

TOURISM AND CULTURE: CARNIVAL IN THE CITY OF MACEIÓ-AL (BRAZIL)

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ABSTRACT

Carnival is celebrated in a peculiar way in the city of Maceio, in the State of Alagoas (Brazil), by presenting greater involvement of local society in the weekend before the official date consecrated to the festival in the calendar. The “*Previa*”, as it is called, is consolidated in each edition, even if government actions seek to develop a broader Carnival agenda, which includes the official dates for such festivities. As such, the aim of this investigation was to historically rescue the dynamics between the city and Carnival, in their transversalities with culture and tourism. The investigation strategy of the research, the focus of this article is qualitative-exploratory in nature, and data collection was based on bibliographic and documentary research and interviews. The study to understand the peculiarities of the empirical object covers the 19th, 20th and early decades of the 21st centuries. At each historical moment it questions the articulation of the carnival festivities with the city itself, culture and tourism. The data obtained makes it possible to characterize four cycles in the Carnival of Maceió, periods that may overlap: (a) from 1850 to 1930, a time when the spontaneous manifestations of the *entrudo* gained organicity, involving especially Afro-descendants and, simultaneously, the prevalence of racism among the white elites; (b) from 1930 to 1990, marked by the distancing from the historical centre leading to the spatial segregation; (c) from 1993 to 2005, added to the spatial segregation, the temporary segregation associated to the *Prévias*; (d) after 2005, when the festival expanded, but was not necessarily coupled with social inclusion.

KEYWORDS

Carnival, culture, tourism

TURISMO E CULTURA: O CARNAVAL NA CIDADE DE MACEIÓ (BRASIL)

RESUMO

O Carnaval é celebrado de forma peculiar na cidade de Maceió, no Estado de Alagoas (Brasil), ao apresentar maior envolvimento da sociedade local no final de semana anterior à data oficial consagrada à festa no calendário. A “*Prévia*”, como é denominada, consolida-se a cada edição, mesmo que, em anos recentes, ações governamentais busquem o desenvolvimento de uma agenda carnavalesca mais ampla, que alcance as datas oficiais para tais festejos. Nesses termos, o objetivo desta investigação foi o de resgatar historicamente as dinâmicas apostas entre

a cidade e o Carnaval, nas suas transversalidades com a cultura e o turismo. A estratégia investigativa associada à pesquisa, foco deste artigo, apresenta caráter qualitativo-exploratório, e a coleta de dados apoiou-se na pesquisa bibliográfica e documental e em entrevistas. O estudo, para compreensão das peculiaridades do objeto empírico, percorre os séculos XIX, XX e décadas iniciais do século XXI, em cada momento histórico questionando-se a articulação da festa carnavalesca com a própria cidade, a cultura e o turismo, quando este se faz presente. Os dados obtidos permitem caracterizar quatro ciclos no Carnaval de Maceió, períodos que podem se sobrepor: (a) de 1850 à 1930, momento em que as manifestações espontâneas do entrudo ganham maior organicidade, envolvendo especialmente afrodescendentes e, em simultâneo, presença de racismo pelas elites brancas; (b) de 1930 à 1990, marcado pelo afastamento do centro histórico levando à segregação espacial; (c) de 1993 a 2005, soma-se à segregação espacial, a segregação temporal associada às Prévias; (d) após 2005, quando há expansão da festa, mas sem que a mesma venha, necessariamente, acompanhada de inclusão social.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Carnaval, cultura, turismo

INTRODUCING

The city of Maceió, capital of Alagoas, a state located in the northeast of Brazil, is home to an estimated population of 1,025,360 inhabitants (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e de Estatística [IBGE], n.d.). Its economy is based on the trade of goods and services, among which tourism appears with significant relevance. In addition to the scenic beauty, which attracts visitors and structures the highest performing tourism segment — the sun and the sea —, the local gastronomy and the festivals of popular cultural expressions stand out, such as the pre-Carnival, the cycle of June festivities and the Bumba-Meu-Boi exhibition. Even so, the city has low human development indexes (HDI) and the highest Gini¹ index of Brazilian capitals (Borges & Nealdo, 2019).

With Maceió and its Carnival as focus, this article aims to historically rescue the dynamics between both, in their transversality with culture and tourism. In this city, nowadays, the festivities take place in the week before the official days of the festival in the calendar², hence the programming is treated as “Prévias Carnavalescas” (Carnival Preview), a name that leads to a certain contradiction. It leads to the assumption that something will follow it, which is not fully confirmed, because on the official date of Momo festivities, more specifically, there is not the same festive vigour that marks the celebration in various parts of the country and abroad (Silva Neto, 2014).

We consider as general introductory assumptions for the discussion that will follow, based on the keywords, the questions presented below.

¹ The Italian mathematician Conrado Gini developed an index to measure the level of income concentration in societies. The final resulting number, the closer it is to zero, the closer it is to equality; the closer it is to one, it expresses its opposite.

² Carnival is celebrated 47 days before Easter Sunday. The date of the festival is not fixed, sometimes occurring in February, sometimes in March, due to Holy Week being celebrated according to the first full moon of the spring equinox in the northern hemisphere.

