be the “real” Brazil. The Mexican journalist Alma Guillermoprieto and U.S. anthropologist Robin E. Sheriff, even chose to live in the favelas while conducting fieldwork (www.ogloboonline.com.br 2007).

Figure 2.3 - Copacabana beach, author’s photo, 2005
3. Samba Schools

**Introduction:** Despite white domination, black people in Brazil have held on to their African heritage through the centuries. They preserved their religion by renaming their Orixás (gods or spirits) after Catholic saints, and their dances and music evolved through different stages into the Samba. One of the characteristics of African musical culture is the drum, and in Brazil the Africans and African descendants were allowed to play drums as part of their cultural celebrations. Nina Rodrigues states that in 1807 in Bahia, blacks got together anywhere, and played and danced with loud sounds of *batuque* (drums) (2004), which is one of the predecessors of Samba. Such black cultural practices have been evolving through the centuries, and in the 20th century, the *Escola de Samba* (Samba School) was created, organized much like a social club where blacks could get together and dance. From this point, many things in the black culture, including the Samba Schools changed or adapted (see Larry Naylor 1996). For the purpose of my thesis I will concentrate on the Samba Schools from 1980 to 2007, and I will discuss how modernization attracted the white elite and transformed the Samba Schools from a cultural celebration of black people in Rio de Janeiro into a nationwide business.

It was poor black Brazilians, living alongside poor whites in the favelas, who created the first Samba School in 1929, and later people living in other favelas and suburbs created others. The first Samba School earned its name because the Samba dance was practiced in an empty lot by a school, the *Escola Normal de*
Professores, similar to a vocational school for training teachers. Samba organizers, such as Ismael Silva, thought to add the word “school” to Samba, and thus was created the term Escola de Samba (Guillermoprieto1990; Castro 2004). The Samba Schools, of Rio de Janeiro are “a manifestation of the urban folklore, made up of a group of people who use music and dance to tell a story” (Rector 1984: 44). At this time in 1929, and for a few years to come, the creators had control of the entire organization of the Samba School Carnaval, from choosing of music to deciding who would or would not participate in the parades.

Although the first recognized Samba School in 1929 had the name Deixa Falar (Let Me Speak) (Castro 2004), an earlier one, Portela, was “one of the oldest [Samba Schools], founded in 1923” (Rector 1984: 55). The first Samba School parade was in 1932, and was sponsored by a journalist named Mario Filho (www.odia.com.br 2002). According to Rector, this parade was organized to introduce the Samba music created by black composers to the people who lived in the city (1984), namely to the white elite living in the southern neighborhoods of Rio. In other words, this first parade was for black people to showcase their heritage through their talent and creativity. As a result, the white elite began to see the Samba less as a crude, savage rhythm and more as a catchy popular music form, and so the Samba eventually “emerged as a source of national identity” (Wilson and Dissanayake 1996: 24).

As Charles Chasteen states, after the 1930 Revolution in which Getúlio Vargas became president of Brazil, “[I]n Rio, a populist mayor began to offer official sponsorship to black street dancers” (2004: 48). Thus, it seems that the appreciation
for African contributions to Brazilian culture started during the Vargas presidency (Chasteen 2004). Soon afterwards, with the first Samba School competition in 1932, Carnaval started to grow socially and economically. And already in the next year, 1933, the Brazilian newspaper O Globo became the sponsor for the Samba School championship (Sangalo 2002). The first official Samba School parade in 1935 took place at the Praça Onze neighborhood in downtown Rio.

Hermano Vianna argues that during Vargas’ dictatorship, the “whitening” of Brazil was left behind and “race mixing had become the policy of the authoritarian New State, declared by President Getúlio Vargas in 1937” (1999: 51). Ironically, with help from Vargas’ nationalism and from elite white composers such as Noel Rosa, Heitor Villa-Lobos and Mario Reis, Samba became a popular music and a national symbol, helping to showcase Brazil to the world (Vianna 1999; Sheriff 1999).

In 1960 the Brazilian President Juscelino Kubitschek moved the capital of Brazil from Rio de Janeiro to Brasilia, a newly constructed city. Rio, having lost its status and glamour of being the capital, sought something to replace the revenue that had been lost. Consequently, after Rio’s government saw the success enjoyed by the Samba Schools, its solution was to increase its control over the Samba Schools, demanding that they improve aspects of their Carnaval, such as the costumes and written music, and thus become a draw for tourism (Raphael 1990).

Later, the Samba Schools in Rio de Janeiro were organized into the União das Escolas de Samba (Samba Schools Union), and in the Carnaval of 1963, the parade moved to the Avenida Presidente Vargas in downtown. Every year, Rio’s city
government had crews construct wood and metal bleachers along the parade route so they could charge an admission fee. Thus, the Samba School parade in downtown Rio started to become a profit-king industry, and the public had to pay to cheer for their favorite School.

Culturally, Samba Schools in Rio de Janeiro bring Brazilians together from different social classes, races and backgrounds. “[B]razilian culture is the result of a syncretism that comes from the relationship among several human groups of different origins” (Rector 1984: 37). There is no better time than during the Carnaval to see first-hand all of this coming together of cultures: people of African, European and Native American descent, as well as other ethnic groups that immigrated to Brazil more recently.

On the other hand, a conflict between blacks and whites started to be portrayed in movies, such as Samba em Brasilia, released in 1960, in which a white sambista woman was practicing dancing as a flag-bearer to possibly be chosen over a black woman to fulfill this role in the parade, a role which, to my knowledge, has virtually always been filled by black women. The movie was fiction of course, but on the one hand it showed how the “whitening” policy worked, and on the other hand suggested that white people were being discriminated against by being barred from positions in the Samba Schools (1960; Stam 1997). Looking at this issue from another aspect, Robin E. Sheriff interviewed a black woman who lives in a favela, whom I quote: “…because samba is a black thing. It began with the negros [sic]…Look at them! They’re all white, very pretty, but can they samba? No. They can’t samba at all!” (1999: 18).
Years later, Rio’s government started to support Samba Schools though an organization called RIOTUR - Empresa de Turismo do Municipio do Rio de Janeiro S.A. (Rio de Janeiro Tourism Organization), with the condition that the Samba Schools had to choose Brazilian symbols for the *samba enredo* (Samba theme).

As Samba Schools in Rio de Janeiro re-invent themselves through modernization, the focus is moving from popular celebration of black culture to big business. The *carioca* (people from Rio de Janeiro) elite started taking part in the rehearsals in the hills or favelas where most of the Samba Schools are headquartered, though a few Schools are also in the north neighborhoods of Rio and elsewhere. The rehearsals occur all year round, mainly on Fridays and Saturdays, when the people living in the favelas mingle with the white Brazilians who are middle and upper class. Here, there is an inversion of power: the poor become the teachers, the experts in samba dancing and samba-theme, passing their skills on to the middle and upper class pupils as much as possible. One of the rules for dancing samba is to move your feet (and for women the hips as well) in time to the rhythm of the syncopated 2/4 music (Guillermoprieto 1990). Not everyone can do it, but many can learn.

Samba Schools in Rio de Janeiro attract artists and top models from around the country, some of them looking for opportunities to showcase themselves. Sheriff, based on his fieldwork, argues that black women felt degraded as white elite women assumed prominent positions, such as on the tops of the floats, formerly held exclusively by black women (1990). And for politicians as well as Brazilian beer
companies, a Samba School is like an outdoor advertisement: they distribute T-shirts, paper fans and other trinkets with their names on them.

One of the big events in the 1980’s was the construction of the Sambódromo. In 1982, Rio’s government commissioned the Brazilian architect Oscar Niemeyer to design a place for the Samba School parade on the street called Marquês de Sapucaí. The plans were completed and construction began that same year. Inaugurated in 1984, the Sambódromo, whose parade runway is 700 yards long, resembles a stadium, with huge concrete bleachers on both sides (figures 3.1; 3.2). These structures can seat 88,500 people and contain 300 bathrooms, 35 bars, and 51 box seats in many different sizes, primarily for tourists. During the rest of the year, the Sambódromo’s boxes are used as public school classrooms. At one end there is also a parabolic arch at the back of the Praça da Apoteose which has a stage where big musical concerts are held during the rest of the year (Castro 2004; www.odia.terra.com.br 2006).
Figure 3.1 – Sambódromo, from www.liesanet.com, 2006

Figure 3.2 – Another view from Sambódromo, from www.braziltur.com, 2006
Tickets to watch the Samba School parades in the Sambódromo are too expensive for many people who would like to attend, including people who work for the Carnaval industry. The high prices make the Carnaval parade in Rio a big event for tourists. For example, Barbara Bush went to see the Samba School parade during Carnaval in Rio a few years ago, and it seemed that Mrs. Bush enjoyed what she saw. Her presence shows the power of the Carnaval and also the power of money, since she joined the celebration without having to stand in line for tickets. On the other hand, there are people who sleep in line for days to buy tickets. The Samba Schools do, however, provide a number of tickets for the local community. But in Rio, to contribute to the social and economic problems surrounding Carnaval, there are cambistas, individuals or companies, such as travel agencies, who buy most of the tickets and sell them for inflated prices; in other words, scalpers.

