

THE HISTORY OF CAPOEIRA IN THE SOUTH REGION OF THE STATE OF RIO DE JANEIRO: REUPDATES FROM THE PAST BY THE GUARDIANS OF MEMORY

LA HISTORIA DE LA CAPOEIRA EN LA REGIÓN SUR
FLUMINENSE: LA REVITALIZACIÓN DEL PASADO
DESDE LOS GUARDIANES DE LA MEMORIA

A HISTÓRIA DA CAPOEIRA NA REGIÃO SUL FLUMINENSE:
AS REATUALIZAÇÕES DO PASSADO A PARTIR
DOS GUARDIÕES DA MEMÓRIA

Alvaro Rego Millen-Neto¹
Álvaro Bergamini-Gusmão²
Marco Antônio Santoro-Salvador³

¹ Doutor em Educação Física pela Universidade Gama Filho (Brasil). Professor Adjunto Programa de Pós-Graduação em Educação Física, Líder do Laboratório de Cultura e Escolarização do Corpo no Sertão Nordestino, Universidade Federal do Vale do São Francisco (Petrolina – Brasil). alvaro.millen@gmail.com

² Licenciado em Educação Física pelo Centro Universitário de Barra Mansa (Barra Mansa RJ – Brasil). albegu@hotmail.com

³ Doutor em Educação Física pela Universidade Gama Filho (Brasil). Professor Adjunto Laboratório de Estudos da Aprendizagem Humana Universidade do Estado da Rio de Janeiro (Rio de Janeiro – Brasil). marcosantoro@uol.com.br

Millen-Neto, A., Bergamini-Gusmão, A., & Santoro-Salvador M. A. (2016). The history of capoeira in the south region of the state of rio de janeiro: reupdates from the past by the guardians of memory. *Educación Física y Deporte*, 35 (1), 97-116, Ene-Jun. <http://doi.org/10.17533/udea.efyd.v35n1a04>

10.17533/udea.efyd.v35n1a04

URL DOI: <http://doi.org/10.17533/udea.efyd.v35n1a04>

ABSTRACT

Aim: To investigate one version of the history of capoeira in the southern region of the State of Rio de Janeiro, using the perspectives of those responsible for the consolidation of the current stabilized capoeira groups.

Method: The research was structured around oral history methodologies and theories about memory. Specifically, the research is based on the narratives of eight capoeira masters, who are active in this region.

Results and Conclusion: The testimonials clarified the relevance of one master who is even remembered by the collective memory of those younger practitioners. We also concluded that the masters that have chosen to limit their practices to the root identity, and to resist to the globalization of culture, nowadays have less power in the capoeira market.

KEYWORDS: Memory, Capoeira, Oral history, Culture.

RESUMEN

Objetivo: investigar una versión de la historia de capoeira en la región sur del Estado de Rio de Janeiro, desde la perspectiva de los responsables de la consolidación de los actuales grupos establecidos. **Metodo:** se realizó una encuesta estructurada a partir de la metodología de la historia oral y las teorías acerca de la memoria. Las fuentes consultadas tienen como base los informes de ocho maestros de capoeira que trabajan en la región investigada. **Resultados y conclusión:** los informes permiten observar la importancia de un maestro que es poco recordado por la memoria colectiva de los practicantes más nuevos. También es posible inferir que los maestros que optaron por una raíz que demarca identidad resisten las influencias culturales globalizadas, actualmente tienen menos cuotas de poder en el mercado de capoeira en la región.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Memoria, Capoeira, Historia oral, Cultura.

RESUMO

Objetivo: pesquisar uma versão da história de capoeira na região sul do Estado de Rio de Janeiro, desde a perspectiva dos responsáveis pela consolidação dos atuais grupos estabelecidos. **Metodo:** realizou-se uma encuesta estruturada a partir da metodologia da história oral e as teorias a respeito da memória. As fontes consultadas têm como base os relatos de oito maestros de capoeira que trabalham na região pesquisada. **Resultados e conclusão:** os relatos permitem observar a importância de um maestro que pouco recordado pela memória coletiva dos praticantes mais novos. Também é possível inferir que os maestros que optaram por uma raiz que

Millen-Neto, A., Bergamini-Gusmano, A., & Santoro-Salvador M. A. (2016).

