

“THE SLAVES OF MR. MANOEL MAURÍCIO INVITED, WITHOUT THEIR MASTER'S PERMISSION, SEVERAL COMPANIONS, TOTALING SIXTEEN, TO A 'SAMBA'“: (RE)EXISTENCES, SAMBAS, AND RECREATIONS IN THE LIVES OF THE ENSLAVED DURING THE 19TH CENTURY (1800 – 1899)¹**Received on:** May 17, 2024**Passed on:** November 22, 2024License: *Danilo da Silva Ramos²*

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ABSTRACT: How did samba in the 19th century serve as a practice of (re)existence and sociability among enslaved people, despite repression? The main objective of this study is to discuss the processes of (re)existence in sambas during the 19th century, based on an analysis of national press sources. The methodology involved cataloging 1,179 sources from periodicals available in the National Library's digital archive, using critical reading of these sources to identify references to samba and its implications in the lives of enslaved people. The results indicate that samba was a constant practice among enslaved people, even under strong repression, and it also functioned as a space for sociability and affection. The scientific and social implications of the research highlight the importance of bringing the memory of the enslaved into the field of leisure studies, contributing to discussions on historical reparation within this context.

KEYWORDS: Black people. Samba. Recreation. (Re)existence. Slavery.

“OS ESCRAVOS DO SR. MANOEL MAURÍCIO, CONVIDARAM, SEM LICENÇA DE SEU SENHOR, DIVERSOS COMPANHEIROS EM NÚMERO DE

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DEZESSEIS, PARA UM ‘SAMBA’”: (RE)EXISTÊNCIAS, SAMBAS E DIVERTIMENTOS NA VIDA DOS/AS ESCRAVIZADOS/AS DURANTE O SÉCULO XIX (1800 – 1899)

RESUMO: Como o samba, no século XIX, atuava como uma prática de (re)existência e sociabilidade entre os/as escravizados/as, mesmo sob repressão? O objetivo geral deste estudo é discutir os processos de (re)existências nos sambas durante o século XIX, a partir da análise de fontes da imprensa nacional. A metodologia consistiu na catalogação de 1179 fontes de periódicos disponíveis na hemeroteca digital da Biblioteca Nacional, utilizando a leitura crítica dessas fontes para identificar menções ao samba e suas implicações na vida dos/as escravizados/as. Os resultados indicam que o samba foi uma prática constante entre os/as escravizados/as, mesmo sob forte repressão, além de funcionar como um espaço de sociabilidade e afetos. As implicações científicas e sociais da pesquisa destacam a importância de trazer a memória dos/as escravizados/as ao campo de estudos do lazer, contribuindo para discussões sobre reparação histórica nesse âmbito.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Pessoas negras. Sambas. Divertimento. (Re)existências. Escravidão.

*Quando nós falamos tagarelando
E escrevemos mal ortografado
Quando nós cantamos desafinando
E dançamos descompassado
Quando nós pintamos borrando
E desenhamos enviesado
Não é por que estamos errando
É porque não fomos colonizados
Viva, viva,
Porque todas vidas importam
Nego Bispo (2020)*

[Free translation:]
When we speak chattering
And write with poor spelling
When we sing out of tune
And dance out of rhythm
When we paint smudging
And draw crooked lines
It's not because we are mistaken
It's because we were not colonized
Long live, long live,
Because all lives matter
Nego Bispo (2020)

Introductory Notes

There are certain cultural practices that, having become so popularized and deeply rooted in our country, are lost in our memory regarding their ancestry or even the historical struggles related to their development. Among these practices, we can

mention samba. It runs through national history, and especially through the history of Black and enslaved people who were its founders, intersected by other social dimensions such as gender, class, and race.

Consolidated as an influential and important musical genre in the Brazilian cultural scene, samba was highlighted in a study conducted by Learning & Insights Division of IBOPE Media (2013). The target audience consisted of radio listeners from major capitals and metropolitan regions of the country. In this study, samba was categorized together with pagode, and the results showed that it was the third most listened-to musical genre during that period, representing 44% of the total music consumed by the focus group. Gabriel Melo (2017) conducted an assessment of musical circulation on Spotify Brazil in his master's thesis titled “O som do Spotify Br: dimensões do consumo de música digital no Brasil” [The Sound of Spotify BR: Dimensions of Digital Music Consumption in Brazil]. He presents samba/pagode as a musical genre that still ranks among the most played on the digital platform Spotify, based on data collected between 2016 and 2017, particularly in the state of Rio de Janeiro (considered by part of historiography as the cradle of samba).

These papers reveal the vitality of samba today. Furthermore, we can highlight the samba-plot performed by samba schools throughout the country, which, especially during Carnival, also demonstrate the importance of the genre—it is like a sunflower, already in full bloom.

