

# Carnaval Clubs For Black People in Pelotas: A Memory Beyond Samba

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*This article describes and analyses black carnival clubs founded and existing in the city of Pelotas, Brazil, since the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and that had great importance in society, especially since they made Pelotas to hold the title for best street carnival in the state of Rio Grande do Sul. This paper describes the history of these Carnival Clubs in the 1930s to 1950s, the peak period of the clubs and street Carnaval. It focuses on the Fica Ai Para Ir Dizendo, the “elite” club, in contrast to other clubs such as Chove não molha. It is our interest to deepen the discussion of its social rules, the different behavioural comportment and conduct demanded from their members, inside and outside of the club, as the expected model-behaviour for the Pelotas’ community.*

This article presents the results of research on black *carnaval* clubs in the city of Pelotas,<sup>1</sup> in which we worked with written documents, especially minutes, newspapers, and oral history, conducting interviews with people who had diverse experiences related to these associations as members, directors, or simply as participants. The objective was to build narratives following Albert’s model: “The work with oral history consists of recording interviews with actors and/or witnesses of events, situations, movements, institutions and ways of life of contemporary history. One of its main foundations is the *narrative*. An event or situation experienced by the interviewed cannot be transmitted to others without being narrated.”<sup>2</sup>

It is intended to historicize the presence of black clubs in the *carnaval* of Pelotas in the decades from 1930 to 1950, during the height of the *cordões*<sup>3</sup> and

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<sup>1</sup>The research project was developed between 2003 and 2005, supported by CNPq, and had the participation of the following history students: Fernanda Oliveira, Marcelle dos Santos, Caroline Meggiato, Juliana Cabistany, Débora Clasen and Viviani Tavares. Ten testimonies were collected, which are archived at Núcleo de Documentação Histórica da UFPel (Historic Documentation Sector of the Federal University of Pelotas), where the students worked as volunteers. We use the term “carnaval” to denote the yearly celebration as opposed to the term “carnival” that can denote both the feast and a park with amusement rides.

<sup>2</sup> Verena Alberti, *Ouvir Contar*. Textos em História Oral (Rio de Janeiro: Editora FGV, 2004), 77.

<sup>3</sup> Carnavalesque *Cordão* is a form of association that is more flexible than a club, and older than samba schools in Brazil. It was developed in the beginning of the 20th century. It was composed by blocks of *foliões* in costumes according to a determined theme, but with varied costumes, with a flag in front, and followed by music. Subsequently, a lot of these *cordões* turned into clubs with

street parades and then analyze the clubs *Fica Aí para ir dizendo* (*Stay there to go telling*) and *Chove não molha* (*It Rains but doesn't get wet*), the only two societies which still exist today. The analysis will focus on their rules and etiquette of internal behaviour as well as the reactions of their members regarding the control by associations. It is of particular interest to differentiate between the expected behaviour according to gender and the submission to the ideological processes that marked the insertion of blacks in Brazilian society, such as the “whitening ideology” and the myth of racial democracy, which will receive special attention in order to learn how the black urban community of Pelotas internally elaborated their comprehension of these processes.

Africans and their descendants were brought into the territory of the current state of Brazil – Rio Grande do Sul – since the beginning of its colonization by the Portuguese for work as slave labour in the cities and on the ranches of the region. They were employed in many different services, doing virtually all manual labor: in rural areas in farming, weeding, or assisting in the moving the cattle, in the cities as domestic servants, specialized artisans, and vendors of various products. In Pelotas, a city that became known in the imperial period (1822-1889) for the production of jerked beef, they were also employed in manufacturing (jerked beef, hats, leather tanning) and other occupations, contributing to the wealth of that region.

After the abolition of slavery (1888), the Afro-Brazilian population constituted 33% of the urban population in Pelotas and most of these workers remained in the region, giving rise to an urban black community fairly well integrated into society in the newly established (1889) Republic of Brazil. In 1920, Pelotas was a populous city by the standards of the state, with 45,000 people in the urban area, but the percentage of black population throughout the city had dropped to about 15%.<sup>4</sup> In the 1940s the urban core of Pelotas had a population of about 60,000 people, mostly devoted to commercial or industrial activities.

The members of the urban black communities, especially those who managed to have specialized training, such as artisans, even during the imperial period were crucial in the organization of ethnic Afro-Brazilian institutions, founding and participating in Catholic charitable and religious associations or beneficent societies in the last years of the empire. In Rio Grande do Sul and particularly in cities such as Porto Alegre, Pelotas, and Rio Grande, the development of beneficent and recreational black societies was important and was maintained during the so-called First Republic (1889-1930). In Porto Alegre

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headquarters, associates and an associate life during the whole year. In this article, they will be referred to as blocks.

<sup>4</sup> Beatriz Loner, *Construção de classe: operários de Pelotas e Rio Grande (1888-1930)* (Pelotas: EdUFPEL, 2001).

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documentation shows the existence of about 62 black organizations as well as a few mixed societies;<sup>5</sup> in Pelotas, the number closer to 77, while in Rio Grande there were almost 30 associations in the same period.<sup>6</sup>

This wide variety of associations corresponded to the needs of urban black communities, since, after the abolition of slavery, racial prejudice, associated especially with the tone of skin colour increased and, eventually, conditioned the possibility of social ascension and improvement of quality of life of black families. In the capital city, Porto Alegre, and in Pelotas, the black associative networks tried to compensate the social and educational difficulties for its members that were caused by their racial and social discrimination. An exclusive associative network developed in communities that was formed, in part, by a strong beneficent society that welcomed and assisted the new associations that were being created. The associations shared their headquarters and members and contributed to the associative diversification. The associations also engaged, though unsuccessfully, in providing lessons and provided access to education for the black population that suffered discrimination in public schools and had no money to attend private schools. Thus, the black associative network played an important role in integrating and aggregating the group, in addition to socializing their young within their own cultural habits and practices, creating a warm and exclusive environment in this sector, required because of the harsh racial prejudice in society.

From the perspective of this study, we understand the Afro-Brazilian population as belonging to the “black race,” as described by Guimarães,<sup>7</sup> who considers race as both an anthropological and a social concept, because in Brazil, racial discrimination includes features of both skin colour and facial features of each individual as well as other elements that derive from class, political, financial, and individual power and family. However, we will also use the terms *community* to talk about the black urban group in Pelotas, integrated through their associations, and *ethnic group*, to signify the relations and differences between blacks and other nationalities/ethnic groups in Brazilian society that were particularly strong at the initial period of the Republic.

