



## PART 4

# Safeguarding the intangible

# Origin Narratives, Transformation Routes

Heritage, Knowledge And (a)Symmetries On The Uaupés River

*Geraldo Andrello*

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## **Abstract**

This article begins with a series of discussions on the identification of sacred sites in the locality of Iauaretê, situated on the shores of the middle Uaupés River, between 2004 and 2011, involving the participation of local indigenous leaders and representatives of the National Historical and Artistic Heritage Institute (IPHAN). The work of identifying these sites began with the institute's visit to the region in 2004 and the partnership established with the Federation of Indigenous Organizations of the Rio Negro (FOIRN) and the Instituto Socioambiental (ISA), a non-government organization that has provided advice and support to indigenous peoples of the region for two decades. Following an evaluation of the effects of the listing of the Iauaretê Falls as intangible heritage by IPHAN in 2005, as well as the preservation actions implemented subsequently, the article explores some aspects of the new collaborative dynamics between anthropologists and indigenous researchers/intellectuals which the experience brings to the fore, as well as the specific way in which this phenomenon is manifested in the context of the upper Rio Negro.

**Keywords:** intangible heritage, knowledge, mythic narratives, symmetrical anthropology

## **Resumo**

Este artigo apresenta, inicialmente, uma série de discussões sobre a identificação de sítios sagrados existentes na localidade de Iauaretê, situada às margens do médio rio Uaupés, entre 2004 e 2011, da qual participaram lideranças indígenas locais e representantes do Instituto do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico Nacional (Iphan). As atividades de identificação desses sítios iniciaram-se com a aproximação do órgão à região em 2004 e à parceria

que estabeleceu com a Federação das Organizações Indígena do Rio Negro (FOIRN) e o Instituto Socioambiental (ISA), organização não-governamental que presta assessoria aos povos indígenas da região há duas décadas. A partir de uma avaliação sobre os efeitos do registro da Cachoeira de Iauaretê como patrimônio imaterial em 2005 pelo Iphan, bem como das ações de salvaguarda que se seguiram, busca-se explorar alguns aspectos das novas dinâmicas colaborativas entre antropólogos e pesquisadores/intelectuais indígenas que a experiência põe em destaque, bem como o modo específico como esse fenômeno se atualiza do contexto do alto rio Negro.

**Palavras-chave:** patrimônio imaterial, conhecimento, narrativas míticas, antropologia simétrica

# Origin Narratives, Transformation Routes

Heritage, Knowledge And (A)Symmetries On The Uaupés River<sup>1</sup>

*Geraldo Andrello*

This article describes a set of activities and discussions surrounding the identification of sacred sites in the locality of Iauaretê, situated in the Alto Rio Negro Indigenous Land on the shores of the middle Uaupés River, between 2004 and 2011. The activities of identifying these sites began with the visit by the National Institute of Historic and Artistic Heritage (IPHAN) to the region in 2004 and the partnership established by the institute with the Federation of Indigenous Organizations of the Rio Negro (FOIRN) and the Instituto Socioambiental (ISA). The aim of this action was to develop a pilot experience involving indigenous groups in the new policy of intangible cultural heritage with which IPHAN had been working since 2000. The experience produced various outcomes, including the recognition of the Iauaretê Falls as intangible heritage. At local level this event was absorbed into another set of ongoing actions and discussions, including key themes such as mythic narratives, participative mapping and the production and circulation of knowledge. The article looks to construct the general scenario formed by these connections, as well as explore some aspects of the new collaborative dynamics between anthropologists and indigenous researchers/intellectuals which the experience brought to the fore. Various people from Iauaretê participated in the process, among whom I should like to mention Adriano de Jesus, Pedro de Jesus, Miguel de Jesus and Luis Aguiar (Tariano) and Guilherme Maia Laureano Maia, Moisés Maia and Arlindo Maia (Tukano). Much of what follows has been authored by them too.

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<sup>1</sup> This article partly reproduces arguments developed in an earlier work of collective authorship (see Andrello et al. 2012) with additional comments in its final section. My thanks to Ana Gita de Oliveira, Renata Alves and André Martini (in memoriam) for sharing their ideas.

## The Iauaretê Falls as Intangible Heritage

The discussions concerning the drafting of Decree 3551 – promulgated in 2000, instituting the Intangible Cultural Heritage Register and creating the National Intangible Heritage Program – were based around the extensive accumulation of experiences of the National Institute of Historic and Artistic Heritage (IPHAN) relating to its preservation and protection of Brazil's cultural heritage. Amplifying the field of heritage work to contexts very different from those already consolidated posed a challenge, considering merely the questions covered by Law Decree n. 25/1937, which instituted the registration of material assets in Brazil.<sup>2</sup>

From 2004 onwards, the upper Rio Negro region effectively became one of these contexts. For IPHAN the upper Rio Negro posed a challenging and almost paradigmatic case. Firstly it involved putting into practice the guidelines established by the Department of Intangible Heritage for surveying the cultural references of indigenous peoples and expanding its institutional activities to regions historically situated on the margins of (or even outside) its range of preservation work. Secondly it involved confronting underlying problems like the very transposition of the notion of cultural heritage, as understood by the institution, to diverse cultural contexts. From IPHAN's viewpoint, other questions relating to the construction of the object to be preserved also loomed large. These included: how to approach the complex system of ritual exchanges already documented extensively in countless ethnographic texts? What domains of social life are immediately identifiable for preservation purposes? What approach would be best: work with one of the twenty-two ethnic groups found in the region or approach the set of shared 'cultural assets' also richly documented in the ethnographic literature? What parameters should be used to identify and delimit a 'historical site' (a concept central to heritage work) when implementing the actions to safeguard it? What are the most important references of the cultural context in question? And finally, but crucially, how to resolve the logistical problems involved in visiting the region's basins and rivers?<sup>3</sup> Whatever the answers,

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<sup>2</sup> These experiences took place at the National Centre of Cultural References (CNRC) and the National Pro-Memory Foundation in the period between the end of the 1970s and the mid-1980s. Both institutions were directed by Aloísio Magalhães.

<sup>3</sup> This diagnosis of IPHAN's institutional vision of its own work in the upper Rio Negro region is based on my conversations with the anthropologist Ana Gita de Oliveira, a technical officer at the institute's

the upper Rio Negro was chosen for a variety of motives, including the existence of FOIRN, perhaps the most prominent indigenous organization in Amazonia, whose partnership with ISA (Instituto Socioambiental) was initiated over fifteen years ago.

In fact the partnership established by IPHAN, FOIRN, ISA and local indigenous associations was essential for the proposal to become minimally viable in terms of the anticipated issues and initial challenges. Hence between May 2004 when the project began and August 2006 when the Iauaretê Falls were declared part of Brazil's cultural heritage by the Cultural Heritage Consultative Committee, various actions supporting 'cultural revitalization' processes were implemented.<sup>4</sup> But the start of the process was marked by the meeting solicited by IPHAN and organized by FOIRN in May 2004 in the maloca located at its headquarters in the city of São Gabriel da Cachoeira (AM). As the meeting was about 'culture,' the organizers invited those groups who had been working on the implantation of differentiated indigenous schools in the region, such as the Tukano and the Tuyuka of the Tiquié River and the Baniwa of the upper Içana River. Additionally, though, the meeting was also attended by the Tariano of Iauaretê, who, though not participating in a formal indigenous education project, had shown a lively interest in registering their origin histories, building a maloca and resuming past ritual practices.

The meeting basically involved presenting the policy for listing 'intangible cultural assets' – classified for this purpose as 'bodies of knowledge,' 'celebrations,' 'forms of expression' and 'places.' Although the subject included some legal aspects alien to the indigenous audience, the groups present demonstrated a keen interest in the topic. Overall the positive response to

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Department of Intangible Heritage, responsible for coordinating its activities in the area. She enjoyed a privileged view of these issues, since as well as being a permanent employee of IPHAN, she had carried out research in Iauaretê and São Gabriel da Cachoeira in the 1980s as the basis for her master's dissertation and doctoral thesis in Anthropology at the University of Brasilia.

<sup>4</sup> Among these actions we can list the support given to the rebuilding of malocas; the identification of sacred adornments held at the Indian Museum in Manaus; the elaboration of a Repatriation Agreement for these adornments drafted by IPHAN with the collaboration of lawyers from ISA and the participation of indigenous leaders from FOIRN; and the audio-visual documentation of the work process by Vincent Carelli from Vídeo nas Aldeias. It is also worth mentioning the implementation of a Culture Point at FOIRN in 2008, which formed the basis for a diverse range of local actions focused on cultural heritage, leading more recently to plans for a specific program for the Rio Negro under the aegis of the Ministry of Culture. This program, still under development, will involve indigenous communities situated on the Colombian side of the region.

IPHAN's proposal reflected a wider concern on the part of the indigenous groups of the Uaupés and Içana Rivers to document the 'culture of the ancestors' for the new generations, who seemed to them increasingly drawn to things of the city and the whites. Indeed some of the experiences supported by FOIRN seek to counter this trend, especially the publication of the Collection *Indigenous Narrators of the Rio Negro* (which to date amounts to eight published volumes of Desana, Tariano, Baniwa and Tukano mythology). This material adds to the numerous primers and textbooks that have also been published. These experiences can be seen to provide the key to interpreting the response to the presentation made by IPHAN's officers to the indigenous audience assembled in the FOIRN maloca. As the Tariano put it, "now the government too wants to support the work we have already been doing," demonstrating considerable interest in IPHAN's proposal and interpreting it as an official initiative designed to support and strengthen their own initiatives. However the form in which IPHAN explained its work methodology suggested new ideas to them, since soon after the meeting they began to ponder the idea of registering their 'sacred places' as cultural heritage to be recognized by the government. But what were their precise reasons?

The Tariano, though part of the system of linguistic exogamy connecting the different peoples of the Uaupés River, occupy a peculiar position within it. Unlike the other groups, they originate from the Içana basin to the north, having moved to settle on the Uaupés in the pre-colonial period. They ended up occupying an extensive area within the territory of the Tukano groups from whom they not only obtained wives in exchange for sisters but also gradually adopted their language. The Tariano area on the Uaupés centres on the Iauaretê Falls, a location that forms part of the origin histories of various groups living there today. In these extended narratives, the emergence and growth of the different groups of the Uaupés are conceptualized in the form of successive spatial-temporal migrations of their ancestors, a process that also defines their respective territories.

According to the Tariano, Iauaretê is the place where their ancestors settled after leaving the upper Aiari, an affluent of the Içana River where they originated along with other Arawak-speaking groups. In Iauaretê the Tariano population today number around 850 people. The rest of the settlement's population, around two thousand people, is composed of representatives of Tukano-speaking peoples from the Uaupés: the Tukano, Desana, Pira-Tapuia,

Wanano, Tuyuka and others. For these groups the Iauaretê Falls comprise one of various stopover points of the anaconda-canoe, who brought their ancestors to the Uaupés in its wake.

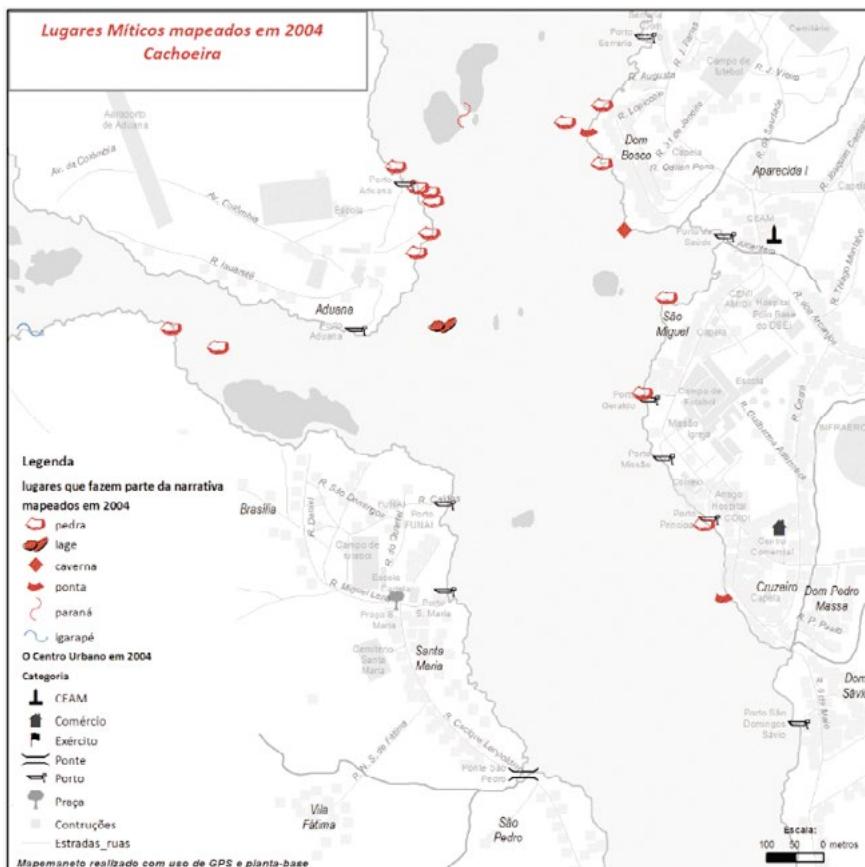
Iauaretê is today virtually a town with high schools, a hospital, electricity, a post office, television, an airstrip, an Army platoon and an active indigenous commerce. Until the mid-1980s, there were four Tariano communities living around the Salesian mission, founded there in 1930. Today there are ten 'districts' or 'villages.' It is generally considered that the closure of the boarding school run by the Salesians there for decades was the main cause behind this demographic concentration. Without the usual means of ensuring that their children frequented school classes, many families started to live in Iauaretê on a permanent basis. At first this led to the expansion of the old Tariano communities, forced to allow residential space, as well as areas for swidden planting, to their brothers-in-law from the Tukano, Pira-Tapuia, Wanano and so on. Next the priests began to allow the areas previously occupied by their pastures and plantations to be used to form new communities. In this context, the management of community issues became increasingly immersed in new difficulties. Families from the same original community tend to be dispersed among different districts, a fact reflecting the specific circumstances involved in each family's arrival in the settlement. Children and young adults spend much of their time at school and have a far less intense interaction with parents and grandparents. Much of their day is spent in front of the TV. Consequently the most frequently heard comment in terms of the difficulties faced in Iauaretê concerns the 'unruly youths,' which manifests as numerous quarrels over festivals and teenage pregnancies.

However another line of tension is perceptible in the day-to-day life of Iauaretê, one related, precisely, to an often implicit debate on the prerogatives claimed by the Tariano and other Tukano-speaking groups over who constitutes the 'legitimate residents' of the locality. This debate relates directly to the urbanization process and the kind of compulsory coexistence that the new situation imposes on these groups. The indisputable fact is that Iauaretê located at a point on the Uaupés River where the trajectories of two of the main indigenous groups of the region, the Tariano and Tukano, intersect. As well as its strategic geographic position, the prerogatives for establishing new communities in Iauaretê are disputed by the Tukano and the Tariano, who have distinct and opposing interpretations of their respective

mytho-historic narratives. Though difficult to evaluate, we can venture that the demographic concentration and hence the ongoing process of urbanization also result from this particular characteristic: in addition to the easier access to education, healthcare and income, many people seem to judge that they are fully entitled to live and raise their children there. For all these reasons, Iauaretê comprises a unique locality within the regional context.

This was another circumstance that enabled the Tariano present at the meeting at the FOIRN maloca to learn about the intangible heritage policy proposed by IPHAN. According to the legal framework instituted by Decree 3551, places can also be listed as cultural heritage. For the Tariano, Tukano and other groups from the upper Rio Negro this is certainly no novelty. Only that the decree spoke of markets, fairs, sanctuaries and squares. Meanwhile the Tariano were thinking of their own home. Since, as they tried to demonstrate in the following months: “*our history is written in the rocks of the Iauaretê Falls.*” These were the sacred places that they intended to register. IPHAN, in principle, accepted their proposal. We can recall that during the demarcation of the Indigenous Lands in the region between 1997 and 1998, various leaders had already said that “*our area is already marked, the demarcation is one more confirmation.*” They thereby referred to a vast range of mythic meanings attributed to the rocks forming the innumerable rapids along the area’s rivers, many of them presenting petroglyphs (on this topic, see Ricardo 2001).

A detailed map of the settlement in hand, we visited Iauaretê very quickly in November 2004. On this occasion, we agreed with them a set of more than twenty points to be visited in February or March the following year when the Uaupés River would be at its lowest level (see the map below). They insisted that we should come equipped with instruments allowing us to register what we would come to see: in parallel with the narrative to be recounted in situ, it would be essential to photograph and, where possible, film the rocks along with the Tariano themselves describing what each one signified. This would amount to a visible testimony of the prerogatives that they claimed over the site. Then in February 2005 we were in Iauaretê once again (Geraldo Andrello for ISA, Ana Gita de Oliveira for IPHAN and Vincent Carelli, video documentary maker from Vídeo nas Aldeias). Over a ten-day period, the Tariano of the Koivathe clan placed themselves entirely at the disposition of the project. During this time, they made considerable effort to debate the issues among themselves and formally and solemnly recounted a history that took place



Map 1 – Map of the urban centre of Iauareté and the surrounding area

in Iauareté a long time before the emergence of contemporary humankind (formed by the Tariano, Tukano, other indigenous groups and the whites). Using GPS, we located on a prepared base map the places relating to the ancient history of their mythic ancestor, whose successive transformations were responsible for the origin of some of the rocks of the Iauareté Falls. The narrative concerned the primordial time of pre-humanity, a world peopled by creator divinities who sought to provoke the emergence of rivers, animals, plants and true human beings.

This Tariano history takes place in a world still in formation and explains how the Iauareté Falls came into being. The word Iauareté, 'waterfall of the jaguar,' is a toponym that alludes to a 'jaguar-people' who inhabited the place in the remote past. It is on this mythic narrative that the Tariano base their claims to be the legitimate residents of Iauareté, since it recounts the

origin of various outcrops, rapids, islands and channels of these falls from successive transformations of a demiurge called Ohkomi. According to the narrative, the jaguar-people already knew that Ohkomi would create a populous group who would come to dominate the Uaupés River: the Tariano. For this reason, he was captured in his own house (located in what is today an upland area where Cruzeiro district is situated), sacrificed, killed and devoured by the jaguars. With the jaguars in pursuit, Ohkomi tried to throw them off his trail by transforming himself into animals and plants. All the forms that he assumed prior to being killed turned into rocks along the falls that are today used to set fishing traps. These are the 'sacred places' that the Tariano took us to visit and wished to register with IPHAN's support. The three small bones left from Ohkomi's right hand would form the origin of the Tariano ancestors, responsible for wiping out the jaguar-people and turning the Uaupés River into an appropriate place for the settlement and growth of true humankind. Hence from the Tariano viewpoint, the Iauaretê area itself comprises a record of their history, knowledge of which includes a detailed map of the ideal points for setting fishing traps and thus for obtaining essential food resources in the human era.

