

The Influence of Latin American Culture in Japan
— The case of Kobe Matsuri's Samba —

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Abstract

Japan has maintained contact with the Latin American region for several decades. The main connection has been through the economical relations, but the cultural contact has also been possible through the emigrant and immigrant population. But also, thanks to internet and other mass media, different Latin American cultural expressions have extended along Japan. Therefore, different activities related to Latin American culture have appeared in all the country.

Among these activities, samba music and dancing has become very popular since it appeared in the city of Kobe at the end of sixties. Some very famous festivals like Kobe Matsuri and the Asakusa Samba Carnival center around samba, and hundreds of people participate in the different samba teams across the country.

But samba, as other Latin American rhythms, carries a significant socio-cultural background and meaning, closely related to Latin American culture. Considering this fact, samba can be considered as a Latin American cultural expression. Through this expression, the Japanese people might be receiving certain influence and messages through the performance of samba. We will discuss what kind of influence this is and how it has changed the way of thinking of the Japanese involved in samba music and dancing.

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Introduction

The topic to be investigated herein is *The influence of Latin American Culture in Japan: the example of Kobe Matsuri's samba*. The aim is to analyze the influence in the Japanese people of the Latin American culture, through the example of samba music and dancing in the festival known as Kobe Matsuri, in the city of Kobe, in the prefecture of Hyogo. This musical genre has been present in the city for over 40 years and it's a very important element during the festival time. The significance of this influence relates to the fact that it cannot only produce changes in the individual but also in the society where it takes place, in this case, the city of Kobe.

We will begin with the importance of this topic and how it has been omitted even though Japan has maintained international relations with Latin America for a long time. Then we'll explain the hypothesis and objectives that guided the study.

In chapter 1 the previous investigations related to our research will be explained. In this section, we will be able to explore further the relation between Japan and Latin America, where the economic and immigrant issues are the ones that have been investigated in detail. We will mention briefly the lack of research relating the cultural interaction.

In chapter 2 we will present the theoretical framework used in the investigation. First of all, Japanese festivals (*matsuri* in Japanese) will be explained from Japan's point of view, the modern expressions we can see in them and what these expressions tell us about Japanese society. Likewise, we will wrap up the social meaning of music for society, specially in the case of Latin American music, and how it can be manifested in activities like *matsuri* in Japan. Finally, we will introduce the history of samba in Brazil in order to understand its social meaning and the possible connotations that can be found in Japanese society. Similarly, we will explain how samba came to Japan.

In chapter 3 we will describe the example used in the investigation, Kobe Matsuri, its history, participants, samba music and dancing, along with the reason why this particular festival makes a good example for our research. Afterwards, we will explain the methodology that has been used during the research: participant observation, a questionnaire and half-structure interviews. We will also explore the characteristics of the samba teams that collaborated in the research, their characteristics and their view about samba, Brazil and Latin America in general.

In chapter 4, we will present and discuss the findings, draw some conclusions and propose some further investigations that could be made.

Justification

Japan has maintained a long relationship with Latin America and the Latin American immigrant population is of considerable size. Nevertheless, as it is stated in one of the recent publications of The Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLAC), “The relationship between Japan and Latin America and the Caribbean has centred mainly on economic issues” (ECLAC, 2010, p.145).

As we will explain in detail in the following chapters, even the relations associated with the economic factor occur between people and not between the capital *per se*. Still, both the emphasis of the relationship and the investigations related to this relationship relate mainly to the economic factor. Those involved in this economic exchange promote strengthening the trade relations, but in this process is discarded the possibility to promote a proper understanding between the parties involved that might contribute to that growth. For a proper understanding of the groups involved in the relationship, it is needed to look beyond the numbers and to the people who deal with these numbers.

Nonetheless, researches relating to the cultural exchange or to the influence of the Latin American culture across Japan are almost nonexistent, even when the Latin American presence is more than obvious in the present Japanese society. Here we not only insist about the immigrant population, but also thanks to the mass media and the internet, the possibility to approach to the knowledge of different cultures is easier than ever.

The contact with a culture so different from the Japanese is bound to have an important impact in society. By analyzing the influence that certain cultural expressions, such as samba, might have in the Japanese population, we can understand not only what kind of influence is being taken into the society, but also how that influence is changing the individual.

Hypothesis & objectives

For the purpose of this investigation, we are proposing a hypothesis which will lead all the following discussion. The hypothesis is as follows:

“Latin American culture is currently influencing Japanese society through several cultural expressions”

In order to confirm this hypothesis, the subsequent objectives are proposed. The main objective of the present investigation is as follows:

“To clarify the influence of the Latin American Culture in Japanese society”

The specific objectives are as follows:

- a. To deepen the comprehension of the influence of a cultural representation such as samba music and dancing, in modern Japanese people, in the city of Kobe.
- b. To clarify the changes produced by the influence of samba music and dancing in Japanese people in the city of Kobe, and shown in their view of life, way of thinking and human relations.

Chapter 1

Background: Process of interaction between Japan and Latin America and the previous investigations related to the topic

The purpose of this chapter is to contextualize the relationship between Japan and the Latin American region, explaining the paths that the previous investigations related to this relationship have taken. We will describe the main topics that have been treated extensively: the economic relationship and the emigration/immigration problem.

We want to demonstrate that, even when in these enquiries several social issues have been considered, in contrast to the areas of the economic interaction and of the migration, studies on the cultural interaction which takes place in Japan between Japanese culture and Latin American culture has been mostly omitted, thus leaving an important research gap in the context of the multicultural studies that are been promoted in Japan in recent years.

1.1. Economic interaction

When it comes to economic interaction between Japan and the Latin American region, there are several reports and articles related to the subject, as well as recompilations of symposiums and reunions related to international cooperation, mostly held by international organizations like The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC), Japan's International Cooperation Agency (JICA), The Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA, the Spanish acronym is CEPAL), and so on. Covering all of the different reports would be a monumental effort that deviates from the main objective of this investigation. Therefore, some representative investigations were chosen in order to show the tendencies in the economic interaction between Latin America and Japan. The investigations will be presented in a chronological order, starting from the oldest to the newest.

The Fourth Symposium on Financial and Business Cooperation between Latin America and Japan, which took place in Nagoya city in 1989 concluded that that Latin America needs to organize its economic structure and the Japanese inversion could increase as long as the those sectors that really need it are identified.

The study by the professor Carlos Moneta, *Japón y América Latina en los años noventa: nuevas opciones económicas* (1991, *Japan and Latin America: new economic options*), summarizes and explains several investigations from the part of Japanese specialist in the subject of economic interaction. Overall, Japan represents an important commercial destination for Latin American products even when the percentage is not that significant. However, the exchange could amplify

and to do that the communication between Japan and Latin America needs to increase, so that they can understand each other as commercial partners.

The article written by a member of ECLA, Mikio Kuwayama, entitled *Las relaciones entre Japón y América Latina* (1992, *The relation between Japan and Latin America*) centers in two basic issues: to reduce the customs barriers for the different products and to facilitate the transportation of merchandise between the regions in order for the commercial relation to strengthen.