And every sunflower was once a seed. Before the flower opens, there is a long journey influenced by weather conditions, the amount of water received, the soil, predators, and a series of elements that affect this process. What were the elements that shaped samba in its seed stage? In history, it is a complex and difficult task to identify the events that can be considered the starting point of a practice. Among the factors

contributing to this difficulty, we can mention the scarcity of sources, fragmented oral transmission, the impossibility of reading certain forms of writing, among others. In order to seek clues and reconstruct a bit of this history of samba, we will present in the following paragraphs some of the results from the research project titled “Samba in the National Press of the 20th Century”.

This research was carried out between 2023 and 2024, and one of its objectives was to catalog all occurrences of the word samba in national periodicals of the 19th century (1800–1899) available in the Digital Newspaper Archive of the National Library. A total of 1179 articles containing the word samba were found. The research methodology involved keyword searches — in this case, the term samba was used to search the entire website. Subsequently, we excluded occurrences where the system suggested words unrelated to samba, such as “sahido”, which were removed from the catalog. Thus, we arrived at the total number mentioned above.

Our purpose herein is to analyze these sources and discuss the intersections that shaped samba in the 19th century, based on newspaper articles that included references to enslaved people in their content, with the first occurrence in the database dating from 1830 and the last from 1899. For this purpose, we will present to readers, in subsections, the use of newspapers as a source, a mapping of research on the topic, and later, a discussion of the sources we found.

Newspapers as Sources in the Search for Constructing the Memories of Black People

In the field of leisure history studies, in recent years, the use of periodicals as sources has been increasingly present. If we turn our attention to works produced over the past ten years in Research Line 02 of the Interdisciplinary Graduate Program in

Leisure Studies—titled Memory and History of Leisure—we will notice that a large portion of dissertations and theses have used periodicals as sources⁴.

Certain methodological precautions must be adopted when following this path. José Barros (2022) points out that we must consider that periodicals are part of a network of competitiveness, especially in the 19th century, when the reading public was specific and relatively small in number. Studying Rio de Janeiro as an example, the author presents the market changes and circulation of ideas between the 18th and 19th centuries, as well as the specific political distinctions of each period and how these elements influenced journalistic production.

In another text, José Barros (2021) demonstrates that newspapers sought a certain standardization in their consumer relations with their target audience. For this, especially in the 19th century, there was concern with including content on specific topics, maintaining stable prices, attracting sponsors, among other aspects. The author argues that periodicals are part of society in its sociocultural dynamics and therefore are important as a means of communication capable of reaching various people within a territory.

When used as a source for historiographical work, a newspaper should under no circumstances be regarded as a spokesperson for the truth about a given event, as it represents the perspective of its owners, who can influence the type, format, content, and other aspects of the articles. A periodical is not exempt even from the political views of those who write for it, as stated by Márcia Silva and Gilmara Franco (2010). Regarding this aspect of source criticism, Rafael Lapuente (2016) discusses how the press seeks to objectively meet its target audience's expectations, and this action directly influences the format of a periodical's discourse. An important contribution by

⁴ Studies available at <https://repositorio.ufmg.br/> and [http://www.euffto.ufmg.br/euffto/pos_graduacao/estudos_do_lazer_mestrado_doutorado/defesas](http://www.eeffto.ufmg.br/euffto/pos_graduacao/estudos_do_lazer_mestrado_doutorado/defesas).

Lapuente concerns the concept of “public”, which he characterizes as the gathering of people who share certain ideas yet are geographically separated, with the periodical serving as the link uniting them around a specific topic—thus marking its social importance.

In this paper, we will analyze historical sources with the care and insights mentioned above. However, we will follow the considerations of Danilo Ramos (2022), who points out the possibility of finding clues in what is not explicitly stated in the articles. One example is a newspaper clipping that reports an arrest due to the performance of a samba. Beyond the explicit report of the arrest, such a clipping provides important clues, such as the neighborhood, time, and day of the week when the samba occurred. Thus, we can extract information beyond what the source directly declares, without fabricating data, thereby preserving scientific rigor in the use of periodicals as historical sources. Finally, it is worth highlighting that the choice of periodicals as a source is justified by the accessibility and availability provided by the Digital Newspaper Archive.

Mapping Research on Sambas in the 19th Century

Before we begin our discussions on the topic, we will present a mapping we made of what already exists, in terms of production, regarding sambas from the period of slavery. For this purpose, we used the databases of the Scientific Electronic Library Online – SciELO Brasil, the Thesis and Dissertation Repository of the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel – CAPES, and Google Scholar, and we also used the online tool Connected Papers⁵. Thus, we employed the terms “samba and slavery” as the main search parameters. Subsequently, our findings on the subject

⁵ Which allows searches based on the DOI of an article on a specific topic.

resulted in a small sample, from which we selected those we considered most relevant to our discussion. Throughout the text, we will also reference other works that contribute to the narrative and conceptual construction of this study.