Discrimination was stronger whenever family and personal relationships were implied such as in recreational, theatrical, carnivalesque, and charity societies, being less active in professional associations and in the representation of social classes, who generally did not intermingle.

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<sup>5</sup> Liane Muller, “As contas do meu rosário são balas de artilharia – irmandade, jornal e sociedades negras em Porto Alegre 1889-1920” (Porto Alegre, Mestrado em História, PUC-RS, 1999).

<sup>6</sup> Loner, *Construção*.

<sup>7</sup> Antonio Guimarães, *Classes, raça e democracia* (São Paulo: Ed.34, 2002).

While in the beginning of the 20th century virtually all ethnic groups in Brazil felt the need to develop associations of various scope depending on the city, group size, and their degree of organization, over time and during the second and third generation, powerful forces of attraction began to incorporate most ethnic groups, especially their younger members or those born in Brazil, within national society. Thus, the need and the very continuity of associative networks were being weakened and most of them disappeared. Some functions, such as social security and healthcare activities, previously extremely important, ended up being assumed by the state, especially after 1930. The technological development itself, with the advent of radio and cinema, as well as of mechanical music, made associations cease to exist as bands and amateur theater groups, while the brotherhoods lost many of their believers. Schools would be a big factor in ethnic cultural preservation, but they were only completely successful among the German immigrants, while other European groups were not sufficiently organized for their maintenance for long periods of time.

As for blacks, the lack of financial resources did not allow them to carry on many educational initiatives. Over time, public schools had to accept black children in greater numbers, considering that the legislation did not allow discrimination to continue, at least in legal terms. Informally, however, it is known that discrimination continued to occur for many decades. Among the respondents, Flávio Alves da Costa Farias, or Farina, as he is known, is one of the most emphatic when discussing the prejudice against blacks, commenting on the difficulties he had to go through studying in a private school in the city and also in joining the Club *Regatas Pelotense* (*Regatta of Pelotas*), because of his colour.

Especially from the 1920s, the black associative network focused on *carnaval* and sports associations, forming, unintentionally, the combination *carnaval* and football and, somehow, consolidating the existing prejudice around their main recreational activities. Indeed, the fact that there are black societies dedicated only to samba and football was mainly a result of racial discrimination, since Afro-Brazilian players and *foliões* (how the carnival goers are called) were not accepted in societies organized by whites, which turned the maintenance and expansion of this kind of societies into a necessity. On the other hand, the most representative and prestigious black societies also tended not to accept white members, in order to avoid fights between black and white men and also to protect black women from having contact with white men. Exceptions occurred only when there was a mixed family, as it was the case of the first president of the Carnavalesque Block *Fica aí para ir dizendo*, who was white, but married to a black woman.

A phenomenon that draws attention in the study of black ethnic organizations is the importance of women as articulators of the bonds of sociability and active participants. This fact has been recognized in studies for

other regions and is also apparent in relation to the state of Rio Grande do Sul. In a group where men were facing a lot of competition with other white workers and were often discriminated against and could not find employment, searching the region looking for work was the only way. Meanwhile, black women were traditionally employed as maids or seamstress, humble professions, but they nevertheless ended up being the source of steady income at the end of the month, causing them to remain in the same place and transforming them into the family centre that held together other family members. This type of activity was reproduced in other spheres of social life, creating female only institutions, or, in the case of traditional institutions, there were female directors, responsible for the organization of festivals, fairs, and other community unifying activities. This group of women who worked with an executive board of men was mentioned by all respondents in the project.

In the 1920s there was the very rapid development of several clubs, blocks, and black *carnaval* associations, which marched on different days than the white clubs. In the urban area of Pelotas the black occupied a “corner” apart, near the central town square, for their concentration during the *carnaval* festivities. Known for its enthusiastic *carnaval*, the city celebrated for more than a week, with activities such as dancing balls, clubs’ street parades, processions of allegorical floats, and costumed people wandering the streets and squares during the festivities.

In the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the leading and most renowned associations that organized parades and that served as a model for other clubs were the white middle-class *Diamantinos (Diamonds)* and *Brilhante (Sparkly)*, maintaining a remarkable rivalry. Later, these clubs were restricted only to the ballroom *carnaval* and the space in the streets became more strongly disputed by the *carnaval* clubs, both black and white, which would keep the *carnaval* alive in Pelotas for the next decades.

In the late 1940s, the first samba schools began to appear, inspired by the model of Rio de Janeiro’s *carnaval*, by gathering the largest blocks (at this point, already with club status) in ballrooms and letting the streets be occupied by schools, blocks, bands, and the so-called animal blocks (*cordões de bichos*). Thus, there was also a cultural transformation, and, from the mid-1960s, the street *carnaval* was no longer defined by the issue of skin colour, but rather by other identities consolidated around district or suburban region.

As for sports associations, they were usually formed by football teams, centered on a local black sports federation, which organized competitions among them. In Pelotas, the José do Patrocínio Federation was founded in 1921 and lasted until the mid-1930s. Football clubs also maintained relations with the *carnaval* clubs, with members belonging to these associations and having dances

in the salons of the associations to which they were closer, although they had different events as associates.

The work of about São Paulo uncovered the intimate relations of the teams with the *carnaval* clubs, due to the work of black women who managed the connections between them, organizing fairs to support the teams, composing the support staff and their fans, integrating them into black family networks.<sup>8</sup> At that time, “amateur” football ruled, that is, the players were not paid and worked only on weekends or under license from employers. If that was an obstacle to the further development of the sport, on the other hand it democratized it by allowing a dispersion of good players in a diverse set of teams of neighborhoods, factories, and other sectors of society. The fact that there was no monopoly of the best players gave a real chance of winning games, and allowed the growth of teams without much capital. Obviously, it also allowed the dominance of players coming from families with good financial resources, mostly white. They had more time to practice and to do activities related to sports, while the black or the white players who were workers were at the mercy of commitments and conveniences with employers, getting paid for their work in the factory and not in sports or teams or playing in amateur teams. In this context, the racial prejudice encountered an environment well suited to its development. At around mid-century, however, amateurism was confronted and dismantled, forming the major Brazilian clubs and professionalizing the players, where gradually, the black athletes gained space.