According to the Tariano, it was thanks to the extermination of the jaguar-people by their ancestors that the anaconda-canoe of the Tukano ancestors was able to journey up the Uaupés River and populate it. In fact the Tukano and other groups did not tarry in becoming involved in the process of registering the Iauaretê Falls, arguing, however, that their histories are equally marked on other rocks there. Their argument centres on a recess found on a large flat outcrop located just below the most rugged section of the falls. According to them, this element was the unequivocal sign that the giant anaconda-canoe of their ancestors had beached at this spot, from where it would subsequently open a channel between the waterfall's rocks before submerging forever upriver on the Uaupés. In other words, while from the Tariano viewpoint there was a large cluster of rocks dispersed across the area that testified to the history of the sacrifice of their 'grandfather' Ohkomi, for the Tukano there was at least one rock that provides the evidence and grounds for their claims, as well as the existence of the channel which still today allows canoes and other river craft to navigate along the Uaupés, upriver and downriver of Iauaretê. In addition many people question the monopoly claimed by the Tariano over the history of the jaguar-people. For them, the

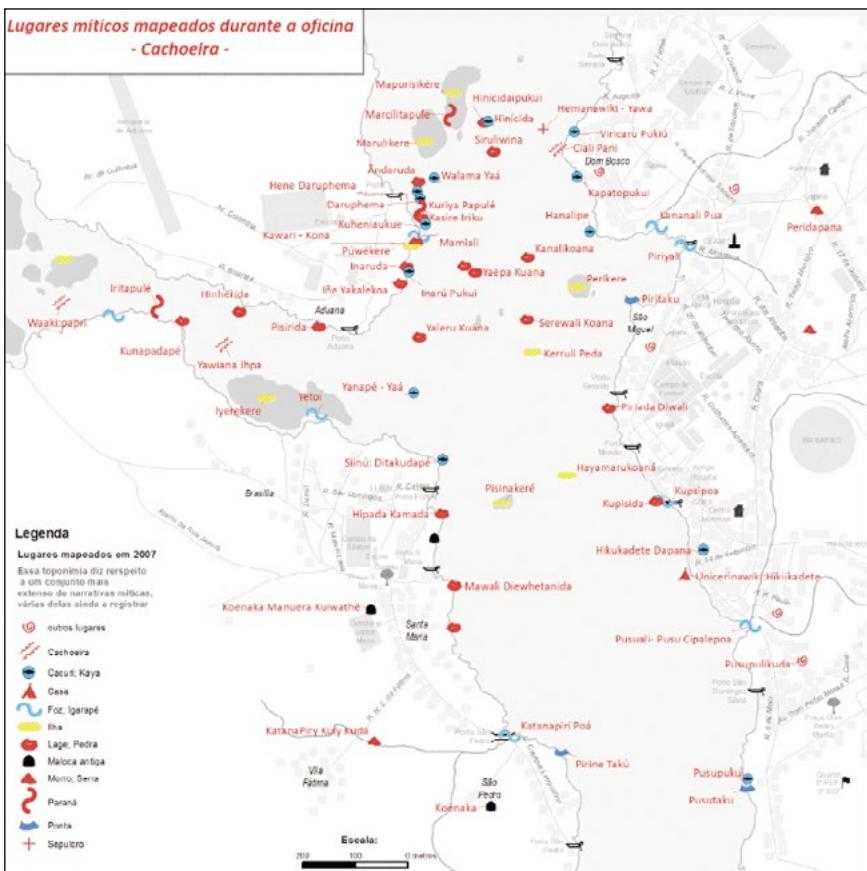
episodes that led to their extermination fit into various other versions of the narratives that describe the pre-human phase of the universe (for details of these other versions, see Andrello 2012).

The eventual outcome was that the request to register the falls in the book of places signed by Tariano and Tukano leaders had to be sent in the name of all the ethnic groups living in Iauaretê today. IPHAN's Consultative Council approved the request on August 4<sup>th</sup> 2006. The democratization of the request to register the falls and its implementation had a direct effect on the format of the 'preservation actions' implemented by IPHAN after the listing, specifically in terms of expanding the mapping work referring to the mythic places in the middle Uaupés and Papuri region around Iauaretê. The subsequent process involved the organization of cartography workshops with the participation of the Tariano of the Koivathe clan and various other groups.

## **Cartography of Sacred Places**

The use of map images and base maps (with a hydrography and toponymy of the contemporary and past community and sites) in the first surveys of the Iauaretê Falls and in subsequent workshops represented both the introduction of new techniques and the simultaneous expansion of the social network involved in developing the activities, which included the localization of other sacred sites on the Uaupés and Papuri Rivers. Coordinated by technical staff from ISA's Geoprocessing Laboratory, the two workshops held in 2007 and 2008 showed the potential in terms of narrative content that each of these named places evokes, based on the informed observation of elements of the landscape.

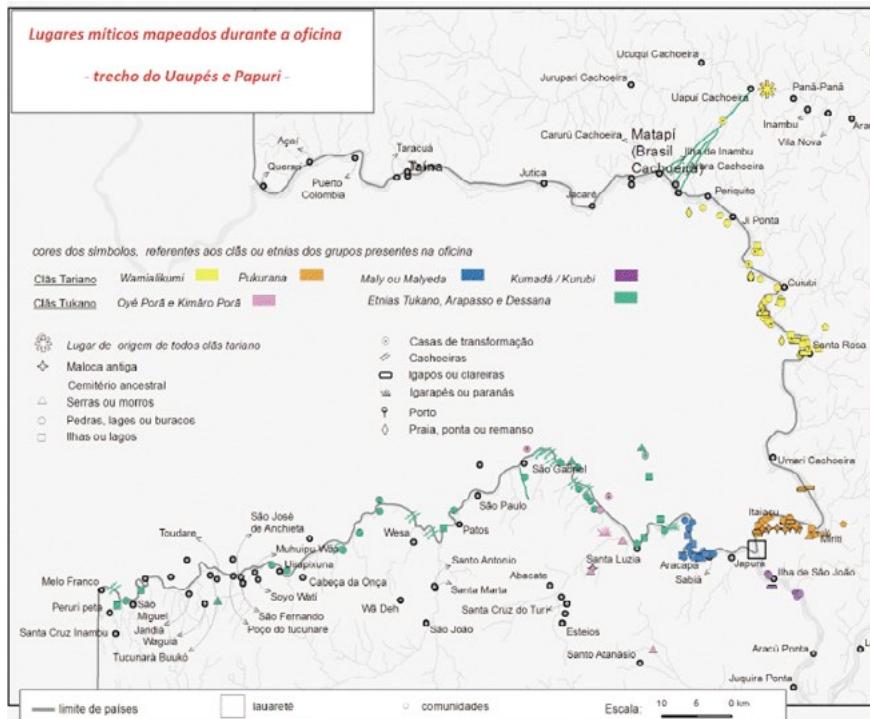
The first workshop on mapping the sacred sites was held over a five-day period in May 2007 in Iauaretê. Approximately one hundred people took part, ranging from students to elders and belonging to five Tariano clans (Koivathe, Pukurana, Wamialikune, Malyeda and Kumada Kurubi), two Tukano clans (Oyé and Kimâro Porã), as well as members of the Desana and Arapasso groups. The Koivathe's project of registering the toponymy referring to the Iauaretê Falls on maps was already well-known, stimulating the participation of these other groups. During the workshop each group concentrated on their region of origin, looking to identify the sacred places existing in each of these areas. The support material for the workshop was



Map 2 – Map produced by the Iauaretê group, centre.

produced beforehand at ISA's Geoprocessing Laboratory in São Paulo, and basically involved the preparation of base maps (with detailed information on the river courses and the localization of the communities on their shores) and map images (from the Landsat satellite) of the Iauaretê settlement and the region of the upper Uaupés and Papuri Rivers as a whole. All this material was printed in 100 x 70cm format, thereby allowing the identified sites to be plotted directly by the groups. The plotting work was preceded by an internal discussion within each group on which points were to be marked on the maps, i.e. those they really wished to make public.

Most of the groups decided, in parallel with the plotting work, to register in writing fragments of the narratives related to each point. In some cases they used numerical captions correlating points on the maps with these texts since, with the exception of the Iauaretê maps, the scale used prevented any precise



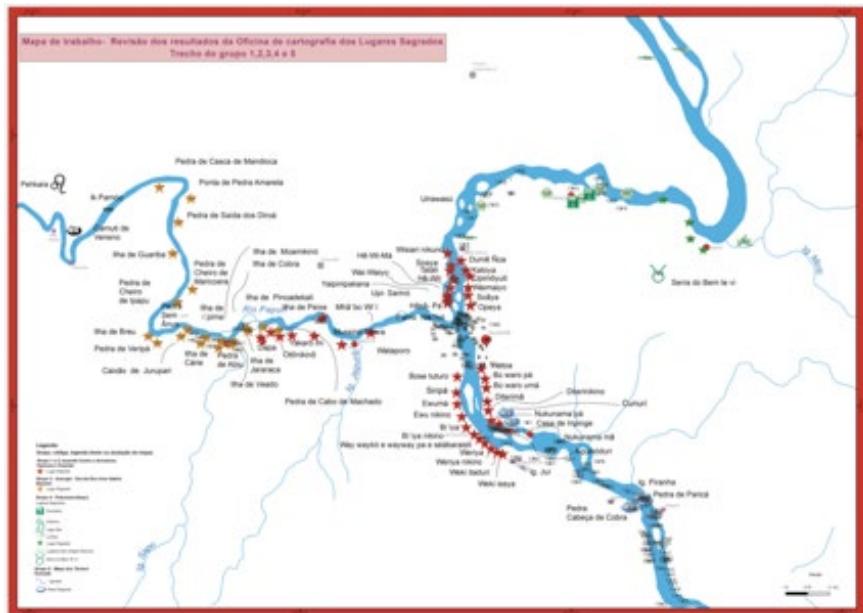
Map 3 – Map produced by the groups of the Uaupés and Papuri Rivers.

plotting. In fact the scale of the maps available proved to be a limiting factor for much of the work produced. This is demonstrated by comparing what could be registered for Iauareté, a locality for which a high definition Ikonos satellite image was available, enabling a 1:3000 scale map, and what was obtained with the other maps, all at the 1:100,000 scale. The first mapping of the Iauareté Falls with the group from the Koiwathe clan in 2005 identified 20 points mentioned in the mythic narratives, while in 2008, as a result of two workshops, there were 75 points. In this second stage, twenty people from two Tariano clans took part. This more extensive toponymy relates to a more diverse set of mythic narratives, various of which have yet to be recorded. Meanwhile the other five groups (three Tariano clans, one Tukano and one Desana) who worked with maps of various parts of the Uaupés and Papuri identified a total of two hundred and thirty places, mentioned in a variety of mythic narratives.

Maps 2 and 3 represent the current phase of a process in which the Tariano and the Tukano are recalling their places and histories, attempting to coalesce these memories into a map form with the help of technical advisors.

The set of points identified on the maps refers to various types of geographic features, such as islands, marsh areas, creek mouths, shallows, outcrops, rocks and ridges, as well as the sites of old malocas and the ‘transformation houses,’ stopover points on the journey of the giant anaconda who brought the ancestors of the current groups to the Uaupés. All of them were identified on the basis of narratives referring to episodes from mythic time, involving diverse figures, and the origin of a series of precautions related to the present-day management of natural resources and people’s health. The data from the eight maps produced during the first workshop were fed into a Geographic Information System, which allowed the elaboration of new work-maps for ongoing revisions. In 2008 another, smaller five-day workshop was held with approximately thirty people to revise the places mapped in the first workshop, including several discussions on the use of the Tukano language by the Tariano and their effort to discover the name of various places in their own language. On this occasion visits were made to some elders, as well as some of the places unidentifiable on the scale of the available maps, where GPS points and photographs were taken. The overall map of the Uaupés and Papuri region shown above is the provisional result of the initial work undertaken during these workshops.

The lesson acquired from these two workshops is that the maps slowly acquire new elements in response to the narrative details that emerge on each occasion. The resulting impression is that the process of elaborating these maps is virtually infinite, especially if the scale can be amplified at each stage, and if this exercise is combined with more time for visits to the mapped locations. In fact there is a striking variation in terms of details seen between the map of the Iauaretê urban settlement (1:3000 scale) and the more general map of the region (1:100000). Additionally the possibility of visiting the points cited in the narratives referring to the Iauaretê Falls and their vicinity allows a highly detailed mapping of this subregion unthinkable for other parts of the area. The map below is perhaps the best example currently available of what can be recorded through the adopted procedures. In other words, as part of the area surrounding the location where the workshops were held – which a number of the Tariano participants journey through in their day-to-day activities – it was possible to interpret or elucidate *in situ* some of the references to the local landscape found in the narratives being recounted.



#### Map 4 – Review of the results of the mapping workshops – Iauaretê surroundings

As the Tariano-Koivathe said at the outset of the process, “our history is written in these stones.” As we have seen, though, in the context of the Iauaretê district, this clan shows a very particular trajectory. It is perhaps one of the few whose members recognize in the waterfall itself where they settled many generations ago the marks of the pre-human era related to their own emergence and their present-day attributes. Moreover, like the other Tariano clans settled near to the Iauaretê Falls, they describe the borders of the Tariano territory as a triangle with its three points situated in Campo Alto (Uaupés downriver of Iauaretê), Miriti (Uaupés upriver of Iauaretê) and Aracapá (entering via the Papuri river). From the viewpoint of other groups, this area – approximately covered by the map above (map 4) – is considered an Arawak enclave in the heart of Tukano territory. It is certain, therefore, that had the Tukano clans present in the workshops enjoyed similar conditions for producing their maps, the resulting cartography would be very different. Hence despite the increasing inclusion of other groups from Iauaretê in the overall process, the importance attributed by the Tariano to the Iauaretê Falls in their origin narrative assured them a privileged position in the context of holding the workshops and elaborating the maps.

Put otherwise, the Iauaretê Falls are clearly an important place for the Tariano and for the Tukano, Desana, Arapasso and others, albeit to different degrees, since the mythic transformations registered there are, for the Tariano, equivalent to what the Tukano narrative distributes along almost the entire trajectory of their ancestral anaconda. In fact this generated a methodological problem that became evident in the mapping workshops in Iauaretê: how to go about making the local maps if the narratives from which they derive mostly refer to a succession of movements and stopovers? How could these elements be registered in cartograms without re-enacting these very same movements? It was the Tariano-Koivathe themselves, in fact, who assumed the task of requesting the resources needed to travel the route taken by their ancestors from the Içana river to the Uaupés. This would be another of the actions involved in the listing of the Iauaretê Falls as a heritage site, since although they could demonstrate their ancestral connection to the landscape, they still needed to map the path taken to arrive there.

The interesting question that the overall experience raises is, therefore, that of the connection between landscape and narrative. It does not seem fortuitous that before engaging in the plotting work, the groups present in the workshops devoted themselves to writing sections of narratives. These provided the source details of what was seen and experienced on past voyages: their enunciation is itself a repeated form of mapping, just as the constant journeys up and down river today are also journeys of reflection on events of the more or less distant past. The fixation of features of the landscape onto the geographic maps produced for the workshops could not, therefore, do without this work of memory. The (im)possibility of retracing some routes led to differences in the level of detail in the maps. Indeed the density of the partial map shown above, which centres on the Iauaretê Falls and registers the extensive toponymy of the adjacent zones, suggests that this exercise itself should ideally be undertaken while moving. If not we risk producing what anthropologist Tim Ingold (2000: 234) calls a 'cartographic illusion': the presumption that the structure of the world represented on maps is fixed independently of the movements of their inhabitants. A map filled by an indigenous toponymy is likewise merely a pale and codified image of the landscape intensely projected by the migration narratives.

The origin narratives told by the Tukano peoples of the Uaupés are unanimous in affirming that the very course of the Negro River and its affluents,

and in general the course of all the Amazonian basin's rivers, acquired existence thanks to the upriver movement of the ancestral anaconda from the portal of the waters, situated at the mouth of the Amazon. It was not a random movement, however, since the arborescent structure of these rivers is due precisely to the felling of the great tree encountered there by the ancestors. After the great flood that followed, the travellers headed westwards, tracing a route that corresponding to the trunk of this tree and its branches, i.e. moving up the Amazon and entering its affluents and sub-affluents until finding the centre of the universe. An important point to emphasize is that this journey-gestation of humanity was conducted by the ancestors of all the current groups. People usually point out that the same history is involved, though told from different points of view. Consequently the same stopover point or episode may be situated in different localities, depending on the current position of the narrator's group within the regional context, making the situation even more problematic for the cartographer.

In attempting to produce cartograms based on conventional cartography, therefore, other problems will inevitably emerge. Each narrative is a particular exercise in mapping, which means that the continuous endeavour to condense multiple narratives into the same mapmaking process<sup>5</sup> may lead to insurmountable dilemmas. This problem raises the question of what type of map could in fact do justice to this dynamic. Such dilemmas echo the kinds of questions explored in striking form in the beautiful book by Keith Basso, *Wisdom Sits in Place* (1996), itself the outcome of an extensive project of mapping cultural geography among the Western Apache within a twenty mile radius of the community of Cibecue in Arizona, USA. Although the Apache themselves had conceived the project, the idea of publishing an atlas with the names of places identified in their own language to replace the countless maps of the region produced by the whites seemed to them somewhat absurd. As one person said: "White men need paper maps, we have maps in our minds" (Basso 1996:43).

Just as in Iauaretê, in the Apache community in question the interest in mapping seemed to reflect first and foremost a certain dissatisfaction with the limitations of conventional cartography, which, in Basso's words,

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<sup>5</sup> On this point the distinction between 'mapping' and 'mapmaking' would be equivalent to the distinction between the oral and the written (again see Ingold 2000, Chapter 13).

basically constitutes a ‘charted territory.’ In this particular case, the solution encountered by the ethnographer was to draw from writings that shed some light on this impasse, such as, surprisingly, the account of the visit by the physicist Niels Bohr to Kronborg Castle in Denmark: just the idea of Hamlet having lived there, perhaps, was enough for the castle to become for the physicist something very different to the image projected by its architectural features as a whole, though specific details, such as a dark corner or wooden carving, might evoke the character’s famous phrase – to be or not to be – in a new guise. For the informed visitor, the experience induced what Basso called a ‘retrospective world-building,’ more specifically in the form of ‘place-making,’ an act in which memory and imagination are implicated. Transposing this experience to the Apache universe, the author came to observe that the set of place names – as well as their structure, inextricably associated with elements of the landscape – codify narratives about the past; more specifically, about the events that occurred in specifically named places. In this sense the histories suggested by the local toponymy are equally specific: episodic, local, personal, subjective and above all highly variable in terms of the actors potentially involved in their production.