Clarissa Maia (1996) discusses the elite's attempts at social control over enslaved people in Pernambuco at the end of the 19th century (1850–1888). In this regard, it points to samba as a focus of repressive state action through the police and the local ruling class. The author shows, through analyses of the city ordinances of Recife, that sambas and batuques were prohibited, yet they never ceased to exist — reflecting a continuous movement of resistance among the enslaved.

Samba, as a form of resistance and a medium for transmitting ancestral knowledge, later flowed into the samba schools as transmitters of this wisdom built over centuries. Cristiano Araújo (2023) highlights this in his research. The author demonstrates how samba, both in its lyrics and music, has been capable of addressing several themes over time. This study helps us imagine the potential of the songs performed during sambas, including their role in consolidating humanizing sentiments among Black people living under slavery.

Sheila Silva (2016) analyzes sambas as weapons of Black resistance, given their manifestation of knowledge systems that contribute to the development of racial consciousness among Black people. The author presents sambas as epicenters of Black resistance, existing in our country under two distinct modes of production: colonialism and capitalism. She emphasizes that sambas had to develop strategies of existence to avoid disappearing as a Black cultural practice and that, regardless of the historical period, they were traversed by multiple elements of intersectionality that reveal the very characteristics of structural racism and the struggle for existence. Within these

dialogues, our study aligns with the conception of samba as a space of sociability for enslaved Black people.

Danilo Ramos (2022) argues that samba represented, in Salvador (Bahia), at the turn of the 19th to the 20th century, a space of sociability and (re)existence — serving as a cultural hub that contributed to the self-awareness and affirmation of Black people's humanity. This author conceptualizes the actions of the State and segments of the dominant elite toward the leisure practices of Black people as necro-leisure, in the sense that legislation, press coverage, and the spirit of the time mostly depicted such practices — such as samba — as “savage”. Consequently, these practices were completely removed from the condition of humanity and from the prevailing moral codes. These considerations will become evident throughout this article, as samba will be analyzed as both a space of (re)existence and persecution.

We understand that these are the studies that most directly dialogue with the present text. Having concluded our initial considerations, we now move to the discussion of the sources.

“O Preto Raymundo, Crioulo, Cor Fula, Cara Larga, Beiços Grossos é Muito Ladino, e Diz Saber Ler, é Amigo de Sambas, onde Diverte-se Tocando Flautim⁶”: An Analysis of Sambas in the Lives of the Enslaved During the 19th Century

The period that serves as the backdrop for this article was marked by a mode of production based on slavery. The exploitation of Black people brought from Africa — the vast majority — by colonizers led them to be treated as non-human, viewed as commodities. However, this was not a peaceful process. Numerous studies have already demonstrated the various forms of resistance by Black people across different domains,

⁶ [Free Translation:] “The Black Man Raymundo, Creole, of Fula Color, Broad-Faced, Thick-Lipped, Is Very Cunning, and Says He Can Read, He Is a Friend of Sambas, Where He Amuses Himself Playing the Flute”:

such as the works of Rafael Marquese (2006), João Reis e Eduardo Silva (1989), among others.⁷ Although our research focuses on another aspect of this relationship, it is essential to emphasize this historical context.

In 1847, the *Diário de Pernambuco* published an article that reveals two aspects that help characterize samba as a possible space of sociability: the generational encounter, the confluence of different social positions among Black people, and the element of amusement⁸ among the enslaved.

Marcelo Lemos (2010/2011) presents sociability as a multifaceted phenomenon with temporal variations in its formation. According to the author, each social group has a distinct way of developing and practicing sociability within its spatial and temporal contexts. In the excerpt from that newspaper article, we observe a society in which slavery was still in force, where Black people lived under different social statuses — broadly categorized as free or enslaved⁹. Samba stands out as one of the possible meeting points for these Black individuals, regardless of their social condition. Let us examine the cited article:

It is requested that the police authorities of the parish of Santo Antônio do Recife keep an eye on a butcher shop located in the house where the late vicar of Santo Antônio lived, on Rua do Rangel, where there is samba and gambling most nights, among a large number of freed and enslaved Black people, resulting in slaps and beatings that scandalize the public and cause harm to the masters of the slaves who gather there.¹⁰

What draws our attention is the frequency with which sambas occurred in that locality, as the report states they happened “most nights”¹¹. The focus of the complaint gives the impression that physical fights were an expected consequence of samba. From

⁷ For more information on slavery and the trafficking of Black lives, visit: <https://shifter.pt/2020/06/slave-voyages-trafico-de-escravos/>

⁸ In this study, we chose to retain the word “recreation”, as it appears in the sources, when referring to the phenomenon we know today as leisure. In doing so, we justify this choice to readers as a way of privileging the terminology used in the historical materials consulted.