A inform which shows us a more recent situation is presented in the ECLA report *Latin America and the Caribbean in the World Economy 2009-2010*, where in Chapter V, entitled “Economic cooperation and ties between Japan and Latin America and the Caribbean” where the change of the economic relation between the regions is explained. The conclusions are related mostly to the cooperation agenda, about the possibilities the Latin American region has if it can organize properly and show Japan that with its cooperation, the gain could be mutual.

After analyzing the information gathered, we are aware that it is still insufficient. The overall situation about the economic relationship between Japan and Latin America cannot be easily explained since Japan has a different economic agenda in each country. Nevertheless, we can summarize the main points that are present in the different investigations as follows:

- 1) During the 80's the economic relation focused in commerce and the inversion of Japan in the developing Latin American countries (IDB-JBIC, 1989). On the other hand, Latin American products in Japan and their general impact in the Japanese commerce is not significant even when for Latin America its does represent a significant percentage of its exportations (Moneta, 1991).
- 2) In the 90's the commercial relation is emphasized with the need to strengthen it and to facilitate the transportation of the different products, stressing the Latin American economic system needs to properly organize so that the mutual benefits can increase (Kuwayama, 1992)
- 3) During the past decade, Japan becomes aware of the growing Latin American market and the possibility of inversion becomes clear, therefore besides trying to strengthen even more the economic relations, the bilateral cooperation takes a prominent role with a stronger impulse that in the previous decades (ECLA, 2010)

The existence of an economic agenda and the precedence that has been given to it as the central point with of the relationship with Latin America is undeniable. If we take a careful look to the general conclusions of the different investigations, all of them plead for a change in the economic system in the Latin American region, system which needs to be more organized, more systematized; so that the economical exchange can increase and be beneficial for both parties. The same state is made in former and in the newest investigations and reports. It could be presumed that Latin America economy has not changed at all in the

previous decades and the same problems which affect the economic interaction persist through the years.

We need to consider, then, the possibility that the problems persist not because a deficient economic system on the Latin American side or because of a strict organization on the Japanese flank. The documents insist on organizing, strengthening and planning mechanisms, programs, and economical strategies. The investigations never consider the fact that all these economic systems are in the hands in humans who need to interact with other humans so that the organisms can properly function. A common mistake is to think that economy can be managed through technology. But when a cooperation project is proposed, for example, it has to be presented by the people interested to the people in charge of the organization that can lend the assistance. A lot of projects fail their previous screening but not because it was ill presented, but because of a misunderstanding between the parties involved.¹ Even if the same economic vocabulary is been used, its comprehension may vary between the groups involved in the interaction. Therefore, the necessity to take into account other sociocultural factors which might not be related to economy at all when dealing with an economic issue.

Japan and Latin America's relation might be centered in economic issues, but the relation has had the same problems for decades without been able to point out a long term and viable solution. It's about time for the representatives of the two regions to consider the non-economic factors that might be affecting the relationship

1.2. Emigration and immigration

The investigations related to the emigration of Japanese people to Latin America, and then the immigration of their descendants to Japan, is another topic that has been explored by different organizations (International Research Center for Japanese Studies, JCAS) and researchers (Howell). We would presume that the issue of intercultural interaction would be taken into account, nevertheless, most of the time the topic has been treated with other emphasizes. The following studies will also be presented in chronological order.

One of the emphases refers to the working force migrants represent both in Japan. The article *Migración de Trabajadores Latinoamericanos a Japón, ¿una solución a los problemas demográficos de ese país?* (*Migration of Latin American workers to Japan: a solution to the demographic problems of that country?*) (Salgado, 2002), explores the potential of the Latin American workers in Japan. The author explains that in several industrialized countries, its population is aging and the birth rates decreasing. This is Japan's case. The question arises whether the large number of immigrants from Latin America could be a solution regarding

¹ The researcher had the opportunity to investigate about this subject in Costa Rica with the collaboration of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) office in that country in the year 2007. Several documents were analyzed and an Assistant in Technical Cooperation was interviewed.

workforce the country needs to keep its usual pace of production. It is concluded that this workforce could help Japan since it constitutes cheap labor from which small and medium enterprises depend. This article shows us that not only Japan is an attractive option for Latin American workers, but also that the authorities are aware of the situation and that it has consequences for both Japan and Latin America.

In the *JCAS Symposium Series 19, Emigración Latinoamericana: Comparación Interregional entre América del Norte, Europa y Japón* (Latin American Emigration: Interregional Comparison between North America, Europe and Japan; Japan Center For Area Studies, 2003) several articles are presented, where different issues are discussed. The topics treated are about the Latin American workers or Japanese descendants, who come to Japan and the different issues they face; the particular migration process Latin American need to handle in order to come to Japan, their integration problems to Japanese society, the educational problems the migrants confront in Japan and misunderstandings related to the different ways of thinking.

On a different tone, Howell (2004) explains in “Ethnicity and Culture in Contemporary Japan” that a lot of the different problems between Japanese and immigrant population, not only Latin Americans, is related to ethnic and racial discrimination, situation related to the idea that Japan is racially homogeneous. Through different examples, the author shows that the country’s reality is far from being homogeneous.

The articles presented in *Cultural Exchange between Brazil and Japan*. 日本・ブラジル文化交流 (International Research Center for Japanese Studies, 2009) refer to the history of emigration from Japan to Brazil, the consciousness of identity of the migrants in Japan and the legal assistance for Brazilian workers. One of these articles however attempts to explore the cultural influence and exchange from a point of view which is very close to ours. This article will be discussed in detail in the following section.

The information that has been presented gives us a general idea of the emigration/migration relation between Japan and Latin America. The interesting part of the whole historic process is to appreciate how, in less than a century, the roles were inverted. At the beginning of this process, during the first decades of the XX century, Japanese people sought Latin American soil in order to enhance their way of life, but some decades later, the procedure was reversed and the Latin Americans were the ones seeking new opportunities of improvement in Japan. Both phases of the migration process had and still have important socio-economic consequences in both regions.

We would presume that the issue of intercultural interaction would be taken into account during all the analysis of the emigration and immigration development process. Nevertheless, most of the time the topic has been focused in:

- 1) The historical process: the emigration of Japanese people to Latin America at the beginning of the XX century and the immigration Latin American to Japan, especially during the 80's.
- 2) Economical issues: the positive and negative economic issues that the migrant population represents for Japanese society
- 3) Adaption: the difficulties the immigrants and their descents confronted or confront in the respective countries, and the problem this situation presents to that countries society.

In this last matter, adaption, is where we can see some clear reference to the cultural interaction. Misunderstandings, education maladjustment and other problems to integrate into the new society are related to the cultural difference or to the dissimilar way of thinking of the immigrants in Japan. But as we can see, the cultural diversity is treated most of the time as a problem instead as an exchange of distinctive knowledge. The cultural discrepancy becomes an obstacle which doesn't permit the immigrant to adapt and causes problems to Japanese society.

Another important gap in these researches is the fact that they focus on the immigrant population and fail to mention what occurs to the Japanese side. What happens with the Japanese people who make contact with a different culture and socialization? They remain unaffected? If a person presents defying the known socio-cultural system, those who belong to that system are expected to react to the challenging individual. Therefore, what happens to Japanese people when confronted with a different set of ideas and behaviors? We will explore this in the following chapters.

