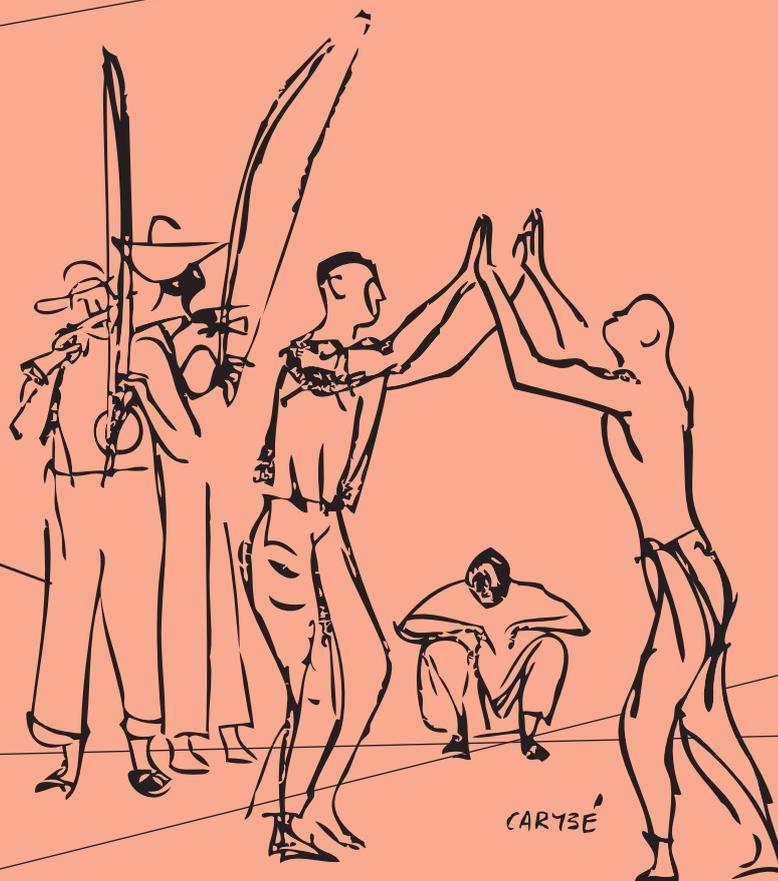


# THE CHALLENGES CAPOEIRA FACES TODAY

LUIZ RENATO VIEIRA E MATTHIAS RÖHRIG ASSUNÇÃO

CAPOEIRA HAS LITERALLY CIRCLED THE GLOBE. ONCE PRACTICED BY AFRICAN SLAVES AND THEIR DESCENDANTS, DOCUMENTED BACK IN THE DAYS OF THE COLONIAL EMPIRE, CAPOEIRA HAD BECOME A WORKING-CLASS MALE PASTIME DURING THE OLD REPUBLIC<sup>1</sup>. IT EMERGED AS A SPORT IN THE 1930S, AND WAS FLOURISHING BY THE 1960S AND 70S, WHEN IT ATTRACTED YOUNG PRACTITIONERS, MALE AND FEMALE, FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE. BEGINNING IN THE 1980S, CAPOEIRA HAS BEEN DISSEMINATED WORLDWIDE, AND IS CURRENTLY PRACTICED BY HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF DEVOTEES THE WORLD OVER.



(1) The Old Republic (*República Velha*) is the period in the history of Brazil that extends from the proclamation of the Republic (1889) until Getúlio Vargas comes to power in 1930.

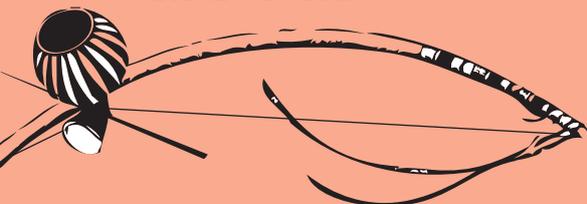
No longer restricted to academic circles and the performing arts, capoeira is making its debut before a much wider audience, from the theater stage and cinema screen to the world of advertising.

Public perceptions of capoeira have also changed dramatically. Once a misdemeanor punishable by whipping, or a barbaric “Negro” custom blocking the path of progress, it is now the stuff of exotic folklore and worthy of preservation, manifestly the cornerstone of a truly Brazilian martial art. More recently, attention has been lavished upon its various aspects, and capoeira is on the verge of being declared a part of the heritage of Brazil and of all mankind. Now globalized, it has become a Brazilian expression of what sociologist Renato Ortiz correctly described as international pop culture.