⁹ The social fabric in progress was composed of elements far more complex than the dichotomy presented above. However, we use this simplification merely as an example, which explains our choice.

¹⁰ *Diário de Pernambuco*, n. 124, p. 3, June 05, 1847.

¹¹ Same as above.

our perspective, this interpretation is part of a repressive ideology — one that called for police intervention to prevent potential damage to the bodies of enslaved people, who were treated as human merchandise. This reflects the author's subjective differentiation regarding the amusements of the enslaved, tied to the risk such activities posed to their physical condition. Treated as commodities, any action that altered or interfered with their bodies was seen as a threat to the colonizers' investments. Paradoxically, this same body was placed in a position of dehumanization, as its suffering was neither acknowledged nor permitted due to its denied humanity — expressing one of the consequences of structural racism, as pointed out by Flauzina and Freitas (2017).

In an article, Walmyra Albuquerque (2018) discusses the limits of enslaved people's freedom, using samba as the central axis of analysis. Although it was evident that social changes were underway — with the collapse of the slave system bringing about a new social dynamic — their consequences were also apparent in various cultural practices, such as samba.

Another author we bring into this discussion is Sidney Chalhoub (1990), who reveals the complex web surrounding the sociability of enslaved people in Rio de Janeiro. By analyzing criminal proceedings, he demonstrates that freedom had multiple meanings in society as a whole and, especially, individually — even among the enslaved. Thus, the enjoyment of time and its meanings were shaped by experiences, perceptions, forms, access, and other factors that produced heterogeneous understandings of freedom among the enslaved themselves. From our perspective, these relationships are evident in samba's potential as a space of sociability.

In an excerpt from the newspaper *“A Regeneração”*, published in Santa Catarina but referring to an event in Pelotas, we observe characteristics of the two aforementioned conceptions. The narrative recounts an event in which enslaved people

gathered to attend a samba on another property without their master’s permission. In fact, when one of the sons of the owner of the place where the samba was taking place, woken up by a dog frightened by the sound, gathered the private police and neighbors to break up the party, he was surprised by the physical resistance of these enslaved people. In other words, samba, as a gathering place for enslaved people from different locations and as a site of cultural exchange and sociability, resisted repressive efforts, regardless of their origin — even through physical confrontation with their “masters”. From our perspective, this underscores the importance attributed to the practice by the enslaved, as what was at stake in these forbidden sambas was their very lives. In this newspaper excerpt, when the death of an enslaved fugitive is mentioned, we also perceive the possibility of “leasing” enslaved individuals, as we are informed that “Roque was a slave of Mr. Alberto de Campos Velho and was leased to Mr. Maurício”¹² and how going to another property, in the broad sense of the word, both of a new “master” and location, could be a subterfuge for the enslaved to circumvent the established rules. Below we share this article in full.

Under the headline “Disorder Leading to Death”, *Diário de Pelotas* reported: The slaves of Mr. Manoel Maurício, a resident of Conde d’Eu Square, invited, without their master’s permission, several companions—sixteen in total—to a “samba”. Late at night, one of the sons of Mr. Maurício awoke due to the noise coming from the back of the house and, upon investigating, found some of the guests in the height of drunkenness and uproar. He attempted to send away the slaves who were not from the household and to restrain the others, but all tried to assault him. He then called several neighbors to his aid, and, with the help of the private police, they managed to arrest two of the rioters, while the others fled. **The Black man Roque, leader of “samba”, while trying to escape, fell into a well on the property and died shortly thereafter.** Roque was a slave of Mr. Alberto de Campos Velho and was leased to Mr. Maurício.¹³ **Emphasis added.**

At other times, samba is portrayed as a space of sociability for the enslaved, yet one frequently subjected to police intervention and repression. Moreover, it was often

¹² *A Regeneração*, n. 162, p. s/n, July 20, 1884.

¹³ Same as above.

described as a practice that disturbed local residents. This reveals that social control was a complex web composed of multiple layers. Not only the elites and the State, in their entirety, were concerned with surveillance over sambas, but also other segments of society, such as the complainants mentioned in the article presented below.

We are informed that on Saturday and Sunday nights, a group of black slaves usually gather on rua do Cotovelo; and there they form a samba, which should not be tolerated due to the inconvenience it causes. The peace of families, particularly during hours of rest, and public order are incompatible with the anachronistic existence of this African dance party¹⁴.