In sum, a history ‘without authorities,’ without any pretension to generate definitive narratives. More than general theories or models, a history that can “fashion possible worlds, give them expressive shape, and present them for contemplation as images of the past that can deepen and enlarge awareness of the present” (Basso 1996: 32). Still influenced by Bohr’s words, the ethnographer observes that this does not involve “a small or uninteresting truth,” but “a common response to common curiosities,” such as “what happened here? who was involved? [...] why should it matter?” (Basso 1996: 5). Responses, then, that presume cultivated sensibilities and knowledge. Nothing very different therefore from the situation that we have been observing during the activities undertaken in Iauaretê by IPHAN and its partners.

These suggestions in mind, the following section explores a number of points relating to the dynamic of knowledge generation and circulation on the upper Rio Negro, a dynamic that the experience of registering the Iauaretê Falls as a heritage site allowed to some extent to be glimpsed.

## **Registering Heritage, Registering Knowledge**

The above-mentioned experience in fact points to a theme of enormous relevance in the life of the region's indigenous peoples: the inscription of their origin histories in the natural landscape. More precisely, the entire process indicates a fundamental association between history, as conceived locally, and geography, a social memory stored along the river courses, at the waterfalls, shallows, beaches, long stretches, areas of still water, channels and so on, which we saw as we navigated these routes. In this sense the journeys today re-enact the primordial movements and evoke the differentiations internal to humanity that came to populate the course of the Rio Negro and its tributaries, all of them recorded in the features of the landscapes and in their toponymy. In sum, while we can readily identify the motives for people travelling through the area – visiting kin, planning fishing expeditions, going downriver to the towns to obtain money and goods, seeking out schools and healthcare, etc., – it is less evident that during these same journeys, as well as what happens over its course, people also travel through time, and thus both acquire and produce knowledge. We could say, therefore, that on the upper Rio Negro, the sacred sites – these potential intangible heritage sites – themselves form a substrate of recorded knowledge. The narratives that they evoke thus refer to what we could call 'transformation routes.' These are the paths that, by circumscribing the movements and cycles of today's world – generally recorded in the so-called ecological-cultural calendars (see below) – comprise evidence of the process that led in the mythic past to the appearance of a true humanity, usually conceived as a slow transformation, or passage, from the subaquatic world of 'fish people' to the properly human world (I shall also return to this point below).

But, as I stated at the start, from the indigenous viewpoint the institutional experience of registering the Iauaretê Falls as intangible heritage formed part of a wider set of activities being developed through the partnership between FOIRN and ISA, and of the diverse projects involving indigenous leaders linked to the former and technical officers linked to the latter. Since the 1990s, a diverse set of local projects has been put into practice.<sup>6</sup> Here special

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<sup>6</sup> Teams of advisors-researchers from ISA began to work with community leaders and local associations in 1993 on a project to produce an extensive map of the region's communities, as well as advise FOIRN on assembling a network of effective communication between the more than 500 communities represented by the entity, belonging to more than 20 indigenous peoples, distributed across the enormous system

emphasis can be given to the implantation of schools with differentiated education on the Tiquié, Içana and Uaupés Rivers, among the Tuyuka, Baniwa, Tukano and Wanano. These nuclei implemented systematic experiences designed to reverse a historical tendency linked to the introduction of school education on the Rio Negro: the concentration of school-age students in the large Salesian boarding schools in São Gabriel, Taracuá, Iauaretê and Paricachoeira since the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, whose closure was only concluded in the 1980s. The experience of the boarding schools can be said to have supplied a negative reference point for the implantation of these new schools. While indigenous languages had been prohibited in the Salesian schools, in these recent experiences everything took place ‘in the native languages,’ from literacy classes to the elaboration of research and monographs; while in the boarding schools the priests taught the language, maths and trades of the whites, it was now a question of assembling curricular and didactic material based on local cultural meanings. The base methodology involves the development of research on the indigenous culture itself, for which western techniques and knowledge can and should be employed. The overall premise is that this will allow the absorption of new knowledge and value traditional knowledge simultaneously. Despite the extensive range of work needed to make such a program viable (constant pedagogical supervision, training of indigenous teachers, workshops with different types of indigenous and non-indigenous specialists, the production and publication of didactic material in different languages), the differentiated education model of school was incorporated by the São Gabriel da Cachoeira Local Council in 2007, at least in discourse.

These schools made use of and to a certain extent guided the start of other parallel projects, in particular a project for managing fishing and agroforestry resources. Along with the schools, plans were made for the implantation of fish farms, which were used to develop methods adapted to local ecological and logistical conditions. Breeding of native fish species was introduced in the region with technical assistance. Domestic fishponds,

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of rivers forming the basin of the upper Rio Negro. This first phase of work was crowned by the homologation of five Indigenous Lands in the region, covering a total area of more than 10 million hectares, in 1998. FOIRN’s political and institutional consolidation, as well as the database accumulated thus far, played a fundamental role, enabling the successful implementation of a participatory process of physical demarcation of these areas.

combined with an agroforestry system located nearby to supply feed for the fish, began to appear in some communities closer to the schools. The fish farm activities fed back into the educational activities, so that most of the research developed in the schools began to concentrate on knowledge related to plants, animals and their reproductive cycles, the so-called ecological-cultural calendars. Fishing monitoring programs were also begun at the same time, focusing on both fishing production and the use of different technologies, both traditional and recently adopted, which involved an assessment of the impacts of the recent introduction of fishing nets.<sup>7</sup> At the same time, the schools also invested in a survey of the ancient origin narratives, documentation of the chants associated with them, and attempts to revive ritual practices that had fallen into disuse. It is no coincidence, therefore, that the mapping workshops described above have been incorporated as activities in an indigenous school recently implanted in Iauaretê. In addition, many of the resources available to these new school experiences were directed towards the reconstruction of large malocas. Likewise over the course of the documentation process for the Iauaretê Falls, IPHAN provided funds for the Tariano-Koivathe to be able to rebuild the former maloca of Leopoldino, the famous *tuxáua* or leader of the Uaupés who welcomed the Salesian missionaries in Iauaretê in 1929. In sum, practically all the actions suggested to IPHAN as part of the Preservation Plan for the Iauaretê Falls coincided with experiences being developed within the differentiated education schools implanted in the region over the last decade.

In addition to evaluating the successes and failures of this set of activities – which may be present or absent depending on the criteria and scales adopted – the important fact to emphasize is that these nuclei of education-research became the centre of the community or set of communities in which they were located, just as the listing of the Iauaretê Falls as a heritage site animated many of the local conversations between the Tariano and their neighbours between 2005 and 2010. These initiatives formed the base on which new associations were built, creating new spaces for discussion and debate, and establishing new connections with the outside, including cooperation agencies, government and non-government programs for supporting

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<sup>7</sup> A description of a number of these experiences can be found in a volume recently edited by Cabalzar (2010).

community projects, research institutes and even artists. In addition they reconnected, so to speak, with their relatives from Colombia, as attested by the exchange visits between the Tuyuka and the Barasana, Yeba-Masa, Tatuyo and other groups from the Pira-Paraná River, where much of the ritual life already abandoned on the Brazilian side is still alive. Through these relations they were able to glimpse new possibilities for life in the communities, allowing them to acquire new routines and encouraging young people, always highly sensitive to the signals coming from the city and the white world, to continue living there. Obviously this process involves the appropriation of new technologies and equipment through which information can be accessed and made readily available – needless to say, the internet is a powerful tool in this context. Overall, then, the schools and their experiences created a space from which a new collective spirit emanates, stimulating a continuous reflection on the options and impasses now facing local people, including the new possibilities afforded by the official (and unofficial) tools for preserving heritage and the research that these stimulate. One of these issues, highly symptomatic of this new state of affairs, is expressed by Higino Tuyuka: are we just researchers or do we really live this culture we are rediscovering? Or as André Baniwa, the founder of the Pamaali School on the Içana, put it: we need to think clearly about the type of education that the new Baniwa person needs.

A particularly complex point in these processes – to a certain extent present in the case of the Iauaretê Falls and in the mapping workshops that took place after its listing – concerns the need to achieve a balance between the knowledge and techniques of the whites and indigenous knowledge. In the experiences developed thus far in the differentiated education schools, indigenous knowledge can be said to have converted into an object of study, that is, one type of knowledge turned into the object of another type. Though difficult to be sure, based on what took place in the mapping workshops described above, it may be that certain indigenous conceptual schemas have been objectified in the schools too, as if it were possible to separate their content from the form that they take, or the form in which they are produced. The question in reality is not new, since much of the discussion concerning the protection of traditional knowledge is unanimous in pointing out that its preservation involves above all the preservation of the conditions through which this knowledge is continually produced (see, among others, Carneiro

da Cunha 2009 and Viveiros de Castro 2008).

But here perhaps resides an important specificity of the Rio Negro. Speculating somewhat, the conditions for the production and transmission of knowledge have undoubtedly varied significantly over the course of recent history. Moreover, the systematic efforts of the Salesian missionaries to destroy the malocas and expropriate the traditional wealth of the region's groups (flutes and ceremonial adornments indispensable to the rituals performed in the traditional malocas) constituted, according to an assessment frequently made in the region, an almost insurmountable blow to the integrity of a canonical corpus of knowledge originating from the mythic past, insofar as songs and chants that form the basis of the ritual cycles were steadily abandoned. People say that many of the specialists of this type of esoteric knowledge (the baiaroa and the kumua, masters of the song and the chant respectively) died of sadness, and the elders known to today's generation are the children of these ritual experts: although they were born in the malocas, they grew up in an environment in which the abandonment or loss of the wisdom of the elders was a fait accompli. The initiation rituals gave way to the period in which children went to the boarding schools, and the prestige of the old kumua was further eroded by the emergence of new ritual leaders, such as the students who later returned to the communities to occupy the position of catechists and officiate at the Sunday services in the small chapels built under the direction of the priests.

The environment in which the elders of today grew up is, to a certain extent, known to their children and grandchildren. Their evocations of the sadness of the elders, the melancholic chanted songs that they also got to hear and, above all, certain essential magic spells that could never be abandoned (protecting children from potential diseases, giving them ancestral names, neutralizing the malevolent quality of some foods, protecting women and children from the dangers surrounding menstruation and childbirth, organizing a *dabucuri* for brothers-in-law to exchange sisters, among others) are very palpable indications that the knowledge inherent to certain existent practices is connected, undoubtedly in a complex fashion, to a wider intellectual system whose full expression was found in the ritual life observed in the traditional malocas and in the more austere way of life pursued then. What is the consequence of this fact? Many say that the elders were stronger and healthier, less lazy and smarter than young people today. But what was lost

exactly in this process? This is a question it seems impossible to answer with any precision. Even so it is common to hear that while much was lost, much was also gained, and that to an extent the Indian today already appear like whites in many aspects. The whites, though, do not possess ‘ethnic groups’ or ‘culture’ and in a sense do not run the same risks that Indians run since their body and food are different. I return to this point later.

In other words, although the conditions for the production, reproduction or transmission of knowledge have come under heavy pressures over the course of history, we can observe many life situations today in which ancient knowledge is mobilized, integrated and potentially transformed. During the conversations on the topic between anthropologists and indigenous intellectuals or researchers, for example, whether inside or outside the new schools, the impression is frequently given that we are all glimpsing just the tip of the iceberg. In other words, although the “knowledge possessed by our grandparents”<sup>8</sup> generally seems to be beyond our reach, we can perceive flickers dispersed along distant rivers and localities even today. These shared perceptions mean that at least in some contemporary cases and processes, these research partners – Indians and anthropologists – recognize each other as effective collaborators. Although their interests may not always converge, a base of shared motivations seems to have engendered a situation in which all research conducted in the area today is research ‘with’ rather than ‘about’ the local groups. A situation as stimulating as it is sensitive, given that sometimes what appears as a very clear example of mutual understanding can hide serious equivocations. This is not a problem as such<sup>9</sup>, but it does have a number of implications, some of which I shall examine in the following section.

## Reversibility and Symmetry

Clearly the problem at which we arrived in the previous section lies at the heart of an important contemporary debate on what anthropology can be at the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, when the old distinction between empirical data

<sup>8</sup> In Tukano, *Isa wikisimia masinsehé*, an expression chosen by a member of an important Tukano clan as the title of the book in which they narrate their version of the origin history of the universe and humanity (see Maia & Maia 2002).

<sup>9</sup> On “controlled equivocation” as a virtual positive component of ethnographic analysis, see Viveiros de Castro, 2004.

gathering and theoretical speculation is beginning to be placed in doubt – i.e. when the separation between method and theory no longer appears to convince anyone. In fact it reflects a new situation in which the natives have ceased to be informants and have become real collaborators in the findings of anthropological research: “people we work with” (Ingold 2011: 243). Indeed Tim Ingold recently proposed that anthropology, rather than a comparative analysis supported by ethnographic observation, is itself “a practice of observation grounded in participatory dialogue.” The author suggests something like an inversion in the usual order of our analytic procedures, situating ethnography as a moment posterior to observation when the ‘field’ is constituted as a retrospectively imagined world, which permits a description separate, so to speak, from the moment of observation. The latter, for its part, corresponds to an inquisitive mode of inhabiting the world, of ‘being with,’ marked by a comparative attitude in relation to the varied conditions and possibilities of human life in a shared world. This, in the author’s view, would constitute the most recent definition of anthropology, and which, in an unparalleled way in my view, seems to characterize in fairly precise terms a series of collaborative studies that have been put into practice over the last decade in the region of the upper Rio Negro. Perhaps with one difference: according to Ingold, the anthropologist writes for him or herself, for others and for the world; on the Rio Negro we can observe numerous recent experiments that could be described as ‘writing with,’ as attested by the experiment in producing maps described above, as well as the production of a significant local literature over the last few years, typically generated with the support of anthropologist-advisors. Hence the field to be imagined in retrospect by these anthropologists includes a series of indigenous writings, as well as the effects that these have begun to generate in their contexts of circulation.

However it needs to be remembered that these recent experiments are not entirely unique in the region. The first book by one of the precursors of upper Rio Negro ethnography testifies to this fact. I refer to *Amazonian Cosmos* by Reichel-Dolmatoff, published in 1971, the first chapter of which consists of an account of the origin myth of the peoples of the Uaupés provided by Antonio Guzmán of the Desana people. Having lived only to the age of twelve in his community of origin, Guzmán displayed particular interest in working

with an anthropologist who would help him produce this record.<sup>10</sup> Though it would be an exaggeration to take this work as a distant and pioneering example of what we today call auto-anthropology – especially because the other chapters of the book offer very *sui generis* exegeses proposed by Reichel-Dolmatoff, in general based on a notion of sexual energy that has been subject to heavy contestation by some of the region's ethnographers – the book nonetheless suggests that since the primordial era of anthropological research in the Amazonian Northwest, the Indians themselves have, at least in part, been placing their most recurrent themes on the anthropological agenda.<sup>11</sup> More specifically, though, the growing involvement of anthropologists in the promotion of indigenous writings seems to me to evoke some form of symmetrical anthropology, “the idea that there is no anthropology that is not an anthropology of the other, in the double sense of the preposition” (cf. Viveiros de Castro, Goldman & Almeida 2006). Symmetrical, though, not exactly in relation to the anthropologists, who in these cases work as transcribers, revisers, presenters, note takers and so on. The creative part of the initiative is once again falls to the indigenous authors. Symmetry, then, in the sense that in speaking of themselves, the indigenous writings also describe ourselves.

To a large extent indigenous writings feed off one another. Written versions of the origin narratives that have begun to circulate over the last two decades have stimulated each other: in other words, each new published book provokes amendments, evaluations, corrections, one or several responses (Andrello 2010, Hugh-Jones 2010), a process that I think has been equally well exemplified by the debates on the registration of the Iauaretê Falls described above. Not by chance, the books published in the collection

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<sup>10</sup> Earlier examples could also be cited here, such as the famous text on Jurupari published by Stradelli at the end of the nineteenth century and the articles by Marcos Fulop in the 1950s on Tukano cosmogony. On the production of books of mythology by indigenous authors, as well as other kinds of writing produced in collaboration with anthropologists, see Andrello (2010 and ed. 2012) and Hugh-Jones (2010 and 2011).

<sup>11</sup> Defining the extent to which the indigenous conceptual schemes themselves determined the form assumed by later ethnographic descriptions would demand a re-reading guided by this problematic generated by the extensive set of works available today, but I suspect that their influence is far from negligible. It is worth recalling what Irving Goldman observed in his second book (Goldman 2004), namely that an indigenous anthropology would correspond to the origin narratives themselves. In this book, indeed, the author famously devotes himself to what we would today call ‘cultural revitalization’ work, having stimulated the revival of a mourning ritual among the Cubeo Hehenewa.

*Narradores Indígenas do Rio Negro*<sup>12</sup> have been compared to the verbal confrontations marking the exchange rituals in the exchange, when two groups exchange goods and reciprocal perspectives. As occurs in the ritual discourses, indigenous writings do not guarantee the persistence of a specific version: like a *dabucuri* (a ritual offering food and artefacts), they virtually suppose various others. But there is an important difference. While the *dabucuris* are exchanged between the Indians, the books can and should circulate between the whites too – *dabucuris* directed towards the whites are not uncommon, but usually take the form of ‘thanks’ for certain ‘benefits’ or ‘projects’ facilitated by the latter; in other words, it is never a case of one *dabucuri* functioning as retribution for another earlier *dabucuri*. At the same time as the books involve the enunciation of the relational position of their authors vis-à-vis brothers-in-law and brothers (younger and older), they equally do so vis-à-vis whites. In these narratives, the white man appears as a younger brother of the indigenous ancestors whose intrepidity and courage – derived from his childlike foolishness – managed to acquire amazing powers: industrial goods and an unquestionable capacity for multiplication. For this reason whites, despite being the younger brother, are treated like older brothers.

There is no space here to enter into the details of this episode, but the point worth emphasizing is that the difference between Indians is placed in continuity with the difference between Indians and whites: i.e. if the original relation between the indigenous ancestors is conceived as a difference between senior and junior siblings (some of whom became brothers-in-law at the end of the mythic era), the difference between them and the whites is understood in the same way. Symmetry, then, at least in the vision of Eduardo Viveiros de Castro (2012):

This is how I understand the Latourian idea of a ‘symmetrical anthropology.’ I do not take it to be an attempt to discover equalities, similarities or identities between anthropologists and natives, scientific theories and indigenous cosmologies, or so on. Symmetricalization is simply a descriptive operation that involves *making the differences between all analytic terms continuous*: the

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<sup>12</sup> A collection made up of eight volumes published by the Federation of Indigenous Organizations of the Rio Negro (FOIRN), with versions of the origin narratives elaborated by Desana, Tukano, Baniwa and Taríano authors. Other volumes are currently in production phase, though whether these will see the light of day is unknown. Like those already published, they result from the encounter between anthropologists and people from the region interested in producing manuscripts.

difference between the ‘culture’ (or ‘theory’) of the anthropologist and the ‘culture’ (or ‘life’) of the native especially is not deemed to possess any ontological or epistemological advantage over the differences ‘internal’ to each of these ‘cultures’; it is no more nor less conditioning than the differences of both sides of the discursive boundary.