Firstly, Carnival arises from the Middle Ages and is established, since then, as an urban festival. Therefore, it is important to bring its development closer to that observed in cities, in particular to what was drawn from the transition from the 20th to the 21st century. At the time there was an expansion of the cities in economic and geopolitical terms (in detriment of the presence of national states), and of Carnival, which reached, in the same sense, high economic status.

Secondly, the hegemony of the urban leads to the diversification, specialisation and qualification of cultural production, to serve an increasingly demanding consumer audience, including tourists. What is designated as culture in the final decades of the 20th century, shows a conceptual and temporal expansion. Temporal, because the symbolic exchanges mediated by advances in technology, globalisation and consumption, change the perception of historical time and cultural representations (Featherstone, 1995; Hartog, 2007). Conceptually, now included as “cultural” are not only those goods associated with the magnificent material heritage, but also immaterial goods such as festivals, among them the Carnival, handicrafts and culinary knowledge, in both their erudite and popular expressions. The daily practices of different social groups are altered, among others by their availability in the market of symbolic and economic exchanges (Canclini, 1999).

Thirdly, tourism, associated with its massive offer, was an important economic contribution for many contemporary cities. In this situation, it presents both dialogues and conflicts with local cultural expressions. For the purposes of this reflection, we resume what we have already mentioned in a previous article (Gastal & Moesch, 2007), that the tourist activity implies historical-social practices associated with the subjects’ mobility in times and spaces different from those experienced in their daily lives. It also means that tourist displacement will no longer be marked by the distance travelled in the territory, but guided by the estrangement(s) that may be produced in the subjects (Campos, 2012). In this way, we assume that it is possible to do tourism without leaving the urban perimeter of the residence.

Fourthly, the conceptual, typological, and chronological expansion of what is treated as culture nowadays leads to the consequent expansion of the possibilities covered by the segment of cultural tourism. In this dimension, contemporary travellers seek greater interaction with the daily life of the places they visit, including traditional festivals. Tourism and culture become intrinsically linked, regardless of whether cultural resources are the primary motivation for tourist displacement. In these terms, in a broad sense, it is possible to understand that all tourism practice is cultural, leading to the incorporation of other segments as cultural, such as creative tourism (Gastal, 2012; Pérez, 2009; Richards, 2011). For the World Tourism Organization (as in Richards, 2009) — in what Richards (2009) characterizes as a “narrower definition” —, cultural tourism comprises:

movements of people in search of essentially cultural motivations, such as study tours, theatre and cultural excursions, trips to festivals and other cultural events, visits to localities and monuments, trips to study nature, folklore or art and pilgrimages. The central aspect in this definition is

that cultural tourism involves essentially cultural motivations. (Richards, 2009, p. 1)

This segmentation would represent 37% of the global tourism, with such percentage varying according to the concept for cultural tourism applied by the localities. Among its audiences, there would be tourism agents and workers in the cultural sector. According to Richards (2009), it would mean that people who work in museums, when they are on holiday, visit other museums. This seems to be a clear evidence that extending rather than reversing everyday patterns of consumption is important for many cultural tourists (Richards, 2009, p. 3).

Based on the four assumptions set out in the research, this article proposes to understand how the Carnival in Maceió is historically organized and how its relations with the cultural field and tourism in the urban space are constituted, leading to peculiarities such as the aforementioned “Prévias”. The research process was based on a qualitative approach. Data collection resulted from bibliographic review and documentary research based on the keywords carnival, tourism and culture, and collection through in-depth interview, questioning the interrelationships between them, in the city of Maceió. Based on the proposal of Tomazzoni (2009), it is considered that in the analysis of situations associated with tourism — and one could add, with culture —, it is necessary to consider, among others, authorities and political realities, local culture, tourists, and local and external partners in this process. For the author, such actors are private entrepreneurs, the public sector, local communities and the tourists. Their interaction requires permeable boundaries to provide a favourable environment for creation and reinventions.

In these terms, leaders of cultural and tourism organizations in the city were heard, and for this article we highlight the speeches of Vinicius Palmeira (then president of the Municipal Foundation for Cultural Action of the City of Maceió); Edberto Ticianeli (director and founder of Jaraguá Folia); Bruno César Cavalcante (anthropologist and researcher at the Federal University of Alagoas); and records of a radio interview that brought together, on February 21, 2014, Vinicius Palmeira and Claudia Pessoa, then, respectively, municipal secretaries of Culture and Tourism (Rádio Educativa de Alagoas, 2014).

THEORETICAL CONTEXT

Carnival is among the major seasonal festivals — Christmas, Easter and New Year, among others — which would report to European pagan rituals in their origin. They are symbolically associated with birth, death and the resurgence of life, and to the cycles marked in nature. Such festivals expand when they are Christianized and urbanized, because the city established an “urban time proper to the celebration of the festival” (F. Ferreira, 2009, p. 25).