1.3. Cultural interaction

It cannot be stated that the investigations related to cultural interaction are completely inexistent, but compared to the economic and migration topics, there is still a lot of unexplored territory, as we discussed in the two previous sections.

The article "Cultural Contribution of Brazilians in Japan and Japanese in Brazil through Informal Education and Leisure" (Tiho, 2009) mentioned before as part of *Cultural Exchange between Brazil and Japan*. 日本・ブラジル文化交流 (International Research Center for Japanese Studies, 2009) explores different aspects of the daily life that have received some specific cultural influence. It explains the adoption of some Brazilian customs in Japan and the transmission of Japanese popular modern culture to Latin America. The author explains that "*the set of the elements such as habits, cultural values, diet, spare time, language and speech, among other things, are reforming the cultural features of both countries*" (Tiho, 2009, p.51). Regarding the specific influence of the Brazilian culture in Japanese people, Tiho explains that the Brazilian food and some communication gestures were adopted by the Japanese whom were interviewed. But besides showing the change of habits or diet, the author doesn't go very far into asking what meant for them that change or specifically what provoked that change.

The previous situation is not particular. The influence of the cultural interaction is usually reduced to new adopted habits or diet, but the change in the individual's mind is never taken into account. For a person to change their daily lifestyle and introduce foreigner practices something must also change in their way of thinking and in the way they perceive the world around them. But this kind of inquiry has not been taken into consideration when it comes to the relation between Japan and Latin America, even when the association is lengthy and even when the two cultures are so different.

In the following chapters we will explore the changes Japanese people can experience through the contact of a cultural expression. In the immediate following chapter, we will discuss, firstly, some important cultural expressions that will help us to comprehend better how they can influence people's way of thinking.

Chapter 2

Theoretical Framework

2.1. Japanese Culture: festivals in Japan

Culture, according to Bauman (1973) is a possession of the human being, an essence that determines the individual. As possession it can be “acquired or squandered, manipulated and transformed, shaped and framed” (Bauman, 1973; p.7). Therefore, a specific culture is learned depending on the environment the person develops. But as we learn from our surroundings, these aren’t static, society changes along with its people together with knowledge in it. As Kottak (1982) explains in his texts of cultural anthropology, individuals learn from the society which he or she belongs, the environment in which the person grows. Traditions, ways of thinking and the general view of the world are shown and transmitted to the individual through social interaction. (Kottak, 2003) Consequently, in a society where not only the main stream culture is promoted, but several cultural influences interact, the individual would reflect the different influences not only in through a specific lifestyle, but also through a particular way of thinking.

In the case of Japanese Culture, it has been characterized in several ways through diverse studies (Benedict, 1946; Chie, 2009) that mostly describe Japan’s lifestyle, and the way of thinking of the Japanese people. However, as we mentioned, societies are not static, and Japan’s is changing (Matsumoto, 2002)

To be able to show this change we can take the example of festival, or *matsuri* in Japanese. *Matsuri* was used to refer to the different religious festivities taken place in order to thank or plead to the gods for favourable conditions for the community, for example, protection against diseases, or to pray for a good harvest.

But in modern societies, the urban festival (都市祭り) has a different meaning that is directly related to the specific city. The festival transmits the image that wants to be projected of a particular town (Matsudaira, 2008). Because of this background, the modern *matsuri* has to be studied not only from a religious point of view, but taking into account the socio-cultural reality where the festival is taking place and the cultural the modern festival reflect.

Matsuri was and still is an important cultural expression in Japan, which echoes the reality of the present society and its people. It shows in an indirect way the things consider important in their city or town. So, if a city spends a whole year preparing for a certain activity, that situation reflects a particular way of thinking. Never mind the economic or touristic reasons, a tradition or a specific event wouldn’t last without the people wanting it to last.

In the case of the festival that will be investigated, the setting is Kobe city, a city that has an international atmosphere since it had an important exchange with other countries through its international port, and then because of the immigrant population. So, in the case of Kobe Matsuri, we can perceive the promotion of an international city, an atmosphere that is well received and has been preserved through the years. We will continue later with Kobe Matsuri's characteristics.

What we need to take into account in this point is that Kobe Matsuri is a very good example of an urban festival which is organized through the different interest of the people, through those activities the people of Kobe consider important. As we will explain, hundreds of people participate and prepare for Kobe with a particular idea in mind. Considering this situation we could conclude that the urban festival might the method through which the people can connect to their own town and work together for it.

In our present time, opportunities like this are few since everyone just assist to school or goes to work, and the chance to work all together as a single community seems to be thing of the past Japanese society. But the *matsuri* bring people together. Even if the person doesn't participate directly in the event, they identify with it.

We want to highlight a specific aspect of *matsuri*, the music. Music seems to mark a very important mood for the festival. But in the case of Kobe Matsuri, where traditional Japanese music, American hip-hop, Brazilian samba and other musical rhythms can be heard, was is the mood of Kobe Matsuri. Well, it is samba. Kobe Matsuri's samba is very well known, as we will explain in the following chapter, but before exploring Kobe, we need to understand more about samba and the importance music has in Latin American culture.

2.2. Latin American Culture: an introduction to Latin American Music

Each culture has some elements to which the natives can identify with. In the case of Latin American culture, the *Latinos* know their music and recognize it in any part of the world.

The music of the Latin American region has a strong influence from European and African sources (Manuel, 1989). This phenomenon can be understood as an inheritance of the colonial period. Nevertheless, the Indian elements cannot be denied (Manuel, 1989). Even so, when it comes to the popular music of the region, the influences can be tremendously diverse.

This diversity can be noticed if we take a look into the different origins of the popular genres of Latin American music. A good example is the genre known as "salsa". According to the ethnomusicologist Peter Manuel (1989), this term is ambiguous since it compresses several Latin American musical styles such as *merengue* and *cumbia*, which can be recognized in the different countries by their

natives. But, the importance of the term itself, Manuel explains, is its social function and the symbolism it has for the Latino community (1989). This situation points a very important aspect of Latin American music: it is an important symbol for the Latin Americans and a vital aspect of their culture. But, why are the Latin American rhythms so important for its people? Let's find out.