Since the 1980s, capoeira has also evolved into a proper focus of academic study, and the subject of many master’s theses and doctoral dissertations – in Brazil and elsewhere – in such fields as anthropology, history, sociology, education and physical education. Practitioners of the sport, scattered in groups throughout Brazil and beyond, debate the merits of capoeira studies in their local milieus and at the events they organize. No longer restricted to academic circles and the performing arts, capoeira is making its debut before a much wider audience, from the theater stage and cinema screen to the world of advertising.

The generation of capoeiristas out there earning its rope belts since the 1980s is driving a paradigm shift in the history of this form. While current practitioners are wearily familiar with the stories told by their masters – stories of persecution, of circles broken up by the cops and sent scattering pell-mell through the crowds at public festivities – their own experience has been very different. Capoeira has earned its place as an institution covered by the media and respected by the powers-that-be, and this has profoundly changed its meaning and its methods. The rapid pace of these changes has been a challenge to capoeiristas, political institutions and the various exponents of cultural values.

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**TOWARD A LEVEL PLAYING FIELD .** To better explain how today’s capoeira came about, we must look backward through time. *Capoeiristas* were still seen as something far from ordinary in the early 1970s. The practice was taken to be an expression of cultural form seeking a place for itself as a sport, albeit a sport more at home among the poorer (mostly afro-descending) populations living on the outskirts of town. The institutions of polite society regarded capoeira with apprehension, often from behind closed doors. Considerable effort was needed, by way of organization, to keep capoeira from losing what momentum it had built up during the early part of the 20th century.

Even though one could look back on many important initiatives in the development of capoeira, these were isolated efforts compared with the larger projects emerging in the 1970s and 80s. Capoeira was offered in schools, at universities, as physical therapy and training for the handicapped. It became a major for licenciature degrees in physical education and a fit subject for academic papers and theses, rehabilitation for juvenile delinquents and “the



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proper Brazilian style” of gymnastics. The literature on capoeira bristles with studies on the subject in all of these fields – and in others too numerous to mention here. The important thing is to recognize this turning point in the recent history of capoeira. It was also during the 1970s and 80s that capoeira won its rightful place among Brazilian sports. Even then, it stood under the aegis of the Brazilian Pugilism Confederation, where it gained recognition from a number of educational and sports-related government agencies. In those early days, capoeira competitions resembled other martial sports. Stripped of its artistic heritage, it was reduced to just another combat sport. Gradually over time, those details were restored and capoeiristas and their competitions came to be judged in ways reminiscent of the original capoeira circles. We mustn’t forget the important part played in these developments by Brazil’s Interscholastic Games (*Jogos Escolares Brasileiros, JEBs*), which provided the setting for a more holistic approach to capoeira.

One must recall that the 1980s were also the backdrop for the rapid nationwide growth of the larger capoeira schools.<sup>2</sup> The group-learning pattern of organization quickly jelled around the art, despite efforts by some to structure the schools along the more traditional lines of federations. This was, without a doubt, the most significant step in the recent history of capoeira. Organization by groups became a standard in which the teacher or *mestre* forms and organizes his own school, then establishes ties with some institution which has already achieved recognition in the

marketplace. Still a lively topic of discussion is to what extent that form of organization serves to preserve capoeira in its wealth of diversity while adding sinew to the nation’s cultural backbone.

Another important trend in the early 1980s was renewed appreciation of the “old masters,” together with the strengthening of the Angola-style capoeira groups. These groups gained in influence as the larger capoeira community began having doubts about the metamorphosis of their practice into a commercial sport.<sup>3</sup> A reflection of this was a trend toward re-Africanization within the capoeira community – especially at its more traditional schools – a trend that affected their lingo, musical styles, instruments, and even the historical viewpoint of researchers. Capoeira scholars began to lay emphasis on its African origins, and began searching for earlier foundations and parallel styles, with discoveries that included the Caribbean *ladja* of Martinique, and the *moringue* of the Indian Ocean. Simplistic nationalism, once the dominant influence, gave way to a

(2) By way of clarification and context, each capoeira group is a school founded by one or more masters, which unifies under a single name the teaching venues run by its graduates as teachers or *mestres*. They range from small groups, with two or three little academies, to large ones, chartered as corporations and global in scope. Graduates of one school will often migrate to another group to teach professionally, a development that has profoundly altered master-student relations throughout the world of capoeira. Up to the 1970s, the *mestre*’s name was practically an added surname to the student (e.g. Mestre João Pequeno de Pastinha). Nowadays, practitioners identify more closely with their groups.