The history of capoeira in the south region of the state of rio de janeiro: reupdates from the past by the guardians of memory.

demarca identidade resistem às influências culturais globalizadas, atualmente têm menos quotas de poder no mercado de capoeira na região.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Memória, Capoeira, História oral, Cultura.

INTRODUCTION

The colonization of the territory that is now Brazil was marked by the exploitation of natural resources, especially regarding mineral extraction and agricultural production. In order to exploit the resources available, the colonizers needed to find a sufficient foreign workforce that was willing to cross the Atlantic Ocean and partake in manual labor. As a consequence, colonizers trafficking slaves from Africa which greatly aided the development of the colony and, consequently, the nation's wealth. As African slaves were brought to Brazil, they also brought along their own habits, beliefs, symbols, and their diverse culture. Later on, these cultures were a great influence on Brazilian identity and contributed the creation of a new cultural melting pot.

Capoeira is one of the many different cultural products Brazil has from African cultures, and has acted as the common people's tool for political participation since monarchy. It is also a cultural manifest which reflects the Brazilian identity (Soares, 1999). One identity was somehow rebuilt at the decades of 1920/30 by members of the elite, who were trying to sever the European influence during that time. The movement away from European ideals started a process which would define a unique Brazilian identity with all the cultural habits coming from its own people. *Feijoada, samba, capoeira, mestiço* (mainly the Caucasian and Black mixture), all previously despised, became national symbols that helped define the Nation and helped construct a "Brazilian civilization" (Vianna, 1995).

Over the years, the general transformation suffered by Brazilian society has caused to call into question or redefine some characteristics of *capoeira*, which led to the construction of new identities around this sort of cultural expression. The rise of capitalism resulted in social, economic, and political restructuring (Abib, 2004). The discussion between practitioners of the two different types of *capoeira*, Angolan and regional, illustrates that

Millen-Neto, A., Bergamini-Gusmano, A., & Santoro-Salvador M. A. (2016).

The history of capoeira in the south region of the state of rio de janeiro: reupdates from the past by the guardians of memory.

statement. Almeida et al. (2007) consider that the debate regarding the two distinct kinds of *capoeira* defines two different identities with a common aim, as both are associated to the market. According to the authors:

[...] We have been presenting opposite identities for the debate: those who aim higher for the settlement and legitimacy of *capoeira* in society through an organized athletic system, and on the other hand, those who evoke discourse in defense of the original *capoeira*, from the ancient body technique created by the slaves. While the first ones seek legitimacy by the expansion and growth of new markets that offers a product of rising value not only in Brazil, but also abroad, the second ones capitalizes on the identity discourse of being the representative of the “true *capoeira*”. However, the “true *capoeira*” is also present at this body practice discourse, which becomes a sort of currency at the market, so that many of those who have left Caxias [traditional *capoeira* circle in the city of Rio de Janeiro] opened their own gyms and started teaching abroad –United States and Europe– in the name of “true *capoeira*” (Almeida et al., 2007, p.128).

Thus, different identity discourses establish a new battle for performance space on the market domination, and encourages the consolidation of their own activities as a result of conflicts within the *capoeira* universe. Associated with it, traditionally, in *capoeira*, the narratives are kept alive through ancient masters who, somehow, have an effect on the collective memory of the actors evolved. That is why memory does not reflect the past neutrally and impartially. According to Pollak (1992), memory keeps facts that everyone has lived together but, when it recounts the events, the narrator reconstructs different information and the present moment must be considered as an influence on the story.

Santoro & Soares (2009) offer us an example –Brazil’s involvement at the 1970’s Soccer World Cup– in which they clarify how memory is built according to the narrator’s subjective ideas and personal interests. That is why these authors have shown that

newspaper articles published in the 70s, around when the event happened, highlighted the training and players' physical strength. On the other hand, articles published at the 2000's call special attention to 1970's players talent and skills. It shows how different contexts create a variety of subjective ideas and interests. Still, from Pollak's (1992) perspective, "if the dispute between the individual memory and others' memory is possible, [...] the memory and identity are disputed values in social conflicts and inter-group, particularly in conflicts that oppose several political groups" (p.5). In the *capoeira* field, the debate among the most reknowned masters' followers, such as Master *Bimba* and Master *Pastinha*, comes from different perspectives on identities, with their own interests and subjective ideas and end up calling attention to particular aspects from the collective memory.