2.3. The social function of music

Popular music is not always considered as a serious object of study, since it is believed that it only obeys economical and fashionable tendencies that reflect mostly the movements in the industry of music and the manipulation of the mass media. Nevertheless, precisely because of the up-to-date side of popular music, it can

“... stand for, symbolize and offer immediate experience of collective identity. Other cultural forms – painting, literature, design – can articulate and show off shared values and pride, but only music can make you feel them” (Frith, 1987; p.140)

As explained in the previous quote, the trends reflect more than imposed fashion or the economic status of the musical industry, but the tendencies echo the collective identity. Whether this echo is manipulated or not, the truth is that people know what they like and what they not, and they use these tastes as an identity sign. This aspect is marked by Firth as music's first social function, where through the use of music as an identity symbol, social groups can be identified and categorized. Precisely, because of this social function, popular music can acquire nationalist functions (Frith, 1987)

Nevertheless, the question of popular music really reflecting a social need is an enquiry that researchers still debate about, just as the ethnomusicologist Peter Manuel points out. According to Manuel (1988), is very difficult to conclude if popular music actually responds to social needs, or if it just a creation of the industry used to manipulate the masses, or if it is some kind of mixture of both. The author states that even with the manipulation of the mass media, music can be used as a contrast tool, where people reaffirm an identity that doesn't fit in the homogenised society. He explains that this situation can be especially evident in the urbanized societies, where people of different ethnic and economic origins come together. Manuel concludes that the music each group tends to choose is an expression of social identity. With this affirmation, we can ascertain music's second social function proposed by Frith, which is, music *“give[s] us a way of managing the relationship between our public and private lives”* (Frith, 1987; p.141)

The third function, according to Frith, is *“to shape popular memory, to organize our sense of time”* (Frith, 1987; p.142) In the case of Latin American music, as we explained in the previous section, it has an important social function. In the case of the style known as “salsa”, we mentioned that it has an important

symbolism for the Latino community. This is because “*salsa is a musical lingua franca shared by separate Latino nations and communities*” (Manuel, 1989: p. 47)

In the case of samba, by reviewing the topics of the lyrics we have a sense of time and the social reality. According to Shaw (1999) before the decade of the 1930's, the figure of the *malandro* (Brazil's rogue thief figure) was admired and through it an anti-establishment discourse was present in the samba of the time. But, with the new government, the message had to be transmitted in an indirect way, changing not only the topics of the songs (the reformed thief), but also the forcing the musicians to transform the exterior of samba in order to preserve its essence (Shaw, 1999)

In conclusion, music has an important role in society. Music affects not only the individual but also the environment in which it is performed. Samba is an integral part of what the *favelas* in Rio de Janeiro are, of their identity and the daily life of its inhabitants. In Japan's case, more specifically, in the case of Kobe, what role does samba have? We will explore this matter after.

2.3.1. Samba in Brazil: it's social function

Investigations about samba in Brazil are vast since this musical genre has an important role in Brazilian society. Some examples can be found in the works of the anthropologist Roberto de Matta (1991), who analyses mostly the meaning of the carnival where samba is performed and examines one of the important topics than can be found in samba and we will discuss later, the figure of *malandro*; professor Lisa Shaw (1999) makes an account of the history of samba and its socio-political and cultural context and meaning; and the anthropologist Hermano Vianna (1999) who besides explaining the historic and cultural context, he also offers a more personal approach to the world of samba.

In order to understand this musical genre that appeals many people in Japan, we first need to examine samba in its original context, Brazil. Samba, simply put, “*comprises a choral melody with instrumental accompaniment*” (Manuel, 1988: p.65). It's better described as a vivid music, where the percussion instruments and singing are indispensable. Its dancing also is very strenuous, where the movement of the hips is characteristic, but since it's so intense, the whole body takes part.

By revising the history of this genre in Brazil and the meaning it was given through history and it is given today, we can explore and understand the significance it has in Japan. But, as it was mentioned, since the exiting investigations are extensive, samba's characteristics will be introduced briefly since an extensive report about Brazil's samba deviates from our research objectives.

The analysis of the history of samba locates its origin during the colonial period in Brazil, with the music the black slaves performed during that time. In Brazil's XVII century, as in other colonies in the American Continent, black

slaves were brought to work in plantations, servitude and so on. These slaves took with them their culture and traditions, and once they were established in the new continent, they continued with some traditional practices; where among them was their music and dancing, which had a symbolic connection with their original culture. By performing the music and dancing of their land of origin, the slaves were able to preserve some of their culture and adapt to the new land.

But as time passed, these traditions started to take a new form, original of this group of black immigrants. The American musicologist Chasteen (1996) explains that by the XVII century, the main characteristics brought from the African tradition were preserved, that been the polyrhythm music, and lively and intense dancing known in the time as *batuque*, which also included some Amerindian instruments besides de African drums. Also, with the different European influences arriving at the colonies, some European musical styles like *flamenco* and *sapateado* shaped the polyrhythm music and its dancing. For example, the intense movement of the torso, hips and legs, known as *requebros*, makes reference to African dance, whereas some of the movements of the arms, to *flamenco* (Chasteen, 1996: p.32-33).

By the beginning of the XVIII century, *batuque* and other polyrhythm music, known as *lundu*, that, also, had some influence in the formation of samba, became popular among the white and wealthy population too, characteristic which put it apart from *batuque*. Chasteen explains that by the end of this century and the beginning of the 1800, *lundu* was Brazil's national social dance. The author continues pointing out the multicultural scenario these dances posed, since both white and dark-skinned people participated in the dances. But also a male-female hierarchy could be seen as the usual sight involved a white male dancing with a dark-skinned woman where the movements of the male indicated dominance (Chasteen, 1996). With this, we don't mean to say that *lundu* became the first interracial social dance in Brazil, but it was the one which gained popularity and some kind of social acceptance. The intense dancing was still very criticized as an immoral dancing.

In the end of the XIX century, *lundu* lost some of its appeal to give place to *maxixe*, a combination of *lundu* and *polka*. More than a specific rhythm, *maxixe* acknowledged a way of dancing, characterized by the hips movements, the *requebros*. Because of this characteristic, several musical genres, like *lundu* and *polka*, could be danced *maxixe* style. Around Rio de Janeiro and other urbanized cities in Brazil, *maxixe* soon took root, not only as a social dance but also as a symbol of the races mixing in Brazil. Most of the women who participated in the dances were *mulatas* or *morenas*, women of mixed race who would later become "an emblem of Brazilian sensuality" (Chasteen, 1996, p.40) *Maxixe*, that had been a hall dance, moved quickly to the streets thanks to a new group called *Congos*, who paraded around the streets of Rio de Janeiro with costumes labelled as "African" or "Indian" because of the feathered accessories.

By the beginning of the XX century, Rio's streets resounded to the music of the *Congos* and other music groups that appeared after them. By the second

decade, the first melody that has been acknowledged as samba appeared and thus the already big musical movement took new dimensions with the appearance of the *Escolas de Samba* in the decade of the 20's (Shaw, 1999: p.5-6). These samba groups were and are mostly are still composed by the dark-skinned people from the *favelas*, the surrounding humble vertical towns around Rio. The following decade, these groups became the main exponents of the newborn samba music and dance.

On the following years, Brazil will confront a radical political change which encouraged the cultural industry under the *Estado Novo* policy. During the 1930's decade, the country went through a revolution that put Getúlio Vargas in the presidency and with his ideas to create a modern, strong and united Brazilian State. As Shaw (1999) explains: "*the forging of a national consciousness, or brasilidade, and the creation of an emblematic iconography of state were central concerns of the Vargas administration*" (Shaw, 1999; p.28-29)

Thanks to this situation, and to the support of musicians, scholars, politicians and some other influential sectors, samba soon became a central actor in the cultural industry, earning the title of symbol of the country (Vianna, 1999). Also, the state started to subsidize the Samba Schools, practice that continues nowadays. Samba also became a product to sell to the tourist by the decade of the 60's, and by the 70's white people were also participating.