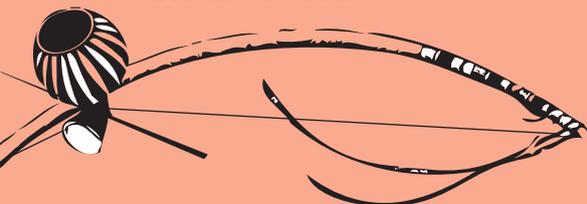
(3) Note also that under the military regime of the 1970s, characterized by intensive economic development and a push toward modernization, capoeira was generally appreciated in terms of its value as a sport and its characterization as “Brazil’s national martial art.”

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more global view of the culture and early development of capoeira, which is now understood as part of the resistance put up by Africans sold into slavery, and by their descendants all over the world. Capoeira had legitimate standing as a sport, true enough, but its larger cultural and artistic whole resisted deconstruction into simply another sport. This cultural reawakening, which began in the 1980s, grew stronger as expressions like “salvaging” and “cultural baggage” worked their way into the lingo current with capoeiristas. One result of this was that capoeiristas, accustomed to conga drums fitted with easy-to-use tuning lugs, reverted to drums stretched and tuned with heavy knotted sisal cords. As a cultural phenomenon woven into the warp and woof of Brazilian heritage, not simply a sport, capoeira took the world by storm during the 1990s, and merged with popular culture on a global scale.

Gone is the lone capoeirista of the 1970s, risking life and limb overseas, replaced today by strategic thinkers

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out to conquer new markets. Today there is not a successful group in Brazil that doesn't have its own representatives abroad. With very few exceptions, capoeira is easily found and promptly recognized in any of the world's major cities, where native teachers – schooled by Brazilians – are teaching the style in their own countries. There lies the challenge that faces today's scholars and practitioners, namely, to understand where capoeira fits in as its own facet of international pop culture. To the observer it shifts, one minute showing its Brazilian roots, then appearing the next as a market phenomenon, paying homage to its African origins while standing in judgemental contrast to the Western culture surrounding it. Clearly, we must understand how this international Diaspora meshes with the dynamics of globalized culture, but understand it also in terms of its own inner logic, at odds with its inner contradictions.

**CONTEMPORARY CAPOEIRA STYLES.** Two different styles emerged from the modernization of capoeira and its acceptance as a sport beginning in the 1930s. “Capoeira regional”, the first modern style, was created by *Mestre Bimba* (1900-1974), and perpetuated by his group of students. Bimba thought the style in Bahia was too laid-back to hold its own against the mixed martial arts entering freestyle competition at the time. To develop his “Bahian regional fighting style,” Bimba kept the techniques he thought proper, dispensed with others he considered outdated and worked in some new moves – generally effective overall. Even more important was his development of a teaching style in a more formal academic environment – wearing uniforms – and setting disciplinary and ethical standards. But despite its huge success, especially from the 1960s on, his style was not universally accepted by capoeira devotees in Bahia.

A competing faction, headed up largely by *Mestre Pastinha* since the 1940s, chose to retain precisely those

though these had long been a part of “traditional” Bahian capoeira. We must bear in mind that even before the wave of modernization, Bahian capoeira was by no means uniform and homogeneous, but rather, each individual *mestre* taught his own specific set of movements, rhythms and rituals. Indeed, the capoeira taught by other old *mestres*, men like Waldemar, Cobrinha Verde or Canjiquinha, were very different in many features from what was taught by *mestre Pastinha*.

We therefore see that there was never a unique, monolithic capoeira tradition in its early days in Bahia. This, in turn, made it easier for later groups to emphasize dissimilar or even conflicting versions of the “tradition.” We should note that both the regional and angolan schools parted company with the street-wise hep-cats of yesteryear, and transferred their schools indoors, where they offered scheduled training, uniforms and rules. They began teaching larger classes and recruiting students – male and female – of all ages and from all walks of life.