As in the excerpt above, it is noticeable in other sources that sambas most often occurred on Saturdays and Sundays. Another characteristic that deserves mention is the presence of dogs in these locations, serving as guards. Indeed, in the news clipping presented below, it was the barking of dogs that revealed the theft of a cow¹⁵. We were drawn to the author's attempt to link the theft to the sambas that were taking place in the vicinity of the scene of the incident, without explaining the veracity of the accusation or the motivations that raised the possibility, as discussed below.

Yesterday, between 10 and 11 p.m., Major Inácio José Ferreira, already retired for the night with his esteemed wife and daughters at his estate in Tamoio-Grande, near the streetcar station, was awakened by the loud barking of one of his dogs.

Upon going to investigate with his family the cause of the animal's agitation, they encountered a Black man who, having already roped a cow, fled with it. Pursuing the thief and shouting for help, the Major was assisted by Mr. Herculano Almeida, accompanied by four men. The thief disappeared, abandoning the cow.

To prevent such events from recurring, and the disorders that frequently occur at a samba held every Saturday and Sunday near the 'Dois Leões' estate, it would be advisable for a patrol to guard the area, especially during the night, remaining on alert until the time of withdrawal or return to barracks¹⁶.

This kind of call for surveillance and repression of sambas by members of society — through complaints and reports — was a constant feature in our sources. In

¹⁴ Diário de Pernambuco, n. 30, p. 2, February 06, 1862.

¹⁵ O Paiz, n. 251, p. 3, November 08, 1886.

¹⁶ Same as above.

the following example, there are elements relevant to our argument. The complaint's setting is a brick kiln, which allows us to infer that there was likely some level of permission from the property owner and possibly from the “master” of the enslaved individuals involved for the samba to take place. However, this cannot be interpreted as an act of kindness, since the available sources do not allow us to trace what negotiations, if any, were made for the event's occurrence. Another point worth discussing is how samba is treated musically in this article, as the writer suggests that music was not developed among the enslaved.

At the brick kiln near Beco das Barreiras, there is a samba of slaves every Saturday, which greatly disturbs the residents of the surrounding area, for it is well known that music is little developed among the sons of Africa, who possess harmony only in the noise of a complete charivari. The owner of that kiln must ensure that such an occurrence ceases, and it is remarkable that nothing has yet been done in this regard. Today, therefore, we demand that this measure not be delayed any longer¹⁷.

As a space for sociability, samba was also surrounded by the violence of the period. In our sources, we found a report of a trial in which an enslaved man was convicted for killing a police officer during a samba. We seek to move away from a romanticized view of the phenomenon and instead reveal its contradictions and the possibilities of endogenous violence. From our perspective, this death was not a result of resistance to repression but rather motivated by other factors — which may indicate that some police officers also attended sambas during their leisure time. It is worth noting that, according to the article, the prison sentence was commuted to corporal punishment, as shown below:

Capital Jury – On the 22nd, the trial was held of the defendant Antônio, slave of Captain José Albano, accused of killing a police officer on the night of the 13th of last month during a samba. The defendant was sentenced to twelve years in prison, which was commuted by the presiding judge, in accordance with the law, to 400 lashes¹⁸.

¹⁷ Diário de Pernambuco, n. 85, p. 2, April 11, 1860.

¹⁸ O Cearense, n. 2670, p. 1, July 25, 1868.

Another death we encountered was an accidental one, in which a person was struck by a gunshot fired from a house where a samba was taking place. One of the participants, attempting to greet the arrival of a friend, discharged a pistol in celebration¹⁹. However, the report does not specify who fired the shot, preventing us from determining the shooter's social status or drawing inferences about the case as a whole. On the contrary, the source leaves us with open questions: Was the person who fired accidentally an enslaved individual? Why was he carrying a firearm to a samba? Why was he carrying a firearm to a samba? What was the social position of the friend who arrived at samba to deserve a salute with gunshots? Below we share this article in full:

On the night of the 19th of this month, in the district of Santo Antônio de Jesus, one Umbelino, at a samba held in a house by the roadside, upon the arrival of a friend whom he wished to welcome and applaud, fired a pistol shot toward the road. At that moment, the Black man João, slave of Francisco Félix de Souza Andrade, happened to be passing by and was struck by the full charge, dying instantly.

The sub-delegate arrested the offender and sent him to the city jail, where proceedings are underway²⁰.

In another crime reported across five newspapers from four different states (Pernambuco, Maranhão, Rio de Janeiro, and Ceará), we find the account of an incident in which, after spending part of the stolen money, a Black man was arrested at a samba with only a small portion of the funds remaining. A noteworthy aspect of this case is that the perpetrator spent part of the stolen money on amusements — as made explicit in the phrase, “he partied with his accomplices”²¹. The full text is presented below.