Another activity encouraged by the clubs was ping pong games for teens and girls, with interclub tournaments, and events even between neighboring towns, especially from the 1940s onwards.

### **The Black *Carnaval* Associations**

The *Carnaval* in Pelotas followed the role model of the center of the country, especially Rio de Janeiro,<sup>9</sup> although it had unique characteristics, establishing itself as the strongest in the state of Rio Grande do Sul. The black participation at this party had become significant from the mid-1910s with the creation of *carnaval* clubs that came to play an important role as a form of ethnic aggregation, which coincided with a restructuring of the associative network of the group, which turned into organizations based on principles of recreation. The force of the Afro-Brazilian organization in the region was strong, which can be seen by their participation in political parties in the 1930s and in the support of

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<sup>8</sup> Maria Isaura Queiroz, *Carnaval brasileiro: o vivido e o mito* (São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1992).

<sup>9</sup> Queiroz, *Carnaval brasileiro*.

one of the few black political associations in Brazil in the 1930s, Pelotas's Black Front (*Frente Negra Pelotense*), which exchanged letters with the Brazilian Black Front (*Frente Negra Brasileira*) in São Paulo. In addition, they managed to maintain the newspaper *A Alvorada* (The Dawn), the only regular long-term newspaper of blacks and workers in the state for over 50 years.

In the 1930s, with the relative demise of racial discrimination in sports, the black sports associations were abandoned, leaving only the *carnaval* clubs and blocks a black organizations that now stood out. Although more specialized, these *carnaval* entities continued to fulfill the fundamental role of integration and representation of the black ethnic group in the city, due to the difference of purchasing power of their members (which, although in general was low, always presented small variations according to families) and their levels of demands and requirements for associates.

In that same decade a club that would accept only mulattos as members emerged, *Grêmio R. Democrático* (*Society R. Democratic*), founded in 1934, a ballroom club which did not participate in the street parades and seems not to have lasted long. An interview with Mr. José Facundo Mira,<sup>10</sup> familiarly called Uncle Mira, corroborated the idea that one club of Afro-Brazilians, the *Democráticos*, made a distinction regarding the skin colour of the members in their salons, discriminating against those of darker colour. The criticism of the black community of this association, although without mentioning its name, certainly contributed to shorten its existence.

At the periphery of the city, associations that acted as representatives of neighborhoods and outlying areas of the city also emerged, with less luxury and fewer requirements for members. Especially in more peripheral regions, such associations could accept blacks and whites in their parties, but with the use of physical mechanisms of isolation so that there would not be mixing between the couples. These mechanisms could include anything from balls on different days to a rope stretched in the middle of the room, separating the colours, a fact also reported in interviews with residents of suburban areas of the cities. As a discretionary mechanism, it was accepted by both sides, after all, the Afro-Brazilians did not want to see their daughters or wives subjected to contact with white men, seen as opportunistic and malicious.

Since black recreational associations started, their activity was partly shaped by the insistence of white men, who were sometimes empowered by their employment or their social position, who tried to join clubs that were conceived only for AfroBrazilian families. Instances where whites were allowed membership always led to riots. AfroBrazilian members felt that the whites refused to recognize the cultural patterns of behaviour inherent in the clubs, especially by

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<sup>10</sup> Interview of José Facundo Mira, July 10<sup>th</sup>, 1996. Archive of Núcleo de Documentação Histórica da UFPel (Historic Documentation Sector of the Federal University of Pelotas)

the insistence with which they tried to force their presence on accompanied black women. The Afro Brazilians felt that the whites' behaviour towards women was arrogant and defiant toward the other men present. Their attitudes, in an armed and militarized society such as Rio Grande do Sul,<sup>11</sup> ended up hurting the pride of black men, resulting in fights, shootings, and other confusions, which received attention in newspapers. Over time, the most prestigious associations began to accurately track the entry to their parties which, in some cases, were restricted to members only. With this, they managed to reduce the events as reported above, although incidents during street parades continued to be frequent.

Connected to the main clubs, there was also the development of blocks of *foliões*, who cheered the festivities. Most of them lasted a few years and were restricted to indoor parties such as: *G. Filhas do depois da Chuva* (*G. Daughters of after the rain*), *Filhas do Certo* (*Daughters of the Right*), *Bloco Filhos da Folia* (*Block Sons of the Fun*), *Bloco das Levadinhas* (*Block of the Sassy*), *Mocidade Pelotense* (*Youth of Pelotas*) *Bloco das Malandras* (*Block of the Naughty*), *Bloco As Melindrosas do Certo* (*Block The Suffragettes of the Right*), *Bloco das Torcedoras Chovianas* (*Block of the cheerleaders of the rain*), *Bloco das Primaveras* (*Block of the spring*), *Bloco dos Teimosos* (*Block of the stubborn*) – this last one included in the *Fica Aí*. They operated within the big clubs, adding members. And they also used to organize promotions, especially balls of their own. In its foundation and in the activities of these clubs, women were of great importance and also highlighted the formation of recreational or *carnaval* groups in support of football associations.

However, schedules followed the same pattern: parties on specific dates such as the anniversary of the organization's founding, Mother's Day, Father's Day, as well as fairs, picnics, and monthly balls to socialize and, of course, a lot of *carnavalesque* activities. *Fica Aí* also had a football team, gym, dance groups, and, for some time, it housed the School Francisco Simões, a municipal school.

We now turn to investigate some ideas spread in the city of Pelotas about the clubs, checking some of the myths about its origins and members, which emerged over the years. To do so, only four *carnaval* groups were chosen, the ones that existed in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, focusing on those with the greater number of oral testimonies, complemented with the aforementioned news sources. The clubs are: "*Fica Aí para ir dizendo* (*Stay there to go telling*)", "*Chove não molha* (*It rains but doesn't get wet*)", "*Depois da Chuva* (*After the rain*)" and "*Quem ri de nós tem paixão* (*Who laughs of us has passion*)". From these groups, *Quem Ri de nós tem paixão* was analyzed only through written sources, due to its

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<sup>11</sup> The *gauche* culture has always been militarized considering its location near the borders of Argentina and Uruguay, countries started wars during the nineteenth century, as well as a civil war, the revolution of 1893, in the beginning of the Republic. Thus, there was always the habit of carrying guns and not forgiving any offense.

brevity and age, since no former member or participant could be located to be interviewed. Still, it was an important club in terms of popular sympathy. Most respondents participated in the *Fica Aí para ir dizendo* or in *Chove não molha*, the only clubs that still exist in the city today.