I am not entirely sure if it is legitimate to apply this suggestion from the other side of the discursive boundary. But the procedure suggested by the author appears to describe with some precision what the Indians of the Rio Negro do with their narratives: there is no separate ‘origin myth’ for the whites, since their distinctive qualities are conceived as variants of those that distinguish the Indians from each other (see Hugh-Jones 1988, Goldman 2004). In this case, specifying the ‘life’ of the whites is part of the ‘theory’ of the native as much as their own, indicating a reverse anthropology that is equally symmetric – which perhaps is not the case in the famous analogy suggested by Wagner (1981) between ‘culture’ (of the whites vis-à-vis the Melanesians) and ‘cargo’ (of the Melanesians vis-à-vis the whites). The message, therefore, that the recent indigenous writings address to the whites concerns our common origin, as well as a creative mode of thinking about our differences. And if it really is the case of ‘thinking with’ them – rather than ‘like’ them, as Viveiros de Castro argues<sup>13</sup> – taking the difference between their thought and ours seriously, we need to ask what the implications of this statement are. What kind of lesson can be drawn?

Without the space and competence to develop this point satisfactorily, I return to two points described above where I alluded to fundamental aspects of the local cosmology elaborated in diverse narratives. The first relates to the transformation of humankind, its emergence from the subaquatic world of the fish-people; the second to the fact that the whites do not possess ‘ethnic groups’ or ‘culture’: while the Indians are Tukano (earth-people), Desana (universe-people), Wanano (water-people) etc., the whites are generically considered ‘shotgun-people.’ The two points complement each other, albeit not explicitly, the second amounting to a deduction of the first. The slow process that led proto-humanity to differentiate itself from the fish resulted in a fundamental antagonism: since the fish-people envy humans, they became their

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<sup>13</sup> Although in the present case we could perhaps take the exercise of symmetrization contained in the indigenous narratives as an inspiration for our own experiments.

enemies for not having effected that passage, and later became their principal food. Because they envy the human condition, fish are held responsible for most diseases and deaths, conceived as abductions of human souls. For this reason great care is needed both on fishing trips and when bathing in the river, especially on the part of menstruated women and their new-born children.

The whites, however, are completely oblivious to this fact, as the Indians have already long observed, since no white person is known to have died from a spiritual attack from the fish-people. It is deduced from this that they do not run the same risks as the Indians, since they do not fish and indeed eat other kinds of food. But from the indigenous point of view the main reason why they are invulnerable to attacks from the fish-people is their lack of ethnic groups. Not possessing ethnic groups means not possessing souls –in other words, a specific immaterial part of the person, coupled to the body via nomination and brought back by shamans from the same subaquatic houses located at the stopover places of the anaconda who led the ancestors to the Uaupés River. Without these soul-names the indigenous collectives could not reproduce themselves and grow, since by differentiating themselves as the Tukano, Desana and so on, they establish a relation of affinity between them as exchangers of women, which enables them to procreate. Sexual desire is one of the indices of the gradual acquisition of humanity by the indigenous ancestors, but the differentiation between their descendants, the condition for the satisfaction of this desire, is only possible through a reconnection, so to speak, with their previous pre-human condition. Not by chance, some of these names designate fish species, such as the aracu, the wolf fish or the peacock bass. A crucial consequence stems from this: these soul-names, suggestively conceived as ‘fish bones,’ are what make the Indians fully visible as true human beings, especially from the viewpoint of fish but also from other potentially aggressive beings.<sup>14</sup> If whites are oblivious to this type

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<sup>14</sup> These conceptions clearly invert certain aspects of the theory of Amerindian perspectivism as formulated by Eduardo Viveiros de Castro. Here the prey of humans – the fish – do not see them as jaguars or cannibal monsters, but as humans, a condition that they could not attain. Consequently the prey par excellence is also the predator par excellence, epitomized by the anaconda, the mother of all fish. Perhaps the difference corresponds to one between groups that privilege hunting and those that privilege fishing. I hope to be able to discuss this point more fully on another occasion; not, of course, to claim that perspectivism does not apply in the Rio Negro region, but to verify how far its basic components involve an important transformation that can provide us with a more complete generalization of the model. After all, here humanity does not correspond to a condition removed by humans and lost by animals, but a condition corresponding to a transformation in the animal condition itself and, to a certain extent,

of aggression, it is very probably because they are invisible to the fish who therefore do not harm them. Hence dealing with the viewpoint of the other and with the serious risks this involves is fundamental for the Indians but apparently irrelevant for the whites. This is the first lesson of this history.

This succinct account certainly fails to do justice to the complexity and nuances of the topic, which I hope to be able to explore on another occasion. However it is enough to highlight a fundamental aspect of this Rio Negro ethno-anthropology: while to us it seems fundamental to understand how the Indians think to try to think with them, to the Indians it is important to understand our habits and manners, in other words, how we behave and what we do with our own body – enter the river without any type of precaution, for example. This careless behaviour leads to the second deduction, namely our invisibility from the viewpoint of the fish, which means that nobody in this universe envies us, and that the mythic bath that lightened our skin and made us the masters of production is the same bath that took from us the soul that the Indians were able to retain – “you whites have no soul,” in the inspired phrase and title of a book of tales by the anthropologist Jorge Pozzobon. The soul that makes the Indians visible as true human beings in the eyes of others – the fish, first and foremost. What is the lesson then? The somewhat discouraging lesson is that, from the indigenous viewpoint, our own humanity is doubtful, perhaps since it resulted from an immediate and abrupt transformation, in contrast to the mediated and slow transformation experienced by the indigenous ancestors. But here we must tread carefully, since rather than constituting a form of ethnocentrism, this attitude seems to result from the long and very often painful ethnography that they themselves have been conducting on us. In sum they know us and our ways better than we know them and their thought. A knowledge undoubtedly produced through the logic of the sensible. But times have changed. Our desire to comprehend indigenous thought has not passed the Indians by unnoticed: on the contrary, many people on the Uaupés River are enthusiastic about this shift. Many are aware too, though, of the distance that separates their ways from our own, and frequently ask us: “Do you think you’ll succeed?”

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dependent on it. An unequal condition dynamically shared by the so-called ‘transformation people,’ true humankind. I suspect that perspectivism can also help us to comprehend the nature of the hierarchical relations on the Rio Negro and thus conflicts like the one we have seen emerge in the case of the Iauaretê Falls, involving the Tukano and Tariano.

But returning to our point, it is necessary, therefore, to take this type of knowledge seriously. In my view, the best way of so doing perhaps is to avoid taking ourselves so seriously. This question could be examined in some depth, possibly more than can be explored here. Since we need to return to the initial point of the article, suffice to note that the virtues we so extol in various fields may simply not be those that impress – and mobilize – others. In the case in question – official cultural policies and the possibilities for effective involvement of indigenous peoples within their scope – what most stands out are the unpredictable effects elicited by the set of actions planned on the basis of what seem in principle coherent criteria. Fortunately there has been some space and dialogue for constant adjustments to be made. It would be difficult to expect otherwise given that on the Rio Negro, under the apparently shared language of heritage, there are diverse modes of knowing and correlate forms of sociality that we are only beginning to learn through local narratives. Here it is worth mentioning that IPHAN and the Ministry of Culture more recently began to support a large bi-national Brazilian-Colombian project intended to retrace the trajectory of the ancestral anaconda, mapping all the relevant places along the Rio Negro between Manaus and São Gabriel da Cachoeira, and from there to the Ipanoré Falls on the middle Uaupés from where humanity emerged. This project is now underway with a first part of the journey having been undertaken in February 2013, with the participation of Tukano, Desana, Piratapuia, Tuyuka, Bará and Makuna indigenous specialists. Images and narratives are being captured with the objective of editing in the future a video documentary on the theme of the appearance and differentiation of humanity. We shift, therefore, from the journeys on paper maps to another type of experiment, where the intention is precisely to experiment what may have happened on that primordial journey.

In conclusion: the transformation routes described in these narratives refer to a primordial movement along the course of the region's rivers through which humankind transformed into its present form, leaving behind the subaquatic world in which it slowly acquired strength and shape. Perhaps this formulation is the most that can be achieved at the moment in terms of some kind of synthesis, but it at the very least prompts us to ask about its source of inspiration. Anyone familiar with the region and who has already travelled up and down the rivers for many days or weeks with the Indians to

reach distant communities situated on the headwater rivers, and, in the opposite direction, visit kin who already live in the cities, will have some idea of how much this experience of prolonged travel – involving a ‘picture by picture’ contemplation of the landscape as it gradually reveals itself – stimulates thought and reflection. Hours and hours of silence spent in constant observation of the elements of the landscape, interspersed with the appearance here and there of communities and, above all, dangerous rapids, spectacularly shaped rocks, sandbanks and islands, variation in the patterns of shoreline vegetation, and the attentive search for the correct channel to follow, constitute a permanent scrutiny of what has already been seen and interpreted on previous voyages. In the end, each voyage can be considered a verification of what happened, or did not happen, on the first ever journey, that of the ancestral anaconda itself. The latter, for its part, is annually remembered through the upriver movement of shoals of various fish species and by the festivals held along different sections – i.e. their spawnings.

To travel in space and observe other movements is also, therefore, to travel in time and read the events and movements of past moments and eras within the landscape. What other events could have caused the qualities of the world and its inhabitants? This is why these earlier events were precipitated in the ancient and esoteric ritual discourses and songs, specialized knowledge par excellence. This leads us to conjecture on the extent to which the knowledge of the grandparents described earlier, sometimes deemed to be lost, or partially lost, is not found there still, so to speak: if not entirely stored in thought, then potentially distributed along these transformation routes.<sup>15</sup> Between what is stored in thought and what is acquired through observation during successive voyages – of humans and non-humans – is situated perhaps the specific way in which knowledge is generated and, as we saw in the case of the Iauaretê Falls, disputed on the Rio Negro.

Moreover, obtaining day-to-day food in the region demands knowing the appropriate locations to place the sophisticated fishing traps – *cacuris*, *caíás* and *matapis* – over the course of the seasons. As we have seen, these locations contain the rocks that crystallized the transformations of the Tariano demigurge and thus intentionally prepared them to ensure fish could be captured

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<sup>15</sup> In support of this hypothesis, see the recent works on the Northwest Amazonian region by Hugh-Jones (2011), Xavier (2008), Lolli (2012) and Cayón (2008), and others collected in Andrello ed. (2012).

by future generations. Eating fish, and avoiding the risks associated with this consumption, therefore implies knowing this history; but such knowledge is tested, precisely, when one fishes. Knowing the myth and fishing appropriately are indissociable operations here. In my view, it is this apparently recursive relation between thought and practice that needs to be kept uppermost in mind when planning future actions to safeguard the cultural and/or intellectual rights of the indigenous peoples of the Rio Negro, and very probably elsewhere.

Translation: David Rodgers

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# Iauaretê, Cachoeira das Onças [Jaguar Waterfalls]

Available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X4Lyq9UwBAw>

2006, 48 min

Film directed by Vincent Carelli

Produced by IPHAN – Institute of Historical and Artistic Heritage and Video nas Aldeias.

Anthropological consultants: Geraldo Andrello and Ana Gita de Oliveira. The film was produced in 2006 as part of the Registration Process of Iauaretê, Cachoeira das Onças [Jaguar Waterfalls], municipality of São Gabriel da Cachoeira, in the Upper Rio Negro. This sacred place was the first site to be inscribed in the “Book of Places” of Brazilian Immaterial Cultural Heritage. In addition to subsidizing the inclusion of these elements into the listing process, the film features the mythical account of the origin of humanity, which the Tariano Indians attribute to the stones of Iauaretê falls. It also shows some of the activities to safeguard the site, such as the reconstruction of a large hut and the successful attempt to retrieve ritual objects that had been stored for many years in a museum in Manaus.

IPHAN and the Ministry of Culture more recently began to support a large bi-national Brazilian-Colombian project intended to retrace the trajectory of the tukanoan ancestral anaconda-canoe, mapping all the relevant places along the Rio Negro between Manaus and São Gabriel da Cachoeira, and from there to the Ipanoré Falls on the middle Uaupés from where humanity emerged according to the vision of tukanoan Indians. This project is now underway with a first part of the journey having been undertaken in February 2013, with the participation of Tukano, Desana, Pira-Tapuia, Tuyuka, Bará and Makuna indigenous specialists. Images and narratives are being produced with the aim of editing a new video documentary on the theme of the simultaneous appearance and differentiation of regional landscape and humanity.

# The Recognition of Brazilian samba de roda and Reunion maloya as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity

Guillaume Samson and Carlos Sandroni

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## Abstract

In this essay, we present a comparative analysis of the UNESCO heritage nomination process for two African Diaspora music and dance forms: *samba de roda*, from the Bahian Recôncavo (a coastal area of the northeastern Brazilian state of Bahia), and *maloya*, from Reunion Island (a former French colony in the Indian Ocean, which is now officially an “overseas department of France”). *Samba de roda*, as the Brazilian candidate, was included in the III Proclamation of Masterpieces of the Intangible Heritage of Humanity, in 2005. And *maloya*, the French candidate, was inscribed onto the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, in 2009. Despite a number of formal commonalities between *samba de roda* and *maloya*, such as responsorial singing, choreography, and the main musical instrument types, the controversies raised during their respective processes of nomination were quite distinct. The former is regarded as a traditional and less well known style of samba, the musical genre widely recognized as the musical emblem of Brazil. The latter competes with *séga*—a genre of popular music consolidated in the local media—for the position of chief musical representative of Reunion Island. The disparate symbolic identities attributed to these musical expressions pave the way for a distinct manner of employing the international resources related to the safeguarding of intangible heritage. This suggests that the local impact of the inclusion onto international lists depends as much on the contextual particularities of each candidacy as on central decision-making bodies such as UNESCO.

**Keywords:** *Samba de roda; Maloya; Bahia (Brazil): Music and dance; Reunion (France, overseas department): Music and dance; Intangible cultural heritage; Cultural policies.*

## Resumo

Este artigo apresenta uma análise comparativa do processo de patrimonialização, junto à UNESCO, de duas formas de música e dança afro-diaspóricas: o samba de roda, do Recôncavo baiano (área litorânea no estado da Bahia, na região Nordeste do Brasil), e o *maloya*, da Ilha da Reunião (um ex-colônia francesa no Oceano Índico, cujo atual estatuto jurídico-político é o de um “Departamento francês do Ultramar”). O samba de roda foi incluído, como candidato brasileiro, na Terceira Declaração de Obras-Primas do Patrimônio Imaterial da Humanidade, em 2005. O *maloya* foi inscrito, como candidato francês, na Lista Representativa da Convenção para a Salvaguarda do Patrimônio Imaterial, em 2009. Embora apresentem muitos traços formais em comum – tais como canto responsorial, estilo de dança e principais instrumentos musicais de acompanhamento – o samba de roda e o *maloya* diferem no que diz respeito às controvérsias suscitadas por seus respectivos processos de patrimonialização. O primeiro é visto como uma versão tradicional e menos conhecida de um gênero mais amplo, o samba, geralmente reconhecido como principal emblema musical do Brasil. O segundo disputou com o *séga*, gênero de música popular consolidado na mídia local, o papel de principal representante musical da Ilha da Reunião. Tais diferenças no simbolismo identitário atribuído a formas musicais dão lugar a diferentes usos dos recursos internacionais de salvaguarda do patrimônio imaterial. Sugere-se que o impacto político local de tais inscrições em listas internacionais depende de particularidades contextuais de cada candidatura, tanto quanto de instâncias decisórias centrais como a UNESCO.

**Palavras-chave:** Samba de roda; *Maloya*; Bahia (Brasil): Música e dança; Ilha da Reunião (França): Música e dança; Patrimônio cultural imaterial; Políticas culturais comparadas.

# The Recognition of Brazilian samba de roda and Reunion maloya as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity

Guillaume Samson and Carlos Sandroni

## Introduction

To what extent does recognition of musical forms as Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) relate to national politics and local identity struggles? What is revealed by the ways in which cultural expressions are selected as candidates for inclusion in international Proclamations and Lists? What is the impact of these choices, in which governments appear to play a central role (Roda, 2011), on musical practices and their contexts? To address these questions, this article examines comparatively the complex processes of recognition by UNESCO as ICH of humanity of two African Diaspora dance and music cultural expressions, *samba de roda* from Brazil and *maloya* from Reunion Island<sup>1</sup>. In particular, we explore the dynamics of local politics and emotional investment regarding the respective traditions while also considering the ways in which such traditions have been reevaluated locally in the context of international recognition.

It is important to note that we, the authors of this article, each participated individually as ethnomusicologists in the respective commissions which were established to compile the applications sent to UNESCO on *maloya* and *samba de roda*. Based on our experiences, we will first examine the relationships between the ICH processes and regulations, how they are implemented institutionally, and the diversity of cultural and political contexts in which

<sup>1</sup> *Samba de roda* was recognized by the Proclamation of Masterpieces of the ICH on November 25, 2005, and *maloya* was formally added to the ICH Representative List on October 1, 2009. Audiovisual information about *samba de roda* is available at <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/?RL=00101> and about *maloya* at <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/RL/00249>.

musics are eligible for recognition. Second, we will discuss the role of cultural expertise in these processes of cultural revitalization, considering such questions as: 1) Should we think of the investment of UNESCO and the ICH as something akin to a set of tools employable by communities in order to assert their right to difference in a globalized world? 2) Or, on the contrary, should the ICH policies be regarded as a new means of “inventing traditions,” resulting in top-down constructions imposed on the people they supposedly represent? Between these two positions, the first of which can be described “as too naïve” and the other “too critical” (Sandroni, 2010), we have above all sought, through our analyses, to underscore the complexity and diversity of local cultural and historical situations that can be affected by UNESCO’s designation of the ICH status.