Serious Assault — According to a newspaper from São Carlos do Pinhal, São Paulo, the following account describes an assault committed by the freedman João, which, according to the report, was justified by the people: “The freedman João went to the estate of Mr. Simeão in search of his son, who was in the coffee field and therefore not present on the property. “At home was Mrs. Palmira Sampaio, married to the son of Mr. Simeão, accompanied only by a child of about fourteen years of age.

¹⁹ Jornal do Commercio, n. 134, p. 1, May 14, 1868.

²⁰ Same as above.

²¹ O Cearense, n. 167, p. 1, July 25, 1888.

“The freedman arrived and said he wished to speak with the victim's husband.

— He is not at home.

— Then, who is there with you?

— No one.

“Immediately, the wretch threw himself upon Mrs. Palmira, grabbing her by the neck, nearly choking her, and said: “Where is the money?”

“The poor victim, nearly fainting, took the key to a cupboard and showed it to the wretched Black man.

“He stole 530\$000 and, upon leaving, seized a bench and struck Mrs. Palmira repeatedly.

“The criminal fled, but people soon went in pursuit, and on Sunday night he was found at a samba, possessing only 300\$000.

“He bought fabrics, fine clothes, jewelry, and threw a great party with his accomplices”. (emphasis added²²).

However, even with such a detailed account, we lack information about the motivations that led João to attend a samba only a few days after the crime. We infer that this action was part of their plan to use the misappropriated resources. We also barely understood the connection of João with samba. Nevertheless, returning to other newspaper reports, we notice that a fondness for samba was often listed as a characteristic in advertisements for fugitive enslaved people. In our view, this reflects—paradoxically—a recognition of samba as a common practice among the enslaved, to the point that it was included in such ads as a clue that could assist in their capture.

Alexandra Silva (2018) presents, as of advertisements for fugitive enslaved individuals published in Rio de Janeiro newspapers in the eighteenth century, demonstrates the cultural diversity to which these people had access. Furthermore, according to the author, the enslaved developed various forms of knowledge, including literacy. Aldinízia Souza, Antonia Pedroza, and José Fagundes (2022) contribute to this discussion by providing information about the struggles of Black people revealed in those ads. Some of the advertisements they analyzed to make their respective readings about nineteenth-century Rio Grande do Norte highlight the construction of certain escape routes by enslaved people. Fernanda Ferreira (2020), analyzing advertisements

²² Same as above.

in Rio de Janeiro periodicals in the mid-19th century, brings to light the diverse narratives that an advertisement contains and the possibilities that we, historians, can incorporate into our research. In this regard, the author observes that, in the future, such advertisements show us the capacity for individual action in the fight for freedom, materialized in the act of escape. These works are important for our analyses as we will indicate the elements that configure samba as a characteristic of a specific black person.

In light of this topic, we bring the discussion about samba in a conceptual way, considering it a vehicle for transmitting knowledge that is part of the ancestry of black people in Brazil, arising from the combination of several other cultural practices from different nations. We begin with its oral nature, a crucial feature for the (re)existence of Black people. Marinalva Barbosa (2017), when discussing the musical practices of the enslaved in the nineteenth century, points out the possibility of bodily communication through the rhythms of samba and how it served as a linguistic meeting point among the enslaved, some of whom spoke different languages.

In the first advertisement for a fugitive enslaved person found during our research²³, we encounter Raymundo, whose physical characteristics are described in detail, followed by a direct mention of his connection to samba—classified in the text as a form of recreation. Although the source does not specify how he was captured after his first escape, we believe that samba was included in the advertisement because the claimant knew Raymundo would likely seek out sambas as a form of enjoyment wherever he went, as it was part of his humanity. Thus, by alerting readers to this behavior, the chances of capture increased. Since the location of his hiding place was uncertain, he might be found at sambas. The advertisement reads:

Disappeared on November 11 of last year: the Black man Raymundo, crioulo, born in Icó, about 25 years old, mulatto, broad face, thick lips, close

²³ Diário de Pernambuco, n. 9, p. 3, January 12, 1854.

beard, of average height, slightly lame in one groin, very shrewd, and says he can read, fond of sambas, where he amuses himself playing the piccolo. The said Black man was captured at the Tapacará plantation, from which he fled again after 4 days. Whoever captures him, please bring him to rua Direita n. 78, where a generous reward will be given²⁴.

Next, we present four other instances demonstrating how samba was regarded as a form of amusement by society. It is evident that advertisers could identify the specific role that the fugitive enslaved played within the samba—whether as singers or drummers. We can also discern details about their attire when attending sambas and their possible carrying of knives, perhaps for self-defense (one of the possibilities). Another notable point is that these advertisements span multiple provinces—Ceará, Pernambuco, and Rio de Janeiro. In one of the excerpts, the enslaved man is identified by his association with women, suggesting the existence of affectionate or romantic relationships emerging from spaces of sociability such as samba. Our sources allow us to infer that samba persisted throughout the nineteenth century, embodying a process of (re)existence and serving as a site of amusement for Black people. These findings reinforce the notion that samba's origins and development were multifaceted. Below, we reproduce part of our findings in full.