In 2006, the Globo Television Network, as has been the case for many years, broadcast the Samba Schools parade, transmitting coverage to forty-seven countries, including the United States. The television presentation featured many special effects. Each time a new Samba School entered the Sambódromo, there appeared a special effect on the ground, like a shimmering carpet, with the school’s colors. The bleachers had effects superimposed on them as well, such as waves in different colors and the School’s name above.

The Sambódromo itself had laser beams going into the skies forming geometric patterns. The sponsor’s brand names were displayed in colorful neon lights all over the Sambódromo decorations, sponsors such as Schincariol and Antartica beers and Nestlé.
3.1 - Samba School Organization

Samba Schools are officially recognized by the RIOTUR – the Rio de Janeiro Tourism Organization. Samba Schools are highly organized as follows: the internal and permanent side, and the external and mobile side.

3.1.1 - Internal Side: Administration

The internal or administration side has positions that can be filled by election or appointment for certain periods of time, or by hiring people for permanent jobs. The internal operation of the Mangueira Samba School has a structure typical of most Schools and is organized as follows: president (1 person), vice-president (1), administrative department (3), financial department (3), social department (3), property department (3), harmony department (3), marketing (3), legal department (2), sports (1), cultural department (5), medical department (3), public relations department (2), Baianas section (1), Carnaval (5), samba school for the future (2), special projects (2), barn (2), women’s department (2), assessors (10), and accounting (4) (www.mangueira.com.br 2007[my translation]).

3.1.2 - External Side: Composition

The external side is composed of people who are contracted for some specific jobs or for general work during Carnaval season. Samba Schools in general have one carnavalesco. The carnavalesco (or carnavalesca if it is a woman) is a person who develops the idea for the school’s theme for the year, a kind of art
director who works under contract. At the end of the year or after Carnaval, the contract can be either renewed or not.

The carnavalesco/a oversees the entire Carnaval operation and its personnel, such as researchers, fashion designers, seamstresses, sculptors, painters, aderecistas (makers of adereços, or costume accessories), carpenters and electricians, and all other School employees.

After the theme is selected, the School’s composers write samba music for it called samba enredo (samba theme). The costumes and all the ornaments for decoration are developed according to the theme or story that the School will present during the Carnaval parade.

Each Samba School is composed of several groups: Comissão de Frente (literally, “front commission”), a group of ten to fifteen people who are the opening act for the Samba School with special choreographic movements (figure 3.3) introducing the School; Carro Abre Alas (opening float), most of which have the School symbol; Alas or wings (depending on the theme, there could be up to 50 or 60 wings); a maximum of seven or eight floats (figure 3.2) (Globo Television Network, 2006); Passistas, (figure 3.4) a group of people who dance samba during the parade; masters of ceremonies; first and second flag/standard bearers (for several years these have been hired as “special components”) (figure 3.5); the directors of the percussion band; and the percussion band itself, which is the last group in the parade. Most of the school’s components carry something in one hand called Adereço de Mão, or “hand ornament,” to complete the costume. The percussion orchestra, considered the school’s heart, can have around 300 people
and typically features around “twenty-nine bass-drums, thirty side-drums, forty-three kettle-drums, ten cuicas, twenty-seven tambourines, four agogós, four washboards, and ninety-two maracas per school” (figures 3.6; 3.7) (Castro, 2004: 62; Globo Television Network 2007).
Figure 3.4 – Passistas, from Helmut Teissl, *Carnival in Rio*, 1999
Figure 3.5 – Flag-bearer, from Helmut Teissl, *Carnival in Rio*, 1999
Figure 3.6 - Bateria or Percussion Orchestra, from Helmut Teissl, *Carnival in Rio*, 1999
3.2 - Parade

The Samba School parade “is a procession in which the individual participants or groups present themselves one behind the other” (Rector 1984: 51). They present an organized mass of people divided into majestic wings that are the symbols of the power of the poor Brazilians (Queiroz 1992: 115). In Rio de Janeiro, up through 2006 there had been 14 Samba Schools called “special groups”. In 2007, there were 13, and from 2008 on, the number will be reduced to 12: the stated purpose of the reduction in numbers is to make the schools more competitive (Globo Television Network 2007). These schools are divided into two groups: in 2007, 6 paraded on Sunday night and 7 on Monday night of Carnaval.
The parade’s order is determined by a schedule drawn up months ahead by the RIOTUR. Each school has 80 minutes to present their Carnaval; if they go overtime, they will lose points. There are also other groups of Samba Schools called Access Group A and Access Group B, each group having about ten schools. The schools within each group compete against each other in other parades (Group A on Saturday and Group B on Tuesday at the Sambódromo), working their way up from B to A, with the winner of section A being awarded the last position in the special groups the following year. In 2007, two schools went from the Access Group B to Access Group A, and the winner from Group A was promoted to the Special Group (Globo Television Network, 2007).

There are forty judges, chosen by the RIOTUR, to judge the Samba Schools in the parade. The judges have good knowledge of the Carnaval and expertise in visual arts, including dance, costumes and music. As the schools’ participants pass in front of the judges, they do a samba demonstration, “falando com os pés” (talking with their feet). Different aspects of Samba Schools are judged as follows:

*Allegoria and Adereços (ornaments):* The judges consider the creativity, workmanship, selection of colors, the meaning of the *enredo*, and whether the school transmits the *enredo*’s message to the public.

*Bateria or Percussion Orchestra:* Considered are creativity, versatility and harmony with the school’s *enredo*. The different sounds produced are also judged.

*Conjunto:* The School is judged as a whole, and whether the school’s artistic equilibrium is united throughout the parade.
**Front Commission:** Its role is to greet the audience and to present the school to the audience with choreographed movements throughout the parade (figure 3.3).

**Enredo or Theme:** The general idea developed as proposed, including the creativity of the costumes and ornaments and the arrangement of the wings according to the theme.

**Evolution or Development:** The judges rate the people participating in the parade, their enthusiasm and agility, without confusion in the wings.

**Harmony:** Musical rhythm of the Samba singer and the percussion orchestra. Everybody needs to be synchronized, which can be a challenge, since sound takes about 2 seconds to traverse the 700-yard length of the Sambódromo.

Flag- and Standard-bearer: Harmony and grace with smooth and classic movements that define the couple. Also, the flag-bearer carries the school’s most important symbol, the flag. The Standard-bearer is responsible for presenting this symbol to the audience by holding the end of the flag to present its entire surface to the audience. Nowadays, the school has a choreographer who helps the couple improve their dance.

**Samba Theme:** the words and melody should have lyrics that are beautiful and in harmony with the *enredo*: The melody is judged by its Samba rhythm and how well it lends itself to being sung and danced to by the school, particularly the passistas (Rosseto 2007 [my translation]).

As mentioned before, tickets to watch the Samba School parade are too expensive for many people who would like to attend, including people who work for the Carnaval industry. This has been a concern among the older and traditional
people from the Samba Schools. According to some of them, the Samba Schools have lost their original purpose: to preserve the black culture. There are still some traditional Samba Schools, such as Mangueira, although they have white elite members (there is no discrimination in this regard). Mangueira preserves black culture, in part by making sure that the people who fill most of the major positions in their school are from the local community.

The Special Group parade starts on Sunday night. The Sambódromo is decorated with lots of bright and colorful lights, reminding one of the Las Vegas Strip. The music is very loud and almost gives the sensation that the drums are playing inside the spectator. The audience sings along enthusiastically with the most popular songs, hoping their favorite school will win the contest. When the first school appears on the runway, the public applauds and makes a lot of other noise and dances along to the rhythm of the samba.

In 2007, Beija-Flor paraded with 4,500 people, and because the majority of the school’s components are from the community, they sang and danced with harmony. In fact, just being members of the community made them proud to present a beautiful parade. Besides, the theme was Africa, and most of them are black (Globo Television Network 2007).
4. Samba Schools: the Politics of Sponsorship

4.1 - National Sponsorship

In the 1980’s, the departments of tourism in many Brazilian states started sponsoring Samba Schools. The Brazilian newspaper Jornal do Brasil states that in 1987, the Brazilian city of Cachoeiro de Itapemirim in the Espirito Santo State was the first city to invest in one of Rio’s Samba Schools, because this school’s Samba was about Roberto Carlos, a popular Brazilian singer and composer who was born in this state (www.jbonline.com.br 2006). Since then, other states have also begun sponsoring the Samba Schools. The reason again is that the Samba Schools provide an excellent advertising medium that will be seen all over Brazil and around the world, consequently attracting tourists, improving business and most of all providing jobs.