## **1. *Samba de roda* and *Maloya*: Some Elements of Historical and Cultural Comparison**

### **1.1 “Neo-African” Musics**

A comparison between *maloya* and *samba de roda* seems pertinent for several reasons. Both developed in the analogous socio-economic and cultural contexts of nineteenth-century colonial sugar cane plantation societies. Defined by forced African migration as a result of the slave trade and, beginning in 1848 for Reunion Island, indentured servitude, *maloya* (in what is considered its “traditional” form in the Island) and *samba de roda* belong to what Peter Manuel (1989: 25) has characterized as “neo-African” New World musics. According to this model, both *maloya* and *samba de roda* are defined by songs involving alternating responsorial (i.e., call-and-response) singing between a soloist and a choir, and are performed with the accompaniment of orchestras composed mainly of drums and rattles. They also share choreographic practices in which couples of dancers move either in succession or simultaneously inside a circle of participants or assistants. Dance moves themselves are also similar, composed of “short, quick steps” (Chaudenson, 1974 for *maloya*; Waddey, 1981 for *samba de roda*) that shuffle along the ground. Finally, *maloya* and *samba de roda* have historically comprised a sort of “common cultural denominator” as part of a cluster of religious, economic, and ludic practices specific to plantation workers. Until the 1960s on Reunion Island, the musical

practices currently associated with *maloya* were common across a variety of contexts that integrated ancestor worship, work songs (linked to the cultivation of sugar cane), entertainment practices (such as the *bal maloya*), and a form of combat-dance called *moring* (Samson, 2008). In the Reconcavo region of Brazil, *samba de roda* is typically associated with entertainment practices, but it is also a part of syncretic cults dedicated to Catholic saints, in the Afro-Brazilian *Candomblé* religion, and in the combat-dance practice called *capoeira*. In their historical performance contexts and formal characteristics, *maloya* and *samba de roda* both appear to share significant attributes. In fact, musicians in Reunion occasionally invoke their shared traits as explanations for the appeal of *samba* and Brazilian musical culture in general on the island.<sup>2</sup>

## 1.2 Different Musical Contexts of Recognition

A comparison between the contemporary expressions of these musical genres helps to shed light on the ways in which both genres were seen as consistent with the value system of the ICH. But if we take the comparison a step further, a more sociological perspective on their respective contexts reveals several fundamental differences that strongly influenced the path to, and the consequences of, recognition by UNESCO. These differences relate to the position of the musical forms recognized by the ICH in their respective fields of cultural production (Bourdieu, 1998). In the case of *maloya*, the entire genre was recognized, including its many varieties – “traditional,” “neo-traditional,” “electric”. Like *maloya*, *samba* in fact encompasses a diverse group of categories that includes *samba-enredo*, *samba de partido alto*, and *samba de roda*, among others. But the ICH award came to one particular version of this much larger *samba* genre. Because they play different roles in their respective societies and relate to national musical identities in unique ways, this distinction between *maloya* and *samba de roda* has important implications for their ICH designation.

## 1.3 The Emergence of *Samba* as the Brazilian National Music

*Samba* serves as a powerful symbol of national identity in Brazil, rarely questioned as such to date. Its rise to the status of “Brazil’s national music” took

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<sup>2</sup> Along the same lines, the cultural ties between *moring* of the Reunion Island and Brazilian *capoeira* were exploited during the revitalization of *moring* in the 1990s.

place during the 1930s. The first published instances of the word “samba” in reference to music or dance date from the 1830s in Brazil. In 1842, the word appeared for the first time in Bahia to describe the practices of enslaved Africans. Beginning in the 1860s, however, it became increasingly common in print sources to refer to the music and dance practices of slaves, as well as of free blacks, mulattos, and poor whites. In the ensuing decade, references to “sambas” in the Bahian press share several characteristics with the present-day *samba de roda* of the Recôncavo. The subsequent popularization of the word in Rio de Janeiro was associated with the immigration of Bahian blacks to the capital immediately after slavery was abolished in 1888. There are also several early twentieth-century references to popular celebrations in Rio de Janeiro during which *samba* was practiced.

Recording technology first arrived in Rio de Janeiro (the capital at the time) in 1902 and played a key role in the popularization of *samba*. Musical genres such as *lundu*, *modinha* and *choro* gradually became part of an emergent industrial and commercial network in which the music was diffused as merchandise via records and later, through radio broadcasts. The creation of *samba* as a genre of popular music was part of this broader process. The success of the song “Pelo telefone” during the 1917 Carnival was an early milestone. Allegedly composed by Ernesto dos Santos, aka Donga, the son of a Bahian woman from the city of Santo Amaro (in the Recôncavo), “Pelo telefone” was described as a “*samba carnavalesque*.” It is worth noting, however, that some members of the Bahian community of Rio de Janeiro accused Donga of appropriating collective musical heritage for his own purposes (Sandroni 2001).

In the 1920s, the spread of *samba* throughout Rio was facilitated by a variety of media, and it eventually was acknowledged as the country’s national musical genre in the 1930s. “*Samba carioca*”, which developed in Rio and later spread throughout the country, evolved a style that was very distinct from Bahian *samba de roda*. The “nationalization” of *samba* took place against a backdrop of profound social and political changes and increased attention to the question of national identity (Vianna, 1995). During the twentieth century, this came to involve the question of the different “races” from which the Brazilian people originated. According to a view that was prevalent among the early-twentieth-century political and intellectual elite, racial mixing doomed the nation because it was perceived as a form of degeneration that

would cause the country to lag “behind” Europe and the United States. The massive influx of whites from Europe between the 1890s and the 1930s was thus perceived as the only means of counter-acting the negative effects of racial mixing (Skidmore, 1993; Schwarcz, 1993).

Between the 1920s and 1930s, the “modernist” literary generation, together with culturalism-influenced sociologists such as Gilberto Freyre, radically inverted this relationship with *mestiçagem* by reframing it as a positive attribute. From that point forward, *mestiçagem* was interpreted as proof of the tolerant, harmonious character of Brazilian society (Freyre, 1997 [1933]). Since then, mixing has even come to be seen as a kind of prophecy about the cultural creativity of Brazilians. Indeed, Brazilians have often been portrayed as open to unexpected blends, continually searching for hybrid solutions to daily problems and to spiritual matters (Ribeiro *et al.*, 1996). Towards the end of the 1930s, the promotion of *mestiçagem*, albeit often tainted by thinly-veiled racism, came to dominate official discourse as well as the media. *Samba* thus came to be perceived as the popular musical genre that best expressed Brazilian “racial mixing” and indeed, as an example “*par excellence*” of Brazilian cultural creativity. This was particularly well expressed by the celebrated *samba* “Aquarela do Brasil,” composed in 1939 by Ari Barroso (known in English as “Brazil”). The lyrics of the song, which was hugely successful in Brazil and internationally, describe Brazil as a “mulatto” country, “brown,” “tanned” (“mulato, moreno, trigueiro”), a “land of *samba* and tambourines” (“terra de *samba* e pandeiro”); the song’s references to skin tones that were neither completely “white” nor totally “black” were inextricably linked to musical *topoi*.

From the 1940s to the early twenty-first century, Brazilian music saw the popularization of several other successful musical genres, such as *baião*, *bossa-nova*, *iê-iê-iê*, *MPB*, and *axé*, but, for most Brazilians, none ever rivaled the more-or-less official position of *samba* as “the most Brazilian of musics.”

#### 1.4 Competition Between *Maloya* and *Séga* on Reunion: The Question of Legitimacy

Compared with *samba*, *maloya* has a substantially more ambivalent relationship with the musical identity of Reunion Island and has been the object of considerable controversy. Having first appeared in the public and media discourse in the 1970s, *maloya* has been involved in an on-going tug-of-war for representativeness with *séga*, a Creole musical form. On Reunion,

the distinction between *séga* and *maloya* became established in the second half of the twentieth century (Samson, 2008). The distinction divided the field of musical creation on the island into two principal genres that, although closely related in historical and musical terms, were nevertheless often perceived as opposed to each other in terms of cultural representativeness. A key factor in this division relates to the terminological distinction between *séga* and *maloya*.

The term *séga* first appeared in the late seventeenth century in the Mascarene Islands, and along with its variants, *tchéga* and *shiega*, continued to have multiple meanings well into the mid-twentieth century. In colonial travel narratives and journals, the term was used to describe all of the musical practices of laborers of African and Malagasy origin, including slaves, descendants of slaves, and indentured servants. Beginning in the 1850s-1860s, the term was also applied to Creolized forms of *quadrille* and popular singing. First mentioned in the early nineteenth century, the term *maloya* appears to have come into widespread use beginning in the 1920s to refer to the music of the descendants of slaves and indentured servants of African and Malagasy origin (music that had been labeled *séga* in colonial documents until that time). This hypothesis, widely accepted since the pioneering studies of Jean-Pierre La Selve (1995), should be interpreted carefully, however. Until the 1960s, a wide range of diverse, local terminologies (*romans*, *kabaré*, *maloya*, *chanson maloya*, *chanson kabaré*, *séga maloya*...) appear to have been used to describe the musical traits ascribed to the broad category of *maloya* music.” (Chaudenson, 1974; Samson, 2008).

In the second half of the twentieth century, two movements helped cement the polarized distinction between the terms *séga* and *maloya*: 1) beginning in the 1950s, the media popularized Creole popular songs called *séga* by way of recordings and talent shows, a development that was partly propelled by the folklore movement; 2) beginning in the 1970s, in a militant leftist political context, plantation laborers’ “traditional” musical practices were revitalized under the exclusive label of *maloya*. Partially reflecting conflicting views of the island’s political and cultural ties to France, including debates regarding the island’s autonomy, the opposition between *séga* and *maloya* was constructed during the 1970s. *Séga* came to function to some extent as a symbol of collusion with the right-wing anti-autonomist establishment, while *maloya* embodied cultural and political resistance to assimilation with

France, a position politically identified with the left-wing pro-autonomy movements and the *Parti Communiste Réunionnais* (PCR). Although it is partly valid, this polarized view of *séga* and *maloya* oversimplifies the occasionally blurred boundaries between the two genres. *Séga* musicians, some of whom were themselves PCR militants, had contacts with *maloya* beginning in the late 1950s. Conversely, some *maloya* singers recorded *séga* versions (i.e., with modern orchestras) of songs that are more typically associated with *maloya*. Finally, in the mid-1970s, *séga* and *maloya* musicians occasionally shared the same stage.

The evolution of *maloya* as a totally distinct musical genre dates from this period, however. In the 1980s and 1990s, the institutional recognition of the genre by cultural policies helped it become part of the national and international live performance circuit and World Music scene. *Séga* remained confined to the local and regional market, however, much more present than *maloya* on the island's airwaves and album sales charts. The economic role and pathways of diffusion of *séga* and *maloya* are grafted onto contrasting cultural positionings. While *séga* lyrics tend to refer to daily life, humor, anecdotes, and popular criticism, since the 1970s *maloya* has been more closely associated with complex and occasionally contradictory themes involving memorial revitalization, the return to ancestral roots, and the literary and musical avant-garde.

As a consequence of this process of differentiation since the 1970s, *séga* and *maloya* currently occupy very different positions within the island's cultural field. Their roles as the twin musical emblems of Reunion, which are sustained by the media, the recording industry, official institutions, and the live music scene, creates a sort of competition between them. And the process of selecting a single genre as representing the island's culture – a sole “winner”, implying “one country, one culture, one people, and thus one music” — resulted in a strong tendency to mask the ties between the two musics and the complementarity of their respective fields of expression.

## 2. The ICH and Collective Representativeness

Dominant ideas about collective musical identity appear to powerfully influence the reception of official forms of recognition of musical genres within their societies and cultural fields. The recognition of *samba de roda* and

*maloya* by UNESCO elicited very different local reactions, which serve to underscore the relative and “localized” dimension and contrasting character of ICH procedures.

## 2.1 Samba and the ICH Proclamation: From Representativeness to the Risk of Extinction

In these early years of the twenty-first century, *samba* continues to function as the emblematic national musical genre of Brazil. This was the clear message of a televised report on April 23, 2004 that aired on the Globo network’s *Jornal Nacional*, the most influential news broadcast in Brazil.<sup>3</sup> Broadcast on what is the Catholic feast day of Saint George, the report presented images of popular devotion to the saint while emphasizing the importance of *samba* as a national symbol. The relationship between the two subjects—Saint George and *samba*—gradually became clear as the images succeeded each other. First, the devotion to Saint George is considered particularly strong among *samba* practitioners and fans in Rio, who associate him with Ogun, a Candomblé “*orixá*,” and Ogun Beira-Mar, the spiritual entity of Umbanda (another popular religion in Brazil). Moreover, April 23 allegedly corresponds with the birth date of Tia Ciata, or “Aunt” Ciata, a key figure in the early development of *samba*. The broadcast concluded with the announcement of a major decision related to *samba*, which had been made by the Minister of Culture, the musician Gilberto Gil. The televised announcement read as follows:

“*Samba* and devotion to a warrior saint are united on this day, April 23, in Rio de Janeiro. Today is Saint George’s day, and musicians and composers of *samba* have commemorated the birthday of the Bahian cook, “Aunt” Ciata, who made *samba* into a national symbol. (...) *Samba* is born of a mixture of drums and faith. It is for this reason that the Minister of Culture, Gilberto Gil, has proposed *samba*, a symbol of the mixing that has forged the Brazilian soul, as a candidate for recognition as part of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. The final choice will be made by UNESCO, the United Nations institution that promotes Education and Culture.”

This announcement was followed by an excerpt from an interview with

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<sup>3</sup> A private telecommunications firm that holds a quasi-monopoly in the Brazilian media.

the Minister-musician in which he stated that: “We think that *samba* represents an important dimension of this heritage, perhaps one of the most important dimensions of Brazilian intangible heritage.”

This was followed by a declaration by Beth Carvalho, one of the most well known contemporary *samba* singers:

“*Samba* is the most representative and the most revolutionary musical genre of the Brazilian people.”

Gil’s proposal was to submit *samba* as Brazil’s candidate for inclusion in the Third Proclamation of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity. The program, which UNESCO began developing in 1998, produced proclamations in 2001, 2003, and 2005. These “Proclamations,” which preceded the International Convention for Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (voted in 2003 and ratified in 2006), were the first concrete steps taken by UNESCO to widely promote the ICH. Each member country was allowed to present a single candidate for each round. Among the requirements for candidacies, in addition to intrinsic cultural excellence, was the “risk of extinction”—as UNESCO called it—of the cultural practices in question. In fact, the Proclamation’s goal was not merely to promote remarkable cultural forms, but also to highlight the cultural importance of candidates considered to be “endangered”. The criteria for the selection of “candidates” were as follows:

- a. “its outstanding value as a masterpiece of the human creative genius”;
- b. “its roots in a cultural tradition or the cultural history of the community concerned”;
- c. “its role as a means of affirming the cultural identity of the peoples and cultural communities concerned, its importance as a source of inspiration and intercultural exchanges and as a means of bringing peoples and communities closer together, and its contemporary cultural and social role in the community concerned”;
- d. “excellence in the application of the skill and technical qualities displayed”;
- e. “its value as a unique testimony of a living cultural tradition”;

f. “the risk of its disappearing, due either to a lack of means for safeguarding and protecting it or of processes of rapid change, or to urbanization, or to acculturation.”<sup>4</sup>

The criteria can be grouped into three broad areas. Points “a” and “d” concerned the intrinsic quality of the “candidates.” Points “b,” “c,” and “e” related to the relationships between the “candidates” and the cultural traditions among the peoples and “communities” in which they were situated. Point “f” concerned the risk of extinction. In summary, UNESCO required that potential candidates 1) present intrinsic qualities; 2) be integral parts of the cultural traditions of a community; and 3) be threatened with extinction.

Several Brazilian expressions of popular culture could have satisfied these conditions, but *samba* had the added attribute of a claim to national representativeness. It is nevertheless worth noting that the word “nation” does not appear among the criteria for candidates. The word “people” figures prominently (twice), as does “community” (four times). If the intention was for these terms to be interpreted as signifying “nation,” *samba* was an ideal candidate. After all, compared to similar Brazilian dances such as *jongo* of the southeastern region or the *tambor de crioula* of the state of Maranhão, *samba* was and continues to be widely viewed as a national symbol.

This is not the only possible interpretation of the Proclamation criteria, however. And indeed, as Hafstein (2004) contends with regard to the 2003 Convention (whose general orientation is identical to that of the Proclamation of Masterpieces), it could be argued that this is not the most appropriate interpretation. After all, a cultural form that has acquired some degree of “national representativeness” might for this very reason be incapable of satisfying condition “f,” the “risk of extinction.” It is also clear that this factor had a negative impact on the candidacy of Argentine *tango*. *Tango* was a candidate for the Proclamation in 2003, and the jury reasoned that because it was internationally known, amply recognized by the media, taught in dance schools, and promoted as a tourist attraction, *tango* was far from facing the risk of extinction.

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<sup>4</sup> *Proclamation of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity: Guide for the Presentation of Candidature Files*. Paris: UNESCO, 2001, p. 12. Digital version consulted online on April 26, 2013: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001246/124628eo.pdf>

## 2.2 The Final Choice of the Brazilian Candidate<sup>5</sup>

The proposal to submit *samba* as the Brazilian candidate was discussed at the Ministry of Culture at the end of March 2004, and the press announced its candidacy in early April. However, as we shall see, at that point the public treatment of the subject revealed a flagrant misunderstanding of the Proclamation's requirements. During the months of April and May, the Ministry consulted with experts and researchers. It was at this point that I (Carlos Sandroni) was invited to contribute. I had published a book on *samba* (Sandroni, 2001) that had received favorable coverage in the Brazilian press. For this reason, IPHAN (the Brazilian institution for cultural heritage) invited me to join the project team in early May 2004. As a result, I participated in the discussions that led the Ministry to decide, on June 9, that the Brazilian candidate would not be "Brazilian *samba*" in general but "*samba de roda* of the Bahian Recôncavo."

This decision was based on two arguments. The first concerned the requirement of point "f" of the Proclamation regulations. The risk of extinction of cultural forms, or of entire cultures, has been a frequent and often controversial subject within academic disciplines such as cultural anthropology and ethnomusicology. In the context of political decisions, however, a degree of pragmatism is always recommended. It seemed obvious that it would be difficult to convince the Proclamation jury that "Brazilian *samba*" met this condition, given its wide diffusion and international prestige (which are comparable to Argentine *tango*). Indeed, this argument effectively eliminated "Brazilian *samba*" as a potential candidate.

Numerous other expressions of the intangible Brazilian heritage might also have been credible candidates for the Proclamation's condition "f" as for the other requirements. For example, it would have been relatively easy to demonstrate the intrinsic value and cultural and community insertion of, as well as the risk of extinction faced by, *jongo* or *tambor de crioula*, to which we referred earlier. The final choice of *samba de roda* is evidence that pragmatism again won the day. The Minister had already announced *samba* as the candidate, and the press had reported his announcement. The substitution of *samba* for *samba de roda* enabled point "f" to be accommodated while also respecting Minister Gilberto Gil's announcement in maintaining a form of "*samba*" as the Brazilian candidate.