Luiz Renato Collection



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elements of the earlier capoeira style which the regional school had discarded, such as *chamadas* and *jogo de dentro* (ritual breaks and slow intertwined movements), plus a host of theatrical and ritual aspects of *rodas* (including the opening litanies). Even as Bimba labored toward innovation, Pastinha and his adherents struggled to preserve older traditions. This prompted them to add “angola” to the name of their capoeira style, as a means of emphasizing that they kept in touch with the African roots of the art. Yet although the *angoleiros* see themselves – to this day – as guardians of tradition, theirs is clearly a new style forged in part from an effort to preserve capoeira as it was practiced in Bahia during the 1930s, but also springing from their concerted opposition to the regional style. For instance, whenever Angolan practitioners noticed that capoeira regional made use of *balões* – boosted sequences of assisted moves – they were quick to condemn the practice, even

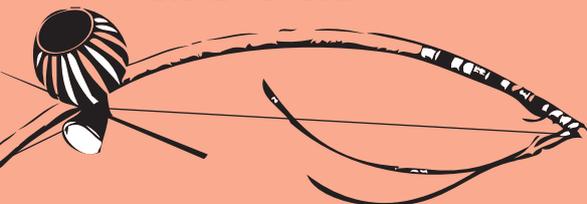
Further complications developed as modern capoeira, based on these two styles from Bahia, spread across the country. The knowledge was transmitted in several ways. Graduates trained by *mestres* in Bahia often set up shop in different states, most of them migrating to cities in southeastern Brazil. Alternatively, students in other states practiced capoeira on their own, and occasionally took classes with the original *mestres* during trips to Bahia. Here, the self-taught nature of the art led to variations on the style, variations easily observed in the case of Rio de Janeiro’s Grupo Senzala. Furthermore, capoeira practitioners from Bahia came upon local capoeira traditions in many cities. How important the contributions of these local forms were to the development of today’s styles is an issue shrouded in controversy, especially in the case of Rio de Janeiro, where teachers like Sinhozinho taught a non-musical style of capoeira even before the arrival of the *baianos*.

To put it differently, this transformation of *capoeiragem* – by which is meant its social context – had an impact on its content. This tells us there is a need to go beyond the classical binary angola-regional dichotomy if we are to distinguish the various styles of capoeira from each other and differentiate among them according to the features they emphasize: contention, tradition, culture, diversion or dance.

In the search for a better life, many people migrated from Bahia to cities in the Southwest from about the 1950s through 1980, when many others began migrating overseas. Among this migrant population were capoeira *mestres*, graduate students and amateur practitioners. Outside the Northeastern region, capoeira became part of the cultural baggage of the migrant population, where it accumulated nostalgic references to Bahia that linger to this day. Living in exile strengthened the ties between capoeiristas of the various styles to the point of undermining the rivalry between proponents of the regional versus angolan schools. In many cases *mestres* and teachers of the angolan and regional styles jointly organized groups and taught classes, especially in São Paulo (e.g. *Cordão de Ouro*, etc.). Generally speaking, however, the angolan style, with its greater cultural dependence on the Afro-Bahian frame of reference, was not as easily assimilated among the new groups of practitioners, and gained little ground during that time. The predominant playing style much more closely resembled the form taught by *mestre* Bimba, even if, at times, it dispensed with his study plans, such as practicing the eight basic patterns.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, the music played by groups outside of Bahia was not typically the regional style. The rhythm most often played on the berimbau bows was *São Bento Grande*, a favorite in Angola circles.<sup>5</sup> For these reasons the next generation of masters living outside of Bahia lost interest in the rift between angolan and regional capoeira, often asserting they were “one and the same.” This “ecumenical” approach had its advantages: it defused conflict among capoeiristas striving to convince the public that their sport had nothing to do with idlers and dissolute hepcats; at the same time it meshed perfectly with the nationalist notion that capoeira – much more than a mere sport – was “the” Brazilian martial art and raised its status as a privileged exponent of Brazil’s national identity.