During the 80's, the now famous *sambadrome*, where the carnival competition takes place every year, was completed near where the *Escolas de Samba* were located, and the parades disappeared from the streets. The performances became more detailed in several ways. The schools chose a topic and focusing on it, prepared the costumes, the organization of the dance along with the song to be danced and the floats that are seen in the carnival.

In modern times, during the carnival in Rio de Janeiro, several musical and artistic performances can be seen, but the samba performances and competition in the *sambadrome* are the ones which draw most of the attention. During the carnival, the big samba teams organize subgroups which execute a different choreography than the one the whole team dances so detailed and complicated performances can be seen. Regarding to the specific samba songs, each *escola* chooses their annual song between the different possibilities the *sambistas* (samba musicians who can compose or also perform samba music) present to them.

2.3.1.1. The meaning of samba

Today, samba is still closely related to the needy people in Rio de Janeiro since it's performed and danced by the inhabitants of the *favelas*, most of them dark skinned people, fact that also emphasis samba's African roots. But it is also a national symbol in Brazil, a country that already accepts the mixture of races as a special characteristic of the nation. It seems to be some kind of contradiction,

but in a society as the Brazilian, this kind of contradiction makes perfect sense (de Matta, 1990: p.6, 9; 1991: p.24, 38, George, 1985: p.10).

Samba was born in the mist of the lowest class, consequently it express their way of living and feelings about their environment. It is therefore a popular expression in Brazil, subsequently an element of Latin America's Culture.

Nevertheless, historically the popular side of society and the hegemonic strata of society don't sympathize. Then, are the hegemonic powers manipulating samba as a national symbol? Or is it a symbol of equality and peace between races? Both options are possible. This is because samba, through its history, also has had unequal circumstances. If we consider the different situation presented by samba's ancestors, when the dark skinned women danced with white men, the dance and movements suggested male dominance (Chasteen, 1996). But even when this situation was obvious, the interaction of the races was possible through the music. At the same time, for the humble people who participate in the carnival in our days, that celebration is the one time for them to forget about their precarious situation and the opportunity to become the center of attention in society.

When we consider the previous information, the significance of samba music and its symbolism show a complicated history; related closely to its country of origin, to the social, cultural and economic background of Brazil. Samba wouldn't be the same kind of music if its origin was different. There is an important aspect about Latin American Culture that samba represents perfectly, as it was discussed in the previous section, and it is how through music Latin Americans express their realities, their societies, and their culture. Such an intricate expression that reaches would conserve its meaning even if it crossed the seas. Or is it possible that it changes completely during different circumstances? Does samba conserves and transmits a social message only in the Brazilian context? If we take into account these questions and possible scenarios, we need to wonder what happens in Japan with all the symbolism and meaning behind samba music and dancing.

2.3.2. Samba in Japan: its history

Before focusing exclusively in samba music and dancing, we need to consider the arrival of Latin American music to Japan. According to Chiba (2005) the spread of Latin American music in Japan obeyed the European and American tendencies, especially after World War II. But, in the decades of the 60's and 70's, the author explains, in Europe and South America there is a boom for the traditional, boom that also takes place in Japan, where the desire to know the original Latin American music flowers. In the decade of the 80's, with the great influx of the Latin American immigrants, new tendencies and influences in Latin American music reach Japan (Chiba, 2005).

Considering the previous statement, samba seems to be a very special case in Japan. Samba first was heard in the country at the end of the 1960's in Kobe city. During that decade, because of the oil shock around the world, several oil ships came from Brazil to the Kobe Port, in order to reconstruct them so they could carry more oil. The crew of these ships, played samba music during their free time in any place they were at the moment. These Brazilians would be invited to small parties or other events all around the city, provoking that the rhythm spread rapidly through all Kobe. People from the city would make friends with the Brazilian musicians whom would teach the Japanese the rhythm of samba and the dancing steps. Some musicians would even sell their instruments to their new Japanese pupils. Very soon, the intense rhythm of samba would take Kobe city, and the best proof of this situation was the organization of Kobe carnival in 1967.

From this point, samba spreads all over Japan. One example is the Asakusa Samba Carnival, which started 1981. With the idea of creating a new image for the city, the carnival took samba as a symbol for the modern Asakusa. Nowadays, it is a symbol of the festivals during the summer in Tokyo and it is the most popular samba carnival in Japan¹, even though when their musicians and dancers first came to Kobe to learn samba music and dancing.

But, in order to have a clearer image of the samba phenomenon in Japan, we will examine Kobe Matsuri and its samba in further detail in the following chapter.

Chapter 3

Fieldwork: description of the field and the participants

3.1. Description of Kobe city and methods used

Actually activities and places related to Latin America can be found in several parts all across Japan. The Fiesta Mexicana in September in Tokyo and Osaka, the restaurants offering food and music from different Latin American countries in the street Kiyamachi in Kyoto, and so on. In order to gather pertinent information related to the experiences of different people that have participated in activities related to Latin American culture, and the process by which those experiences evolved, a particular case of Kobe was chosen in this thesis.

The city of Kobe and its festival presents an interesting case of study because of their particular history. As it was mentioned before, samba music and dancing came to Japan first to Kobe city and then expanded through the country. Through observation in the city, it has been noted that there are a considerable number of activities related to samba music and dancing. These activities include big events like the samba performances in the different wards the first day of “Kobe Matsuri” and the presentations during its second day when a couple of blocks are exclusively dedicated to the performance of samba, the competition known as Samba Festa where teams from all the country gather to present a special show that might gave them the triumph; and small events in different bars where the clients can join a samba class and a samba performance together with samba dancers invited for the occasion.

It is said that, because of Kobe’s special history related to its international aspect and the long history of emigration and immigration, it cannot be taken as an example of a typical Japanese city. Nevertheless, in this case the city is not our main object of study, but it is the festival this city produced, Kobe Matsuri.

It was chosen since both the festival and its samba performances have a long history that will be explained in detail in the next sections. Besides its long history, Kobe Matsuri is also one of the festivals which its considered to have a long tradition and its compared to Tenjin Matsuri in Osaka and Gion Matsuri in Kyoto (神戸まつり六大学合同調査団, 1982; p.1), making this festival one of the most famous festivals in Japan, even to foreigners. Therefore, Kobe Matsuri and its samba can be considered to reach a vast population and influence not only the city where it takes places, but also in other cities in Japan. Even so, in order to

understand better the message that the samba has been transmitting, the research was limited to Hyogo prefecture.

To recapitulate, Kobe's case presents an interesting example because of the particular history of the city, which has been in contact with other countries and their cultures for a long time. In our present time, this kind of contact and interaction is very important for the different countries, and Kobe represents a good model for the rest of Japan. Just as the people of Kobe express themselves, and we refer here to a samba specialist who insists that Kobe not only accepts the Brazilian rhythm but that the city accepts the different of international cultures.

3.2. A brief history of Kobe Matsuri (Kobe Festival)

Kobe Matsuri starts in 1971, with the idea of combining Minato Matsuri and the Kobe Carnival. Minato Matsuri had started in 1933 and took place at the end of October each year. It was created with the idea of inventing a new original festival for the city. Nevertheless, both traditional Japan and the international aspect of Kobe were shown through the parades with floats representing the different groups which participated, a queen contest, a nostalgic parade where people dressing costumes of ancient Japanese warriors appeared, and other activities.