Peter Burke (2010) states that popular festivals have undergone successive transformations throughout recent history, as tradition and the sense of collectivity decline, overtaken by a notion of the individual. The historian also notes that the medieval courts were constantly influenced by the dances and chants of the peasantry, but from the 16th

century, the aristocracy's parties became more reserved and sober. At the same time, popular Carnival started to associate political and anti-religious manifestations. Modernity increased popular festivals, a situation made easier by the advent of the printing press, demarcating new behaviours. In this modern scenario, in 1873, the traditional Nice Carnival was already presented as a resource to attract tourists, in actions coordinated by a festival committee (F. Ferreira, 2009).

Academically, Carnival is part of a broader category of analysis, the festival. Freud (2006) states that the festive feeling is released when people act collectively and "open themselves up to an allowed excess, or rather, mandatory, with the solemn break of a prohibition" (p. 144). Durkheim (1989) considers this feeling similar to the religious ritual, in which people are transported out of themselves and distracted from their ordinary occupations and worries. However, in its asymmetries, Carnival is also a moment in the cultural universe. Thus,

a privileged moment due to its characteristics, for the analysis of sociability practices and the multiple meanings that pierce and guide (or condition) them, since their rites (Carnival practices), reflect the dialogues and tensions of the society that produces them, transposing them to the symbolic field. (Brito, 2005, p. 2)

Brito (2005) goes on to state that Carnival must be seen as a social phenomenon, in which the whole society expresses itself, being the result of culture and, therefore, a result of exchanges that go beyond — but do not nullify — the limits of class and social situation. The most important thing would be to apprehend their meanings, among others, placing themselves as a mirror of the individual and the collective to thereby "seek to rediscover historical and cultural guarantees, reconfirming them in the representation, in the communicative and community act" (M. Ferreira, 2005, p. 28). It also means that festivals with the dimension of Carnival extrapolate to those physically present in the festive arenas, involving society as a whole, directly or indirectly.

To discuss the Carnival in the city of Maceió, this article resumes questions proposed by Lorena (2019), for whom the momesque festivity has been used to analyse themes associated with national identity and other aspects of social life, including social class, race, gender and even tourism, themes that tend to emerge, moreover, intersected (p. 63). The author reviews the studies on Carnival and sets them up in broad lines of theoretical support. The first, the one launched by Bakhtin, sees the festival as an inversion, not only in the tradition in which men dress up as women, but as a subversion of hierarchy and stratifications of the status quo, as well as an escape from the tensions of everyday life, and therefore it is an extra-ordinary moment.

Lorena (2019) also highlights DaMatta, who is included among the theorists who treat Carnival as inversion-subversion, but on the premise that this festival, by confronting the system, would validate it. It is necessary to consider, therefore, not only the performance itself but also the intentions underlying it. The validation (or not) of the system would involve the discussion about the social control exercised over the festival and the society resilience to it. Seen as a form of resistance, the Carnival would constitute a

counter-hegemonic instrument, “in which not only asymmetries and inequalities would be revealed and questioned, but also other alternative worlds would be created and experienced, even if temporarily. The subversion potential of Carnival could even affect structures and power relations” (Lorena, 2019, p. 55).

Regardless of *parti pris*, Lorena (2019) highlights the importance of the intersections imposed on Carnival. It prioritizes in this article the triangulation of city, culture, and tourism, to consider the Brazilian case, in the city of Maceió. In Brazil, Carnivals are presented as significantly urban popular festivals, with cultural-identity ties to explaining the meaning of being in the world of a given society, in the sense proposed by Bakhtin (1987). In addition, these are events with strong business and financial mobilization that guarantees the festivity the condition of a big business, that moves a complex economy (Miguez, 2008), including tourism.

Furthermore, even though it is recognized as a cultural and artistic spectacle, it is intimately and dynamically related to the political order and the power struggle.

However, its political significance changes depending on the context. The dynamism of the event gives its study a heuristic reach in the analysis of political and cultural dynamics. (Lorena, 2019, p. 56)

As Lorena (2019) highlighted, it is a multifaceted phenomenon, to which study different areas of social sciences contribute, among which, culture and tourism, diversifying and enriching approaches (Cavalcanti, 2013).

For data analysis, Lorena (2019) is considered once again, when she quotes Scott (1990), for whom Carnival would be “an institutionalised form of political disguise and a good analytical instrument to dissect the social order” (p. 59). The author also invokes Cohen (1993) to affirm that “Carnival would still be a masked policy behind cultural forms” (Cohen, 1993, as cited in Lorena, 2019, p. 59).

HISTORICAL CONTEXT IN BRAZIL

The earliest distant reference to Carnival in Brazil dates back to 1553, in the book *Antologia do Carnaval do Recife* (Recife Carnival Anthology), in which it is reported that a couple, residents of the Camaragibe mill, donated a slaughtered sow to their workers, on a Tuesday of Shrovetide (Silva, 1991), the earliest denomination of what would be characterized as Carnival. Another record, from 1608, refers to the prohibition of the celebration of the Shrovetide in Laguna, state of Santa Catarina, by the practice of “mela-mela” (exchange of kisses and caresses, not always of free consent between the parts) that would accompany the festival. Other bans followed (Fernandes, 2001; Pereira, 2004; Silva Neto, 2014).