Beyond the marks that remain present in collective memory, forgetfulness is also important to the comprehension of what remains hidden in memory. Certain interests and subjective thoughts overlap others that are forgotten. Traces of memories and forgetfulness of the *capoeira* practitioner remembrance in the south of the State of Rio de Janeiro aroused interest for this article. The collective memory about the *capoeira* masters and their respective roles in the consolidation of this cultural practice in that region compose our object of study.

In this regard, this study aims to investigate the process that starts with the recognition of the past in the present at moment, or the denial of the present due to the memory of a glorious past which enhances the sense of belonging and identity related to a particular group. The entire process of identity construction has its foundation in social memory. This memory recovers losses and gains from the past and reinforces the cohesion and unit senses, in two distinct ways: the official History bias, supported by documents, monuments, typical celebration or through oral history told by generations of established, outcast, and marginalized individuals.

Memory is not constituted exclusively of remembrance. Memory is a space of disputes where forgetfulness and silences are an essential constitutive piece. Memory works through the selection of facts, images, sounds, and smells that give meaning both to collective and individual identities. Selectivity is something evident when it comes to concept of memory, while forgetfulness, as category, is not as clear and explicit.

The forgotten scenes and silences, despite constituting different processes, have a tactical function of continuous construction of identities. The *capoeira* memory in the southern region of the State of Rio de Janeiro highlights the figure of a particular master, known as *Boa Viagem*. This master, who died in a car accident at the beginning of the first decade of the 2000s, is remembered by many as the precursor of the *capoeira* at the region. *Boa Viagem* is a immigrant from the northeast who brought *capoeira* from Bahia to the south of Rio de Janeiro in the 70s. Specifically, in this study, this fact was not questioned. Master *Boa Viagem's* participation within the process of consolidating, expanding and disclosure of *capoeira* in the region is public, notorious, and it is a part of the collective memory.

His *capoeira* name has important space at the region and it is indeed formally honored by the public authorities. By the decree 10.194/2004, in the city of Volta Redonda, the Center of Martial Arts of the Citizenship Stadium is now named as "*Mestre Boa Viagem*". The focus of the present study goes from the remembrances to the forgetfulness founded in collective memory. Perhaps, the strong presence of the part played by Master *Boa Viagem* has displaced other relevant characters to the history of *capoeira* at the region.

This article had as its point of departure Master *Boa Viagem's* life history. The research method was changed during the process due to the difficulty of accessing the field. The rivalries between *capoeira* groups have made them somehow resistant to

the presence of outsiders and due to that most of them became unlikely source of any information.

It is fundamental to emphasize that memory, as an important part of the construction and reinforcement of collective ideas, is a consequence of the process' dynamics. The social memory rescues and controls the past with the objective of reaffirming the present and preparing foundations for possible future perpetuation. However, its construction is made by the different individual conceptions and by a diversity of groups. Accordingly, this process is not always harmonious, so a disagreement will define new pathways and editions of memory.

The different version about the past comes into conflict once power relations and its specific interests are implicit in pursuit of legitimacy for a version about the past. The obstacles to obtain information led us to look for other ancient *capoeira* masters at the south of the State, which ended up highlighting others aspects from this facet of *capoeira's* history.

Thus, taking *capoeira* practitioners as objects of historiographical investigation, this study focuses on *capoeira* as a Brazilian cultural practice and portrays, through the history of one of its masters, the particularities of its consolidation in the South of Rio de Janeiro, especially in the cities of Volta Redonda and Barra Mansa. It represents a universe of more than 10 *capoeira* groups' active in gyms, schools, social projects, and neighborhoods squares.

METHODOLOGY

As a result of the lack of written sources¹, the research has focused on information provided by the older *capoeira* masters who

1 The few written sources consisted of personal files of the masters –a professional diary and some articles published in journals of the region–. Unfortunately we did not have full access to these

Millen-Neto, A., Bergamini-Gusmano, A., & Santoro-Salvador M. A. (2016). The history of *capoeira* in the south region of the state of Rio de Janeiro: updates from the past by the guardians of memory.

work or have worked in Volta Redonda and Barra Mansa. Using oral history methodology, interviews were conducted with eight of these masters, who constituted the main sources to this historiographical report. Interviews were guided by a semi-structured flow, shot in a studio, and then transcribed. All material obtained as footage was useful to set a short documentary for the purpose of being used as teaching material in schools of the region.