According to some respondents, these associations represented segments within the black group. These versions are not unanimous; they represent what might be called the memories under dispute.<sup>12</sup> For the most part, however, while *Fica Aí para ir dizendo* would be of the black elite, *Chove Não Molha* was more representative of the middle class and *Quem Ri de nós tem paixão* and *Depois da Chuva* would be popular (working-class) clubs.

*Depois da Chuva* was the oldest club (founded in February 1917) and treated pejoratively by some respondents<sup>13</sup> as the club of “*cisqueiros*,” that is, people who had limited financial resources and lived in less noble areas. According to the testimony of Dona Sirlei Amaro, “*Chuva*” was born from the union of domestic servants and their husbands, who organized an association. It was located almost at the end of Dr. Cassiano Street,” which earlier was located on the outskirts of the city and today is in the heart of the city.

The club “*Chove não molha*” was founded on February 26, 1919, in the tailoring shop of Otacílio Borges Pereira, who met with five other companions. This meeting originated the idea to organize a group, initially only to celebrate the *carnaval* of 1919. However, its success was so great that they decided to create the *Carnaval* group *Chove não molha*.<sup>14</sup> The club was organized by a very poor sector of Afro-Brazilians. However, this sector occupied an intermediate social position, perhaps due to the fact that many of its members had stable employment, particularly in the service sector; for instance, as tailors, domestic servants, cooks, and seamstresses.

The club *Fica Aí pra ir dizendo* was founded in January 27, 1921 as a *carnaval* block. The origins of this club are contradictory, because the most widespread version claims that it was organized in a casual way and even its own name would reflect this situation, since, according to oral tradition, after deliberation about the formation of the block, two members went out to spread the word and one remained in place to tell the others. Yet another version suggests that it was formed by a break-away group from the club *Chove não molha*. Versions are difficult to be analyzed in depth, due to a lack of documents and

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<sup>12</sup> Michel Pollak, “Memória, Esquecimento, Silêncio,” *Estudos Históricos* (Rio de Janeiro) Vol. 2, Nr. 3 (1989): 3-15.

<sup>13</sup> In his interview, Farina states that the first members of the club lived in the back part of the Prefecture, a place which used to be a garbage deposit. Dona Oflia Silveira Oliveira confirms this version.

<sup>14</sup> Minutes of the foundation of the Cultural Club *Chove não Molha*, Archive of the Club. The document states that in 1966, the club was recognized as a public organization, changing its name to Cultural Club *Chove Não Molha*.

living witnesses, but it could be the root of the differences that will later be identified in the behaviour of the two clubs: *Fica Aí pra ir dizendo* being more austere and rigorous in its rules and practices and *Chove não molha* being more moderate and less rigid with its members.

In any case, the Carnavalesque *Cordão Fica Aí para ir Dizendo* soon became a reference to the black ethnic community of Pelotas, participating in the *carnaval* that year and all of the following years. Subsequently they changed the name to Cultural Club *Fica Aí*. However, throughout most of its existence, it was devoted solely to promoting parties for members, while maintaining some indoor games at its headquarters. In the early 1940s, there was a football club, with the same name, but with full autonomy of management and administration, formed only by members of *Fica Aí*. In the 1950s and 1960s it established itself as a ballroom dance club, with few parades and started to mobilize and thrill the Afro-Brazilian community of the region through artistic promotions in which they could bring Afro-Brazilian artists to the city, important Brazilians from the center the country, to help raise the self-esteem of the black community in Pelotas.

*Quem ri de nós tem paixão* was founded in June 1921 and all records obtained about it through newspapers show an association composed of young workers with little money and a great desire to have fun, so that in the 1930s, their parades had an excellent reputation, although they did not have the costumes or the more pompous bands. According to oral tradition in the city – in part supported by several interviews – the black clubs of Pelotas gathered together members from different sectors of the ethnic group. Thus, *Quem Ri de nós tem paixão* and *Depois da Chuva* would be the poorest. *Chove não molha* would occupy an intermediate position in this ranking, and ultimately, *Fica Aí* would gather, as already mentioned, what one might call the elite of the ethnic group, families in more established social situations, which could afford the necessary expenses to attend the club and meeting their membership requirements.

Reading the minutes book of *Fica Aí*, covering the period from 1938 to 1943,<sup>15</sup> however, leads to the realization that many young women who attended the organization were employed as domestic servants in private homes, affecting therefore the vision of an elite club based on social status. The records also evidence many cases of unemployed male members or male members with a compromised financial situation, without this being considered a criterion for social exclusion, provided they could pay their monthly fees. Therefore, it is difficult to try to establish a membership standard only in terms of financial resources of the associated families.

Here there is clearly a situation in which oral testimony did not support the written documents. As Paul Ricoeur writes: “Once we understand by traditions

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<sup>15</sup> Book of minutes of the Directory and Assembly of the Club *Fica Aí*, referring to the years of 1938-1943. Archive of the do Club.

the things said in the past and transmitted to us by a chain of interpretations, we must add a material dialectic of content to the formal dialectic of temporal distance, the past interrogates and questions us before we interrogate and question it.”<sup>16</sup> On the one hand, there is the strong possibility that associative criteria have varied from 1938 (the initial year of the records) to 1960/1970. There is the possibility of a decline in oral interviews, due to the imposing of new criteria that excluded the presence of servants and other professions of low social status. That is, you can be researching an earlier type of association through written documents. These earlier associations originally allowed membership to certain categories of workers, and then became more limiting, which would explain the contradictions between the sources. As far as the interviews go, most respondents were people who lived in the 1960s who perhaps emphasized this intermediate reality, that of greater social discrimination, since later on the club withdrew such membership restrictions. On the other hand, it must be considered that in the case of Afro-Brazilians, specifically, what is meant by the term elite is not based on financial data, but rather on influence and status within the community. One example, among this group, was the family of Armando Vargas, owner of the newspaper *A Alvorada*, who was a newspaper writer and graphic artist, though his wife was washerwoman<sup>17</sup>.