In 1808, campaigns in newspapers triggered public opinion against what would be the barbarity of and in the Shrovetide, standing for a civilized modernity, whose reference would be the French Carnival of *belle époque* (Cunha, 2001). The campaigns had an effect and flour, talc and other less noble materials, thrown by the participants and at the

passers-by, were replaced by scented water, currants, wine and vinegar, confetti, streamers and spear perfumes. Rio de Janeiro, seat of the imperial government, held its first masquerade ball around 1840, in lounges with banquets, music and drinks, the musicality marked by polka and waltz (Cunha, 2001).

It is worth noting that during the first Masquerade Carnival, held in 1851, in the city of Recife, the attention went to the couple masked with African adornments. At that moment it revealed the assimilation of black languages by the local bourgeoisie, advancing in the following decades its approach to the regional *frevos* and *maracatus* (Cunha, 2001). In Salvador, Bahia, the phenomenon of re-Africanization³ of local Carnival is registered, from the 1970s onwards (Miguez, 2008). Maceió is geographically located in the middle of these two metropolises of north-eastern Brazil, Recife and Salvador, therefore directly referenced by them.

Throughout the 20th century, Carnival grew in importance in Brazilian cities because it increasingly attracted local guests and many others from nearby or distant cities, leading to public and private interventions associated with tourism and, often, to disputes with the cultural field (Silva Neto, 2014). These are two conceptually complicated fields and bringing them together raises other issues and tensions. Starting with culture, the multiplication of studies, approaches and concepts surrounding the term generates theoretical discussions and influences its practices. The same, however, can be applied to tourism, as it is “a phenomenon that presents, at the same time, economic, social, cultural, administrative and environmental aspects related to a universe, in which several social actors, with contrasting interests, find themselves in an arena of complex relationships” (Barretto, 2005, p. 3), affecting both the theoretical and the practical spheres.

In general, local cultural expressions are segmented as cultural tourism, within the scope of public policies that have in marketing an important bias. The *Plano Nacional de Turismo 2013-2016* (Brazilian national tourism plan 2013-2016) (Ministério do Turismo, 2013), for example, configured cultural tourism in the business macro environments, because “it is in them that opportunities are realized” (p. 105). Already in the documents on tourism technology, one can find that “cultural tourism comprises tourism activities related to the experience of the set of significant elements of historical and cultural heritage and of cultural events, valuing and promoting the tangible and intangible goods of culture” (Ministério do Turismo, 2010, p. 5).

In the documents of the Brazilian public authority, the stage for the tourist offer would be the monumental architectural constructions, and one should also consider the resources that accompany the local knowledge, among them the cuisine, the handicraft and the events articulated with the local manifestations. An integrating rationale is perceived within public policies, in partnership with private initiatives, from a growing

³ Risério (1981) uses the term “africanization” to characterize the strong presence of black organizations and clubs in the carnivals of Bahia, at the turn of the 19th to the 20th century, removing the pejorative sense commonly used by the press at the time, and contrasting it with the spirit of “Europeanization” that officially marked the party. Identifying a similar phenomenon in the mid-1970s, with the emergence of Afro *blocos* (groups) and the resurgence of *afoxés*, this same author characterizes this moment as the “re-Africanization” of Bahian carnival (Miguez, 2008, p. 104).

investment in local cultural expressions, reinforcing in this intertwining, its sustainability webs, its regionalization, commercialisation and a strengthening of local relations.

Still on the relationship between tourism and culture, Gastal (2012) warns that the logic present in segmentation policies, highlighted in public planning in different instances, have been characterized by a reduction of the possibilities of visitors' experiences in localities. Cultural tourism cannot be seen only as a specificity of the travellers' motivations in their displacements "to be used by local marketing. Reflection and cultural practices currently have very exciting performances, which cannot be ignored by tourism" (Gastal, 2012, p. 237).

EMPIRICAL CONTEXT: THE CITY OF MACEIÓ

Maceió became a village in 1815 and provincial capital in 1839 (Carvalho, 1980). Since then, the settlement was established as a central region, which began to receive incentives for its institutional and commercial development. In 1856, the Metropolitan Cathedral was inaugurated by the imperial couple Pedro II and Teresa Cristina. The emperor was received at the seaport and a parade led him to the Main Square. "Curious parade", the Emperor declared in his notes about the visit (Duarte, 2010, p. 122.). From then on, other transformations came in urban life, hosting parties such as Shrovetide, Corsican, sea baths in fantasy costumes and balls in social clubs. In 1883, it had regular steam transportation to national and foreign destinations, and six hotels in the accommodation service (Sauer, 1883).

At the beginning of the 20th century, the city collected opinions of its illustrious visitors. We quote two: that of the writer Mário de Andrade (2015), who undertook a journey in the north-eastern and northern regions of the country in the 1920s and recorded: "Maceió, ugly ..." (p. 202). With a different opinion, the Portuguese ambassador to Brazil, Júlio Dantas, when he stayed at the Bela-Vista Palace Hotel in 1924, as an official guest of the state government, stated: "I have the impression of being in a land of princes, because this hotel is one of the most beautiful in Brazil" (Veras Filho, 1991, p. 44). Such opinions, however, rather than diverging, punctuate Maceió⁴, a town marked by profound contrasts, also present in its Carnival, as presented below.