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<sup>5</sup> On this subject, see also Sandroni, 2011.

It was not simply a question of terminology, however. The historiography of Brazilian popular music reveals a strong connection between Rio *samba* and Bahian *samba de roda*. The latter was in fact often described as the “root” (and Bahia as the “cradle”) of Rio *samba* (or “*samba carioca*.”) The narratives surrounding the origins of *samba carioca* emphasized the role of Bahian immigration to Rio in festivals and among the Bahian “aunts” such as Ciata, Presciliiana (Donga’s mother), Amelia (the mother of another celebrated Rio “*sambista*” named João da Baiana, or “João, son of the Bahian woman”). *Samba* thus gradually evolved into a new form in Rio de Janeiro and, although scholars such as Alves (2002) and Lopes (1992) have criticized the simplistic nature of these narratives because they do not account for other influences, Bahian *samba* remains an unavoidable historiographic reference for Rio *samba*.

Gilberto Gil’s initial proposal to apply for ICH recognition of the entire *samba* genre would have been viable had the candidacy been targeted towards the “Representative List” of the new ICH Convention, which took effect two years after *samba de roda* was officially recognized. The Proclamation of Masterpieces resembled instead the “List of Cultural Expressions in Danger of Extinction” of the same Convention. The solution that was found--*samba de roda*--thus represented a compromise between two motivations. One was an expression of Gilberto Gil’s desire to promote national identity, and the other related to the fragile nature and risk of extinction of a cultural form. *Samba de roda* satisfied condition “f” of the Proclamation, while also obliquely satisfying the expectation created among the Brazilian people by the Minister’s announcement that the candidate should be “representative of the country.” *Samba de roda* was a credible “representative of the nation” not only because it was “a type of *samba*,” but also because it is the *samba* form generally considered to be the “origin” or the “source” of Rio *samba*, which has achieved the status of the musical emblem of Brazil. In addition to the requirements of the UNESCO Proclamation, the exigencies of national self-congratulation were thus also satisfied by the final choice.

When the decision was announced by UNESCO that *samba de roda* had been designated as a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity, the only negative reactions expressed in the press came from individuals who did not understand the regulations of the Proclamation and insisted on the greater representativeness of Rio’s *samba* than Bahian *samba*; Gilberto Gil’s Bahian origins were mischievously cited as an explanation for the final choice of Bahian *samba* as the Brazilian candidate.

## 2.3 *Maloya* and the ICH Representative List: From Recognition to Emblematization

The inclusion of *maloya* on the ICH representative list was achieved within an institutional context involving a debate about the cultural policies of the Regional Council. The *Maison des Civilisations et de l'Unité Réunionnaise* (“House of Civilizations and Unity of Reunion”, MCUR), whose scientific team was presided over by two academics, Françoise Vergès and Carpanin Marimoutou, was responsible for compiling the application file for the ICH before it was forwarded to the French Ministry of Culture. This policy was a significant feature of the MCUR's principal lines of action, which were designed to contribute to greater cultural equilibrium among the different cultural components of Reunion society. As the title of the preservation project indicated, the objective was to articulate recognition of the cultural diversity of Reunion Island and to unify the island's “people.”<sup>6</sup>

These goals can be interpreted as revealing contemporary reinvestment in the processes of Creolization that gave rise to Reunion society. The positive aspects of Creolization are considered to center on a cluster of processes that give rise to new cultural forms by melding together cultures of different origins. In some ways, affirming a program specifically devoted to “Civilizations” and “Unity” expressed a desire to perpetuate the highest achievements of the cultural history of Reunion. This continuity appeared to suggest three narratives that could or ought to coexist: The maintenance of a link with source cultures, the coexistence of these cultural groups within the same geographical space, and the positive value of cultural transfers between these different groups:

“Let's say it again. The unity of Reunion is a unity that must value the fecundity of Creolization as an intercultural practice. It must preserve the ability to integrate, transform, and make its own that which it receives.” (MCUR, *Pour un musée du temps présent* [“Towards a Museum of the Present Day”], 2007: 91)

The advocacy for the merits of Creolization by the MCUR guided its approach in terms of culture and heritage, which in turn provided the inspiration and rationale for the building of a new cultural center beginning in 2010. The facility was intended as a modern, living museum that would offer exhibit

<sup>6</sup> For a detailed description of this project, see “Pour un musée du temps présent. La Maison des Civilisations et de l'Unité Réunionnaise,” which can be consulted on line at the following address: [http://www.temoignages.re/IMG/pdf/MCUR\\_POUR\\_UN\\_MUSEE-2.pdf](http://www.temoignages.re/IMG/pdf/MCUR_POUR_UN_MUSEE-2.pdf)

spaces and research facilities, as well as spaces for performances and debate. Its ultimate purpose was to provide the island's inhabitants with a site that would encourage consciousness-raising, reflexivity, and cultural dialogue.

Given the project's aims to promote cultural tolerance and egalitarianism, it is perhaps surprising that the cultural center aroused powerful opposition. The factors that most directly influenced the reaction to *maloya*'s recognition by UNESCO centered on the emphasis on non-European cultural elements and the "unofficial" heritage of Reunion's population. The leaders of the MCUR and Paul Vergès, president of the Regional Council, made a particular point of these issues, beginning with the organization's very first actions in 2004. The MCUR introduced the question of music very early in the discussions, and in 2004, the title *Zarboutan nout kiltir* (ZNK) was created as a distinction that would be awarded to honor "the contribution of the women and men of Reunion to the preservation, promotion, creation, and transmission of the intangible cultural heritage of Reunion Island" (MCUR 2009). The first year that the ZNK title was awarded, it recognized the achievements of a *maloya* musician, Gérose Barivoitse, aka Lo Rwa Kaf ("the Kaffir King"). Four other leading *maloya* musicians, all claiming African or Malagasy origins, received the ZNK title the following year. This recognition of African cultural contributions to music appears to have been a priority that arose from an understanding of diversity and the goal of focusing on less "official" currents in Reunion's cultural history.

In this respect, the actions of the MCUR followed more or less in the footsteps of PCR cultural militancy in the 1970s. This militancy, including the production of a series of "traditional" *maloya* recordings, fueled its increasing prominence. Some of these records had a powerful political dimension, blending old songs with speeches, testimony from militants, and songs with lyrics critical of the period's political opponents. Furthermore, *Peuple de La Réunion. Peuple du maloya* ["People of Reunion. People of Maloya"], one of the LPs recorded during the Fourth Congress of the PCR (1976), emphasized that "every inhabitant of Reunion," whether of African descent or not, could—or should—feel a sense of belonging through *maloya*, which was becoming a symbolic part of the island's political struggle.

In the post-colonial political context of the 1970s, a period during which independence movements were springing up all over Africa, the PCR was embroiled in a polarized political conflict that pitted its pro-autonomy position

against right-wing anti-autonomist political forces. In part, pro-autonomy militancy also relied on militancy regarding cultural forms, which symbolized the struggle against colonial oppression whose first victims had been the descendants of slaves and indentured servants. As a consequence of this coalescence between politics and culture, cultural positions, especially with regard to music and language, came to be closely linked to politics. This in turn favored the emergence of an ideology that, as revealed by the conflict surrounding the ICH recognition of *maloya* in 2009, persisted within the island's cultural and political spheres. The inherent tensions within this ideology are clear: On the one hand, it celebrated *métissage* (racial mixture) and the desire to embrace Reunion Island as a historic possession of France; on the other hand, was the desire to encourage the diversity of specific historical narratives, leading to the conception of the island's cultural unity that did not emphasize—and even questioned—this very same connection with France. Caught up in this ideological conflict, the promotion of *maloya* by the PCR in the 1970s greatly contributed to the recognition of African and Malagasy influences as part of the political and cultural identity of the island. It contributed also to the recognition of rites, cults, and the invocations of the ancestors as forces in the island's colonial history. The debate surrounding the recognition of *maloya* by the ICH is best seen in the context of this political environment.

## 2.4 Choosing Maloya: Conflicts and Resentment over Identity Issues<sup>7</sup>

With the support of the *Pôle Régional des Musiques Actuelles* (“Regional Organization for Local Contemporary Music”, or “PRMA”, an organization devoted to support local musicians and producers), the MCUR led the initiative to propose *maloya* as a candidate for the ICH representative list (according to the new Convention of 2003) and took responsibility for compiling the application materials. As a member of the PRMA team, I (Guillaume Samson) became involved in this process when I was invited to contribute documentation in support of the candidacy. The final draft emphasized the vitality of the genre and its close ties to the musical identity of the island. This approach helped the organization avoid the legitimacy conflicts concerning culture and identity of which *maloya* had been the focus since it first gained

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<sup>7</sup> For a more detailed description of this question, see Samson, 2011 and Lagarde, 2012.

wide popularity. The application also stressed the fact that the “concerned community” was “the entire population of Reunion” and that *maloya* had become the “emblem of Reunion culture,” “the very symbol of a cultural identity that spanned generations.”<sup>8</sup> However, the absence of a true, broad-based consensus on this question has pervaded the cultural environment of the island ever since the 1970s, a point of contention that was given new energy during the dissension surrounding the recognition of *maloya* by the ICH.

To fully understand this conflict, it should be kept in mind that the international recognition of *maloya* was interpreted locally, in a manner consistent with the arguments contained in the application, as cementing its status as the musical emblem of Reunion. The question of the “risk of extinction” was not part of the criteria for joining the representative list as defined in the 2003 Convention. *Maloya*, one musical form among others on Reunion Island, was thus awarded a specific symbolic value linked to cultural representativeness by the press following its official selection. In the cultural and political environment of Reunion, displacing the question of representativeness in the direction of the question of a “national”<sup>9</sup> symbol further fueled the ensuing conflict involving *maloya*. In particular, it helped drive the competition for representativeness between *maloya* and *séga*. The reactions in the press during the days following the announcement offer ample evidence of this shift in emphasis. On October 2, 2010, Bernadette Ladauge, an influential figure in Reunion’s folklore scene for the past forty years, declared in the *Journal de l’Île de La Réunion*:

“What amazes me is to see only *maloya* and not *séga* listed as heritage by UNESCO. *Maloya*, historically, is *séga* [...]. That’s how we called the slaves’ dances. [...] *Séga* presents the basic rhythmic pattern of our music, and you distinguish *maloya* from it just through a difference in tempo.”

<sup>8</sup> This dossier can be consulted on the UNESCO site at: <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?RL=00249&topic=desc>. In his analysis of this dossier, Benjamin Lagarde emphasizes the fact that *maloya* was the focus of a “new definition” that alternated between “Black individualist” and ‘Creole unitarian’ points of view” (Lagarde, 2012: 130). He reveals the highly political and identity-related character of this kind of application.

<sup>9</sup> Because Reunion is officially a department of France, it could be argued that it is inappropriate to refer to “national” representativeness in the case of *maloya*. However, the local debates that accompanied the MCUR project and the inclusion of *maloya* in the ICH were not framed by the fact that the island is a region belonging to France, but by the notion of the particular insular identity of the island.

Conversely, there was this reaction from a well-known *maloya* musician and militant:

“Great! This is what we were hoping for [...]. It [*maloya*] should be everywhere in Reunion, just as *séga* is everywhere on Mauritius<sup>10</sup> [...].”

The initial reaction centers on the historic links between *maloya* and *séga* and underscores the fact that, despite differences in terminology, *maloya* is allegedly a sub-category of *séga*, which is therefore its source. The second reaction dodges the question of the presence of *séga* on the island while insisting on the importance of the practice on Mauritius as well. The elevation of the status of *maloya* also called into question, if less officially, the role of musics associated with popular Hinduism in the musical representativeness of the island. During a conference which I had the opportunity to organize as part of the commemoration ceremonies surrounding the date of the abolition of slavery in 1848, the director of a concert hall raised this issue when he publicly stated that:

“People always say that *maloya* is side-lined, forgotten, neglected, criticized. But the music that is totally absent from the cultural scene of Reunion, and has been for a long time, is the music connected to the population’s Indian roots, and in particular the *bal tamoul*<sup>11</sup>. But we the *malbars*,<sup>12</sup> we do not complain about it...”

In another context, a militant Hindu priest from the western part of the island exhorted the public, at a *bal tamoul* I attended, to invest themselves more in transmitting this heritage so that the *malbars* would not be considered “nobodies,” and so that *maloya* would not be viewed as “THE Reunion culture and ALL OF Reunion culture.” In light of this handful of selected responses, it is worth wondering about the notion of representativeness and the interpretations surrounding it. The discussion of *maloya* international recognition thus appears to have been framed more as a conversation about the island’s musical representativeness (an “emblem” effect of its recognition

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<sup>10</sup> Mauritius is an independent nation formed by islands, 170 km away from Reunion.

<sup>11</sup> A form of popular theater of Indian origin in which passages of the Mahabharata are performed on stage.

<sup>12</sup> Descendants of Indians.

by the ICH) than within the context of a consideration of Reunion's overall contribution to the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

## Conclusion

Unlike the situation in Reunion, there was never any doubt in Brazil about which genre should be considered the nation's "musical emblem." And although this distinction was already assigned to *samba* in the version that had evolved in Rio de Janeiro since the 1930s and had become widespread throughout the country, the ICH Proclamation of Masterpieces emphasized the "risk of extinction" as opposed to the emblematic nature of the candidates. Still, the first choice of the Brazilian Ministry was to present the musical genre already chosen by Brazilians as the most representative. This initial choice ensured that the final candidate was the only one that could enjoy national recognition "obliquely" while also satisfying the requirement that it face a "risk of extinction."

But the former Proclamation and the more recent Representative List do not in any way constitute a list of "the most representative genres" or the most emblematic musics of the affected countries. If Hafstein's analyses (2004) are correct, national representativeness does not in fact constitute a determining feature of the 2003 Convention, which is centered on strengthening "communities" among UNESCO member-states. Even if the intentions of UNESCO legislators, in such expressions as "Masterpieces of ICH" and "ICH Representative List," were not to locate "the most representative" candidates in each country, the cases we have analyzed of *samba* and *maloya* suggest the extent to which this system was interpretable within the framework of political and identity-based choices. Practitioners and experts in search of recognition, as well as militants, government civil servants, and administrators of regional institutions all appeared to have internalized, more or less willingly, the ICH program as part of collective, identity-related self-celebrations. This reinterpretation of the regulations associated with promoting the values of ICH can vary enormously depending on local political and cultural contexts, as we hope this article has shown. Even when the "successful" candidates share numerous formal and historical traits, like *samba de roda* and *maloya*, it is clear that precise, thoughtful, case-by-case analysis remains the only means of evaluating the impact—positive and/or negative—of

international programs for safeguarding particular cultural expressions.

Translated from the French by John Angell

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# Within the Dialog between Anthropology and Museums

The Reference Center for Brazilian Football

*Clara de Assunção Azevedo – Football Museum*

*Daniela do Amaral Alfonsi – Football Museum; PPGAS – USP*

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## **Abstract**

This article presents the work conducted at the Reference Center for Brazilian Football (São Paulo), focusing on methodological aspects of information gathering and the transfer of data to a computerized database. By using an ethnographic method to discover archives and register memories and references related to football practices, the project allows reflecting on the limits and potential of ethnography for the museological work of preservation and promotion of archives.

**Key words:** Ethnography; Museums; Cultural References; Football Museum.

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*The setting is a small bar, of about 430 ft<sup>2</sup>. On the walls, in addition to a rack of pool cues, a public telephone and a message on a blackboard warning costumers that the owner doesn't sell on credit; there are shelves with trophies of all kinds, sizes and materials. They are spread across three sides of the space, on a central column and on the back wall behind the bar. A plastic cover protects the trophies in places most vulnerable to grease and dirt, such as the center of the bar and the kitchen. Alongside the trophies are dozens of photographs of a football team posing for the picture or playing on dirt fields around the city. The pictures, hung in wood and glass frames, are under the shelves. Close to the bar there is a large potted plant called a dieffenbachia which is poisonous if ingested but considered to have protective powers against the "evil eye."*

*The Poulestra Bar, located in the Zona Sul or southern region of São Paulo close to the municipality of Santo Amaro, belongs to Ramiro dos Santos, who was born in Pernambuco. He lives on the second floor and the address is also the clubhouse of the Poulestra Football Club, a várzea or amateur team.<sup>1</sup> Team mementos occupy not only the walls of the bar but also part of the basement. There are photos, trophies, medals and countless documents, such as the official founding papers for the team, articles about its history, and charts with schedules, lineups and the boards of directors.*

*"It must be kept because it's memory" explains Ramiro, who through his own initiative keeps organized in plastic folders team papers and a chronological catalog of the trophies won by the team, which has only ever worn the colors black and yellow. Once a year, Ramiro changes the protective plastic for the trophies, carefully choosing the material: it can't be too thin or too thick, and has to be big enough to wrap up trophies of all sizes.*

*The series of objects and images reminds the owner and customers of the bar of the trajectory of this amateur team, established in 1987 by migrants from Brazil's northeast like Ramiro, the club's first president. The founder's house and bar became Poulestra's clubhouse, and until today athletes and supporters come by regularly in the early evening. (...)*

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<sup>1</sup> Amateurs teams in São Paulo are historically called "várzea teams." A "várzea" is a field along a stream or river and the name arose because the first football fields in the city were near the riverbanks.

*In São Paulo's amateur football circuit, Poulestra F. C. stands out and has become renowned over time, winning championships and representing the neighborhood in important matches against teams from other regions. In the beginning, besides contributions from board members, to cover team expenses they held traditional St. John winter festivals and other fundraisers that attracted neighbors to the bar and the square in front. (...) Although players are still unpaid, there are costs of registration in the leagues, new balls, transportation, purchase and cleaning of uniforms, and the rental of training fields (which Ramiro says is increasingly less common and more expensive). The managers must find creative ways to raise funds, a challenge that is making the team enter fewer competitions.*

*(...) the Poulestra Bar is next to the Interlagos Shopping, the largest Shopping Center in the Zona Sul and which was built just after the team was founded. Ramiro never played for the team, but remembers that a few years before the shopping center was built, in its place were several dirt fields in the then distant and peripheral region, where pickup games, games between rival teams and community leagues were held. He recalls that it was from this profusion of football that the desire to create his own team was born.*

(From the field report for the Poulestra Football Team, October 20, 2011).

The preceding text could be part of a work inspired by classical anthropological monographs, in which the author writes about a given group after living with its members for a few months or years. In the classical model established by the publication of *The Argonauts of the Western Pacific* by Bronislaw Malinowski in 1922, the anthropologist depicts the flesh, blood and spirit of the natives, describing the ways and motives by which men and women act, think and reflect about themselves and others.