Freitas (2006) defines 'oral history' as a practice that consists in resorting to alive characters to tell history still present in their memories. Therefore, bias and subjectivity present in the interviewee's memories are limitations to be aware of. These limitations are also present in written sources, as they are also biased by the author's perspective.

Pierre Nora (1984) analyzes appropriating the past as a process in which the present reconstruction is made as a recreation of the past based on modeling, with selected fragments, that constructs the past according to current needs and as a platform to future aspirations. When edited, forgotten facts and important aspects, separated from the whole, enable memory's reinterpretation, for the reason that what is going to emerge in the present is solidified into what Nora has called "places of memory": museums, monuments, civic days and documents among others. These "places" suit to highlight references and myths from the past which establish identity bonds.

Similarly, the text does not assume to write a total history or even the true *capoeira* history. Prior to that, we intend to produce one possible historiographical register at the studied region to enrich, or even start the debate about *capoeira* history in Volta Redonda and Barra Mansa.

Capoeira in Volta Redonda and Barra Mansa: the history from the guardians of memory

journals for a detailed consultation files because there is no public record of the daily journals published in the region studied.

In this section we explore perspectives that permeate *capoeira* history in Barra Mansa and Volta Redonda. As the majority of the sources indicated the strong presence of one specific master –Master Henrique²– in the formation of every other interviewed master, we will initiate the narrative with a brief description of his life.

Before we deepen the investigation, it is important to emphasize Pollak's (1992) studies, which show memory's control issue and the reinforcement of identities by those who assume the part of memory guardians. The process of social memory construction and its corresponding remembrance from the past shows people's power to reorganize the past. This is part of remembering, after determining the main characters of an event, it also brings new arrangements in the present, effectively updating the past.

Furthermore, ties between memory and identity interact as the first one is the core element in building identity, both individual and collective. Therefore, Pollak (1992) states that no one creates their own image without a complex process of negotiation and changing. He also claims that it is impossible to not be affected by those around you, both in the present and concerning characters from the past who are also part of the current scene.

Memory and identity are parts of the same social process. Regarding identity formation, the cultural aspects of a nation or of a group are always interfering with the individual identity, as moral judgment and daily behaviors come from the context of the local culture. Although we can understand that individuals have the capacity of discernment about subjects and build their own choices, the foundations of every personal structure, made by past events, are reference to actions in the present and to future projections, even if the action is at the rupture point.

2 The identity of the study participants will not be disclosed, but the name of the referenced masters are real.

Millen-Neto, A., Bergamini-Gusmano, A., & Santoro-Salvador M. A. (2016). The history of capoeira in the south region of the state of Rio de Janeiro: reupdates from the past by the guardians of memory.

Master Henrique

Raised in a farm called Felício Moreira in Santo Inácio –in the city of Valença, Rio de Janeiro– Henrique Gonçalves do Santos, Master Henrique, at the age of 18 years ended military service and went with one of his brothers to the city of Rio de Janeiro looking for a job. This brother, Carlos –*capoeira* practitioner known as *Veludo*– took him to practice *capoeira* at the gym Bonfim, in the neighborhood of Olaria, with master Travasso and Arthur Emílio. We give special attention to the fact that, according to Nestor Capoeira (2006), *capoeira* in Rio de Janeiro was almost extinct by Police repression, and only started to be practiced consistently in this region in the 50s and 60s, the time when Master Henrique started as a student of this modality. The quick growth of *capoeira* has allowed its masters to earn their incomes by working with its practice and learning.

By 1967, Master Henrique saw himself obligated to go back to Valença to remain closer to his father who suffered from heart problems. At his hometown, unemployed and taking care of his father, Master Henrique saw *capoeira* as a potential source of income. Valença's population was not familiar with *capoeira* at the time, which made his knowledge unique and valued. With goals outlined, his initiative was to go after the president of Barroso Club –Mr. Nantin. In October 1967, Mr. Nantin gave him the opportunity to teach *capoeira* that was brought from Rio de Janeiro. The following year, in February, Master Henrique envisioned the possibility to disclose his work through the creation of a *capoeira* wing at the local Samba school. The enterprise's success awakened the interest of many students and subsequently the first *capoeira* group was born in the South of Rio de Janeiro, the *Grupo Valenciano de Capoeira*.