Carnival is a historical product, as it reflects societies and cultures (Lorena, 2019, p. 60). If historical, it is important to retrieve its temporal path, for better understanding. Roughly speaking, it would be possible to compose the Carnival of Maceió in four cycles, not necessarily excluding: that of spontaneous manifestations that start to gain a certain organicity and, as a result, racism by the white elites (1850 until about 1930); that of spatial segregation (1930 to 1990); that of temporal segregation (1993 to 2005); and that of expansion without inclusion (from 2005 onwards).

⁴ Alagoas has one of the largest land concentrations in Brazil (Lira, 2007.). This agrarian elite, by occupying the front ranks of politics, the judiciary and trade sectors, makes civilizational changes and innovations arrive late to the state, subjecting them to intense regulatory control. This malaise is still perceived in the 20th and 21st centuries as it translates into agonizing works such as the fictional short film *Maré Viva* (Live Tide; Tela Tudo Clube de Cinema, 2013) and in several poems by Lêdo Ivo (2004), including *Planta de Maceió*: "The wind from the sea gnaws at the houses and men,/From birth to death, those who live here/are always covered by a light shroud of dampness and saltpetre" (p. 546).

The first cycle would last from the mid 19th century until the beginning of the 20th century, when Carnival began to be celebrated with a certain organicity in its spontaneity, in the form of Fandangos, Maracatus, Cordão de Quilombolas and Zé Pereiras, many of them with a strong African influence (Rafael, 2004). Lima (1956) describes the parade on Saturday night in 1903, when, “in special trams, the traditional and much applauded Zé Pereira da Fênix Alagoana emerged, after being announced by clarion calls” (p. 12). This was followed by “the bright guard of honour, made up of members, some dressed in white, others in costumes, all mounted on horseback, carrying a cane fire”⁵ and a first car in the shape of a huge ostrich that, “with its wings spread, carried a little girl, richly dressed, flanked by costumed Fenians. In the second carriage was a well-arranged gondola, manned by beautiful young ladies dressed in pierrettes” (Lima, 1956, p. 12).

In a ruralized society with a strong Catholic influence, racism was a long-standing presence. For example, in 1856, the same year the imperial court of Brazil was in Maceió, the City Council enacted a law that prevented the sale of essential goods by people of African descent, citing that black people monopolized the trade of foodstuffs and it was necessary to end the monopoly (Andrade, 2012).

In the growth of this blemish, there was, in the Carnival of 1912, the invasion and destruction of Candomblé’s “terreiros” on February 2 of that year, a fact that history recorded as “Quebra-Quebra de 12” (Break-Break of 12; Lima, 2015). The consequences of these actions resulted, among others, in the cultural and religious silencing of the Afro matrix in the city and in the State, with the expansion of the processes of ethnic avoidance (Silva Neto, 2014). Even so, the influences were still present. Africans in Alagoas come from the Banto (or Bantu) linguistic branch, leaving as a legacy:

moral, spiritual, religious, aesthetic, social and political values, body techniques, agricultural technologies, collective associative behaviours, models of family organization and others. And that is why the Africans did not contribute to Brazilian culture, because those who contribute do it “from outside”; they constituted it, that is, they elaborated it “on the inside”. (Milani, 2005, para. 6)

Lima (1956) records festive movements in the weeks leading up to Carnival, in the first half of the 20th century, involving small traders and artisans on Rua do Hospital, with masks adorning the shop windows. He highlights the movement of revellers in the house of a certain “Mr.” Ludgero, an old carpenter, and in a commercial house called “Chapéu Chinez”, which only opened during the festive period. On Carnival Sunday there were *blocos* (groups) in the Praça dos Martírios, the centre of public administrative power and reference for commerce, which mixed side by side, workers and traders. In addition to the *blocos* (groups), the same author identifies “loose revellers”, dressed up as characters from the folklore of Alagoas, as well as girls wearing trousers (which would horrify the women of “good family”), “Indians” painted with annatto and cinematographic “cowboys”.

⁵ Typification of a firework that burns in various colours.

About this pulverization of identity, a researcher from the Federal University of Alagoas interviewed as part of the research highlighted, referring to another north-eastern state, Bahia, but with what can be reported to Maceió due to its influences on what is being analysed here: “until the 1970s, the black man from Bahia dressed up as a North American Indian. He was not an Indian from the northeast; he was an Indian with a plume. So, this was the otherness, the victim of the cowboy in the cinema” (Cavalcante, February 10, 2014). The re-Africanization of Bahia occurred when the tourism entrepreneurs saw that they could explore the ethnic model.