For many decades, this model was a central element of anthropology, or at least it was one of the works produced by an anthropologist. It was part of the education of this professional and until today, is part of a study (whether for a dissertation, thesis or other phases of academic research) whose work methodology is concentrated on continuous and prolonged observation, made possible by close and continual contact with a certain group. This effort would allow the anthropologist to produce knowledge about the issue chosen that would emphasize the *native point of view*.

The paragraphs that began this article, however, were taken from the data base of a museum, and were produced in the context of research that is not strictly academic and for this reason, had other standards of evaluation, timeframes and methodological efforts. Even so, the classic production

model for an ethnography and the interest in recognizing, by means of the work methodology, the perspective of those who are observed, remains an epistemological support for the research experience.

The transposition of anthropology to domains outside the academy is not a novelty in the history of the discipline. Whether by working in governments and the formulation of public policy, or in museums and cultural institutions, or – more recently, in the field of marketing and market research and public opinion polls, it is possible to utilize the forms of action of the anthropologist and the interfaces between what is produced inside and outside the academic context. Within this field of possibilities for action, one in particular is worth highlighting, one that perhaps is as old as the discipline itself: the relationship between anthropology and museums.<sup>2</sup>

The proposal is to approach this relationship considering the problems and questions raised in the realm of the project to establish the Reference Center for Brazilian Football of the Football Museum, whose research procedures, as well as those of its model for writing reports, and, mainly, the type of knowledge produced based on these procedures, is directly inspired by anthropology.

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This article presents the research paths taken at the Football Museum (MF), by its Reference Center for Brazilian Football (CRFB),<sup>3</sup> focusing mainly on the methodology for data collection and registration of references of memory and practice of football in a computerized and multi-relational system (a data base).

The CRFB is one of the sectors of the MF, and was established five years after the inauguration of the Museum.<sup>4</sup> It is the area responsible for the

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<sup>2</sup> The interface between anthropology and museums is the theme of important studies that run through the history of the discipline and which are not addressed in this article. We can highlight those by George Stocking (1985) and James Clifford (1988 and 1997).

<sup>3</sup> The Museum of Football is a public facility that belongs to the State Secretariat of Culture of São Paulo and is managed by a civil society organization (known as a social organization for culture – OS). This mixed administrative model for museums in the state of São Paulo has been operating since 2005.

<sup>4</sup> The implementation of the CRFB was begun in 2010 and concluded in 2013, although the project was conceived in early 2009, soon after the inauguration of the MF. It receives financial support from FINEP – the Brazilian Innovation Agency, an organ of the Ministry of Science and Technology - and is executed by means of a partnership between the Instituto da Arte do Futebol Brasileiro [The Brazilian Institute of the Art of Football] (a social organization for culture that administers the MF), and POIESIS (Instituto de Apoio à Cultura, à Língua e à Literatura) [the Institute of Support for Culture, Language

institution's research and documentation activities and offers the public a library and media room specialized in football, which can be consulted at the Museum, and an online database that provides access to both the institution's archives and references to archives and collections at other institutions that are related to the theme. This scope seeks to characterize the CRFB as a center that congregates references about football, in their multiple facets and based on different types of objects and expressions: books, collectable artifacts, general impressions, photographs, events and practices related to sport etc. The proposal, therefore, is to develop an inventory of references about football, independent from the nature of that reference (material or immaterial) and its source (whether it belongs to the MF) or not.

This article presents the method used to construct the inventory based on an ethnographic experience and to reflect on how this type of experience requires repositioning the concepts of museological archives, and the procedures for collection and the formation of archives at museums.

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The idea of establishing a reference center, and transforming it into a central hub within a network of public and private archives, has existed since the inauguration of the Football Museum and is the fruit of the initial choice of the institution to not house collections.<sup>5</sup>

The option to approach Brazilian football as a phenomenon that invades various domains of social life, as expressed in the long term exhibit that was inaugurated along with the Museum, and without starting from that which is conventionally called the material dimension of culture – the central element

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and Literature] and USP, through the Nucleus for Urban Anthropology (NAU). For the execution of the project, in addition to professionals from the staff of the MF, there is a team of nine interns from CNPq (under the modality Industrial and Technological Development modality), whose responsibilities are divided between coordination, research, cataloging, library sciences and internship, in addition to outside consultants for the areas of data base development, architecture, monitoring and evaluation of the projects, research methodology and registration of heritage and specialists in contents related to football. The project was periodically accompanied by an Advisory Board, formed by nine specialists in the fields of anthropology, communication, history, heritage and public policy for culture. The complete list of all the professionals who participated in the project is available at [www.museudofutebol.org.br/crfb](http://www.museudofutebol.org.br/crfb).

5 The creation of the Museum of Football is part of and the fruit of a process of changes in conceptions about the role of a museum and the concepts of heritage, which has taken place in recent decades, mainly since the 1970s. The nearly exclusive emphasis on actions of conservation and documentation and on museological procedures aimed above all at collections, has shifted, opening space for discussions about the social functions of a museum, as well as to broader forms of thinking, preserving and communicating about a given heritage. About the recent trajectories in the field of museology see ARAÚJO & BRUNO (1995).

of museological institutions – was well received by public opinion in terms of its expository interface, but questioned, in particular by professionals who work with museums, concerning the continuity of the institution and one of its basic presumptions: the need to establish internal processes to safeguard archives. Identified as a “museum without archives,” what is suitable for this new institution and why should it be classified as a museum? Is the undertaking merely a large exhibition? The creation of the CRFB can be read, in a certain degree, as a response of the MF to these questions.

The concept of football adopted by the MF is a tribute to the interpretations that specialists (cf. Toledo, 2002) give to the sport: football is a multifaceted phenomenon, with a broad range of expressions that go beyond the practice of sport itself. In the vision of the institution, it would be reductionist to condense the representation of the phenomenon to the material dimension alone, which in most cases is limited to industrialized artifacts, produced in series (uniforms, cleats, balls, trading cards and stickers), or to objects that celebrate specific events (trophies, cups, medals, banners from tournaments and championships). After all, football is intertwined with the daily life of Brazilians.<sup>6</sup>

On the other hand, to ignore these material expressions would also be a mistake, given that they certainly also say something about the way that football is experienced and, moreover, they are, in the final analysis, inseparable from the so-called intangible dimension. Thus, how is it possible to identify these various material forms of expression of the phenomenon without necessarily having to store collections of objects and, on the other, access this intangible universe of the phenomenon, identify it, interpret it and present it to the public in a systematized manner?

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6 This article will analyze why the Museum of Football elected this approach to football in its main expositional narrative, but it is worth noting that this perspective, in Brazil, is the fruit of analyses constructed about this sport since the late 1930s, with specific texts by Gilberto Freyre about blacks and sports (Freyre, 1936; 1940 and 1947), as well as those by journalists and writers of chronicles, and which culminated, in the 1980s with anthropological studies on the theme, beginning mainly with Roberto DaMatta. The main contribution of DaMatta to the anthropological interpretation of football was the perspective that this sport could be understood as a “highly complex system of communication of values” (1982: 40). Football, according to the author, would be popular because of its ability to express national problems, redimensioning social representations and ritualizing them. As a rite and as a privileged place for dramatizations, the sport would allow “expressing a series of national problems, alternating perception and intellectual elaboration with emotions and sentiments concretely felt and lived” (1982: 40). This route inaugurated by DaMatta inspired important dissertations and thesis, which are now the main academic references about the issue, such as the works of Simoni Guedes (1977), Fátima Antunes (1992), Luis Henrique de Toledo (1996 and 2002), Édison Gastaldo (2002), Arlei Damo (2007), and others.

The understanding of football as a cultural practice that gives access to the way that people live in and interpret the world is also a route that is little explored by the institutions of memory dedicated to the preservation of this sport.<sup>7</sup> Thus, the inspiration from anthropology was decisive for the interpretation of the object of study and also for the development of research and documentation procedures that used the ethnographic method and applied it with some necessary adjustments. It is not by chance that the main partnership established for the implementation of the CRFB was with the Nucleus for Urban Anthropology of the University of São Paulo (NAU/USP),<sup>8</sup> to be able to benefit from its multidisciplinary work staff and thus to anchor in anthropology part of the theoretical framework used in the research.<sup>9</sup>

If the use of ethnography outside of its original realm is not new, in the field more directly related to museums and patrimony in Brazil, it was highlighted by the experiences undertaken by the National Historic, Artistic and Cultural Heritage Institute (IPHAN), in particular the creation of the National Inventory of Cultural References (INRC) and its research methodology.<sup>10</sup>

Nevertheless, these initiatives are recent. It is sufficient to recall that the broader discussion about immaterial cultural assets in Brazil took shape in the late 1970s and early 1980s. It is in this period that IPHAN, under the administration of Aloísio Magalhães, gradually began to change the then dominant

<sup>7</sup> A recent study by the Brazilian Institute of the Museum (IBRAM), an agency created in 2009 and affiliated to the Ministry of Culture to lead the national policy concerning museums, found that there are more than three thousand museological institutions in Brazil (more than the number of movie houses and theaters). A search for the theme of "sport" on the National Registration of Museums on the Internet, found only nine museums dedicated to preserving the memory of sport in Brazil. The number of institutions dedicated to sports memory expands when we research outside the official registration of IBRAM, but it still does not exceed a few dozen. Most of these are museums linked to football teams and display memorabilia (trophies, banners, medals, shirts, etc). Except for a few cases, these institutions do not conduct research or document their archives and some do not offer service to the public.

<sup>8</sup> It should be mentioned that NAU/USP has more than 20 years of activity in academic research and in cultural projects, in particular can be mentioned the undertaking of a set of anthropological studies that gave origin to the publications: *Na Metrópole - textos de antropologia urbana* (1996) and *Jovens na metrópole - etnografias dos circuitos de lazer, encontro e sociabilidade* (2007), in addition to the experience of "Expedição São Paulo 450 anos" in the realm of the project to establish the Museum of the City of São Paulo in 2004-2005. These projects were coordinated by Dr. José Guilherme Magnani and have in common the research of cultural practices in an urban context from an ethnographic and anthropological perspective. The main projects undertaken by NAU in the field of heritage and museums are described in the article by José Guilherme C. Magnani in this journal.

<sup>9</sup> It includes professionals in the field of history, sociology, anthropology, geography, museology, visual arts, photography (with emphasis on conservation of photographic archives) and library sciences.

<sup>10</sup> For some examples of the application of the method of INRC see Arantes (2008) and Medeiros (2007).

focus about heritage (the emphasis on brick and mortar properties) and began to also consider elements of the so-called intangible sphere, such as cultural practices and expressions, within the agenda of preservation policies (cf. Fonseca, 2009). This change of focus was located especially in federal state and municipal agencies dedicated to the preservation of heritage, but was discussed in various segments of society, including universities. It influenced the Brazilian Constitution of 1988, which recognized as Brazilian cultural heritage both goods of a material nature as well as those of an immaterial nature.<sup>11</sup>

Actions in this area only gained greater visibility in the realm of Brazilian public policy after publication of a federal decree in 2000 that established the registration of cultural goods of an immaterial nature that constitute Brazilian cultural heritage<sup>12</sup> and also after publication by UNESCO in 2003 of the convention that defines guidelines and makes recommendations that transform, in the realm of international public policy, the understanding of so-called cultural heritage.

All of these redefinitions questioned the traditional division between tangible and intangible heritage, and inevitably gave origin to new forms of identification and registration of heritage, with an emphasis on the use of the idea of cultural reference (cf. Arantes, 2008 and 2010).

Responsible for the development of the Department of Immaterial Heritage and the National Program of Immaterial Heritage of IPHAN, anthropologist Antônio Arantes had a decisive role in the development of the methodology applied by INRC since its establishment. From the defense of the execution of work by multidisciplinary teams to negotiations in the field and the flexibility of research procedures considering social diversity and specific contexts, the methodology for conducting inventories of immaterial heritage prepared by the INRC was born from an approach that was oriented by anthropology, and it can be said, is close in some points with the methodology being used for the CRFB, as will be shown below.

The difference, and what winds up influencing the entire process, perhaps resides in the origin of the initiative. While the INCR is part of a broad and general public policy for heritage preservation, the inventory of cultural references about football undertaken at the MF by means of its Reference

<sup>11</sup> Cf. article 216 of the Constitution.

<sup>12</sup> Decree nº 3551, of August 4, 2000.

Center is intended to be the central element in the formation of the archives of a museological institution. If the first undertakes action of broad scope that has the practical effect of assuring the communities involved the right to and basic means for the maintenance of their cultural practices and expressions, the second, on a much smaller and less pretentious scale, perhaps has its first and most immediate effects on the forms of conceiving and operating the safeguarding of heritage within museums.

The notion of cultural heritage is being transformed, and this is visible in the broadest policies undertaken mainly since the 2000s. Nevertheless, in the field of museums, there still seems to be a division between that which would be called material domain and that which can be fit within the immaterial or intangible dimension (practices, knowledge and productions, techniques, ways of seeing and living etc.), mainly in the guidelines and procedures for research and documentation. Perhaps, at the time of presentation of archives, in particular in exhibitions, this artificial division is less apparent, given that there appears to be a growing effort by museums to contextualize objects and locate them in a historic perspective, bringing to the exhibition discourse facets of the social processes that the objects engender. But, it would not be an exaggeration to say that the practices of safeguarding and handling archives and collections within museological institutions still emphasize material artifacts, especially when it comes to defining policies for collecting and acquiring the archives. This is clear, for example, in the classifications found in the data bases used by many of these institutions, in which there is no way to register the social processes or the experiences and contexts that go beyond the objects of a collection.

To develop an inventory of cultural references of football and rearrange this data into a multirelational system, which is the research objective of the Football Museum realized by its Reference Center, implies rethinking the safeguarding procedures that are currently used at museological institutions. It mainly means taking seriously the concept of cultural reference<sup>13</sup> in all the steps of the work, including its transposition to the field of museums.

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<sup>13</sup> The concept of cultural reference does not distinguish between material and the immaterial, a product of process, object of production etc. (Arantes, 2008). Cultural references are everything that can allude to, indicate a range of meanings or represent a given social phenomenon. This concept is a construct. Therefore it is not found ready-made in the universe of research. It is the researcher who, armed with suitable methodologies, with specific training and based on collective discussions within a broader project of mapping, observes the phenomenon that is the object of the field and defines it, based on the premises of the project, as a cultural reference.

## **Ethnography as a method for registration**

The production of an inventory of references about football, the object of the research conducted by the CRFB, has as its main procedures the mapping, registration and systematization of the items placed in a data base. These three steps must be connected and their meaning can be conferred through ethnographic experience.

Inventories are classic procedures in museums and agencies dedicated to the preservation of tangible or intangible heritage. In general, their primordial form is the listing and classification of items (objects and documents, but also practices and rituals) found in an area (community, group, city) or in an institution. This listing is essential for the organization, control and planning of the actions for conservation in material archives, for example. In the case of goods of an intangible nature, the inventory is the tool used by agencies specialized in heritage preservation to gain knowledge of the socio-cultural context of the practices that are the object of heritage actions. Given this later use, the tool triggers a debate among anthropologists, given that the data presented in it may not reflect or consider the cultural dynamic of the practice to be safeguarded.

Taking as a premise the concept of football as a multifaceted phenomenon, with imbrications in various fields of social life, one of the main methodological challenges of the study is to be able to register, classify and list, following a certain standardization inherent to the museological procedures, items of distinct natures: from banners to chants by fans, from a collection of stickers or photos to the interpretation of the sociability experienced in spaces related to football. This is because the intention is to identify and describe locations of the practice of football, which go beyond the canonical spaces of the sport. This means contemplating, in addition to fields and stadiums, the bars, restaurants or other types of commercial establishments where fans congregate on game days, including the clubhouses of local teams that house the collections of photos, objects and documents; the private collections of a wide variety of items related to football (from beer cans to pins, from albums of stickers to shirts, caps or other clothing items, from banners to books, magazines, newspapers, etc.); the collections of public or private institutions, which also possess, in greater or lesser volume, items from the universe of football (which includes all types of items gathered in clubs and also photographs, books videos, etc. found in various institutions that do not have any

direct relationship with the universe of football); associations of former players who promote sporting and cultural actions; football schools; multifunctional public spaces, but dedicated to sports (as in the case in the city of São Paulo of the Community Sport Clubs – CDCs and the Clubes Escolas [School Clubs]); companies that promote tournaments and competitions; companies that make uniforms that sponsor important events in the city and so on.

Ethnographic field research, therefore, was the special method used to attempt to grasp the heterogeneity of the object researched. Based on the premise that football attracts other expressions that go beyond that which occurs within the four lines of the field, the field research has been aimed at a set of actions and networks of sociability motivated by football. From there it turns to the locations of the practice of football (fields, clubs, courts, stadiums) the practitioners (amateur and professional teams, male and female, and of all age groups) their fans and organizing agents (from sports managers to companies that organize championships and tournaments). That is, by ethnographing a practice (a festival, a tournament or a championship, a football school, a meeting of fans in the bar, etc.), and its practitioners, the idea is to reach the objects and documents, registering not only the existence of these items, but mainly the meanings people confer to them in their contexts.

The registration process begins in the survey of contacts and locations, conducted on the Internet (on social media, specialized blogs and sites) and mainly, by indications given by people already contacted by the study. Each contact invariably generates other contacts and indications, in what is called the “snowball” strategy (Bienarcki & Waldorf, 1981). At first, this option results in an open field of possibilities of locations to be studied. The risk to be avoided, given the scope of the field, is to fall into a proliferation of contacts without constituting a common meaning. Or, due to the short time of contact with the interlocutors, the danger is that the registration does not come to understand and comprehend possible relationships between the locations studied, falling into a segmentation that can obscure the articulation between the elements. Nevertheless, the advantage of this technique is to allow reaching, through indications made by actors in the field, other spaces, practices and subjects that can be mapped and systematized in order to reveal links of a network, thus following an internal logic of the field studied.

Because they are indications related to a theme – football – even if taken in their multiple dimensions and meanings, in the long run, the survey of

contacts comes to delineate the contours of an active network in each location researched<sup>14</sup> – the main starting point of the study. This is only possible because this survey takes place concomitantly to the visit to the locations and people. Thus, the network of references, a product of mapping, is also fed by information that comes from the researcher's observations, which begin to discover the meanings and links between one point and another of this network.<sup>15</sup>

The researchers go to the field armed with plans indicating what should be observed and asked in each context. However, based on ethnographic experience, they learn to emphasize the observation of behavior, language and other elements that are essential for the understanding of the native universe, and that are not always verbalized in an interview with a representative of a group, for example.

As part of the process of preparing an inventory, the research universe was initially broken down into typologies. They were groupings of locations mapped according to their function: bar, fan club, team clubhouse, club, school, etc., and also groupings of people according to their main activity: collector, player, club administrator, referee, fan, etc.<sup>16</sup> Guidelines specific to

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<sup>14</sup> It is worth mentioning that the initial research, which lasted from 2011 to the first semester of 2013, was based in the city of São Paulo. Nevertheless, it is hoped that the MF can later conduct the same methodology in other Brazilian cities.