Capoeira practice consolidation in Volta Redonda and Barra Mansa

With his marriage approaching in 1973, Mestre João started working at FORNASA –a pipe factory in the city of Volta Re-

donda- and left Valença. The first masters who came from the Master Henrique's *capoeira* group have inherited his legacy and since then, they conducted *capoeira* practice in the Valença. The masters Jorge, Z Maria, Dinho, Cal u e Edgar, are responsible for coordinating and maintaining new generations of *capoeira* practitioners in that city until the present moment.

As was customary, during his leisure time Master Henrique sat in front of his house and started the typical *capoeira* sound with his *berimbau*. As reported by himself, the kids surrounded him and had fun listening to the sound of the instrument and playing *capoeira* under his guidance. At the end of 1973, when Master Henrique enjoyed his routine pleasure, the former Volta Redonda's Aero Club -known as Z Botina- invited him to teach *capoeira* at his club.

According to the interviewed masters, in this county there was no *capoeira* until his arrival. After one year of hard work, Master Henrique changed his training center to the neighborhood of *Eucaliptal*, where the headquarters were established and where he taught for eight years. In his new work area, Master Henrique conceded to his title of "*capoeira* master" to the first students.

Capoeira was not the main source of revenue for Master Henrique. His students socioeconomic status required him to establish a fixed standard for the payments he was meant to receive, so his income was related to what the students could afford to pay each month. The monthly earnings were not always enough to cover his total costs. Due to this, in addition to his responsibilities as a master, he also held jobs at factories and industries, aiming to increase his monthly salary. Other financial alternatives to obtain money was *capoeira* presentations at parties. He organized big *capoeira* circles and charged taxes to perform.

Capoeira after Master Henrique

Around 1987/1988, Master Henrique strayed from *capoeira* by personal reasons, leaving his alumni in charge of *capoeira*

Millen-Neto, A., Bergamini-Gusm o, A., & Santoro-Salvador M. A.(2016).
The history of *capoeira* in the south region of the state of rio de janeiro:
reupdates from the past by the guardians of memory.

in the cities of Volta Redonda and Barra Mansa. According to the interviewed masters, these masters rented *Sete de Setembro* Club, in the neighborhood 208, to proceed with trainings under the informal lead of masters Renatinho and Gomes. The desire of these new *capoeira* masters originated to one new group in Volta Redonda. It is noteworthy that in this moment, the goal of Henrique's former students, masters, and professors was to train together without any intention of making any money.

They were also responsible for renting the club from their own occasional gains, generally at the *Companhia Siderúrgica Nacional* (CSN – National Steel Company). The majority of the masters formed by Master Henrique worked at other areas, except Master Evanil, who has dedicated his life to *capoeira* and who still works exclusively with it. After two years of training at *Sete de Setembro* Club, difficulties regarding the rent payments started to arise. Therefore, because large number of students, they started to charge tuition fees. One of the interviewed masters said that at this point some tensions and disagreements among the masters started to emerge, motivated by financial interests and ideological contradictions. This is the important moment in *capoeira* history in the region, because from then on there were ruptures and each of the masters began their own group.

Palmares Capoeira Association

With the end of training activities at *Sete de Setembro* Club, Master Gomes joined Master Branco and they both founded *Palmares Capoeira Association*. The group *Palmares* was strongest in Barra Mansa. In the 1990s, master Branco left *Palmares* to start training at the group *Senzala*³. Then, Master Gomes withdraws definitively from *capoeira*, disappointed with his friend who, under his eyes, betrayed the ideal of preserving *capoeira* origins

3 Group with national expression, at the time led by masters *Peixinho* and *Camisa*.

in both cities, the *capoeira* they learned with Master Henrique. According to Almeida et al. (2007), a romantic view of cultural preservation and speech are very characteristic in *capoeira*. Through this speech, even not intentionally, the narrators end up producing what the authors called conventional advertising to *capoeira*, once the narrators are also the actors.