Probably, what ended up installed in social imagination was the fact that *Fica Aí*, which always put higher expectations in their members, achieved its highest levels of sacrifice in its attempt to maintain standards of behaviour and attire that often exceeded its members’ possessions. It was common to find oral testimonies describing handmade costumes, in a very large effort to meet the expectations of the club on the part of family members, although this was not expected considering their financial capacities. Also in the records are requirements of cocktail dresses for women and tuxedos for men, or even themed balls in which all pairs should be dressed in nineteenth century fashion; this was much discussed in the black community and in the neighboring club, although only fifty couples attended in their costumes. In the following, we discuss this elite role of *Fica Aí* in order to eventually return to the question of popular imagination about the clubs.

Another tradition established in the city made every club match a specific racial standard, under which *Chove não molha* would be the blacks, while *Fica Aí* would be the mulattos.<sup>18</sup> Although there are statements that touch on this issue, this is not easy to be verified by other sources, not only because the statutes of the

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<sup>16</sup> Paul Ricoeur, *Tempo e narrativa*. Tomo III (Campinas: Papirus, 1997), 381.

<sup>17</sup> Regarding this subject, see the book by Maria Helena da Silveira (2002), granddaughter of the couple in question, dedicated to her grandmother, a washerwoman.

<sup>18</sup> This was the point of view of younger respondents, not mentioning other clubs, probably already extinct at the time.

club say nothing about it and their minute books are silent as well. Rather, there seems to be a membership restriction regarding candidates for being too white, and only accepting those who were considered “belonging to the race.” Likewise, the existing photos of balls such as the coronation of queens and other festivities show a succession of black people and mulattos, as well as in the files about its associates.<sup>19</sup> One possible scenario is that the people who formed the black elite were involved in a process of the “whitening of the race”<sup>20</sup> also in terms of physical appearance, a process that was underway in the country in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. And this was reflected in the club, even only in terms of the conversations of its members, with what may have suggested the image of *Fica Aí* regarding this approach. Anyway, *Fica Aí* had as its first president a white man, who was considered part of the community because he was married to a black woman.

One last version, stated by only one former member, gives an account that *Fica Aí* was the club of urban and fairer-skinned blacks, while the darkest members and those coming from farms would preferably join other clubs. This clashes, however, with the common practice of accepting as members women of marriageable age with no family in that city (and who were working as maids, cooks, and babysitters in family homes) wishing to join. They were expected to be sponsored by a family member, but would be accepted provided they had impeccable moral conduct. There is also a discussion in the records, when the status changed, how to proceed in the case of black girls living with white families, whether in an explicit employment relationship, or in the case of girls raised as daughters. The club did not accept the affiliation of white families, and they used the device of tutelage in which a family member was responsible for the behaviour of the young woman affiliated, at times, even in writing, so that there was no doubt about the moral commitment of protection and guardianship.

The documentation collected, both written and oral, does not ratify any of these views about the clubs. However, it remains clearly characterized that *Fica Aí* was distinguished from the others, by the standard they tried to associate with their activities and by the control they had over their members. As regards persons who were not members of this club, even in recent decades, their statements bear traces of resentment, more or less veiled, of their associational standards and the exclusion that entailed in relation to others. *Dona Sirlei* and *Farina*, in statements

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<sup>19</sup> This data can be verified when organizing and classifying the private archive of the club, by the NDH team. Even without a profound analysis of the files, the pictures made clear the existence of members with a dark skin colour as associates.

<sup>20</sup> Regarding the impact of the ideology on the blacks themselves, see Petrônio Domingues, *Uma história não contada. Negro, racismo e branqueamento em São Paulo no pós-abolição* (São Paulo: Ed. Senac, 2004) that analyses the case of São Paulo.

cited above, said that it was not unusual for *Fica Aí* members to avoid greeting acquaintances from other clubs in casual encounters.

### ***Fica Aí* and *Chove não molha*: Demanding Standards and Controlling Their Members**

The two main clubs, *Chove Não Molha* and *Fica Aí*, formed by the leading families of the urban black community, played a role in the socialization of new generations, the transmission of cultural and artistic values, the formation of exclusive ethnic space as well as dating and marriage agency within the accepted rules. Both clubs, even the one considered more moderate, *Chove Não Molha*, had patterns of associativity, internal rules of behaviour in their dances and code of punishments for members – and especially female members – that surpassed what was happening in the organization's headquarters, affecting directly the family intimacy. Consequently, there is the case of members expelled from the club for attending dances in associations considered not suitable for decent women, or pregnancy outside of marriage. Also, the bad behaviour of men, whether at dances or in the excessive use of alcohol, was grounds for sanctions and censorship by the boards. In some years, *Fica Aí* actually banned the sale of alcoholic beverages at their parties.

One of the main functions fulfilled by these associations was to be strategic spaces for the meeting of young people and their definitions of marriage, as many fathers were members as long as they had sons or daughters of marriageable age, and later left the association. From this point of view the situation of young female club members is more easily understood; they worked as domestic servants and, living in the employer's house, could afford the luxury of the association, as they ended up spending much of their income in costumes and dances in search of a potential partner for life. On the other hand, the rigorous control of the membership also involved securing a safe and socially dedicated space for the matrimonial games and the search for friendships and even partnerships or patronage rituals within the black community.

Thus, *Fica Aí* as well as other clubs, had a very important role in the aggregation of the black community in the city, in the socialization of children and young people within the cultural and social elements significant to them, and in establishing matrimonial strategies. As a result, they ended up meeting the internal needs of reproduction of the black community, a role they played not only in Pelotas, but also in relation to other cities. It was common, especially in the late 1940s and throughout the following decade, going to nearby cities such as Rio Grande and to the capital, Porto Alegre, on field trips to participate in dances or in sports competitions.

The clubs could also, and this became increasingly common during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, assist in finding jobs and getting higher professional qualification for its members, by offering various professional training courses such as sewing, repairing of appliances and so on. Thus, they could also help in the qualification of its members to the job market, keeping in mind that many members, especially the younger ones, came from the periphery searching for urban settings.

Even though there was always the crowning of the queen, prince, or little duchess of each club or block, which ended up being granted to the youngsters whose parents were important on the board of the clubs, or whose family had enough money to fund its costs, from the 1950s on, true beauty contests such as the “Miss” black or mulatto and “the most beautiful black girl” became widespread throughout the country. This type of competition, by proposing a new alternative standard of beauty to that of the white race, resulted in a very positive role regarding the self-esteem of the Afro-Brazilian community.