<sup>15</sup> It is important to highlight the concept of circuit, developed by the anthropologist José Guilherme Magnani and which has been important for the realization of this study and for the understanding of the network. Understood as that which “unites establishments, spaces and equipments characterized by the exercise of a certain practice or offer of a given service, although not contiguous in the urban landscape, and is recognized in its totality only by the users” (1996: 45), the circuit can be understood as a physical and or symbolic network that connects spaces, people, objects, knowledge and meanings, which is identified only when the perspective of the practitioner is taken, that is, it is only possible to locate and map the network when the researcher follows those that act within it. The concept of circuit helps understand and organize practices, relations and actors involved in the empiric line chosen, and applied to this research, guides the surveying, mapping and choice of criteria for the cataloging of the indicators of the memory of football.

<sup>16</sup> The first challenge faced by the research team was the definition of the empiric angle. The project first called for the survey of any practice related to football, without distinguishing the various existing modalities of the practice of football, such as, football, or association football, futsal and others. After an evaluation made by the research staff, it was found that the time planned for the implementation of the CRFB would not permit broad field research in this first phase and decided to restrict the initial research to football on outdoor fields, which in itself is quite a large universe. As an initial line, therefore, the focus of the project was selected based on a preliminary classification of the spaces of practices and of the memory of football that would initially be mapped: professional clubs-teams, amateur clubs-teams, school clubs, organized fan groups, collectors. Later, we added to this list the events and festivals. The research plans were prepared considering this first classification and division.

each typology were created and later these instruments were aligned to catalog records in the data system. In addition to the specificities that constitute each typology, they have in common (1) the identification of basic data from the location mapped (the address and description of the activities conducted there); (2) the preparation of a brief history of the place and description of its main characteristics; (3) the identification of items of memory (with the indication of archives, photo collections etc.) realized *pari passu* to the interpretation of the ways that the local group understands and represents the memory of sport and (4) the identification of the network of relationships in which the group is inserted and in which it participates in some manner (championships, institutions, other locations etc.).

These items, common to all the research plans have the common objective of obtaining a minimum set of information that permits glimpsing certain regularities and patterns, making comparisons and relating the different types of locations visited, as well as identifying the connections that exist between them.

The work process that has been conducted includes the concomitant steps of identifying the contacts and scheduling and realizing the visits, which include the production of photographic and video registers, audio interviews and participant observation with recordings in field diaries. The process also includes discussion among the staff of the common points found in the visits realized and the writing of a text, called a “field report,” based on the cataloging of references in the data base and which is one of the final documents to which the public will have access. It is in this set of procedures, therefore, that are delineated the items to be cataloged in the data base. Only after some field visits and the comparison of observations of different researchers, was it possible to define which references would be indexed in the data base. Understanding the concept of cultural reference as a collective construct of the research, references for modalities were chosen for the project presented here: people, institutions, events and archives, which will be described in detail.

One of the differences between this type of research and a classic ethnography concerns the time that the researcher spends with the people researched. With the goal of producing an inventory, and considering that the project encompasses a territory as large as the city of São Paulo – the first geographic scope of the study – and that it depends on resources and

staffs hired for a limited time, it is not possible to remain in each location mapped for more than a few hours per day (morning or afternoon). Except on rare exceptions, the visit is conducted only once. That is, the researcher is always in movement, experiencing isolated events related to the universe studied. Nevertheless, the ethnographic perspective is maintained to the degree that it guides the researcher in what to observe in this rapid passage or how to interpret that which is observed in relation to that which is said by the interlocutors. Thus, the general orientation is on the observation of the behavior, the survey of the strategies of action, the occupation of the spaces, the division of tasks between men, women and children, etc. Even if interviews were conducted, the study is much more the result of participant observation than a simple adhesion to research plans and instruments. Thus, if on one hand the method is far from those used in classic procedures, on the other, it introduces to the field of museological documentation new elements that are capable of expanding the presumptions of the establishment of an archive.

Even if in-depth data is not produced about each location mapped, the study did allow an interesting comparative exercise, because it addressed a single universe – that of football – in a large territorial area. This exercise, another approximation with the anthropological perspective, is essential for the constitution of the final product. It is worth remembering that “it is not an obsession for the accumulation of details that characterizes ethnography, but the attention that is given to them: at some time the fragments can be arranged in a whole that offers a clue to a new understanding” (Magnani, 2009:136). This attention to elements, offered by the visits to the locations and by the consequent construction of this network of connections *in locu*, and the continuous movement of approximation and distancing allowed by this approach, has allowed identifying specificities and regularities. Examples include the survey of recurrences in the organization of games and tournaments, the meeting with the same types of people in a wide variety of events (such as food sellers, politicians, photographers and journalists), and the survey of the types of food and drink consumed at amateur football events in São Paulo, the forms of cheering found in the stands of the amateur games and at stadiums, the forms of commemoration among players in the field, the relations with government in disputes over management of space and other issues. All these recurrences should appear in the

indexation of data in the system, in addition, of course, to being described in the field reports to which the public will have access. It is in this new form of indexation, which will be presented below, that resides the museological experiment itself.

First however, it is worth concluding that the decision to use ethnography in the work process does not imply using only a method, but also conceptual presumptions that directly influence the way of perceiving, approaching and interacting with the other. If the idea to conduct a mapping to prepare an inventory should not be confused with the consecrated notion of ethnography, the mapping can be nurtured and inspired by ethnography and can and should experiment with it, even if superficially, given that a mapping is less focused and broader in scope. This form of approach seeks to guarantee that the data produced are constructed in the relationship with the other and always in context.

The research presented here thus allows producing more than primary information about the references to football, given that it has a supposition the effort to access indications of logics that organize and symbolize this sport in specific contexts. That is, more than just conducting random and disconnected surveys, the recourse to ethnography allows the creation of connections of meaning between the elements mapped, which helps to understand their relevance and pertinence and confers an analytic dimension to the process. As Magnani indicated:

Ethnography is a special form of operating in which the researcher comes into contact with the universe of the researched and shares their horizon, not to remain there or even to attest to the logic of their worldview, but, by following them wherever possible, in a true relationship of exchange, to compare their own theories with theirs and thus try to leave with a new model of understanding, or at least with a new clue that was not previously foreseen. (2009:135).

In this sense, the study undertaken can go beyond the simple survey of existing spaces of practice and memory of football and try to understand them in a minimally contextualized manner. More than to construct large lines of analysis about football, the main objective is to conduct a broad although contextualized inventory of the various cultural references to football raised in the mapping process.

## **For an *antropomuseological* translation of the data**

One of the most difficult tasks in the realm of the CRFB project has been to translate the diversity and wealth of information collected in the field using a “rigid” tool that frames the data in pre-determined boxes, as does a database. While this tool is rarely used in anthropological research, it is the leading element of the documentation procedures at museological institutions.

With the advance in the development of specific software for the organization of data, data bases at museums have fortunately become increasingly attractive: they allow displaying photos, videos and texts in the same database, the information searches are faster, they offer users greater possibilities for research, they can be accessed over the Internet, among other advantages. Thus, in the development of the data base for the Football Museum, the information system technology did not represent an impediment, but offered potential to be explored in favor of a new form of organizing research data.

The development of the data base began with some principles: its records and fields for cataloging should dialog with the systems of other museological institutions at the same time in which they need to be based on concepts native to the universe of football, that is, their classification and the vocabulary used for the cataloging must translate the ideas and values operationalized by the different interlocutors of the research. If not, the entire effort undertaken in the collection of information, in the preparation of observation plans, in the work of writing the field report, would be lost in a static system of organization and control of data.

To manage the research contexts, the data base for the Football Museum has four options for entering information: 1) institutions; 2) people; 3) events and 4) archives. They are four independent but inter-related bases, which organize the information pertinent to each one of these groups. The choice of these four modules is related to the type of cultural reference that the study sought to understand and register.

To better understand the logic of the translation of data, it is helpful to consider the case mentioned at the beginning of this article, the bar which is the clubhouse for the Poulestra Futebol Clube. The data from the field research is thus cataloged as follows: in the base for institutions goes the information about the bar (its location and a description of the physical installations, and the history of the location) and about the Poulestra team (the year it was founded, its emblem, mascot, history, etc); the base for people is used

for information about Senhor Ramiro, the owner of the establishment and one of the directors of the team; in the base for events is entered information related to any championships and tournaments in which Poulestra participated and finally, in the base of archives are cataloged, item by item, the photographs, trophies, medals, documents and other objects stored at the location, in addition to the field report produced by the researcher and the photographs, audio and videos produced in the research context. Each item cataloged (the bar, the team, Senhor Ramiro, a specific championship and a trophy, for example) becomes an “entity” in the data system. An entity is the minimum common unit of information within the system. The relationships considered to compose the network of references occur between entities.

The intent of the strategy of combining this information from the different entities, segregated in four different bases, is to allow establishing relationships between the modules in such a way that recreates in the system the interactions and logics observed in the field. In the case of the Bar do Poulestra, here are the types of possible relationships operated in the data base:

- a) institution-institution: between the clubhouse at the bar and the Poulestra team, or between the bar and another team that uses it or that has some form of interaction with it;
- b) institution-person: between the bar and Senhor Ramiro, between the team and Senhor Ramiro, and between these locations and any other people who are in the data base;
- c) institution-event: between the team and a championship or tournament in which it participated;
- d) institution-archives: between the bar and the complete series of objects stored there that were cataloged in the base of the archive;
- e) person-event: between Senhor Ramiro and a championship at which he conducted an activity;
- f) person-archive: between Senhor Ramiro and all the items of the archive present in his bar that were cataloged;
- g) person-person: between Senhor Ramiro and any other people related to him, whether it is the researcher who interviewed him or a player for the team;
- h) event-archives: between a championship and a trophy or a set of photographs related to this championship;

- i) event-event: between championships that have some type of relationship;
- j) archives-archives: this is what joins all the items of a single original collection, for example, between all of Senhor Ramiro's trophies and photographs. But not only this, the system allows relating Senhor Ramiro's objects to others, like books, textual documents, iconographies, as long as the field research indicates some connection.

All the possible relationships between the data bases are reversible, that is, a relationship institution-person is equally that of person-institution. It is not important through which base the insertion of the relationship is made, it automatically appears in the other related base.

The operation consists, therefore, in fragmenting and reconnecting the field data, in this interplay of combining analyses without establishing an hierarchy for them, or that is, without establishing greater or lesser importance to a type of input. The premise of the horizontality of the data in the system distinguishes the data base from more traditional tools used by museums, whose cataloging is invariably based on the object of the archive to relate other types of information to it, always laterally, belonging to people and locations. Because it is a database established for the purpose of organizing references about football, beyond its archives of a specifically material nature, it has as a principle that an "item from the archives" does not have to be initially registered. To the contrary, in many locations mapped these items are only identified generically, leaving their detailing, and therefore their cataloging, for a later research phase.

To the degree that the research advances, new relationships can be made in the data base, linking a location mapped at one time to a championship or a set of photographs discovered later. In this way, the network of relationships is always expanded and also refined. It must be considered that the network is not a pre-established fact, but a result obtained based on the items listed in the inventory of actions, places, people and objects. And it is not static: for each new insertion creates a possibility to add or re-qualify relationships previously constituted in the database.

Within this logic, another challenge is the naming of the types of relationship. This task calls for the construction of a controlled vocabulary, that is, lists of pre-established terms to standardize the insertion of data. As part

of the methodology inspired by anthropology, an effort was made to use native terms for the construction of this vocabulary. As when writing a paper, each native term carries some links of meaning and is translated for the reader, that is, the data base has an area for management of terms that compose the controlled vocabulary, with the introduction of synonyms and meanings, in order to lead users of the data base to the understanding of the use of that word in the research context.

The native terms comprise the main inputs of keywords (or content descriptors), such as the ability to search for uniform data (shirts, pants, cleats) based on the terms “uniforme” commonly used in the Brazilian press, but also “fardamento,” [another word for uniform in Portuguese] which is commonly used in the amateur universe. Another example is the identification as “teacher” for a person in a type of relationship that is very common in the amateur football universe, which is, that of teaching the football practice in government programs. This name “teacher” is not the official name given to professionals hired by the programs, which calls them “monitors” or “sports agents.” Nevertheless, in practice, these agents refer to themselves as “teachers” as do the children that participate in the activities. Therefore, the option in the database is to also name these people and relate them to the spaces and events in which they act using the term “teacher,” entering the official terms as synonyms. Another example is the connection, via a system of data, between two or more clubs or groups of fans (institution-institution type) based on the terms “alliance” or “rivalry,” which are commonly used in the football universe.

Like the relationships, the fields of the cataloging – while controlled – are not unchangeable. From time to time, reviews are conducted of the lists of vocabulary in order to complete meanings, insert synonyms and new terms. What is important to highlight is the new use conferred to a procedure that is common in the field of museological documentation: the repetition of ideas with different words (as in the classic example of “cat-kitty-feline” to refer to the same animal), in the CRFB project this procedure is used to assist the translation of the research universe into an information management tool.

The investment in this connectivity allows, at first, that the user of the system expand their searches and become surprised with the connections that the database will reveal. At a second moment, and for the specialists in the theme, of which there are many judging by the interest that football stirs

in the daily life of Brazilians, the person consulting the database can write to the Football Museum suggesting corrections and additions to information and it is hoped, make a request to see his private collection referenced in the CRFB and included in the network.

The plan for safeguarding the archives, therefore, comes to be shared between the Football Museum and a community of people interested in the issue. If the option to not collect objects and remove them from their context to store them in a technical reserve with temperature and humidity controls (a longtime practice of museums and still very necessary in many areas) creates the risk of losing material from valuable collections spread throughout the country, the proposal of the MF, on the other hand, is to innovate by constructing an archives of references whose meanings are shared with those who truly collect them, care for them and make them circulate, and for this reason, preserve their meanings and values.

## Conclusion

This article presented the research methodology used by the Football Museum at its Reference Center for Brazilian Football and the options chosen for the translation of field data into a data base. Because it is inspired by anthropology, the field research allows much more than a survey of formal or static data related to the universe studied, given that the main product of the researchers is the writing of a text, a “field report,” which seeks to describe the location or event researched as would an ethnography. This text, in turn, is the basis for the cataloging of the cultural references of football that are the base of the inventory produced by the research conducted by CRFB.

By being based on ethnographic research, even if in a novel form, the cataloging undertaken sought to construct relationships between different entities that represent the dynamic of the practices related to football identified in the study. This methodology has allowed rethinking the procedures for safeguarding that are currently used at museological institutions and also the form of presenting them to the public.

The research presented here is a very recent experiment and is still underway (that is, its results are still not totally visualized and have not been open to public consultation so that they can be questioned and validated by the interlocutors of the study); nevertheless, it is possible to see that it points

to new routes for the work of researchers at museums. This is especially pertinent to the so-called “new museums,” which decide not to have their own material collections to adopt more technological exhibitions that are based on sensory experiences. The greater problem raised for this new type of museum has been the risk of not safeguarding the indicators of memory and collections about certain themes. In the case of football, this was carefully questioned, even because of the absence of other institutions in the country that take on this task (it is known that the clubs and federations do not properly store their documentation and their archives nor do they make them available for consultation to researchers).

Upon referencing and relating objects, documents, practices, events and people, without establishing an hierarchy between the material and immaterial or between archives of the museum itself and those of other institutions, the risk of physical loss of documents and objects remains, even when it is possible to create a digital version or copy, which is possible with certain items. However, the local history, the relationships, the terms used and their meanings are preserved, as well as the description made at the time of passage of the researcher at the location through a series of products from the visit: report, photos, videos and audios.

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In 1950, Lévi-Strauss indicated a need for the transformation of anthropology museums and the possibility that they become privileged spaces for experimentation for the anthropologist; “laboratories for the study of social phenomena difficult to analyze” (1989: 423). If Levi-Strauss’ concern at that time was to discuss the place of anthropology in the social sciences and the discipline as a profession, the text recognized the potential to transform cultural dynamics and social representations (our much discussed intangible culture) into “objects” of analysis of museums, and also the distinction and the effort of the anthropological look in this undertaking.

Although Levi-Strauss was referring to anthropology museums, the suggestion not only appears current, but also capable of being transposed to the field of museums in general, and in particular, to the project presented here. The desire is to treat it as a laboratory, a place of experimentations for museums and for anthropology, perhaps this is the route.

Seen from another context, Levi-Strauss’ recommendation continues to gain meaning: “In all these cases the purpose should be, not merely to collect

objects, but to understand men; not so much to classify dried remains—as in herbariums—as to describe and analyze forms of existence with which the observer is closely and actively in touch. (...) But while it is becoming increasingly difficult to collect bows and arrows, drums and necklaces, baskets and statues of divinities, it is becoming easier to make a systematic study of languages, beliefs, attitudes, and personalities" (1989: 421). We may say, that this is crucial.

Translated by Ana Letícia de Fiori and Jeff Hoff, except the excerpts from Lévi-Strauss, which are from the 1963 U.S. edition.

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# CRBF – Centro de Referência do Futebol Brasileiro [Brazilian Football Reference Center]

Available at <http://vimeo.com/40673683>

Video clip directed by Aira Bonfim and Danilo Delfino  
2013, 2min14

**Images:** Aira Bonfim

**Production and Edition:** Aira Bonfim and Danilo Delfino

**BFRC Researchers:** Ademir Takara, Aira Bonfim, Diego Mora, Karina Alves, Maria Helena Menezes, Marília Fernandes, Michele Silva, Nahema Falleiros, Paulo Nascimento

**Music:** “Um bilhete para Didi” (“A note for Didi”, free translation), Novos Baianos

**Images:** Flamengo of Vila Maria District Football Field (Campo do Flamengo de Vila Maria); National Club Football Field (Campo do Clube Nacional); Adhemar de Barros Community Club (CDC Adhemar de Barros); Copa Kaiser’s Amateur Football Final Match (Final da Copa Kaiser de Futebol Amador Série A); Corinthians versus Santos Match (Corinthians X Santos); Gaviões da Fiel Organized Supporters (Torcida Organizada Gaviões da Fiel); AB Sport, Sports Equipments Company (AB Sport Materiais Esportivos); Mr. Bezerra (amateur football photographer); Pery Novo Team (AA Pery Novo); Raul Tabajara Community Club (Clube Esportivo Raul Tabajara); Poulestra Team (Poulestra FC); Bola Preta Community Club (CDC Bola Preta); Leões da Fabulosa Organized Supporters (Torcida Organizada Leões da Fabulosa); Classe A Team (EC Classe A); Turma do Baffô Team (GR Turma do Baffô); Agostinho Vieira Community Club (CDC Agostinho Vieira).