Wandering about this capital, in the suburbs or even beyond, is Antonio da Gama. A caboclo with very straight hair; short and stout, slightly bowed legs, missing front teeth, somewhat nasal voice, samba singer, slave of the undersigned, who will reward whoever captures him. Dr. Meton²⁵.

Escaped on the 22nd of this month from the Cuyeira plantation, Nazaré district, the slave named Marculino, crioulo, 24 years old, belonging to the undersigned, with the following features: medium height, stocky body, tightly curled hair, round or fleshy face, flat nose, small red eyes, little beard, even teeth, regular mouth, large well-formed feet, very talkative, and accustomed to sing or lead songs in samba. He wore blue cotton trousers, a white cotton shirt, a Chilean hat, also carried a red calico shirt and colored linen shorts (already faded), a leather hat, a blacksmith's knife, razor, and mirror. I request that police authorities, field captains, and property owners kindly take notice so that the said slave may be captured and returned to his master, Mr. Antonio Martins do Rio, cotton presser, in Recife, who will offer generous reward. Manoel Caetano de Queiroz²⁶.

²⁴ Same as above.

²⁵ O Cearense, n. 177, p. 4, April 22, 1877.

²⁶ Diário de Pernambuco, n. 56, p. 4, March 09, 1880.

Fugitive Slave. A good reward will be paid to whoever captures and brings to this city the slave Paulino, delivering him to the undersigned. His characteristics are as follows: Black man of cabra complexion, medium height, stout body, thick legs and arms, round face, bright eyes, missing two front teeth; very stammering, little beard, fond of samba and of cachaça. He carried a pass granting him 4 days' leave to look for his master; however, it has been 20 days or more since he was last seen in Maranguape²⁷.

A special request is made to foremen to capture a slave named Mário, who escaped on January 24 from the Braço do Meio plantation, parish of Escada. His features: Black man, somewhat aged, handsome face, medium height and build, about 45 years old, missing one front tooth, calloused foot with thick nail, wears a beard. Carpenter by trade, plays guitar and sings, always seeks to be at samba gatherings and in the company of women, dresses well and stands out as a freedman; known to wear brown twill pants and jacket, coffee-colored felt hat (may change clothing, as he usually does). Has fled several times and always seeks work as an assistant mason, hauler, or laborer on plantations; once, fleeing to Recife, worked unloading coal and codfish from ships, being very industrious in all tasks. Whoever apprehends and delivers him to the Braço do Meio plantation will receive the stated reward; if he is taken to the Detention House and reported to Messrs. Correia & Co., at rua do Imperador, 50, a reward of 80\$ will be paid²⁸.

Another source that deserves attention shows that even as slavery was legally coming to an end, some freed individuals returned to the estates where they had lived. According to the report, this occurred after a great samba was held to celebrate the supposed "union" of social classes. By the end of the event, the Black participants, overtaken by joy, were said to have "forgotten" their condition as free people and returned to their former circumstances. We emphasize that the writer of the article maintains, in his/her interpretation of society, samba as a guiding thread of a peaceful congregation between classes and races, demonstrating in our considerations the potential of samba, see the mentioned article:

The issue of slavery would be resolved in such a way that the enslaved person and the master would become good friends, and both would cooperate for the advancement of agriculture and its prosperity. All the enslaved people scattered across the provinces of the empire would be summoned to gather in the capital of Bahia and form a colossal samba there. A formidable caruru, with barrels of cachaça around, would achieve what has so far been the scarecrow of all governments: emancipation without the loss of the enslaved labor. After the samba and the caruru, he would say to the Black people: "Slaves, you are free; farmers, embrace your slaves". Grateful, the Black

²⁷ Pedro II, n. 234, p. 4, November 05, 1868.

²⁸ Jornal do Recife, n. 29, p. 3, February 06, 1875.

people, because of the samba, would return to the plantations as free men and friends of their former masters. The problem would be solved²⁹.

In another excerpt, we have samba being shown as a place where a person, probably not black, paid for beers to be able to talk to an enslaved person³⁰. In another excerpt, the samba is shown as a place where a person, likely not Black, would buy beers in order to speak with an enslaved woman. This account contains some ironic traits from the author; however, we can highlight the possibility of forming affectionate bonds within the sambas, as well as marking the samba as a cultural practice of Black people. In full, it states: “Little things from Botafogo. Is it true that V... Palastrana frequents, at night, the Black samba, where he buys beer in order to talk to property of B...?“³¹

The final source chosen for discussion presents a perception of the “harmful effects” of abolitionist propaganda on the enslaved, while indicating its influence in an episode of violence caused by the interruption of a samba. The account also shows the author’s concern with marking the location of the enslaved and, ironically from our perspective, labeling them as “recognized”,³² as well as criticizing abolitionist propaganda as a pretext for actions by enslaved people against their masters. The newspaper excerpt in full reads:

How recognized are the enslaved people of the Divisa plantation! Because the master ordered that they stop the samba they were performing, one of them stabbed him five times, which he would have succumbed to if not for the thick coat he was wearing. Effects of abolitionist propaganda³³.