In beauty pageants, what was at stake was the claim of a new standard for aesthetic beauty. What they tried to prove was that the “black race” could also be beautiful and that the criteria of beauty based only on the white aesthetic model were not the only ones to be considered. For an ethnic group so discredited in Brazilian society, this was a fundamental innovation and echoed in its later behaviour and strategies of ethnic self-assertion. The clubs of Pelotas, as of other parts of the country, participated in this process.

However, another function, such as the formation of a true role model for young Afro-Brazilian in the process of integration into the Brazilian society was met only by one club: *Fica Aí*.

Actually, *Fica Aí* developed a demanding standard of association, that combined moral codes of submission with behavioural patterns of the middle class and a tight control of the females, with a style of festivities and demands that could only be supported by that fraction of the Afro-Brazilian group that actually had greater wealth, or that had a strong emphasis on the participation in the club over daily needs.

As previously mentioned, this club was regarded as the black elite in the city and especially in the decades from 1940 to 1970; it pursued goals of integration into society, trying to apply a strict code of conduct for its members, being influenced by the Catholic religion and by the moral standards of its time. In this sense, its influence went far beyond the narrow space of its headquarters, affecting the private lives of members, dictating rules and behaviours to be followed in various circumstances, approving and disapproving friends and companies, especially in relation to women. By applying this procedure and by keeping a strict eye on women in the group, the club sought to discipline their

minds and bodies,<sup>21</sup> directly influencing their behaviour and, of course, standardizing also the formation of black families and their compliance to the existing norms in society.

Their norm of behaviour and inspiration was the one valid for Brazilian society in general; it was of bourgeois character, and, in those years, followed different moral standards according to gender. Their very strict membership requirements, with details even about the type of clothing that could be used at each moment, and various norms of behaviour on the premises of the club, along with the surveillance over who could attend it, ended up raising a lot of resentment and bitterness among those who did not fit in or did not have sufficient resources to meet the established standards. Throughout the interviews conducted in our research this situation became clear, expressed by several respondents, as in the case of *Dona Sirlei*<sup>22</sup> that refers to *Fica Aí* as follows: “*Fica Aí* members were those who had more possessions, we did not go so often [...] I do not remember how the discrimination, the selection was, because people had to join, then, according to the profession and the conditions they were not accepted, then that person knew he or she did not have [sic] conditions, they really wouldn't go.”

In the late 1940s and in the beginning of the following decade, this club hoped to be the only association to be attended by affiliated families while maintaining cordial relations with other black organizations. The fidelity expected was related not only to avoid competition with other associations, but also to focus on a vision that they would be the only group to demand proper behaviour and, therefore the members who were also associated with other clubs would be at risk and degrading the good name of the club. Thus, the requirement of exclusivity would act as a kind of sacrifice to confirm the good intentions to maintain a higher standard compared to the other associated families.

The male and female members immersed in this environment and some participating in their parties since their childhood, did not perceive the racial and social modeling to which they were submitted, or its effects on those excluded by the club. Especially in the narratives of the female members the devotion that some families nurtured for the club becomes clear. Celestina and Nair da Silva Pinto, sisters, said they participated in *Fica Aí* from an early age with their parents, and then as young women, independently, until they were about 40 years old and they began to participate in the directors' boards.

Although their demands appear exaggerated nowadays, it is important to remember that besides the racial prejudice, the disqualification of its members also weighed on the entire black community, which made many white people see the women of this group as mere sex objects. From this perspective, disciplining

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<sup>21</sup> Michel Foucault, *Vigiar e punir* (Petrópolis, Vozes, 1987).

<sup>22</sup> Interview with Sirlei da Silva Amaro, in August 22th of 2003. Archive of NDH/UFPel.

the bodies of the youngsters so they showed appropriate behaviour, segregating women from contact with white men, and protecting their wives and daughters were an important part of the association policies, which ended up, obviously, excluding other elements of the black community, who could not or would not conform to those rules and provoked some discomfort and resentment in those years, which nowadays have been overcome.

It is also possible to notice, in part agreeing with what was implemented all over Brazilian society, a double standard of behaviour according to gender, a practice that meant that men were much less affected by the surveillance and censorship of the boards and by the association censorship about their activities than women. This behaviour was maintained by all the clubs studied, and its impact on women's behaviour came to light in a flavorful interview with several female members of *Chove Não Molha*, in which they exposed the criteria of the strict monitoring to which they were to adapt under the burden of being single girls of marriageable age. The double standard was even exposed in the gossip column *Pescadinha* (little catches) in the newspaper *A Alvorada*, especially in a part called “*Gosto mas não gosto*” (I like it, but I don't like it), which explored the fact that black girls walked down the street in attitudes that were not suitable to them, such as holding hands with strangers or with clothes too short.

*Chove Não Molha* was also a strict club regarding principles of behaviour in their dances or in the daily lives of members, but usually the actions of the directors was more flexible in relation to the behaviour allowed and the requirements in terms of clothing of the members. As for *Depois da Chuva* and *Quem ri de nós tem paixão*, it was composed of workingmen and domestic servants, that is, people who had fewer resources and less aspirations to control the lives of their attendees or to impose standards of behaviour.

Another aspect to be highlighted in the social activity of these clubs is their intense social programs, that is, being a family association, they sought to have attractions for all family members and also to attract the sympathies of young people from an early age. *Dona Gicelda Marques*,<sup>23</sup> whose father was president of *Fica Aí* for three administrations, refers to her childhood in the club:

We were raised, my brothers and I, within the Cultural Club *Fica Ai*. I was a Little Duchess, my sister who lives in Rio was Glamour, my brother was a Duke, my daughter was a Queen so it goes back many years. My father and mother attended the *Fica Aí* ever since it had headquarters here on Félix da Cunha Street.

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<sup>23</sup> Interview with Gicelda Marques, April 13, 2004. Archive of NDH/UFPel.

Similarly, Dona Nair Pinto and Dona Celestina Pinto,<sup>24</sup> taken by their uncles, participated extensively in *Fica Aí* when they were young:

To a certain hour we could participate in the dance, that was the children's dance, and then later there was the time for adults. At that time, the children's ball was earlier, it ended up about seven o'clock, but not anymore.