Each year, many sponsors invest in the Samba Schools because there will be a return on their investments, including for jogo do bicho, or The Animal Game. Jogo do Bicho (figure 4.1) is an illegal numbers game in which different animals represent the numbers one through twenty-five. Players choose a combination of numbers and give them and the money they bet to numbers runners, who take them to the “banker” at the headquarters of the local game, where the winning numbers are chosen and the money handled. There are jogo do bicho drawings every day. Although illegal, jogo do bicho provides jobs for people desperately in need, mainly blacks with a lack of education or training necessary to get good legitimate jobs to provide for their families. Jogo do bicho bankers can be said to be performing the
role that should be played by the government: providing the poor community with social and economic help. In doing so, they gain the loyalty of these people.

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</tr>
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<td>45 - 46 - 47 - 48</td>
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<td>GATO</td>
<td>53 - 54 - 55 - 56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>JACARÉ</td>
<td>57 - 58 - 59 - 60</td>
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<td>61 - 62 - 63 - 64</td>
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<td>65 - 66 - 67 - 68</td>
</tr>
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<td>69 - 70 - 71 - 72</td>
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Figure 4.1 - Jogo do bicho numbers, from [www.jogodobicho.com.br](http://www.jogodobicho.com.br), 2007

In fact, the influence of jogo do bicho was openly publicized in the mid-1970’s when the jogo do bicho banker Anisio Abrahão David contracted Joãozinho Trinta (figure 4.2) as the carnavalesco, or artistic director, for the Beija-Flor Samba School in the Nilópolis neighborhood of Rio. For this landmark year, Trinta chose as his theme Sonhar com o rei dá Leão ("If you dream of a king, bet on the lion," referring
to the jogo do bicho game). People were stunned with Trinta’s rich visual effects: lots of sequins; people painted as animals, mirrors and all sorts of astonishing materials.

The flamboyant Trinta’s creative innovations helped the Beija-Flor Samba School win the parade competition. As a result, it spurred other Samba Schools to work harder to try to reach the same level as Beija-Flor. All this had the overall result of improving and evolving the Samba Schools in general, thus elevating their status in the eyes of Brazil and of the world to what it is today (Beija-Flor biography, 2006).

It is important to mention that Joãzinho Trinta also worked with the Nilópolis community, showing them how they could improve their lives by using the materials they had available. The whole program included a community vegetable garden and recycling.

Figure 4.2- Joãozinho Trinta, from Helmut Teissl, Carnival in Rio, 1999
During the 2006 Samba School parade, Trinta, who had suffered a stroke resulting in a speech impediment, joined in the procession in a wheelchair. The audience applauded, and he said that he would be back in 2007 (Globo Television Network, 2006).

Getting back to the theme of sponsorship: Alma Guillermoprieto states that someone from the Vila Isabel Samba School was upset with the School’s commercialization by the sponsors: “They want the float pushers, the only school members who are not in costume, to wear T-shirts with the [Coca-Cola] company logo on their backs…for me the schools are the people on the hills” (1990: 33).

The Samba Schools also receive money from RIOTUR (Empresa Municipal de Turismo do Rio de Janeiro S.A.), from ticket sales to the Sambódromo parade, from fees people pay to watch and participate in the Samba rehearsals during the year, from CD sales, and from the Globo Television Network. TV Globo bought the rights to transmit the Samba School parade on Sunday and Monday of Carnaval to many countries around the world.

In addition, Samba Schools organize fund-raising events, such as selling the popular feijoada, a Brazilian national dish, which is made of black beans cooked with sausage, different types of meat and seasoned with fried garlic. All these events keep the Samba Schools’ components busy throughout the year, because it takes a lot of money for the school to function.

In 2007, the Beija-Flor Samba School did not have any sponsorship. The school wanted to have the freedom to choose their theme without imposition, and they decided to talk about Africa (figure 4.3). One reason was that Beija-Flor had
won the Samba School Parade championship with Africa as a theme at least once before. Another reason was that a majority of Beija-Flor’s community in Nilópolis (the Rio suburb) is black. They wanted to honor black Brazilians and their African roots, but not about what Africans in Brazil suffered during slavery; rather they wanted to present and celebrate African nobility and culture. And Beija-Flor won the 2007 Samba School championship in Rio de Janeiro (Globo Television Network 2007; www.oglobo.com.br 2007; www.odia.com.br 2007).

4.2 - Transnational Sponsorship

According to Hiram Araújo, as Carnaval has become an expensive show, sponsorship is very important (www.jbonline.terra.com.br 2006). In recent years, multinational companies, such as Nestlé, Petrobras, McLaren, and Dove, have contributed to the Samba Schools. Giving financial support, these companies buy
the right to have the company’s names included in the Samba lyrics. In fact in 2005, the Nestlé company had a large share of Carnaval stock: Nestlé sponsored the Samba School *Grande Rio* with food as a theme. The company made a contract with the Samba Schools Association that gave them rights to have Nestlé’s logo on Samba School music CDs, and bought shares of Globo Television Network’s transmission of the Samba School parade, sprinkling their advertising liberally throughout coverage of the parade (www.oglobo.com.br 2004).

For Carnaval of 2006, Vila Isabel Samba School, from the Rio suburb of the same name, was sponsored by the Venezuela Petroleum Company (PDVSA) and received between US$500,000 and US$1.5 million from the company. The school’s theme this year was the Latin American continent and was called “*Soy loco por ti America: A Vila canta a latinidade*” (difficult to translate, but roughly, “I am crazy for you Latin America: Vila Isabel sings of ‘Latin-ness’”) (www.oglobo.globo.com 2006; www.odia.com.br 2006).

Vila Isabel Samba School was anticipating that Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez might attend or even take part in the parade, but in the end, he did not. Vila Isabel won the 2006 Samba School championship; Chávez did call to congratulate the school. The reason for the sponsorship, according to PDVSA’s management, was to use Carnaval as a springboard to establish Venezuela’s image in Brazil. They even had a marketing campaign in Venezuela using radio, TV, and advertisements on the sides of buses to announce their participation in the Brazilian Carnaval (Marcelo Kischinhevsky 3/1/06).
*Porto da Pedra* (Stone Port) Samba School was sponsored by the Dove cosmetics company in 2006. The idea was to show a democratic concept of beauty. The school’s theme was *Bendita és tu entre as Mulheres do Brasil* (Blessed are you among the Brazilian Women). Dove’s ad campaign in Brazil sent out the same message as in the United States: That beauty comes in many forms; not everybody needs to look like Barbie. So, the *Porto da Pedra* Samba School and Dove created the Real Beauty *bloco* of women who paraded in the wing called Wing of Women’s Rights. The school had women of all shapes and sizes to present the message that beauty comes from within ([www.gessylever.com.br](http://www.gessylever.com.br) 2007).

In 2007, *Imperatriz Leopoldinense* Samba School had *bacalhau* (salted cod, a popular dish in Brazil served mainly on Holy Friday) as a theme, and went to Norway for research and to find a sponsor. The School got about US$500,000, and a Norwegian company bought one hundred costumes to help out. The Norwegian chief of Fishing Advisory said that Carnaval was a good opportunity to tell the Brazilians that *bacalhau*, contrary to what many Brazilians believed, comes from Norway and not from Portugal (Duarte 2007).
5. Samba Schools and Modernization: Globalization of Carnaval

Introduction: Today, the Samba Schools are businesses and as such they are expanding, due in part to globalization. For example, Samba School employees now include engineers who do research to determine the best materials and structures to use to build the floats. And each Samba School has its own website, through which they are able to sell costumes and to communicate with Carnaval participants.

The Samba Schools are so important for Rio de Janeiro that the Cidade do Samba was created, which on its website refers to itself as “à Fábrica de Sonhos” (the Dreams Factory) www.cidadedosambarj.globo.com 2007. Inaugurated in February of 2006, Cidade do Samba or Samba City was designed as a place where the schools from the thirteen special groups (twelve after 2007) can work during the year. It was a combined effort by the City of Rio de Janeiro’s government and Liga Independente das Escolas de Samba do Rio de Janeiro (Rio de Janeiro Independent Samba Schools Association) to put Carnaval in the hands of the people and not in the hands of the government (www.oglobonline.com.br 2006).