The second cycle is marked by spatial segregation, a process that begun in the late 1930s and lasted until the 1980s, marked by sea baths in fantasy costumes on the Avenida beach, Carnival marathons and balls at social clubs on the Pajuçara beach, for members only. It characterized the first festive decentralization, in relation to the historic centre. On the particularity of this period, the same university professor explains that there had always been “a trend towards *Prévias* (previews) here. (...) Diegues Jr., in the 1930s already said that bathing in fantasy costumes has always been ‘*Prévia*.’ It was always before Carnival. So it is traditional, this tendency of ours to have *Prévia* (preview)” (Cavalcante, February 10, 2014). Another historical reason for the “*Prévias*” that take place in the week before the official date of the Carnival in the calendar would be associated with the introduction of the train, in 1894, connecting Maceió to Recife and Rio de Janeiro, leading local elites to seek Carnival festivities in those cities. However, Carnival would only follow a greater trend. For Edberto Ticianeli, interviewed in the research, the escape of the most wealthy of Maceió to other places, whenever the opportunity arose, was due to the urbanization of the city, for him a late urbanization:

the first school in Maceió appeared in 1900. The higher education courses in 1940. This led the children of the elite to study abroad, in Recife, Salvador, Rio [de Janeiro], some in Europe. The shopping was done in Recife. Therefore, this problem meant that in Maceió, during Carnival, or [people] would go to play Carnival in the countryside, which was very good, it was good because they were close to families, to their nucleus of friends, etc. Or they would go to Recife, to Salvador, or to Rio de Janeiro. (Edberto Ticianeli, February 8, 2014)

Carnival *Prévia* became a way for local elites to participate in the festival. Still according to the same interviewee,

in the resumption of 1985 it is the middle class that is already on the street. It is not the people; it is not the popular Carnival. It is the middle class. [The block] Boys from Albania are the middle class. Predominantly middle class. Of course, because of the link with the PCdoB [Communist Party of Brazil] there were many popular segments. But it was a middle-class block. With middle class discourse. It is no longer a rescue from the Carnival of Maceió. It is a new phenomenon. And our model was Bahia, because Bahia was the first middle class experience on the street. (Edberto Ticianeli, February 8, 2014)

The third cycle, that of the temporal segregation is marked by the MaceióFest, or Micareta⁶, the off-season Carnival, created by the government and the Liga dos Blocos (League of Blocks), under the management of the Partido Socialista Brasileiro (Brazilian Socialist Party; PSB)⁷, when in charge of the city hall and the state government, between 1993 and 2005. At that time, the second decentralization of the festival took place, moving further away from the city centre and the Avenida beach, degraded by pollution. The new circuit of electric trios, using large vehicles and sophisticated sound equipment, now runs along the Pajuçara and Ponta Verde beaches, in December, culminating in the beginning of the high season with the holiday's parties and summer holidays. Ticianeli explains the reason for the transposition of the block parades:

Jaraguá was going through a period, the mid-1990s, in which with the revitalization of the neighbourhood, that architectural reform, that renovation of buildings, improvement of the street, etc., there was also a very intense reactivation of night-life, of bars. This also led to an intense cultural life in the area. (...) And in the late 1990s, Tanagi, owner of Casa da Sogra, one of the most frequented bars there, called me for a kind of consultancy. He was the only one who bought the property, all the others were rented. Everyone was closing down, going into decay and he was penniless. And he said: look, what can I do with life? I'm dying here! Do something, create something for the Jaraguá Bar and Restaurant Association, so we can try to boost this here. It's very complicated. [I replied:] It is a process that is beyond my scope, but I can create at least one event. (...) The first event took place in 2001, at that time we didn't even call it Jaraguá Folia. (Edberto Ticianeli, February 8, 2014)

Despite the initiative to seek greater popularization of the street Carnival by transferring it to the Jaraguá neighbourhood, far from the city centre, it did not get the expected success, because

the Carnival of the waterfront is a segregating Carnival. This area [referring to Ponta Verde beach] is not the people's space. (...) Both in Jaraguá and in the waterfront, it is a middle-class Carnival. A certain sociological profile, the populace, the masses, are excluded from the party. Self-excluded so to speak. Because I play a week before you do. The problem is not to

⁶ Micareta (1995-2005) organized by the viability of the public authorities, by entrepreneurs in the entertainment sector and by the Liga Independente dos Blocos Carnavalescos de Maceió (Independent League of Carnival Blocks of Maceió). The last was extinguished in the first decade of the 2000s and reactivated in 2019 under the name Liga Carnavalesca de Maceió, being considered as a Public Utility entity by the Municipal Bill No. 7.340/2020.

⁷ Ronaldo Lessa (PSB), mayor of Maceió 1993-1996; Kátia Born (PSB), mayor of Maceió 1997-2000 and 2001-2003. Ronaldo Lessa, governor 1999-2003, allied to Partido Comunista do Brasil (PCdoB), Partido Popular Socialista (PPS), Partido Verde (PV), Partido dos Trabalhadores do Brasil (PTdoB), Partido Humanista da Solidariedade (PHS), Partido da Reedificação da Ordem Nacional (PRONA), Partido da Mobilização Nacional (PMN), Partido Liberal (PL), Partido Democrático Trabalhista (PDT) e Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT). According to Bezerra (2007), it was after his administration that a new cultural identity was institutionally established in Alagoas.

have *Prévias*, but to have exclusive *Prévias*, because then everybody goes away and the rest damned. If there were *Prévias* (previews) with everybody, it would be interesting. (Cavalcante, February 10, 2014)

In this regard, there is a behaviour which lasts throughout history that is the evasion from the city during the official days of Carnival in the city of Maceió that causes two subsequent movements nowadays: advertising aimed at tourists who want to rest during the momesque period, and the annoyance generated in intellectuals and cultural agents who believe that this broadcast prevents vigorous native actions related to the festivity.