Notice that there was an interest in the children's interaction from very early on, which then echoed in the adults' consideration that the club was an extension of their home, of their network of acquaintances, which they sought to reinforce with their work, whether in the street's parade or in promoting or participating in dances and festivals. Joining a *Carnaval* club, in this perspective, was an annual task. There were fairs, June festivals, and various other activities, during the final years of the 1940s and at the beginning of the next decade. There were ping pong tournaments between clubs from Pelotas and Rio Grande, aimed at children and youngsters. Regarding football clubs, it was noticed that some of them were closer to the clubs, perhaps because they had many participants in common, allowing activities that engaged the members of both, dividing costs and any profits. Thus, the idea was to provide wholesome and safe entertainment for the community, exclusively for their children and adolescents. As for the young adults, there was a tendency for families to join clubs when their daughters reached marriageable age, because then the recreational associations fulfilled the role of a privileged and controlled location to meetings, dating and possible marriage. The control was great and included also the issue of prohibition of alcoholic beverages in some clubs and the requirement for appropriate behaviour both in regular parties and celebrations at *Carnaval* time.

### **The Female Role in the Clubs**

At this point, we should talk a little bit more about the situation of women in these clubs. Even though women have an even greater value within the black community, because in many situations they are the responsible for the fundamental work of maintaining the family, as noted above and also in spite of the women's work being one of the cornerstones of these clubs, we have some examples, especially in the 1940s and early 1950s, of a lot of control over women's participation.

Through research in written sources, it was noticed that the black associations had to deal with a chronic problem in society: the lack of respect

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<sup>24</sup> Interview with Nair and Celestina Pinto, September 19, 2003. Archive of NDH/UFPel.

from some sectors. It was common, especially in the late 1920s and early 1930s, that white men or non-members started brawls, fights, and riots in the parties for blacks.

Thus, the strengthening of codes of conduct, banning the entry of non-members, and the surveillance over the group of women to avoid that they were “enjoyed” by other groups, should also be understood as a form of defense of a group threatened by abusive practices of other social and ethnic groups.

The discussion of the issue of behavioural differences and social requirements based on gender among these black groups must be understood in all its nuances. In societies, there were always differences between the expected behaviour of men and women, so it would be absurd to imagine that in this group, located in a very provincial town marked by Catholicism, this would not occur. After all, among the working class or even among some sectors of the middle class, there was also an explicit monitoring of women’s behaviour as well as the phenomenon of a double morality, that is the expectation of different behaviour patterns according to gender. On the other hand, the study of gender issues can help us understand the depth of power relations established between men and women. However, it does not cover all the relationships involved in this particular analysis, in which gender, race and social classes are inextricably mixed.

In this case, distinct variations between the clubs are observed, all located among the black race and with little real differentiation in terms of social class, but with a more noticeable change in behaviour in relation to the women’s position among them. Of the two clubs that we have more information, we saw that the position of *Fica Aí* was virtually defined by an associative policy of the elite clubs in Pelotas, that is, middle-class groups. It can be argued that the social composition of the club (civil servants, specialized workmen) was not part of the middle classes, but without doubt within the black urban community, they were ranked as middle class. *Chove Não Molha*, whose social background was practically the same, nevertheless had a much more open policy in relation to female participation and women received the right to vote and stand for office in 1938.

What was the perception of the women involved in these two clubs? Female respondents who participated in *Chove Não Molha*, even in later times, reported greater participation, even though the boards were predominantly male. On the other hand, in *Fica Aí* the narratives show some softening of internal codes of behaviour only in the last decades, with a more active participation of women on the boards. However, most of the respondents of the latter club did not seem to question women’s subordinate position, but merely reaffirmed their strict codes of conduct.

Gender relations are more strongly connected to cultural constructions and therefore have a greater permanence. Bourdieu works with the concept of

symbolic violence, understood as the ways and means by which relations of domination are inscribed in the *habitus* and the bodies of the dominated, so that it incorporates mental concepts, the categories constructed from the point of view of those who dominate and even their own values, thus naturalizing this situation.<sup>25</sup>

That said, women cannot develop resilience to these mechanisms, they seem established and eternal. And even though they may become aware of them, they can hardly reject them, as they are inscribed, both in their body, and in the way they feel, think, and act. More importantly, they end up accepting and also imposing these same standards without even noticing these restrictive rules. Dona Otilia Oliveira Silveira was chairperson of the female sector of the club *Depois da Chuva* in the late 1960s, during the administrations of her brother-in-law. In her interview, after reporting that it was because her sister, wife of the director, disliked social activities, she begins to talk about what she did and did not do in her “management” in the female sector, seen by her as very free and purposeful. She even emphasised that she and the other women did whatever they wanted and just sent the decisions to the men, so that they could sign them without challenging it. Although she is an exceptional person, by her organizational capacity and recognized leadership, there is no doubt that her testimony reflects more her own version, mediated by the mists of what she wants to remember and decided to forget, including the fact that, officially, the female directors had no power of effective decision about the club. Even dealing with women far less proactive and authoritative, as the ladies of *Chove Não Molha*, we also faced a similar thought about the male directors, as they also revealed that female members could easily do everything they wanted, only then recommending its deliberations to the male directors.

In part, we must consider that they are right in relation to the alleged docility of male directors about their proposals, although one should not forget that this also has to do with the fact that they took the burden of doing all of their proposals and they usually were strictly within the framework of what were the club’s objectives. That is, they had no objection to the principles and internal existing rules, because if they were, surely the most likely outcome would have been that they would be removed from the board. Dona Otília says so in an excerpt from her testimony: “Ah, yes. In my case, I have always been demanding, I was a president that would go to the kitchen to prepare the Christmas dinner and all the decorations came from my own house, then they wanted to buy it, I would take my pretty things that I had at home and would not sell. Not at all! And I was always praised for that.”

The space they could occupy, allowed in each club, was compatible with their function in the home, which means they should act as assistants to the male

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<sup>25</sup> Pierre A. Bourdieu, “Dominação Masculina,” *Educação e realidade* vol. 20, no. 2 (1995): 133-184

board organizing events, serving members and also in monitoring the behaviour of young people at parties, all of those found abundantly in the records. In addition, through the mechanism of tutelage, they were responsible for the behaviour of single female members whose families did not live in the city. Even the fact that, at times, they could attend the meetings of the Board of Directors if and when they were open to all members, does not invalidate the above, because her actions had always been guided by strict compliance to the rules. The female space was the internal space, of the everyday, the management and care of members and of the club itself, restricted to local, internal limits. If male power was expressed in public, often related to the figure of the state itself, the female power usually found a place in private and in a diffuse and peripheral form.