Samba City is actually a huge building of 70 thousand square meters on a 92 thousand square meter lot. Twelve meters high, it is partitioned inside into fourteen sections called galpãos or sheds, one for each school in the Special Groups, and one for a proposed museum. Up until now (February 2007), it has not been announced what the extra section will be used for after the number of schools in the special groups is reduced to twelve.
Visitors can tour Cidade do Samba for a fee; this is mainly for tourists and anyone who wants to see how the Samba Schools construct their floats and ornaments. The public can look down on each school’s galpão from a gallery area. Among other things, they will see the floats being designed and constructed, costumes being designed and fabricated, and *alegorias*, or hand-held ornaments being made. Each school has its own industrial kitchen, complete with professional cook and nutritionist, to feed all the workers. There is even a 150-person-capacity restaurant for the tourists.

In 2007, during the Carnaval festivities, Cidade do Samba, besides promoting tourism to see the Samba School artwork, also promoted a Luxury Costume Ball. The event was for the Samba Schools to present their fancy costumes that a few days later would be in the parade (www.globo.com.br/rjtv 2007).

In the 2007 parade, Samba Schools made use of more technology than ever before. For example, *Unidos da Tijuca* Samba School’s theme was the history of photography. Besides displaying many photos of people who work for the school and their families in the parade, the school hired professional photographers to take digital pictures that immediately showed on a big monitor screen mounted on top of one of floats. These pictures later will be in an exposition at the Carnaval museum.

Another novelty was with the *Grande Río* Samba School. They had a stationary computer lab, cameras along the Sambódromo, and a laptop computer carried along with the parade, all under the supervision of a computer technician. The purpose was to monitor the school’s parade and to find and immediately solve any problems that might arise.
Since Samba Schools have been expanding into businesses, some of them have helped to establish and develop Samba Schools in other states of Brazil and around the world. Some of Mangueira’s participants went to Japan to teach people how to dance the Samba and to help organize a Samba School there. In Toronto, Canada, Brazilians created a Samba School called *Escola de Samba de Toronto*. The Toronto Samba School, patterned after Mangueira Samba School in Rio, also has a Carnaval costume competition; some costume designers come from Brazil to compete. Their web site, [www.sambatoronto.ca](http://www.sambatoronto.ca) states that they are “Rooted In The Brazilian Spirit” (2006).

The Brazilians in Diaspora celebrate Carnaval in the United States with their own Samba Schools, and many feature their own websites, for example:

- *Grupo Ribeiro*, New York: [www.sambany.com](http://www.sambany.com)
- *Sambalá* Samba School, Long Beach, CA: [www.sambala.org](http://www.sambala.org)
- San Francisco School of Samba, San Francisco, CA: [www.sfsamba.com](http://www.sfsamba.com)
- *Acadêmicos da Ópera* Samba School, Austin, TX:
  - [www.austinsambaschool.org](http://www.austinsambaschool.org)
- *Chicago Samba*, Chicago, IL: [www.chicagosamba.com](http://www.chicagosamba.com)

These Samba Schools are proud to show and teach Brazilian culture to the communities in which they live through the most famous festival in Brazil: Carnaval.
5.1 - Social Programs

Samba Schools also are committed helping their communities. For example: Beija-Flor offers swimming lessons for children and aquatic exercise for adults. They also have a ballet school, sports programs, and a daycare for 289 children, ages six months to six years, which gives medical and dental assistance. When the children become six years old, they attend an elementary school in the Samba School. Beija-Flor also has a project with two very well known associations in Brazil, SENAC and SENAÍ, that offers professional courses for teenagers; they plan to graduate 1500 students per year. In addition, they offer courses in English, Spanish and arts (www.beija-flor.com.br 2007).

Mangueira Samba School also has social projects for the community, which include: a school, medical and dental assistance, an “Olympic village for training athletes, and even schools…from basic education” to vocational training (Castro 2004: 102).

Furthermore, the State Secretary of Culture of Rio de Janeiro provides R$50.00 (about US$25.00) a month for each child who belongs to one of the Escolas Mirins (Children’s’ Samba Schools) to teach the child how Samba Schools function and how to construct everything related to it. People who are involved with the project say that children are able to learn about their own culture, and this cultural involvement in turn helps to enrich the regular school learning. These social projects are usually implemented in low-income, predominantly black neighborhoods; some of these neighborhoods are considered “high risk” which is to say, in or near favelas (www.globo.com.br/rjtv 2007).
As for the Carnavalescos/as, most of them have earned Fine Arts degrees. Some of them are teachers at universities in Rio, and some work designing visual effects for drama theaters. Also, because Carnaval is very demanding all year round, carnavalescos have a lot to do in the Samba Schools. There is one carnavalesca, Rosa Magalhães, who makes miniature prototypes of the Samba School parade floats so that people who work with her can see her ideas. In 2006, besides being responsible for the school, she also had her models on exhibit in France (Globo Television Network 2006).

In May of 2006, a Carnaval symposium was organized in Rio. The event lasted two days and was held at the Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro. During the symposium, projects about Carnaval were presented, with good public attendance (Alberto João 2006).

5.2 - Jobs

Of course, with so much tourism in Brazilian cities like Rio de Janeiro and Salvador during the Carnaval season, lots of jobs are created for hotels and services in general. But Carnaval in Brazil and especially in Rio is a year-round industry. The Brazilian newspaper O Globo states that just in the city of Rio de Janeiro, Carnaval creates about US$ ½ billion dollars per year (www.empresas.oglobo.com 2006).

In Brazil, Carnaval provides jobs in many different fields. For example, about 300,000 people such as seamstresses, designers, shoemakers, confetti makers, and people in every other profession directly or indirectly related to Carnaval are employed (www.empresas.oglobo.com 2006). Carnaval also provides jobs in other
states besides Rio, even if they are not strong in Carnaval. There are jobs also in the manufacture of Carnaval accessories, including the musical instruments, which have some parts that need to be replaced very often.

In this way, everything that is connected directly, such as Samba Schools, hotels, etc. and indirectly, such as manufacturers of shoes, costumes, hats, etc., provide jobs year-round. Also, many manufacturers and stores sell products throughout the year for regional and folkloric parties. In doing so, jobs are provided to many Brazilians who are connected to Carnaval.

In Rio de Janeiro, during Carnaval season, hotels, pensões (bed & breakfast inns), and all kinds of accommodations are reserved ahead of time. According to the Brazilian News, during Carnaval 2006, the Brazilian Hotel Association expected revenue of R$2 billion (about US$1 billion) (www.empresas.globo.com/Editora 2006).
6. Dance and Music: Eurhythmic Influence of African Culture

Introduction: Carnaval in the Americas has strong connections with African music and dance, due to the African slave heritage. Most of the countries in the Americas, like the United States, Trinidad, Argentina and Brazil, to name a few, developed styles of music and dance, each of which is unique, yet related to the others.

Although there have been many rhythms of African descent in the United States, such as blues, ragtime, and swing among others, jazz is one type of music and dance in particular that has survived through the years (Jonas 1992), and Congo Square in New Orleans is considered to be the place where Jazz was born (Fiehrer 1991).

Trinidad, like other countries in the Americas, originally had Carnaval with European styles of music and dance, but Africans “introduced drumming and the rhythms of the ‘chac-chac’ (shak-shak) and ‘toms-toms’” (Nunley 1988: 114), and, as in the other countries, these African elements were originally abhorred by the elite segment of the population. The Trinidadian Allan Adams says that eventually Calypso music evolved, which again was considered music and dance for the lower classes only. Adams states that the drums of the steel bands were originally made of small empty cans, but when the American soldiers left at the end of World War II, they left behind large oil drums, which the Trinidadians began using for this purpose. Today the steel drums, though no longer made from oil drums, are all still hand
made. So the steel drum bands at Carnaval in Trinidad play calypso and add other rhythms, including some from Brazilian musical styles (2007).

Carnaval in Argentina at the beginning of the 20th century also used European styles of music and dance. Then groups of white men with their faces painted black began to appear in the streets singing and dancing in the rhythms of milonga and tango, which they had learned by imitating black people. Eventually, these men furthered the development of these rhythms by practicing this dancing in back rooms of bars, either with women or with each other. Thus, the tango created by the black people was evolved by the white, and, after initial resistance by the elite social classes, the tango, danced not only at Carnaval, was celebrated by all as a national symbol (Chasteen 2004; Seigol 2000).

In Brazil in the 1800s, the carioca elite liked much of the music played in the Portuguese style called fado, and later on, Italian songs with Carnaval as a theme were introduced in Brazil. There were also other European styles such as polkas and mazurkas (Vianna 1999). Eventually different European styles of music were played for Carnaval, like modinhas, waltzes, and quadrilles. Styles developed in Brazil with African elements such as batuque and maxixe among others were finding their way into the repertoire too (Castro 2004).