The São Paulo Capoeira Federation was organized in 1970 under the auspices of the military government that gained control in 1964, and in 1972 the Brazilian Pugilism Confederation (CPB) added a capoeira department as an umbrella organization for fighting styles lacking confederations of their own. Member groups agreed to abide by Federation rules, ranging from the minutiae of competition regulations to mandatory uniforms and deferential salutations (such as the “*Salve!*” still in use at many capoeira schools). These changes, true enough, facilitated the integration of capoeira into the school system and sports on a

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(4) “Regional capoeira patterns,” or “sequences taught by Mestre Bimba” are one of the most telling features of the teaching method developed by this important *baiano* master. They consist of a sequence of attack and defense moves, simulating actual combat and acting as a sort of stock-in-trade of the most important techniques in regional capoeira. Patterns (which some believe total eight arrangements) were used to teach beginners and as part of daily training for more advanced capoeiristas.

(5) In addition to providing the rhythmic foundations for performing the “stock-in-trade” of capoeira, the berimbau is charged with important symbolism in capoeira circles. The tunes played on the berimbau express the preferences of the group or mestre running the circle. They set the pace and determine other features of capoeira play. Thus there are, among many others, “Angola” and “Regional” tunes.

national scale, and sparked yet another wave of expansion outside of Brazil. Nevertheless, a backlash soon followed, from practitioners committed to the idea of resistance by the underdog, which was still associated with the style.

A number of groups, including several of the largest, not only refused to join the Federation but went even farther in staking out their alternative approach. For instance, they established competing standards of rank, with associated colors of rope belts for each grade. In the midst of all this, a resurgence of Afro-Bahian traditions gained in strength to the point of approaching the stature of capoeira angola – which had itself been declining with the passing of an entire generation of old *mestres* from Bahia, which decline reached its ebb with the passing of Pastinha (1981). Beginning in the 1980s this style resumed graduating its own masters and increasing its ranks in Brazil and elsewhere. Some friction has since arisen between one angola style, whose practitioners claim to trace their lineage directly back to a *baiano* master, and styles we might call “angolanized” in that they incorporate some of the moves characteristic of *angoleiros* without letting go of peculiarities of their own, peculiarities scorned by the *angoleiros* as “regional.” As time went on, several of the groups demanded recognition as *angoleiros*, recognition withheld from them by what might be described as the “hard core” practitioners of capoeira angola.

The situation gets even trickier as we examine the qualifier “regional.” To the *angoleiros* it is a handy category into which all other styles are indiscriminately lumped, so the term itself acquires negative connotations in their lingo. At the opposite end of the style spectrum are several anointed heirs of *mestre* Bimba who seek to preserve his style with no major changes. These worthies likewise announce to the world that only they merit the title of regional. This was reason enough for many capoeira masters to divorce themselves entirely from both of the extreme or “purist” designations, and either describe their style as “contemporary” capoeira or claim that they practice both styles (an advantageous marketing position in the face of increasing competition among teachers). This fence-straddling led purists to coin the pejorative “angonal” to belittle these middle-of-the-road practitioners – until the miscreants took to proudly sporting the title.

To describe capoeira as “contemporary” does not convey a meaningful picture of the thing described. There are, after all, several clearly distinguishable forms, beginning with the angola and regional variants. As capoeira outgrew its original context and broadened into academies, schools, universities, stage performance, mixed martial art competitions and even gained acceptance as therapy, it sprouted new meanings, interpretations, forms, training methods and styles of play. To put it differently, this transformation of *capoeiragem* – by which is meant its social context – had an impact on its content. This tells us there is a need to

go beyond the classical binary angola-regional dichotomy if we are to distinguish the various styles of capoeira from each other and differentiate among them according to the features they emphasize: contention, tradition, culture, diversion or dance.

**CHASMS AND CHALLENGES** .This complex scenario, which we can only outline here, places before the new generation of practitioners, group managers, academies and public agencies, a laundry list of basic issues surrounding



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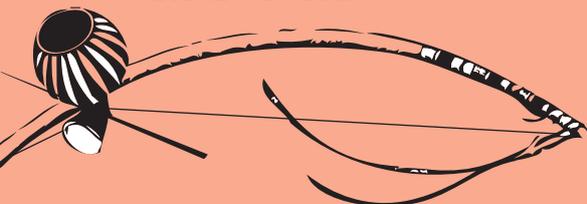


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Throughout this international expansion before mass audiences – as a sport one day and a cultural exhibition the next – stereotypes are emerging and becoming entrenched. The process involves trade-offs, as does any other process relating to cultural change.