On the other hand, Kobe Carnival began in 1967 as part of the centennial of the opening of the Kobe Port, and took its lead from the carnival in Rio de Janeiro (Inoue, 1979; p.179). As it will be explained latter in detail, in this year samba music and dancing was introduced to Kobe city, so it could be presumed that following this "new tendency", the model of the Rio de Janeiro Carnival was taken. In this occasion, several groups related to the city like the Chamber of commerce or the Council of Women's Organizations participated with different songs, dances and costumes in a parade. Artists presented painted murals; there were also spaces for young people and other activities related to music and art.

But the preparation of both celebrations was very complicated since it affected especially the transit in the city and for this reason the authorities of the city decided to put together the two festivals. Kobe Matsuri was born with the same activities of the previous festivals: the decorated floats, the queen contest, the musical performances of the carnival, including samba music and dancing; and others. More activities were added and some there also special activities different years. The participating groups also increased and include several organizations related to Kobe city, children performing groups, groups representing the foreigners in the city, artist, several samba teams, and so on. It is worth mentioning that in the festival of 1996, the year after the Great Hanshin

Earthquake, was a special festival that was planned with the theme of “Thankful prayer, joy of life” and among the distinctive activities of that year, samba teams from Rio de Janeiro also participated², joining the local samba teams.

Kobe Matsuri is a festival that, according to Inoue (1979) is different to other festival since it has some characteristics that place it in a different category than the traditional festivals. The most important aspect is that the typical religious elements seem to be omitted in Kobe Matsuri, to the point that the festivity doesn't have a deity to which it is offered. Therefore, Kobe Matsuri enters the classification of “urban festival” explained in chapter 2.

Also, as discussed in chapter 2, Kobe Matsuri is the moment when the people of the city can connect to their own town and work together for it. For the people of Kobe, wherever they are, Kobe Matsuri and its message are a part of who they are.

3.3. Samba music and dancing in Kobe Matsuri

Nowadays, the participant samba teams come from all over Kansai Area. Some guest teams participate from time to time, but there are seven teams which are the ones who the audience recognizes as the teams of the city. The size of the teams is diverse, the biggest one with around a 500 members when all the team assembles. The participants include people from all ages. The dancers are mostly women, so most of the participants in the different teams are women. Men participate as part of the band of the respective team, but some teams have a few males who also dance and these men usually have a lead role in the choreography of the team.

Besides participating in Kobe Matsuri, various teams perform in other festivals, like the Asakusa Samba Carnival, or other activities like opening acts in concerts, as an entertainment event to animate a wedding or other musical festivals not exactly related to samba itself.

One of these teams exists since the formation of Kobe Matsuri, and is the official team of the city. Their musical and dancing style is original and different from the other teams, and this is why they are easily recognized. Because of it history and the mentioned characteristics, this team was chosen for the investigation.

² <http://www.kobe-matsuri.com/history/>

On the other hand, other teams prefer to follow strictly the original structure of samba, so their music and dancing is almost the same as the teams in Brazil. The leaders and some other important members of some of these teams have even been able to participate in the carnival in Rio de Janeiro and some of them have been able to dance with the winner teams in the carnival. For the purposes of the investigation, and to be able to contrast with the previously presented team, a team whose members have experience of staying in Brazil was chosen.

3.4. Methods used in this study

In this study, three methods were used: participatory observation, a questionnaire and a half-structured interview.

Firstly, in order to understand better the message that is transmitted through the performance of samba in this festival, observation as a spectator was implemented during the Kobe Matsuri in May 15th and 16th, 2010; May 15th, 2011 and May 20th, 2012. Also, observation as a spectator and as participant was performed during the rehearsal of the two samba teams that were chosen for the next stages of the investigation, in April 4th, September 29th and November 11th, 2012. Some characteristics of these two teams will be explained in detail in the following sections.

Secondly, with the purpose of investigate the influence of samba and the knowledge about Latin America, a questionnaire was given to the regular participants of the two samba teams mentioned previously. Some of the questions included in the questionnaire are the following:

- ◆ Personal changes that can be associated to samba.
- ◆ General knowledge about Latin America.
- ◆ Among others³.

Finally, with the intention of deepen the information gathered in the questionnaires, half-structured interviews were effected with one of the leaders and two to three regular members of each samba team. Some of the questions were the following:

To the leaders:

- About how they got involved in samba to the point of organizing a samba team.

³ For further details about the questions presented, please refer to the Annex No. 3.

- The organization of the teams.
- The meaning of samba for them and what do they want to transmit.
- Among others.⁴

To the participants of the teams:

- About how they got involved in the samba team.
- The reason why they chose a samba team instead of other musical or sports groups.
- The meaning of samba for them.
- Personal changes they associate with samba.
- Opinion about the music, lyrics, dancing, outfits.
- Among others.⁵

It's important to mention that the participants of the teams that were chosen, and the ones who were interviewed, all of them are Japanese. Since our main objective is to find out the influence in Japanese society, it was preferable that all the informants were Japanese.

3.5. Characteristics of the samba teams chosen for the investigation

As was mentioned in the previous section, two different samba team were chosen amongst the seven samba teams which are recognized as “permanent participants” in Kobe. For practical uses, we will call the team that has participated since the very beginning of Kobe Matsuri, Team A; and the team with members who participated in Brazil's Carnival, Team B.

Some members of both of the teams explain that they make their own music and costumes. Each team has subgroups which are in charge of different tasks.

The socio-economic situation is very diverse even inside one team. We can find participants that have a full time job and cannot always participate in all the activities of their respective teams. We also find housewives whose only leisure moment seem to be the essays and performances of the teams. There are also participants who have built their way of life around music, who dedicated entirely to the samba performances and activities. And finally we have the youngest participants who still assist to school and who sometimes join the teams because their parents or other family member is part of it, or because of a friend invitation, or on their own initiative. Through the observation of the performances and essays of both teams, of the working situation of their participants and the resources they have, both teams' members enjoy a stable economic situation.

⁴ For further details about the questions presented, please refer to the Annex No. 4.

⁵ For further details about the questions presented, please refer to the Annex No. 4.

3.5.1. Team No.1: Team A

This team was formed by the current leader, around 70 years old, and his son and daughter have helped him to maintain it until our days. The current leader met some of the Brazilian crew of the ships that were stationed in Kobe at the end of the 1960's and learned the basic rhythm of samba from them. The team started with the Kobe Matsuri and is actually the biggest samba team in all Japan (山田, 2011; p.5).

As was mentioned before, this team has their own idea of samba music and dancing. For this reason, their music and costumes have their own original taste, very different from the traditional Brazilian samba music or costumes, so the team stands out from the other samba teams.



Picture took by the author during Kobe Matsuri, 2010

The regular participants are around a 100, but since it is the official team of the city, every year new participants can join so they can be part of the main parade of Kobe Matsuri after they learn the basic steps of the team's choreographies in a public class known as "Samba School", which takes places during the weekends before the festival. The numbers can vary from 400 to 1000 during the main parade. Also, a lot of the members participate as family; therefore, its age range is wide.