According to Peter Fryer, maxixe was a fusion of an African dance in Brazil called lundu and the “imported polka and Cuban habenera” (2000: 11). It was the Carnaval of 1845 that introduced the polka to Brazil. And in 1899, Chiquinha Gonzaga, born Francisca Edwiges Neves Gonzaga (1847-1935), composed the first
Brazilian Carnaval song, *O Abre Alas* (Out of the Way), which was in the marcha style (Cardoso 2007; Castro 2004; Eneida 1958).

Although Rio de Janeiro has many *blocos* with street Carnaval playing *marchas*, *frevo*, and other rhythms, the most popular dance at Carnaval is samba. Chasteen states, “*r*ather than a couple dance, carnival samba is a spectacle, a competition, a civic event” (2004: 33). The Samba music “has a 2/4 meter, an emphasis on the second beat, and a stanza-and-refrain structure” (Shaw and Dennison 2005: 14; Guillermoprieto 1990). Samba was adapted from dances brought to Brazil by slaves from the Angola and Congo regions of Central Africa.

The word Samba was “originally a synonym for ‘*batuque*’ [beat]” (Rector 1984: 65), and was derived from the Angolan/Congo word Semba, which refers to a dance with fast footsteps. Samba or Batuque was considered a sensual dance and a favorite among slaves in Brazil, and batuque was also used in Candomblé sessions; consequently, the Catholic Church and the whites discouraged its practice. In fact, there is a song by the composer Martinho da Vila (who is one of the composers of Vila Isabel Samba School) with the lyrics, “*batuque na cozinha sinhá não quer*…” (the mistress doesn’t want batuque in the kitchen). Robin E. Sheriff quotes Martha Gil-Montero’s statement, “the batucada [batuque] became a profane dance and a melody with a choreography and a rhythm distinctively Carioca” (1999: 11).

In the Carnaval parade, each participant dances the Samba individually; as a ballroom dance, Samba can be danced in couples. To dance Samba, it is necessary (for women) to have *molejo, cadência*, or “a natural sense of rhythm,” with lots of hip movement and sensuality. Samba rhythm is very captivating and sensual but at the
same time a “style of remarkable tenacity and hegemonic reach” (Sheriff 1999: 3). Camara suggests “the [white] men closely mimic the movements of the blacks, while the [white] women merely suggest them” (1997: 216).

Poor black Brazilians developed the modern Samba, which is reminiscent of early African celebrations, and “[a]lthough the bittersweet nostalgia that samba seemed to invoke almost inevitably was anchored in the magic of Carnaval, it was also, for people on the morro [hill] particularly, a rhythm that accompanied everyday life” (Sheriff 1999: 9).

Today, Samba is considered a national dance, which captivates not only blacks but also the white segment of Brazilian society. According to Térik de Souza, “Samba gained a national status after it was recognized by intellectuals such as Villa-Lobos, who organized a historic play with American composer Leopold Stokowski in 1940 at [a ship called] Uruguay ship” (2006). There were also some other white intellectual musicians like Ari Barroso, Mario Reis, and Noel Rosa who helped to mainstream Samba into the Brazilian culture (Vianna 1999).

Another form of Samba, as was mentioned earlier, is pagode, a “kind of samba-pop inspired by romantic ballads” (Souza 2006:3). Pagode (figure 6.1) originated in the later 1970’s and 1980’s in people’s back yards, and has a slower rhythm. Souza states that the instruments originally used in pagode were banjo and tantan drum. The samba composers felt that the original samba didn’t get the attention it deserved, so they decided to show their songs to people by playing in the back yard (Souza 2006).
Other forms of Samba music include the following:

*Samba Enredo* – developed for and by the Samba School composers after the theme for the current Carnaval is chosen. Samba Enredo tells the story or theme that the Samba School will present during the parade. Through the Enredo, the Samba School will divide into wings and showcase the floats. In general, the theme talks about Brazilian history or national symbols.

*Samba do partido alto* – “It was distinguished by a free strophe – a chorus that explained the theme and was sung by all” (Rector 1984: 66). Also, there are *marchas* (marches), which are played mainly in social clubs and street blocos. Marchas originated from polka and ragtime in the early 1900’s. *Marchinhas* (little
marches), as people call them, give fOLEOes (people who dance carnival) a chance to rest because the marches can have a slower rhythm.

Other types of dance and music are frevo (figure 6.2) and afoxé. Afoxés are blocos of people that parade on the street of Salvador, Bahia. They are characteristically wearing “white tunics of West African style and singing songs in Yoruba” (Fryer 2000: 24). There are other Carnaval groups in Salvador, including Olodum, which plays and dances in a rhythm close to reggae. But “whatever the beat, the music of Brazilian carnival blends African and European elements in a powerful cultural synthesis that virtually defines the Brazilian identity” (Jonas, 1992: 187).

Figure 6.2 - Frevo, from www.pousadapeter.com.br, 2006
7. Symbolic Representation of Carnaval

**Introduction:** Carnaval has inspired different artists over the centuries: for example, Peter Bruegel’s “Battle between Carnival and Lent” (figure 1); Picasso’s painting of the famous triangle romance between Harlequin, Columbine and Pierrot; and Francisco Goya’s “Carnival Folly”, among others. But the festival of Carnaval, in particular as exemplified by the Samba School, has art of its own.

![Figure 7.1 The Battle between Carnival and Lent, 1559, from Timothy Human, Carnavalesque 2000](image)

Although Carnaval combines different ethnicities and social classes, many of the Samba School symbols are of African origin, as for example the flag-bearer, which is reminiscent of African religious processions. Samba School arts can be colorful, embroidered with sequins, rhinestone and beads. In addition, symbolic representations in Carnaval have been seen and interpreted in many different ways.
For example, symbols can be portrayed through colors, lines, texture, designs, and organic and inorganic materials. For the purpose of this project, throughout this chapter, symbolic representations of Carnaval will focus on costumes, masks and floats.

7.1 - Costumes

The Black Indian Mardi Gras group in New Orleans every year (at least, before hurricane Katrina in 2005) presented beautiful and elaborate costumes. Barbara Bridges says of "the Black Indians or Mardi Gras Indians, [that] these neighborhood ‘tribes’ display their dazzling, colorful artistry each year on Mardi Gras" (1988: 158). The costumes are made with bright colors, feathers, plumes, and other materials that catch the audience's eye. In general, these costumes are magnificent and represent high positions in Native American tribes (figure 7.2) (Bridges 1996). Texture can be seen in the embroidered motifs. In addition, lines used as outlines accentuate and strengthen designs.
Bridges suggests that each person makes his or her own costume, from the design down to the last bead, and they can use different materials; for example Chief ‘Tuddy’ Montana makes one of the most elaborate costumes with a strong aesthetic sense by “build[ing] three-dimensional abstract patterns in sequins, studded with stones of different colors” (Bridges 1986: 159). To keep the tradition
alive, Montana teaches members of the younger generations how to make costumes (Bridges 1986).

In Carnaval costume competitions in Trinidad, some of the costumes can be so high and heavy that they have to be supported on wheels. The costumes are constructed with strong and soft lines to connect forms and create movement, thus giving continuity to the design. As for the street Carnaval groups in Trinidad, there are a variety of styles, shapes and materials. Some of the costumes use organic materials such as feathers and add Native American motifs and symbols, complete with arm and leg ornaments. But there are other costumes that are built using inorganic elements, creating a more architectural-looking structure. And some people simply put mud all over their bodies and give hugs to members of the audience (Adam 2007).

In Rio, Samba School costumes are elaborated into an exquisite and rich art form. The strategy for designing costumes is based on texture, continuity, motifs, symbols and lines based on the story-theme (enredo) that the school develops. The costume, rather than being simply clothing, becomes “the real art” (O Dia 2002). In another aspect, each costume is designed with the objective of reflecting the theme, and creating movement, hues and shapes but in a larger sense it “reflects the population’s African and European roots” (Jonas, 1992: 187). Most costumes can also be said to represent the Indian (or Amerindian) culture, since most of the costumes have regalia and headdresses with lots of feathers, and arm and leg ornaments, resembling those worn by the Indians in Brazil (figure 7.3).
The costumes of each *ala* or “wing” (an ala can have over two hundred people) will symbolically represent part of the story or theme that the School is portraying in the parade, and the hand *alegoria* (accessory) completes the costume. These can be of different materials, shapes and textures. In general, hand alegorias are made of light material because the foliões need to have freedom to dance.