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the development of capoeira. If past generations had to cope with the possible disappearance of capoeira – and this has actually happened to other other Brazilian combative dance styles or manly arts like the *batuque*, *pernada carioca* and *tiririca* – the dilemmas unfolding in today's scenario are altogether different. Capoeira is a part of everyday life in Brazil and has spread throughout the world as one of the most visible symbols of Brazilian culture abroad. Throughout this international expansion before mass audiences – as a sport one day and a cultural exhibition the next – stereotypes are emerging and becoming entrenched. The process involves trade-offs, as does any other process relating to cultural change.

By current challenges we mean issues that, in our view, merit inclusion in today's discussion agendas on the topic of capoeira – whether it be in debates on capoeira activities abroad or couched in plans for government action relating to the practice, teaching and popularization of the art in its myriad aspects.

One of the issues we perceive as crucial to current debate has to do with the passing along of ancient traditions and capoeira lore. It is a recurrent theme in discussions about the sort of qualifications a practitioner ought to have in order to become a teacher or master. After all, the traditional notion of a master – an individual known to the community as possessing ancient knowledge handed down by oral tradition and passed along gradually over time in day-to-day contact with the trainee – is slowly being replaced by that of a capoeirista whose title to the calling arrives in the form of a grant by a given group, federation or some sort of quasi-official entity. Within the capoeira community there is nothing resembling a consensus on this topic. Although the larger schools or capoeira groups have been successful in providing their masters with a certain standing (so that the *mestre* derives his legitimacy from the strength of the entity he represents, as



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well as from his own qualities and knowledge as an individual), there is a whole world of capoeira practiced outside of these fraternal gatherings of the art, a world that has no clear standards as to what sort of qualifications or training a capoeira teacher ought to have.

The issue becomes even thornier when we consider the diffusion of capoeira across international borders. It is only natural, after all, to expect entities and individuals extending their hospitality to Brazilian *capoeiristas* overseas to take an interest in what sort of credentials he or she has in Brazil. Yet there is no simple solution. Some of the suggestions put forth and widely debated in capoeira circles carry within them more problems than solutions. An example is to authorize this federation or that government agency to compile and enforce an “official” list of *mestres* or persons authorized to teach the art. This subject must be studied more closely, and its boundaries clearly defined even in the absence of a feasible way to establish standards applicable to all styles as a requirement for permission to work as a capoeira teacher or *mestre*. Those pioneering *mestres* who carried capoeira outside of Brazil have from the outset worried about the arrival of other *capoeiristas*, often unknown in Brazil and entirely lacking in teaching experience, to set up shop and, oftentimes, arrogate unto themselves the title of *mestre*. In the past there has been some preoccupation in Brazil over baseless claims to the title of capoeira teacher or *mestre*. However, the widespread popularity of capoeira today, coupled with the development of its own market, of which there is widespread public understanding, has effectively reduced the number of teachers working without proper qualifications. This, however, is not yet the case overseas.

In the absence of any significant discussion of the issue, the vacuum has been filled by a complex scenario in which several actors predominate.<sup>6</sup> Bear in mind the thorough discussions undertaken in the late 1990s and still ongoing,

albeit with reduced emphasis, about the role of physical education instructors in the teaching of capoeira. Federal Law No. 9696, published in 1998, imposed regulatory requirements for teaching physical education and created the corresponding federal and regional job councils. It turns out that widespread assumptions – later found to have been erroneous – about the idea of “physical activities,” led the Federal Council to spread the word that as of the date of its publication, the law provided that only physical education teachers were entitled to teach capoeira.

This brings us to another subject that, in our estimation, places today’s capoeira between the horns of a dilemma – this one having to do with the preservation of the cultural diversity attending the art. Try as we might to regard capoeira as a sort of universal body language, its constituent parts still fit together differently, resulting in different “accents.” Here we refer not only to the distinction between the angola and regional variants, but rather, to internal differences within these larger schools of capoeira – ranging from technical features to the game itself through concepts underlying the rituals and ethical standards which guide the practitioner’s choices and actions. The organization of these large capoeira groups, with their corporate personas and aggressive strategies for expanding throughout the interior of Brazil – and even into other countries – are observed by several scholars with some misgivings about the possible disappearance of the more colorful outward features of capoeira among those provincial communities and along the peripheries of larger cities. The work carried on by entities connected with the spread of culture, and especially by government agencies having jurisdiction over that culture, must be based on the principle that there is not just a single capoeira, but a plurality of capoeiras. To preserve that diversity and foster a culture of tolerance is to preserve a scenario in which every expression of capoeira is allowed to find its own place.