We conclude our analyses of the sources obtained from periodicals. Throughout our reading, we bring some reflections from a Black theoretical perspective. We

²⁹ A União, n. 7, p. 28, June 18, 1884.

³⁰ Echo Popular, n. 97, p. 4, January 16, 1870.

³¹ Same as above.

³² Diário do Brasil, n. 116, p. 2, May 24, 1882

³³ Same as above.

highlight that choosing to use periodicals as the sole source of our research conditions us to their respective analyses. Thus, in the following section, we will discuss some theories on Blackness, samba, and leisure in the nineteenth century.

Black Epistemologies, Samba, and (Re)existences: As a Conclusion

Clóvis Moura (2014), when analyzing the struggles of the enslaved, identifies these movements as a systematic symptom. Individual actions, when explored collectively, show that even without formal organization among themselves, they form a plural set of actions that share the same meaning in themselves, suggesting that they could be considered one of the spirits of the time for part of the Black population during that slave-holding period. The author also discusses that batucadas were cultural practices capable of keeping tribal traditions from Africa alive and, to a certain extent, could become spaces of sociability, even countering sociocultural hegemonies. To these insights from Clóvis Moura, we add Édouard Glissant's (2005) concept of “creolization,” highlighting that samba results from the mixture of diverse African cultures and reflects a process of constructing a heterogeneous national Black identity. We observe that in the nineteenth century, samba demonstrates its development as a Black cultural practice and the roots of its racial discrimination.

Some of the sources used in this article reveal an attempt to dehumanize the enslaved, which, in our analysis, is part of the historical process of structural racism, as presented by Silvio Almeida (2019). Samba, as a sociocultural phenomenon, is influenced by this process; however, its existence during that period could have represented an empowering space for the enslaved. In this regard, AAdolfo Albán Achinte (2013) proposes that these forms of life creation among Black and Indigenous people are techniques that allow resistance against the prevailing oppressive system—in

this case, slavery—and thus re-signify life while (re)existing. Alongside this analysis, we consider Danilo Ramos's (2022) observations on sambas in Salvador (BA) from the late nineteenth to early twentieth century, where some Black participants experienced a process of resisting in order to have fun and having fun in order to exist. In this process, they became aware of themselves as human beings during a period close to the official end of slavery.

Bringing to light the discussions proposed here is a way of enabling the breakdown of a single narrative in studies on the history of leisure. The concept of a “single story”, as noted by Chimamanda Adichie (2019), refers to the perpetuation of a racist perspective on Black people within a field of knowledge or daily life, occupying a non-space in social imagination due to the existence of an exclusionary official narrative. We believe this article contributes to constructing histories with Black people at the center of discussion, as also emphasized by Grada Kilomba (2019) in her opposition to the epistemicide of Black people in real life and academia.

The sources allow us to infer that samba can be seen as part of the lives of a segment of the enslaved, including when they were fleeing in search of freedom, risking their physical safety. We are able to explore a century of (re)existence that culminates in the continuity and life of samba, showing it as an ancestral technology for transmitting knowledge to Black people. We recognize that samba as leisure carries multiple meanings that must be analyzed to appreciate its complexity. Among the enslaved, it was not only a space of sociability but also a space of self-awareness, providing freedom within a specific community and timeframe.

We conclude this article aware that our discussions are part of our theoretical construction and argumentative choices, and are therefore open to critique. We also highlight our respect for all the memories presented here, for which we request

permission for their use. We recognize that further research is needed on topics such as gender intersections in sambas during this period, among others.

We acknowledge that other perspectives from Black thought could have been incorporated into our discussion. Within the scope of this paper, however, we believe that the proposed intersections and theoretical framework fulfilled this role. There was life for Black people during slavery beyond the world of labor, created through struggles and (re)existences, and samba was part of this process. Presenting samba as a form of leisure does not romanticize the struggles of the enslaved, but rather aids understanding of the battles that paved the way for future generations' dreams. Even amid ongoing struggle, Black people's resistance is an ancestral technology for collective survival, whether to exist or to enjoy life. From this perspective, samba is not merely a musical genre or cultural practice—it is a historically plural and diverse sociocultural phenomenon of Black people, a space where (re)existences are configured in multiple layers.

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