After Master Gomes withdraw, the *Palmares* group is weakened in the region, once there was no leadership representing them. For that reason, each master pursued their own work even when it was not related to *capoeira* in the region. Master Thom s –Master Henrique’s student and Master Gomes’ brother– started working once again with *Palmares* group, now at the municipality of Pinheiral, where the group still remains.

Cultural Association *Capoeira* Brazilian School

Also trained by Henrique, Master Evanil went to the city of Cruzeiro in eastern S o Paulo state to teach *capoeira*. There he formed the Slave *Capoeira* Group. Thus, in 1992, after his return to Volta Redonda, Master Evanil associated with the *capoeira* practitioner *Marinheiro* and created the Cultural Association *Capoeira* Brazilian School. When *Marinheiro* emigrated from the state capital to work at Volta Redonda, he was already graduated as a *capoeira* Professor by the group that has been recently created, *Abad -Capoeira*⁴.

In certain ways, this experience has contributed significantly to the *capoeira* game style and also to the ideals of Master Evanil. This group, *Capoeira* Brazilian School, has substantial influence on the Volta Redonda *capoeira* scenario and they still develop important work at the city. By the end of 1990, *Marinheiro* had to move to S o Paulo to work and because of this, he resigned the group.

4 It is also a group of *capoeira* nationwide expression, possibly the biggest and most structured of all in acting.

Millen-Neto, A., Bergamini-Gusm o, A., & Santoro-Salvador M. A.(2016). The history of *capoeira* in the south region of the state of rio de janeiro: reupdates from the past by the guardians of memory.

By mid-2009, Master Evanil began accepting *Capoeira Angola* as a strategy of work and its role in building a new identity for his group. According to the interviewed masters, after reinterpreting the current situation of *capoeira* at the region, it became clear to Master Evanil that there was growing tendency of a decrease in the number of people interested in taking part of regional *capoeira* practice. Parallel to this decrease, a new public began to approach from *capoeira*. Composed majorly by university students, this audience would identify with the discourses of *Capoeira Angola*, as it is a practice from scratch, supposedly free from outside influences and cultural transplants caused by the globalization phenomenon.

In this aspect, *Capoeira Angola* would be a legitimate resistance expression, and some consider it to refer to “truth *capoeira*”. Master Evanil has the habit of registering his activities in a sort of professional diary. Through the analysis of this document, it was noticed that he rebuilt his ideals about *capoeira* over the years. The idea of working with *Capoeira Angola*, however, seems to be an old companion. In a passage from the diary, written in 1970’s, when referring to the training exercises, still taught by Master Henrique in the neighborhood of *Eucaliptal*, the former student Evanil states that if he could choose, he would only practice *Capoeira Angola*. This desire, although, was not shared by the group, which preferred the traditional game.

Group *Angola Nagô*

The group *Angola Nagô* was founded by Master *Boa Viagem* and Master Luiz. According to the interviewed masters, *Boa Viagem* was a student of Master Henrique but did not reach master graduation standard in his academy, but by being a part of Boxing Federation. Still, in the 1990’s, Master Luiz resigned from *Angola Nagô* group and joined *Capoeira Brazilian School*, led by Master Evanil. The group *Angola Nagô* was the most visible one within the studied region between the end of the 1990’s and beginning

of the 2000's. In this moment of large stability and recognition, Master *Boa Viagem* decided to join the world's biggest *capoeira* group, *Abad -Capoeira*.

The option to join this group caused conflicts with other masters in the region, especially with the ones formed by Master Henrique, who affirmed, in that time, not to agree with the association of local practitioners to others that came from different regions. In his perspective, south Rio de Janeiro state should be dominated by local *capoeira* practitioners – maintaining a tradition that he himself began. The criticism related the association of *Boa Viagem* to *Abad -Capoeira* fostered rivalries that, somehow, still remain, setting apart *capoeira* practitioners from *Abad* from other local groups.

Besides, when joining *Abad -Capoeira*, Master *Boa Viagem* went through tough moments. In order to adapt to the new training system he had to go to Rio de Janeiro weekly to exercise with Master *Camisa* –leader of *Abad* group– and his oldest students, apart from the requirement of being present in events organized by the group, such as *batizados* and championships. That added to the fact that with this new undertaking, his graduation was reassessed, from master he became a professor –in *Abad -Capoeira* symbols, a purple rope. Likewise, the presence of the group *Abad* has caused changes in the identity of *capoeira* in the region. With substantial influence from Master *Camisa*, the *capoeira* practice in Volta Redonda and Barra Mansa became more organized and efficient. Somehow, each custom influences codes, rituals, and values that identify and characterize *capoeira* in the region.