Referring to their musical aspect, the basic rhythm of samba is preserved, but the melody is different from the traditional one. The team has four songs in

their repertory, all are in Japanese and the main message refers to the enjoyable environment of the city of Kobe. The choreography for each song is original for the team, so even when the basic samba steps are maintained, the dance is also different from the traditional samba.

So, in resume the team Team A is the oldest samba team in Japan and has developed its own samba style, “Kobe Samba”.

3.5.2. Team No.2: Team B

The other team chosen for the investigation is Team B. Next year, this team will be celebrating its 10th anniversary, but in the case of the family who leads the team, they have been involved in samba performance for around 20 years. After the Great Hanshin Earthquake, the family joined a samba team as a way to lift their own spirits and of those around them.

But the team where they participated disintegrated, so they started their own team. The family is in charge of the leadership of the team, where the leader of the team is the father; the daughter is the leader of the dancers and mother is the sub leader of the dancers. The merit of this team is that the leader of the dancers has experience participating in the Carnival in Rio de Janeiro for several years.



Picture took by the author during Kobe Matsuri, 2011

The actual members of the team are around a 100, among whom, some also participate as family. People can participate by contacting the team by their web page or approaching the members after an activity.

Since the dancer leader has participated in the Brazilian Carnival, this team's music, dancing and costume designs follow not only the traditional styles of samba, but also the latest tendencies of samba in Brazil. Just as the Brazilian teams, they chose a topic and prepare a song, choreography and costumes related to the topic each year. This also shows the competitive spirit of this team, which has won for five consecutive years the competition that takes place in July, the Samba Festa.

Team B is a new group compared to Team A, but since they perform according to the Brazilian samba music and dancing, they have been recognized through their victories in the Samba Festa competition.

3.6. Samba performace in Kobe Matsuri

As we have seen in this chapter, Kobe Matsuri has a long history that makes it an important part of the city and its people; therefore it forms part of their identity. Samba music and dancing first came to Kobe and it's also a vital element of Kobe Matsuri and the city itself, spreading after to all Japan.

Kobe's samba teams participate not only in the activities inside their city, but also travel all over the country, performing a type of music and dancing which is very different both from the traditional and the contemporary music in the country. Some members have been participating almost for their entire lives, some only a few years ago, and some participate as family.

But after taking part in such a contrasting performance, has some change occurred in the way of being of these people and their way thinking? How has samba and its message affected their perspective of the life and of the Japanese society? We will discuss these and other issues in the next chapter.

Chapter 4

Discussion and conclusions

The results will be presented according to the methods used, in three different sections. First of all, the results of the questionnaires will be presented, separating each team, since each one presented different results. The points in common will be discussed later. In the following section, the result of the interviews will be explained and analyzed. In the final section, a general discussion will be exposed.

4.1. Questionnaires

A questionnaire with 13 questions was distributed among the regular participants of both teams, around a 100. Unfortunately, the response rate was very low in both cases. Several of the questionnaires also had one or several questions in blank. Nevertheless, since the response rate was low but still several comments and opinions were written in each of the questionnaires, they will be used in its totality, so that in the final discussion we may be able to compare more data.

4.1.1. Results from the questionnaires given to Team A's members

Approximately 50 sets of questionnaires were distributed but only 32 were answered. Of the 32 sets, 9 sets were incomplete. Most of the participants were women, a total of 27. The age rate was between 10 and 59 years old. All who answered the questionnaire live in the prefecture of Hyogo.

Regarding any knowledge about Latin America or Brazil, the country of origin of the dance they practice fervently, the survey showed that neither in the past nor in the present the members of the team have any particular knowledge. This includes their awareness about samba before entering the team. But, since this team's aim has nothing to do with the imitation of the original Brazilian samba, this situation seems somehow compressible. Nevertheless, it is still surprising that, considering that this team is the oldest samba team in Japan, their acquaintance with the origin of the music and dancing they have been practicing for such a long time is reduced to some basic information, like the popularity of soccer or the quality of the coffee. In general, the image they have of Brazil is related to soccer and an energetic and cheerful country. The same can be said about the rest of Latin America.

The reasons for joining the team varied. The members expressed that they just wanted to dance samba or they had some interest in it, but most of them expressed that they joined because a friend invited them or a family member was already part of the team and this person seemed to be enjoying herself or himself through samba, so this was the trigger of the participants interest in joining the

team. For the participants, samba music and dancing represent a way to relieve stress, to make new friends, to express art and to express themselves; but mostly, the new human relations acquired through the practice of samba, are the most important experience for the members. As one of them expressed:

「以前、ブラジルのサンバチームの方と一緒に演奏したことがあり言葉は通じないけれども音楽は（サンバのリズムで）万国共通だと実感した」
In the past, I performed along with people of a Brazilian samba team, but even when I don't understand their language I realized that music (in the rhythm of samba) was the universal [communication tool]
— woman, between 40-49 years old.

Besides the improvement of human relations, 26 of the 32 expressed that their way of thinking changed since they joined the team. In addition of discovering a new way to enjoy life, the members answered that their way of thinking is freer and that they realized there are things more important than study or work. In their own words:

- 🐦 「人と人のきずなが大切と学んだ」
I learned that the bonds between people are important — woman, between 40-49 years old.
- 🐦 「自分をありのままになってもっとすきになりたかったから」
I want to be myself so that I would be able to like (or care) myself more — woman, between 30-39 years old.
- 🐦 「目の前の未来が明るく開ける感じがする」
I feel like the future in front of my eyes opens brightly — woman, between 10-19 years old.
- 🐦 「塾とかばっかりだったけど楽しく踊れたから」
I was always just going to cram school but now I can enjoy myself dancing — woman, between 10-19 years old.
- 🐦 「人への思いやりを考えるようになった」
I began to consider other people's feelings — woman, between 10-19 years old.
- 🐦 「いやなことがあった時などサンバをおどったら明るい気持ちになれていやなことを忘れれる」
When bad things happen, if you dance samba you get a bright feeling and you can forget the bad things — woman, between 10-19 years old.

In the case of the Team A, samba music and dancing is taken as a powerful and bright self-expression tool, and these characteristics are the ones that seem to matter the most in the case of this team rather than the meaning samba has. These specific characteristics define this team and the personality of their members, who are aware that, most of all, the environment, which is characteristic of the team, changed them in a positive way: they can enjoy life in a different way thanks to samba music.

But even if the participants did experience a change, through the results in this survey, we can't affirm that it was caused by the influence of samba music and dancing. As it was explained, the members have no knowledge about the roots or meaning of samba, therefore they are unaware of the cultural expression samba represents. The characteristics given to samba by this team are the result of the intense rhythm and dancing which represents samba and have nothing to do with its historical background or sociocultural meaning, and so, their change in their way of thinking has nothing to do with samba's message.

4.1.2. Results from the questionnaires given to Team B's members

Since the response rate for Team A was so low, and to equilibrate the number of surveys between the two teams, around 40 sets of questionnaires were given to FJ team, but in this case the response rate was even lower, and only 21 were answered. Of the 21 sets, 6 sets were incomplete. Most of the participants were women, a total of 19. The age rate varied from 8 to 59 years old. All who answered the questionnaire live in the prefecture of Hyogo.