The cycle of expansion without inclusion, which started in the late 1990s, continues today, consecrating the Carnival *Prévias*, and their main events are free: Pinto da Madrugada, since 1999, at the Pajuçara beach, on the Saturday morning before the Carnival, with thousands of revellers and *frevo blocos* (groups); and Jaraguá Folia, since 2001, in the neighbourhood with the same name, and today with more than 100 *blocos* (groups) of *frevo*, *afoxés* and *maracatus*, on the Friday night before the Carnival. This cycle also begins the development and consolidation of the construction of Carnival programmes in the interior of the state, many of them influenced by the format of MaceióFest, with electric trios and Axé Music.

The fourth cycle is marked by actions of public authorities in favour of the Carnival, of Maceió, in which it is possible to consider that the political will seeks greater democratization of the festival and appreciation of local culture. Municipal law nº 4.749/1998 establishes permission to use public streets for festive purposes, provided that a prior application is made to the competent body and the event includes at least 50% of local musicians and groups. The municipal legislation highlights as of public utility: União dos Blocos de Frevo de Maceió (Union of Frevo Blocks of Maceió), Liga das Escolas de Samba de Alagoas (League of Samba Schools of Alagoas), Associação Cultural Tambores de Alagoas (Cultural Association Tambores de Alagoas), Núcleo Cultural da Zona Sul de Maceió (Cultural Centre of the South Zone of Maceió), Centro Cultural e Esportivo do Benedito Bentes (Cultural and Sports Centre Benedito Bentes), Núcleo de Cultura Afro-brasileira Iyá-Ogunte (Centre of Afro-Brazilian Culture Iyá-Ogunte), Organização Cultural Serenata da Pitanguinha (Pitanguinha Serenade Cultural Organization) and the historic Clube Carnavalesco Cavaleiro dos Montes (Carnival Club Cavaleiro dos Montes).

In 2013, the mission of the Fundação Municipal de Ação Cultural (Municipal Foundation for Cultural Action) was to “operate the cultural policy and insert Maceió, above all, in Sistema Nacional de Cultural (National Cultural System). We took on the mission of structuring, we took on the mission of doing, mainly in the fields of the institution’s regulatory frameworks”, according to then-secretary Vinicius Palmeira, in a research interview. In the same interview, he pointed out that

it is a mistake to say that Maceió is a city to rest during the Carnival period, if this dictum means that the city is condemned to silence. It is a city with a 1,000,000 inhabitants, 800,000 of whom earn up to two minimum wages.

These people will not be resting on Carnival days (Vinicius Palmeira, February 14, 2014).

On the relationship with tourism, he clarifies:

we work on cultural policy that prepares the city, which the tourism policy follows and seizes (...). For example, I do not do Maceió Summer 2014 for tourists. I do it for the city. For people here, in my city, in my state. And, consequently, we want all the tourists here to participate. (...) We understand that tourism benefits from the cultural policy. (Vinicius Palmeira, February 14, 2014)

This is followed by his disagreement, for example, in relation to actions such as “setting a group of traditional revellers at the pier of the port to receive tourists, which I think that this is not the role of our popular culture”. Regarding the technical articulations between tourism and culture in Maceió, Cavalcante considers:

we have a serious problem of professional staff. We have no management, nor documents that register memories of those managements. This is very serious. Today there is a greater openness to culture here in relation to tourism, even if it is utilitarian. It would be nice if the tourist who arrives here could see the local population giving prestige to the revellers together with him. It looks like a showroom relationship, a showcase. Tourists go to Jaraguá, the neighbourhood is pleasant [but] there is nothing to do there. (...) We have to do more organic things for the city. A real city, not a showcase city. Tourists like experience, that's the watchword, experience. (...) There has never been this concern to make the city more organic for those who live in it. (Cavalcante, February 10, 2014)

When commenting on the task that the city council took upon itself to organize Carnival, he adds:

Vinicius was appointed secretary with a very strong support from cultural groups, and he knows how to lead this, respecting the decisions of these groups to this model of cultural management. (...) Now, what I think is happening is that before, the links between the hotel and tourist trade and the municipal public administration were wide open. (...) You heard the Tourism department was working much more than the Culture department. (...). The *frevo* Carnival here is the Carnival that excludes the revellers. (Cavalcante, February 10, 2014)