Therefore, it can be said that the behavioural model which *Fica Aí* tried to instill (and partly *Chove Não Molha*, too) represented, on the one hand, the exacerbation of behaviour monitoring in relation to its members, which is compatible with a position of a dominated minority in society. On the other hand, it represents an attempt to educate its members in relation to values located above its class in the social scale, but which was intended to be the ones in that community and, finally, a reification of the accepted standards of male domination for that society, at that historic moment.

### **The Whitening Ideology and Its Effects Within the Black Community**

In the 1930s, the ideology of Brazilian “racial democracy” spread in such a way that it was present in the behaviour of Afro-Brazilians themselves in the period. It was based on the idea that there would be no racial prejudice in the country, or that, in some cases in which it was almost impossible to deny its existence, it would result from people or situations not yet conformed to the modern patterns of Brazilian society, in which colour was no impediment to the individual’s social situation, since he or she had talent and worked hard. Widely disseminated in society, with the support of some significant intellectuals, such as Gilberto Freire, this ideology was accused of masking discrimination and deceiving Afro-Brazilians in relation to the existing racial prejudice.

To Guimarães, this ideology was configured as follows:

a system of orientation of actions (practices, expectations, meanings and values carved in the common sense) that would inform the real conduct of daily life and political behaviour. From this perspective, the black and the mulattos would act, in Brazil, in such a way that their colour would not be a relevant factor in the organization of their conduct or in our understanding of it. It is not like these people were “alienated” or did not

realize any social prejudice, but when it did occur, it would not be attributed to the race, it would be seen as circumstantial and marginal.<sup>26</sup>

Therefore, blacks would behave and try to follow a social trajectory expected “without their colour being responsible for their course.” For Guimarães, nowadays, in spite of the denunciation of the “myth of racial democracy,” which is consciously rejected by the Afro-Brazilians, there are some in this group that “even knowing that their colour is part of the permanent game of social representations, defining unequal opportunities, they yet have a trajectory of social ascension, without the need to politically mobilize the colour”<sup>27</sup> in Brazilian society.

But until the 1930s, the ideology of racial democracy was also seen by many blacks as a form of protection against effective discrimination, operating in episodes of actual discrimination by blacks themselves. Thus, viewed as a sort of ideal to be pursued, before being denounced, there was the stage in which it was used politically against those who evidenced racist behaviour and in episodes of actual discrimination, in order to show that, in a country that aspired to equality between the races, these attitudes would be out of context and were inconsistent with the dominant trend.

Another line of thought that had greater influence among Brazilian society is the so-called whitening ideology, which, according to Hofbauer, had been present since colonial times and had not been restricted to Brazil.<sup>28</sup> Its general features aimed at erasing the black physical traits of the Afro-Brazilians by their dilution in the Brazilian population. With the large amount of European blood in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century due to immigration of European workers, the Brazilian population would tend to be whitened through miscegenation. Thus, this kind of thinking would bring the advantage of legitimizing the lack of public policies for the Afro-Brazilians, by implying that the black “race”,<sup>29</sup> then considered inferior to others due to theories of scientific racism, would cease to exist in a few generations. According to Domingues it was also inserted among blacks, who tended to see themselves as inferior, especially those seeking to dissolve among white groups, that is those with financial resources that placed them within the standards of the middle class. According to him, the black middle class sectors were the ones that connived this, when the complaint and the fight

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<sup>26</sup> Guimarães, *Classes*, 85.

<sup>27</sup> Guimarães, *Classes*, 86.

<sup>28</sup> Andréas Hofbauer, *Uma história de branqueamento ou o negro em questão* (São Paulo: ED.UNESP, 2006).

<sup>29</sup> In this text, the concept of race will be the one established by Guimarães (2008), as a social definition and not scientific, since in the biology field it is known that there are no human races, only different groups according to culture and other extrinsic aspects.

against racial discrimination by black groups was connected to manual workers (that is, those belonging to the working class), even before the 1930s.<sup>30</sup>

Domingues highlights the fact that the main diseases that affected the poor, that is, a majority of the black and mixed race population, was not subject to specific public policies, which in effect resulted in reducing the birth rate and increasing their mortality rate, thus contributing to physically decreasing the group. The same author denounces the harmful effects of this ideology on the behaviour and culture of blacks, an ideology that argued that the black, in order to enter society, should adopt models of the white middle class. This ideology ended up interfering with the expression of black culture and African heritage, which was considered ugly in the aesthetic sense and primitive in the cultural sense.

Hofbauer argues that another aspect of this whitening ideology affected more heavily the individual subjectivity, turning the subjects of the dominated group into accomplices of their own domination. For him, the whitening idea was present since colonial times, with “the ideal of being white (re)semanticized constantly.”

The whitening ideal postulates the white supremacy and, at the same time, induces the individual to approximate this ideal. It carries a potential resistance towards any attempt to define the essence of colour and race, since it makes the subjects tend to rely in personal and context negotiations of identity borders and tend to reject the formal process and mechanisms that delimitate it. This social practice has contributed to cover the discriminatory level inserted in the ideological scheme, and also to suppress eventual collective counter reactions.<sup>31</sup>

Considering the discussion raised so far, it is understood that the black community in Pelotas, inserted, like other Afro-Brazilian groups, in this complex cultura- ideological situation, tended to move within the limits and standards recommended by Brazilian society, partly by identifying with the values of the dominant society, understanding their values and behaviour patterns. With regard to racism and the discrimination suffered, one way to live with it, as we have seen, was, paradoxically, to deny its own existence. However, it often went beyond a defensive attitude and ended up denying their historical origins in favor of a *Brazilianization* (understood as immersion in the dominant Brazilian culture in those years).

On the other hand, we cannot forget that if they tried to adapt to current models of bourgeois society, it was to be on an equal footing with the whites of

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<sup>30</sup> Domingues, *Uma história não contada*.

<sup>31</sup> Hofbauer, *Uma história*, 27-28.

the same social level. If they developed more rigorous and austere behaviour for its members and affiliates, they sought to prove they were just as capable and decent as the others. From another point of view, there was also an effort to preserve their musical and rhythmic traditions, and to recognize the need for its preservation, an effort they were proud of, which is not found in other ethnic groups from the same period. To conclude, it is important to remember that these associations formed, for a long time, a frontline representation of black people and in this sense, they brilliantly fulfilled its objectives of ethnic aggregation, socialization of young people and transmission of values and traditions, enabling later other belligerent organizations to struggle for racial equality, still in dispute in Brazil.