Samba Schools have *destaque*, or people in the parade who stand on the tops of the floats and are a major focal point. In general, destaque wear fancy costumes that can be constructed of both organic and inorganic materials, and some of which are so big and heavy that they make it impossible to dance (figure 7.4). The
fancy costumes are embroidered by hand with sequins and beads, giving texture to the design and lines defining the motifs. In addition, most costumes have a big ornament on the back (regalia) as well as a headpiece with a wire framework, both of which are finished with hundreds of plumes. Some of the Samba Schools even invest in farms where birds are raised for their plumes and feathers. Nowadays with costumes so elaborate and floats so high, some of the destaque must be lifted into place with cranes (Globo Television Network 2006).

![Destaque, from Helmut Teissl, Carnival in Rio, 1999](image)

Figure 7.4 - Destaque, from Helmut Teissl, *Carnival in Rio*, 1999

The flag-bearer and standard-bearer’s costumes are made “in the style of the French Bourbon court” (Jonas, 1992: 187) (figure 7.5). The flag-bearer is one of the most important symbols in the Samba School. Consequently, her costume's design
is based on the Samba School’s theme. The flag-bearer’s costume is “always supposed to have plumes around the skirt’s hem” (Globo Television Network 2006). The standard-bearer in general dresses entirely in the style of Louis XV, including pants, frock jacket, knee-high stockings, shoes, wig, gloves and headpiece. Everything should be coordinated to reflect the School’s colors and the theme. But in the 2007 parade, Viradouro Samba School’s theme was games, and the flag-bearer’s dress was a roulette wheel, without feathers. As the flag-bearer spun around, the roulette wheel’s edges emitted fireworks.

![Flag-bearer](image)

Figure 7.5 - Flag-bearer, from Helmut Teissl, *Carnival in Rio*, 1999

Every Samba School has one *ala of baianas*, who symbolically represent the School’s old generation; their costumes really stand out in the parade and
emphasize the theme. The baiana costume originally came from Bahia, and is a traditional dress worn by the Baianas while selling food on the streets of Salvador, Bahia’s capital. Most of the baiana costumes (in Bahia) are made of white lace or white eyelet fabric. The costume is white because of the hot weather and also because it symbolizes Candomblé, the African religion.

Carmen Miranda adopted the baiana costume to represent Brazil when she was working in the United States, but the costume was modified for her Hollywood career, with her signature fruit hat and high-heeled platform sandals. But the baianas in the Samba Schools, rather than wearing white, have dresses made primarily in the School’s colors, though other colors can be added, or the costume can be made of a completely different color, according to the aesthetic sense of the carnavalesco/a. A traditional baiana costume is composed of a long, full skirt, a blouse, a pano-da-costa, a headpiece, and many necklaces, bracelets and earrings (figure 7.6). The baiana’s costume has become a common Brazilian cultural symbol (Cascudo 2001).
Each Samba School has different colors, and in general, each has two or three colors but more can be added if desired. As an example, Mangueira Samba School’s colors are green and pink (figure 7.7). The foothills of Mangueira Hill used to have many mango trees, which in Portuguese are called Mangueira; the green and pink colors (verde e rosa) are from the mango fruit. So every year Mangueira has their costumes made with these colors, sometimes in different shades, and sometimes with other colors added according to the theme.
7.2 - Floats

The Samba School’s floats can be seen as sculpture, a three-dimensional art form, rich in detail, using elements of design that can be seen well by the audience at the Sambódromo, such as colors, shapes, lines, and textures (figure 7.8). And each float has areas of interest on every side of it, not just in the front. Floats are designed according to the theme and the imagination of the carnavalesco/a. The float’s decorations and colors are related to the Samba School’s colors and to the story-theme.
To build a float, a blacksmith first constructs a steel framework for it, since some floats carry many people. Then a carpenter add wood if necessary and covers it with fiberglass before the decoration. The destaque (people on top of the float) generally each have two handles to hold on to for safety.

Floats do not have motors, which are forbidden by the rules. Instead, each float is pushed by many people who are typically dressed in the School’s T-shirt and pants, matching and coordinating with the School’s colors. Some Schools choose to dress their float pushers in costumes that blend in with the floats’ decorations.

In 2007, many Schools used people on their floats to form living sculptures. There were floats whose “sculptures” were groups of people wearing hand painted
costumes or colored leotards, and who used choreographically coordinated movements, all of which created fantastic visual effects during the parade.

Also in 2007, Beija-Flor Samba School had an African theme that they named “Africa: Do Berço Real à Corte Brasiliana” (difficult to translate, but roughly, “Africa: From the Royal Birthplace to the Brazilian Court”). Rather than depict African descendants in their roles as slaves in Brazilian history, the floats portrayed noble elements of African civilization and culture that were brought to and preserved in Brazil.

To develop the enredo, Beija-Flor’s carnavalesco created lots of big animal sculpture/costumes, such as giraffes, elephants and lions. Each animal had two people inside walking on stilts and making it look as if the animals were dancing (figure 7.9).

Figure 7.9 – Beija-Flor Samba School Animals, from www.odia.com.br, 20007
In addition, the Africa theme gave Beija-Flor Samba School the chance to use lots of natural fibers and strong colors to show Africa with certain realism. Beija-Flor’s first float was 50 meters long and had a beija-flor (hummingbird) made of sisal and other materials (figure 7.8). There was also a float with 12 lion sculptures as a symbol of nobility and strength. The school used an intricate, highly ornamented style in their sculptures.

7.3 - Masks

Masks can be seen in the street Carnaval and in clubs. They can be constructed using mixed media and in many different shapes. Carnaval masks can be made, among other things, of papier-mâché, rubber and animal skin. Usually, because of the hot weather, some people prefer to paint their faces, with exaggerated make up that can hide their features like masks too.

In general, Samba Schools do not have masks, unless they are relevant to the theme, or if the carnavalesco/a decides to use them for some other reason. Sometimes a school may depict a tribe in Africa, and could use masks that resemble those used in rites or ceremonies of that tribe. Speaking about masks, John Bowen states that they “are used throughout the world to convey ideas of sacred power” (2004: 125). Also, masks as an adornment can give prestige and status (Rubin 1993).

Samba Schools themselves in Rio de Janeiro are cultural symbols of Carnaval, and the Samba Schools' highest symbol is its flag. The flag is considered
sacred and everybody should respect and protect this symbol, much like a national flag.
8. The Parallel between Carnaval and Religion

**Introduction:** Since ancient times, Carnaval has been connected with religion. During the Saturnalia festival in ancient Rome, people celebrated their gods with excess and abandon. And from its roots in the previous few centuries to its present manifestations, modern Carnaval has had a relationship intertwined with the Catholic Church. Modern Carnaval occurs immediately before Lent, the 40-day period of fasting and deprivation before Easter. Also, like Catholicism and Candomblé in Brazil, Carnaval has symbolic and visual aspects.

In New Orleans, people of African descent who practice voodoo are sometimes the same people who are involved with jazz music. Thomas Fiehrer, quoting Al Rose, points out, “It has always seemed to me that musicians, and especially New Orleans musicians, are more susceptible to believing in the assertions of those who claim good and evil music talents.” Fiehrer goes on to state “the newspapers record the participation of all colours and classes in both carnival parades and voodoo, suggesting a broad field of social interaction” (1991: 27).

Roberto DaMatta argues that Carnaval has “connotation with sin, death, salvation … and sexual excess” (1991: 34), and at the same time, Carnaval has its connection with Christian values wherever it is celebrated (DaMatta 1991).

Most Carnaval costumes are adorned with feathers, and according to Nunley and Bettelheim, “[m]asks and feathers symbolize flying beings” (1988: 25). In other words, the spirits can reach a person who is wearing feathers. Nunley and
Bettelheim also state that in the Yoruba culture in Nigeria, feathers have the power to attract heaven, but also can attract attention from the ancestors under the sea (1988).

In Cuba, Carnaval follows Catholicism through “festivals honoring various Catholic saints” (Bettelheim 1991: 67), such as the procession celebrating Dia de Reyes, which is observed on January 6. Also, in Cuba’s Carnaval parade, African descendants symbolically honor African deities such as Changó and Yemanyá (Bettelheim 1991).

Carnaval in Trinidad blends the sacred and the profane. In fact, as John Nunley states, “Asian influences have had an impact on Carnival through Islamic and Hindu festivals” (1988: 94), as seen in the use of symbols, also in headpieces shaped like mosques.

Brazilians involved in one way or another with Carnaval know the connection between Carnaval, Candomblé and the Catholic Church, since many Brazilians practice religious syncretism. Lisa Shaw and Stephanie Dennison state, “Candomblé first emerged [in Brazil] as a religious practice in around 1830…[and] began as an expression of resistance to slavery” (2005: 295). In addition, Africans in Brazil had to associate their gods with the Catholic Saints (Chasteen 2004).