Preserving the diversity of capoeira often means ensuring that *capoeiristas* are able to earn a living from their calling. The issue is particularly thorny in Brazil nowadays in the case of elderly *mestres* living in the nation’s traditional capoeira centers (cities such as Salvador, Rio de Janeiro and Recife) as well as small towns in the interior, where traditional forms of capoeira survive even now. We consider this one of the larger challenges on the road toward implementing a public policy to foster the valuation of capoeira as part of Brazil’s cultural heritage.

(6) We must realize that under current legislation in Brazil, no exclusive monopoly is granted to sporting organizations such as federations or confederations. Such entities cannot, therefore, be considered “official” in the sense of having greater government support behind them than do others – with regard to the organization and representation of practitioners of a given category. For any given category of sports there may be – and in many cases there are – more than one federation per state and more than a single confederation national in scope. This is not to mention the leagues and other types of associations which, with regard to the subject discussed here, have the same prerogatives as federations in the representation of their practitioners. Some capoeira groups have organized their own federations, confederations or leagues.

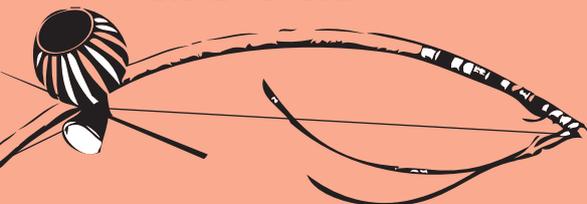
The Cultural Department of the Ministry of Foreign Relations (MRE) has, through its embassies and consulates, secured support for capoeiristas working outside of Brazil.

With that in mind, some attention should be given to the importance of the *Capoeira Viva* project organized by the Ministry of Culture (MinC). Unveiled in Rio de Janeiro in 2006, its purpose is to promote capoeira and provide a basis for government initiatives consistent with the industry.<sup>7</sup> The project consists basically of providing support, through rules publicly proclaimed in an official posting given broad circulation, to efforts related to the teaching of the art in poor communities. Other actions have been undertaken by the federal government in the past, some of them dating back to the 1980s. What sets the *Capoeira Viva* project apart, as we see it, is the effort to give transparency to the setting of standards for selecting projects to be funded, and widespread publication of their results. We therefore have, as we embark on the 21st century, a pioneering and systematic government effort aimed at furthering the development of capoeira.

With regard to the important movement aimed at restoring the ancestral traditions of capoeira, we would like to call attention to the very limited appropriations for historical memories and various other types of knowledge relating to capoeira. Unfortunately, efforts to broaden our research into capoeira have not been attended with similar efforts toward disseminating this knowledge to the practicing community or to society in general. In other words, research relying primarily on the older capoeiras and their surrounding communities as primary sources has tended to dislodge that knowledge, and led to the emergence of an elite group of capoeiristas having plenty of formal academic training, but little understanding of the importance of mechanisms for disseminating that knowledge. Here we identify yet another area in which the State ought to intervene in order to promote popular culture and citizenship – not only by making the research possible, but to see to it that it is also given everything necessary to bring about those conditions that will strengthen the environment in which it is produced as an expression of the life of those communities.

Lastly, there ought to be some discussion of the possibility of providing support to capoeira *mestres* and teachers overseas. The Cultural Department of the Ministry of Foreign Relations (MRE) has, through its embassies and consulates, secured support for capoeiristas working outside of Brazil. The embassies, however, could play a larger role as touchstones for Brazilian culture by providing libraries and video display venues for masters, teachers, and other interested parties. We would like to further suggest that informal capoeira counsels be organized, supported by their corresponding embassies, in countries in which significant visibility has already been achieved. The duty of these councils would be to offer opinions whenever rolls of teachers' names are compiled – so as to always preserve a plurality