Master *Cigana Capoeira* Group

Master *Cigana* was a disciple of Master *Canjiquinha* from Bahia and arrived in Volta Redonda around 1987 and started working in the neighborhood of Vila Mury. However, the local where her job achieved more visibility was at Cultural Space Memorial

Millen-Neto, A., Bergamini-Gusmano, A., & Santoro-Salvador M. A. (2016).

The history of *capoeira* in the south region of the state of Rio de Janeiro: updates from the past by the guardians of memory.

Zumbi, in Santa Cecília Village, a neighborhood in the central region of Volta Redonda. *Cigana* was responsible for bringing Master *Canjiquinha* to offer courses to the practitioners of the region, more specifically to Master *Boa Viagem's* group. She was president of the State of Rio de Janeiro Capoeira Federation, and today presides over the Brazilian Capoeira Federation, disclosing the federation in the localities. Master *Cigana* has also fought for changing the organizational structure of *capoeira* in the area.

The continuity of her group is, today, in the hands of her students, more specifically of her 'counter-master' student, *Arara*. Currently, the professional practice of Master *Cigana* is focused on managing the Federation of which she is the president and organizing courses regarding *capoeira* history and its basic principles.

Group *Guerreiros da Água Limpa*

This group was originally founded by Master Pedro still at the time when Master Henrique was active in *capoeira*. Nevertheless, Pedro has never stopped training with Master Henrique. His group practiced in the neighborhood of *Água Limpa* and, besides *capoeira*, Pedro worked with other activities connected to Afro-Brazilian culture. Those activities required much dedication and time, and after a time, his *capoeira* group lost its force. Other masters, in interview, affirmed that Master Pedro, because ideological reasons, did not accept any project related to the municipal government. They declared that Master Pedro would never sell his knowledge to people following a passing fad. Thereby, his practice as a *capoeira* master is summarized at some appearances or events participation organized by local masters.

Group Raiz Negra

The group *Raiz Negra* was founded by Master Cláudio in the neighborhood of *Conforto*. Master Cláudio has specialized in *Capoeira Angola* that he learned by visiting some groups that played this style in the city of Rio de Janeiro. According to the interviewed

masters, Master Clóvis was against the arrival of *Abad* and *Senzala* in Barra Mansa and Volta Redonda. He would understand that this movement could bring some negative influence of the capitalist society to *capoeira* activities. In this sense, Master *Boa Viagem* would have surrendered himself by join *Abad* group. Master Clóvis, on the other hand, could be defined as an '*angoleiro*' and one "true" *capoeira* practitioner; pure and free from capitalists influences. Other masters who were interviewed hold the opinion that this anti-capitalist ideology stopped Master Clóvis, who has isolated himself and lost influence, as he has not kept up with the transformations occurring in *capoeira*.

FINAL COMMENTS

The consulted sources allow us to consider that the work with *capoeira* developed by Master Henrique in the south of the State of Rio de Janeiro was one of the pioneers and fundamentally relevant to the construction of the current scenario of this cultural manifestation in Volta Redonda and Barra Mansa. It is possible to state that, according to the eight reports collected by this investigation, Master Henrique was the first one to teach this art institutionally.

Thereafter, the present masters in Volta Redonda and Barra Mansa's region have, to some extent, a connection to the old *Valenciano* Group of *Capoeira*. The other groups that remain in the region, are: *Capoeira* Brazilian School by Master Evanil (Master Henrique former student); *Palmares Capoeira* Association by Master Branco and Master Gomes, today lead by Master Thomas (all of them Master Henrique's former students); *Abad* -*Capoeira*, brought to the region by *Boa Viagem* (Master Henrique's former student); *Senzala* Group, nowadays represented by Professor *Tatu* from Barra Mansa (Master Gomes' former student, who was Master Henrique's student); Group *Capoeiraço* by Master Eder (Master Nenem's former student, Master Henrique's former student as well.)