According to Rector, the Samba School parade is an imitation of the Catholic procession called “taieiras” in northeast Brazil, in which beautiful women dress in elaborate costumes and dance during the procession (1984: 44). A similar event takes place in both Rio and Minas Gerais states during the Wise Kings’ celebration called Folia de Reis (figures 8.1; 8.2).
The Folia de Reis participants practice for a few months, and on December 25th they start their peregrination. In general, Folia de Reis’ instruments are...
accordions, guitars, cavaquinhos, tambourines, and drums. The musicians and other participants walk as in a religious procession, singing religious songs. The Folia de Reis flag bearer (usually a woman) carries a flag with the Folia’s symbols and colors, and all the participants wear the same type of uniforms or costumes, coordinated with the flag’s colors. In general, one or two men dress like clowns, wearing masks made of animal skin, very similar to some African masks. The palhaços (clowns) dance for money; the more money they receive, the more they dance.

The Folia procession sings at people’s doors until someone invites them in to perform. The songs sound sad, and as they sing, the flag is passed to the youngest child in the house. After this religious performance is over and the clown dances, the host offers coffee, lunch or dinner to the group. The Folia’s big day is January 6, the Day of the Three Kings, and the whole celebration ends on January 20th, The day of Saint Sebastian, the patron saint of Rio de Janeiro.

The Baianas apparently brought Candomblé, a religion of African origin, to Rio from Bahia. The Baianas used to sell acarajé (a small cake made of beans, filled with shrimp and deep fried), quindim (a dessert-like pudding made with eggs and shredded coconut), and cocada (a sweet, brittle candy, made of sugar and shredded coconut) on the streets of downtown Rio during the day, and at night, they officiated as priestesses for the African gods called Orixás. I can still remember a plaza in the Largo da Carioca called the Tabuleiro da Baiana, or Baiana’s Tray, where some baianas always sold their quitutes.

The most well known Baiana, Tia Ciata, as I already mentioned, lived in the downtown area of Rio called Praca Onze, and people believed she cured many
illnesses through sorcery. For this reason, Ciata’s house was always full of people; this is still the case today in the houses of some of the Candomblé priestesses. And the black Brazilians who lived in Praca Onze (which was known locally as “Little Africa”) used to dance Samba after Candomblé sessions at Tia Ciata’s house.

It is not a coincidence that the rhythms of Samba are reminiscent of Candomblé rhythms, mainly because of the drums’ batuque rhythms and some other African-origin instruments, such as agogô and cowbell.

To illustrate Candomblé, the classic Brazilian movie *Black Orpheus* (1958) whose action takes place during the Carnaval season, shows a Candomblé session to which Orpheus goes to ask the spirits for help. It is interesting to see the movie pointing out a connection between Carnaval and the Candomblé religion (see Black Orpheus, 1958).

It is worth noting that in Carnaval of 2006, the Brazilian newspaper *O Globo* stated that in the Avenida Rio Branco, one of the most important streets in Rio de Janeiro’s downtown, there was a new kind of bloco of people, Os Evangélicos do Projeto Vida Nova (The Evangelical Project of New Life). The newspaper states that this particular event is becoming traditional among other Protestant groups in Rio, and that last year it attracted five thousand people. In 2006, the group’s goals were to protest against the government’s condom distribution during Carnaval, to give the audience their message of salvation, and to advise them to take their masks off instead of putting them on. In addition, the pastor said that his Church is not concerned with statistical data, and for this reason, the Church doesn’t worry if the audience accepts their proposal or not (Pereira 2006).
In 2007, Pastor Ezequiel Teixeira stated that his Evangelical bloco was going to parade in the Rio Branco Avenue in downtown Rio on the last day of Carnaval. The pastor argued that Carnaval blocos and Samba Schools talk about the orixás and pornography, and they (the Evangelicals) only want to talk about things from God and from heaven. In the pastor’s opinion, God does not give only four days of false happiness, but an entire life. It seems that other Evangelical denominations’ blocos will parade in downtown Rio, too (Pereira 2007).
9. Brazilian Carnaval in Ames, Iowa

Introduction: Even though Ames, Iowa does not have the same kind of weather as Brazil, the Brazilian Portuguese Association sponsors *Baile de Carnaval Brasileiro* (Brazilian Carnaval Ball) every year. Ames’ Carnaval takes a couple of months to organize because the majority of the associates are busy students.

I was inspired to do a field observation and participation project of my own after studying the work of Conrad Phillip Kottak, who went to Arambepe in Bahia to do research on social and race relations (1999). In turn, Kottak was inspired by the work of Bronislaw Malinowski (1961). The purpose of my project was to show an example of the globalization of Carnaval by looking at a local group of Brazilians in Diaspora and their version of Carnaval.

Although my interview questions weren’t so personal that people needed to know and trust me (as in Kottak’s case), I had already established a rapport with people, which made it simpler and easier. For my interviews I used a tape recorder to apply the standard method and talked face to face with my interviewees in a conversational style.

Because I was planning to graduate in the fall of 2006, I did the project at Ames’ Carnaval of 2006, which was held at Boheme Bistro. The room was decorated with colorful balloons, masks, streamers and paintings done by a Brazilian fine arts student. There were people dressed in costumes, some fancy and some
funny. The music was a very loud samba tune. Few people were dancing, probably because it was still early in the evening.

Armed with my tape recorder, I interviewed some Brazilian students from Iowa State University, a few Brazilians who lived in Des Moines, and a few people of other nationalities. There were only two questions: “Why do you think it is important to celebrate Carnaval in Ames?” and “What do you want people to know about Brazilian Carnaval?” Here, first, is what some native Brazilians said:

One student said, “We want to show how Brazil is, a happy country with beautiful people who have dancing as one of their main material cultures.” Maria said “that Carnaval in Brazil and Carnaval in Ames are different, but Carnaval is an important way to show the Brazilian culture… to give a little taste of Brazilian culture to Ames.” Another student told me that “Carnaval brings the Brazilians together,” and helps to “kill the homesickness that every Brazilian has.” Angela told me “the Brazilians are bringing happiness to Ames, mixing people together, which I think is very important, because the main characteristic of Brazilian Carnaval is the mixing of all social classes, ethnicities and cultures without racial conflict. Everybody has fun, and all are happy in a positive way.” Carlos, who was here doing post-doctoral work, said, “Brazilians bring the culture, happiness and an alternative to Ames’ party style, because other types of music are played at other parties and not Brazilian music. I think also it is an opportunity for the international student community to have a chance to know a little about the Brazilian culture.” A non-traditional (older) student said, “Carnaval in Ames was too white. I think Carnaval does not agree with the Mid-western culture. Carnaval is for the people, for everybody to enjoy together.” Paula
said, “Carnaval is a reference of home. We want to showcase our culture. I think people here are a little shy to dance because they are not used to Carnaval.”

Then I asked other students, including Americans, what they liked about Carnaval. Most of them had never been to one, but they were enjoying it, and said they would like to participate next year; one said he would like to go to Brazil during Carnaval. A Middle Eastern student told me he had never been in a Brazilian Carnaval before, and he was enjoying the happiness and energy of it.

From my mini-project, I determined that there is a niche in Ames for Brazilian Carnaval as a form of cultural expression. The number of Brazilians living in Iowa has grown, and there is a need to add their population to the Latin American community, since Brazilians, of course, are from Latin America. Also, from my observation and participation in the Ames community, I think further research should be done.
10. Carnaval Memories

Introduction: I have many memories of Carnaval, because it has always been a part of my life, and I have participated in Carnaval blocos and street Carnaval since a very early age. To me, there is no other festival or celebration like Carnaval! Nobody owns Carnaval; it’s for everybody: “In fact Carnival may really be the only Brazilian national festival without an owner or master” (DaMatta, 1991: 87). Fiehrer and Lodwick define Carnaval the way I see it: “It is a graphic representation of collective interiority and social structure of a community” (1990: 7).

In Brazil, Carnaval reflects the cultural, social and political controversies that overwhelm Brazil throughout the year. Many songs are composed with lyrics describing problems that happened or are happening in Brazil, such as racism, poverty, and social inequality; some freely criticize the Brazilian government.

The songs and the Carnaval spirit unite people from different races and backgrounds. During Carnaval, poor people come down from the hills or suburbs, while the better off leave their fancy buildings, and all mix together. Carnaval sets people free from everyday misfortune, from poverty, and from any animosity accumulated during the rest of the year.

In my opinion, Carnaval as a festival is worth waiting through one year of preparation to enjoy three days of happiness. I’ve been dancing Carnaval since I was very young. My parents provided me with an environment in which I could grow up with dance and music played by my father and my brothers-in-law. During the
Carnaval period when I was a kid, I felt anxious waiting to go and dance. I would follow the *blocos de Carnaval* with friends and my older sisters through the streets where we lived. Our *bloco* was a *bloco do sujo* (dirt block) where people didn’t need to wear costumes, just add some make up, perhaps some of the men dressing as women, and we were ready.