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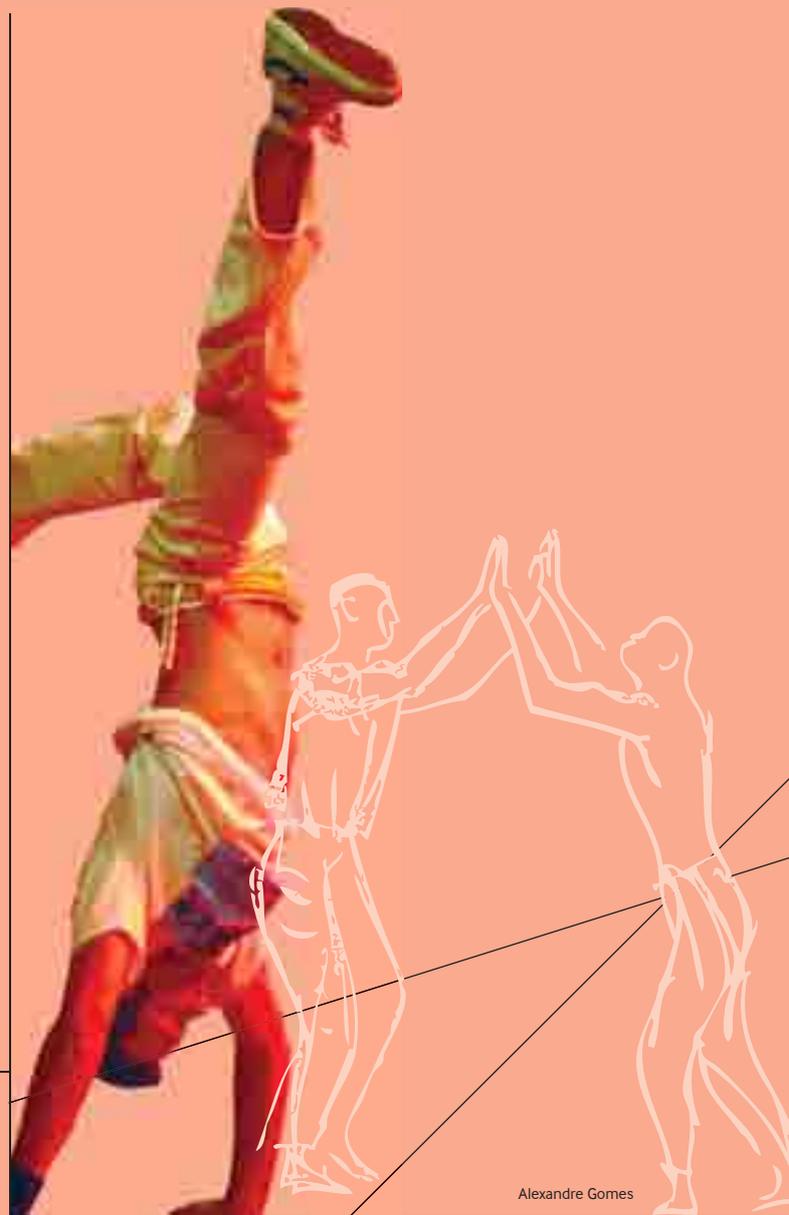


(7) The project web site is: [www.capoeiraviva.org.br](http://www.capoeiraviva.org.br)

of styles – or to help see to it that the decisions on sponsorship having to do with capoeira are more transparent. As we have already pointed out in the case of *Capoeira Viva*, we must ensure that increased funding for capoeira, through a series of cultural incentive laws, is placed under common control so as to also serve as an example for globalization of other manifestations of Brazilian culture – something that is already taking place, albeit in a hole-and-corner way, with samba and *maracatu* rhythms.

**CLOSING REMARKS.** The ongoing globalization of capoeira provides an opportune moment for reflecting on the popularization of Brazilian culture worldwide. It is our view that, in a world where information circulates instantaneously through the Internet, fitted out with resources such as video sharing sites (widely used by capoeira practitioners the world over), a minimalist view of what Brazil ought to do is not what we need at this time. In other words, it may be important to reaffirm the Brazilian nature of our art, but that alone will not suffice to keep Brazil at the forefront in today's world of capoeira.

Brazil's leadership in the world of capoeira today can only be ensured by practical policies vesting value in the capoeira culture as both a tradition and a part of daily life at every level of Brazilian society. Only then – having availed ourselves of the privilege of sheltering the lore of the art, and having been the cradle in which wonderful feats were accomplished by the great capoeiras of the past – will Brazil continue to merit recognition throughout the world as a source of historical memory and new experiences relating to the practice, its musical heritage, and the teaching of capoeira itself.



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