Millen-Neto, A., Bergamini-Gusmano, A., & Santoro-Salvador M. A. (2016).

The history of capoeira in the south region of the state of rio de janeiro: reupdates from the past by the guardians of memory.

You can also notice that the masters who maintain the identity limitation discourse and that defend Master Henrique's game style and organization, or even those who defend an anti-capitalist ideology are not adapted and/or resisted to modifications that have occurred in *capoeira* and, therefore, nowadays they hold less power in the *capoeira* regional scene –as Master Clavis, Master Pedro and Master Henrique itself.

For *capoeira*, memory is the popular space for preserving the history of fights and resistance, persecutions and pride, and forms a link between positive identity and the present. Traditions provide elements that are used to value, devalue, highlight, forget, or even isolate specific groups, such as the ones which characterize themselves as a means of cultural resistance. In this sense, memory, in *capoeira* and also in other social spheres, works as the bridge between the past and the present and also interlaces different generations, with the goal of keeping this society cohesive in the middle of the big whirlpool of news and cultural diversity of the globalized world.

However, memories are not composed of a harmonious and natural process, the tensions between different groups and interests are the determinants to what will and what will not be rescued from the past. These remembrance process cannot be labeled as premeditated. Between society's divergences, there is a higher loss of maintenance and the older generation survives so that memory enables the survival of their own identity in the present and that justifies its space in the future. That is how tensions and fights for space in memory become present, so they are not discarded in an avalanche of news.

Regarding social actors, we must be careful in observing the analysis about their intentions and desires to rescue the past, as well as significant struggles, fought through memory statements. Therefore, it is necessary to analyze critically each testimonial. The social actors can fight for a deeper revision of the past, claiming their own space in history, or they can fight for

the maintenance of the memory already set by the society. Nevertheless, avoiding remembrances from the past or producing forgetfulness about previous situations marked by jealousy, interdiction or taboos as a means to protect themselves from psychological or group identity membership discomforts.

REFERENCES

1. Abib, P. (2004). *Capoeira angola: cultura popular e o jogo dos saberes na roda* (Tese doutoral em ci ncias sociais). Campinas: Faculdade de Educaç o, Universidade Estadual de Campinas.
2. Almeida, J., Tavares, O., & Soares, A. (2008). Discursos identit rios da capoeira na Revista Brasileira de Ci ncia do Esporte (RBCE). *Revista Brasileira de Ci ncias do Esporte*, 30, 131-185.
3. Almeida, M., Bartholo, T., & Soares, A. (2007). Uma roda de rua: notas etnogr ficas da roda de capoeira de Caxias. *Revista Portuguesa de Ci ncias do Desporto*, 7(1), 124-133.
4. Capoeira, N. (2006). *Capoeira: pequeno manual do jogador* (8ª ed.). Rio de Janeiro, Brasil: Record.
5. Freitas, S. (2006). *Hist ria oral: procedimentos e possibilidades* (2ª ed.). S o Paulo, Brasil: Humanitas.
6. Nora, P. (1984). Entre m moire et histoire: La probl matique des lieux. Dans P. Nora (Ed.), *Les lieux de m moire*, Vol. I (pp.23-43). Par s, France: Quarto Gallimard.
7. Pollak, M. (1992). Mem ria e identidade social. *Estudos Hist ricos*, 5(10), 200-212.
8. Salvador, M., & Soares, A. (2009). *A Mem ria da Copa de 70: Esquecimentos e Lembranç as do Futebol na Construç o da Identidade Nacional*. Campinas, Brasil: Autores Associados.
9. Santoro, A., & Soares, A. (2009). *A Mem ria da Copa de 1970*. Campinas: Autores Associados.
10. Soares, C. (1999). *A negregada instituiç o: os capoeiras na corte imperial 1850-1890*. Rio de Janeiro, Brasil: Access.
11. Vianna, H. (1995). *O Mist rio do Samba* (6ª ed.). Rio de Janeiro, Brasil: Jorge Zahar Editora.

Recibido: 2016-04-27
Aprobado: 2016-05-30

Millen-Neto, A., Bergamini-Gusm o, A., & Santoro-Salvador M. A. (2016). The history of capoeira in the south region of the state of rio de janeiro: reupdates from the past by the guardians of memory.