There were times that my older sisters would take me to the Carnaval matinee, which was a dance for children. We danced to the Sambas and *marchas* that were composed for that year, and to the best of the oldies. The clubs divided their space into two sections: one for the adults and the other for the children.

I need to go back in time now and mention some of my earliest experiences with Samba as music and as dance. In the late 1950’s, I used to go with some family members to the Mangueira Hill. Some of the houses were made of pieces of wood from old crates; they were very small, and there was no indoor plumbing, but the little houses were filled with love and warmth.

I remember seeing women and children carrying water from the bottom of the hill where there was a public faucet, back up to their shacks. They carried water in five-gallon cans with wooden handles, and emptied them into a larger brass container. Some women put the cans on their heads on a piece of cloth twisted and wound into a thick circular pad. I also recall seeing men carrying two five gallons cans with something like a yoke on the backs of their necks.

At that time, there were a few mango trees at the bottom of Mangueira Hill, which gave the hill its name. As for the people in the community, they seemed
happy, always smiling and singing. There at Mangueira Hill, I played with other girls my age, but most importantly I learned to dance the Samba on the hill’s pathways.

As I grew up, I started sewing my own costumes. Nothing fancy at first, but as I got older they became a little more elaborate, though still simple enough that I could dance comfortably all night long. As an adult, I participated in different Samba School practices on either Fridays or Saturdays. I also participated in, and in fact saw the birth of the style of samba called pagode (figure 6.1). Pagode is a slower rhythm of samba, in which the women (but not the men) use a lot more movement of the hips.

While participating in some of the Samba Schools’ practices, I was invited to participate in the parades, but I never did. I went to dance every night of Carnaval at social clubs with my friends and my nieces, who were very close to me in age. We chose to dance Carnaval in social clubs because it was safer than Carnaval in the street. Later on, when I had my daughter Ana Paula, I made costumes for her too, and took her to the matinees where we danced together. There was no feeling of tiredness, but rather a sensation of well-being.

I see the Carnaval in Rio and in Bahia as a big business industry. It is so big, in fact, that a project was approved to have a second Carnaval in Rio in July; this project is currently waiting for the Mayor’s signature. The intention of this July Carnaval is to make a parade without the contests or competitions among the Samba Schools. Carnaval in July would bring more tourist revenue for the city of Rio de Janeiro (www.oglobonline.com 2006).
Finally Carnaval is achieving a status that I have thought it would for a long time. Carnaval is now being offered as a curriculum subject at the Universidade Estácio de Sá in Rio de Janeiro. The university will graduate professionals in Carnaval who will learn to “think” Carnaval. Also, students will have classes in sociology, anthropology, finance, Brazilian culture, and art history, among other subjects (www.globonline.com 2006). There are also courses about Carnaval being offered in schools that are similar to vocational schools in the US. O Globoonline states that the Carnaval industry in Rio employs about 300 thousand people (2006). Brazilians have finally realized that Carnaval is a serious business, and that it should be treated as such.
Conclusion

In ancient times, Romans used Carnaval as a form of control over the diverse population, since the city had people from many different backgrounds and religions. At the same time, the subjects used these festivals to celebrate their gods with lots of food and drinking, a practice which continued from the time of the Saturnalia festival until the birth of Christianity.

Early Carnaval celebrations in Europe didn't change much from the ancient Roman versions. In Europe, as in many places outside Europe, Carnaval has connotations with religion as well as racial and ethnic relations. Since Medieval times, there were numerous confrontations between the rich and the lower classes. Carnaval provided an opportunity for the lower classes to mock the elite. As Carnaval spread through Europe, it became a popular festival, especially in Italy and France.

When Carnaval came to the Americas, prejudice came along with it. In the United States, Brazil and Argentina, black people were not allowed to enjoy the festival. So the black people danced separately, celebrating their heritage, and in the meantime, they developed rhythms and styles of dance and music that are now national symbols in these countries.

Carnaval in the United States has been concentrated in New Orleans, since Carnaval is a festival connected with the Catholic faith and New Orleans Carnaval originated from Latin/Catholic roots. In New Orleans, the Europeans were the first to celebrate Mardi Gras, and later slaves and Native Americans intermarried and as a
result, a Black Indian Carnaval came about. Also, African-Americans created the Zulu group and others. However, after Hurricane Katrina in 2005 many people moved out and Mardi Gras has changed. Most of the people displaced by the hurricane were poor African Americans; some of them were connected to Mardi Gras, and others belonged to the jazz groups, or both.

In big cities in the United States, such as New York, Miami, San Diego and San Francisco, Brazilians in the Diaspora created Samba Schools to represent their culture, and in the process, they connected with other ethnic groups living in the same communities. Trinidadians in New York also celebrate Carnaval. Brazilians have created a Samba School in Toronto, Canada with the name Escola de Samba de Toronto. Trinidadians also have their own Caribbean style of Carnaval in Toronto.

Carnaval’s history has been intertwined with the overall history of black people in Brazil, including the prohibition for black people to express themselves through their African culture and to carry on their heritage. According to Larry Naylor, people have a tendency to use “culture to adapt to the environment” (1996: 23). In the case of slaves brought to Brazil, they preserved their culture through the anthropological processes of acculturation and assimilation (see Naylor). They also used Catholic Saints “but contain[ing] elements of West African religion” (John Bowen 202: 95) and Amerindian gods to practice their African religion. Little by little, they have developed their music and dancing over the centuries. Carnaval in Brazil would not be what it is today if not for the African culture, including music, dance, religion, and instruments.
In Brazil, the modernization of the Samba Schools in Rio de Janeiro and their elevation as one of the main tourist attractions, while at the same time becoming more business oriented, has had pros and cons. On the pro side, I believe it was good for Samba and the Samba Schools to be recognized all over Brazil as Brazilian cultural icons. This began giving more respect to a culture other than just the European. Also, by recognizing the elements of African culture, the poor people living in favelas and other poor neighborhoods were empowered.

On the con side, composers of early Samba music had to rely on the help of the white Brazilians to market their songs. It’s well known in Rio that many singers went to the hill and bought songs outright for very low prices, and some of those songs became big hits. Another con is that Samba Schools have lost some control they had over their organizations. Because of the expansion and modernization of Samba Schools, their organizers needed professional assistance and sponsorship from the outside. Also, more people from outside the community, particularly white, middle class artists, came to the hills looking for more public exposure and possible business contracts.

Unfortunately, this trend takes away the jobs that the community so desperately needs. One reason is the lack of education of residents of the local communities, which is evidenced all over the country for lower class Brazilians. I know that Mangueira Samba School provides medical care, elementary schools, sports programs and social services to the community. From the professionals providing these services, only a few are from the Mangueira hill; the Mangueirenses
(as people who belong to the school are called) mostly have unskilled or semi-skilled jobs in the service industries.

Finally, the Samba School phenomenon in Rio de Janeiro has come a long way since the early 1900’s. Today Samba Schools are “show biz.”
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**Carnaval Parade – Globo International Television Network**

February 2006*

February 2007*

**Figures**

Chapter 1
1.1 – Ancient Map from [www.teachinghearts.org](http://www.teachinghearts.org), 11/15/2006

1.2 - Carnaval in Western Germany from Volker Hartmann, [www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com) 10/02/2006

1.3 - Costume at Venice, Italy from Giusepe Cacace, [www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com) 10/02/2006

1.4 - Carnaval in Cádiz, Spain from [www.en.wikpedia.org](http://www.en.wikpedia.org) 2006


1.6– Rhythm & Release: Trinidad Carnival (1996), from Tourism and Industrial Development Company Trinidad and Tobago Limited (TIDCO)


1.9- Sugar cane Plantation in 1823, from [www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USAS.sugar 2/5/2007](http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USAS.sugar 2/5/2007)

1.10- Baiana selling food on Salvador’s street, from [www.brasiltur.com](http://www.brasiltur.com) 3/8/2006


Chapter 2
2.1 – Favela, photo by Marlene Hufferd, 2006

2.2 – Favela behind two buildings, photo by Marlene Hufferd, 2006

2.3 – Copacabana beach, photo by Marlene Hufferd, 2005

Chapter 3

3.2 – Another view from Sambódromo from www.brasiltur.com, 4/20/2006


3.7 – Member of Bateria from Teissl, Helmut (1999). Carnival in Rio. New York: Abbeville Publishing Group*

Chapter 4

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Chapter 6


Chapter 7


7.3 - Indio or Amerindian costume from Teissl, Helmut (1999). Carnival in Rio. New York: Abbeville Publishing Group*


Chapter 8


* Carnival in Rio is a picture book without page numbers
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Magazine


Web


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