Expansion without inclusion can also refer to urbanization, if we consider another line from the same interviewee:

our very late urbanization creates several problems. (...) An absurd social segregation between rich and poor. We have a very rich popular culture that

we hate. We have learned to value it as a symbol of social negotiation, which doesn't mean that we like it. We like to say that we have a great folklore diversity, but we don't know how to sing a song. This, paradoxically, gives us a great creative freedom. (...) So, it is a very exciting city to investigate, to study. (...) Here we live this healthy alienation, I would say. Alagoas paradox which I find very appealing as a subject of study. (Cavalcante, February 10, 2014)

In a radio interview in February 2014, Claudia Pessoa, then municipal secretary of Tourism, explains that the tourist profile expected for Carnival in the city, at that time, was “the family, the young, the elderly. We have always sought qualified audiences, that is, it doesn't mean people with a lot of money, but it is a qualified audience, which we saw in the Maceió Verão editions”. Language expresses thought processes that take place *in words* and are never innocent. By reaffirming the “qualified audience” profile as the desired one, the then-secretary seems to reinforce a certain Alagoan narrative tradition, namely, that of socio-ethnic-racial avoidance:

but I reaffirm this aspect of the profile that we saw in the last editions of Maceió Verão, families, we saw children on their parents' laps, here in the neck as we say, on the necks of fathers, mothers. Many of them had very light skin and very light eyes. We saw that there were many people from elsewhere, even from abroad. So we are very happy because we have a clear vision that our work is based on responsibility, on partnership with the community. (Claudia Pessoa, February, 21, 2014)

The interview to the public authority, while trying to illustrate the importance of the option for a festival that involves light-skinned and light-eyed families, in these terms, strangers to the place, consolidates what the article sought to present as different moments of exclusion, which lead to emptying the festivities as a popular manifestation in Maceió. From car parades, which give organicity to what were spontaneous manifestations of Shrovetide, through the spatial segregation, when the party is transferred to spaces further away from the urban centre and consolidating in temporal segregation by anticipating the festivities a week, so that elites can enjoy Carnival in other cities, the process is consolidated with the whitening of the party, when public policies prioritize tourists over locals.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This article aimed to draw a reflective perspective on the Carnival in the city of Maceió, located in the northeast region of Brazil. Like Rio de Janeiro, it is a region where these festivities are marked by cultural effervescence, revellers' joy and high popular participation, a situation that transforms the momesque festival in a highly appealing tourist product. In Maceió, however, the festivities have peculiarities that set it apart, even when compared to other regional festivals of the same period.

Following what was systematized by Lorena (2019) which suggests that more important than the performances associated with the festival are tensions underlying it, these appeared, in the case under study, at the articulation of the historically built relations between culture and tourism in the city. To recreate such processes, bibliographic and documentary sources and interviews with people who played an active role, in the decade of 2010, in the cultural and tourism fields in the city of Maceió were compiled.

The results allow to a systematic historical reconstruction from four moments, not necessarily defined by rigid or more precise dates. There is fragmentation between the cycles themselves, especially because in all of them there are recurrences such as racism, even if sometimes veiled, and the social (and cultural) exclusion of the popular classes.

In the first moment, which the historical and literary records reveal took place in the middle of the 19th century, the free anarchic manifestations of the Shrovetide were superseded by a certain organization into groups of revellers (Maracatus, Zé Pereiras....) and the parades in cars and floats. Such organization contributes to the segregation of African-based groups. The parade, in turn, separates those who make Carnival, from the audiences attending along its route.

The spatial segregation during the 1930s and following decades derives from the transfer of festivities to beaches along the waterfront, implying a search for the physical separation from the popular classes that filled the historic centre. Temporal segregation, from 1993 onwards, is associated with the spatial separation, when the elites' carnival festivities began to take place the week before the official date of the festival, in the so-called *Prévias*. Finally, from 2005, there is social expansion sponsored by left-wing governments, which incorporates middle-class segments, but does not attain the inclusion of the popular classes.

It appears that the carnival festive centrality changes according to the urban expansion. Data suggest that the abandonment of Maceió by the local elites during the *momesque* holiday is a traditional action, which endures over time. It is radicalised in the transition to the 21st century, due to the tourist offer of revelry programming in coastal cities in neighbouring states or even valuing the Carnival in Rio de Janeiro. Alagoas is geographically located between the two major carnival hubs of the country, Pernambuco and Bahia, where Carnivals reflect the identity of popular expressions of the local culture, nurturing a certain sense of belonging (“baianity”; “pernambucanity”), which would still be lacking in the search for an “*alagoanity*”.

Maceió's tourism marketing, among the various slogans it has adopted over time, has prioritised advertising it as a “*cidade descanso*” (relaxing city), seeking to attract visitors less affected by Carnival festivities, common in most sun-and-sea tourist destinations. The reaction of some interviewees from the cultural field makes us infer that the slogan “*cidade descanso*” (relaxing city) causes discomfort among them, for highlighting, continuously, the local weaknesses in terms of identity. Such appeal would also go against the promotion of a popular and inclusive local Carnival. In a city where the Carnival impetus is not legitimized even in terms of tourism, social and cultural stereotypes associated with the festival are emphasised, which underline the lack of access of the

popular classes to the festivities, in their unwanted presence marked by ethnic origin. Contradictions that can often result in conflicting encounters.

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