Regarding any knowledge about Latin America or Brazil, the situation seems to be the same as the previous team. Nevertheless, the comments regarding the general image of Brazil vary in great measure. Besides the cheerful and passionate image transmitted by samba, some of the members know about the general social reality of the country, especially regarding to the *favelas*, their impoverishment and that these places are related to samba. Other members mention Brazilian food, soccer or the dark skinned people as part of the general population.

The reasons for joining the team varied a lot more. Instead of putting emphasis in their interest in samba or that it seemed to be a fun activity, the emphasis differs significantly. Some express that to participate as family strengthened the family bonds, while others were attracted to the flashy costumes and wanted to wear them; some expressed that it's a healthy pastime; other people were attracted to the rhythm or to the performance during the festivals.

This team express that they enjoy practicing samba, but besides enjoying themselves, there is a strong consciousness as a team, specifically regarding a common objective. The members don't explain what kind of objective they share, but this common goal draws the team together. Besides realising stress or expressing themselves through the music and dance, the members work hard for the common purpose of the team. In their own words:

☞ ひとつの目標に向かってみんなで練習しているうちに強い絆が生まれとても大事な大好きな友人ができた

A strong bond is born out practicing together towards one goal, and I made very important friends that I'm fond of— woman, between 0-9 years old.

☞ 特に目標のない人生から、もっと上手に踊りたいという目標ができた。汗を流して努力することが楽しい

Although I didn't have any particular goal in my life, [thanks to samba] I've found a goal to be a better dancer. — woman, between 30-39 years old.

The strong group consciousness is the most important characteristic reflected in the questionnaires; awareness that appeared after the members joined the team. This is the most remarkable change in their way of thinking, besides expressing, like the previous team, that their life became more enjoyable and that they realized there are things more important than study or work.

🐦 おどっているときは自由になれるので好きです

When I dance, I become free and I like that — woman, between 10-19 years old.

🐦 サンバを通じてたくさんの方を知り合いになった。踊って身体を動かす、リズムの中に身を投じることで心身が活性化されているような気がする

Through samba, I was able to meet a lot of people. With the dance, the body moves, mind and body feel like being activated by a plunge in the rhythm — woman, between 50-59 years old.

🐦 誰もひとりで生きているのではなく、友人家族まわりの人々に支えられているということを、サンバのために、時間をやりくりしたり、見てくれたり、応援をもらって感じるになった

I have started to realize that nobody lives by themselves and that she(he) is supported by friends, family and the people around her(him). My samba [performance] is been supported [in different ways]; [people] make time for me, come to see me and encourage me — woman, between 50-59 years old.

In the case of FJ, the objective its members share as group is the one characteristic that defines them. This goal is the main reason for the participants to work hard to become better samba performers and is the main reason for the change in their way of thinking. Even when this showed some knowledge about samba's background and meaning, any influence of these was not reflected in the answers in the survey. Just as the previous group, participating in a samba team changed the way of thinking of its members, but not because of any specific sociocultural influence, but because of the environment that has been built around a samba that lack any of its original meaning.

4.2. Interviews

The interviews to the members of both groups where performed from July through November of 2012. An interview guide with different questions was prepared for the leaders and members, as was explained before. The average of the time for the interviews according to the guide was around an hour.

4.2.1. Interviews to the Team A's members

The leader and 3 members of the team were interviewed. Thanks to the leader, the detailed origins of the team and their idea of samba could be known. In the time the Brazilian boats were in Kobe Port for the reparations, the crews walked around the city. In one occasion, the leader met two of them, who were lost and couldn't find their way back to the port. After the leader took them back, in appreciation for the help, the Brazilian crew taught the leader samba music and dancing.

He, the leader, liked the music very much and since he was working with the City Hall at the time, he introduced the music in the Kobe Carnival and started organizing Team A. But he really didn't know much about music and samba was very complicated, so he took it as base for the new team he started to put together and the songs he composed. Therefore, the first official presentation of Team A with just a half dozen members, was one year before Kobe Matsuri. By the year 1982, the team participated in the main parade with 1200 members. But the numbers of participants changes a lot every year, as was explained before.

As for the interviewed members, all of them are female dancers; one of them started participating in the team since she was 7 while the other two started at the beginning of their 20's. The age range is 29-32 years old.

Even when their experience has been different, the three dancers expressed the same basic ideas: the great importance of team work and manners, that they have been able to meet a lot of different people of all ages, the fact that the participation in the team has been an important part of their personal formation, and that they don't know about Brazil or other Latin American countries at all.

First of all, the team work is emphasised heavily in the team, in a way that the dancers expressed didn't learn in school or other musical or sports groups they participated. The team needs to be very organized every time they have an activity or presentation because of its size; the participant members' numbers are great, so they really must not only be methodical but also obey the instructions of the different sub-leaders.

This organization also includes the emphasis in good manners especially during the presentations, towards the staff in charge of the event or activity they are participating in. But, the interviewed dancers express that this weight in good manners has been automatically passed to their daily lives and again, they didn't feel such emphasis in their general education or other groups.

Because of these two characteristics, and the fact that their samba music and dancing is different to other teams, the members insist that their team is most "Japanese" team. Therefore, the members are conscious that their team is not only different from the rest of the team that participate in Kobe Matsuri, but also that their team is the one which is closer to certain characteristics that they

consider are particular to Japanese culture: strong team work consciousness and emphasis in good manners.

The opportunity to meet different people is of great importance for the members. The group age range is very wide, as was explained before. To participate in such a group, has given the members a different perspective of the world. Unlike a school or a company, where the ages, the grouping and the tasks are plainly defined and never fade, in a samba team all the members have the same objective and some children might be the leaders of their age group of dancers along with other adults with the same responsibility, and so on.

As for the personal formation of the members, this has not only been affected by the previous characteristics, but also by the challenges they have confronted by joining the team. They express that they have been able to have experiences that not everyone has the opportunity to have like appearing in television, participating in big festivals and events, meeting famous people and travelling all around the country. These experiences have been important in their growth as people. In their own words:

「このサンバがあつたから今の自分もうあるから」

Because of [the experience of practicing] samba, I am who I am now

From this we can deduce that the music itself is not the cause of their personal change. Samba music and dancing was an opportunity for new experiences, for interacting in a very diverse group that gave the members the opening to have a different perspective of the world; even if the new perspective is limited only to Japan.

As the questionnaires showed, the members know nothing about Brazil or other Latin American countries besides what they have seen in television or some the stereotypes related to the region: that its people is bright and passionate. It could be possible that these stereotypes are reaching the Japanese and having a positive influence? We need to examine first the next team to make any further conclusions.

4.2.2. Interviews to the Team B's members

In the case of Team B, the dancers' leader and 4 members were interviewed. The leader of the dancers explains that, at first, this team only was a band that played samba, but then she, after staying more than half a year in Brazil learning more about the original samba and participating in the Brazilian Carnival, came back to Japan, she took the role of becoming the teacher of the new dancers who wanted to participate and put together properly a new samba team. She explains that it has been challenging, since she doesn't know the language and the different environment, but great effort she has been able to participate in four Carnivals in Rio de Janeiro with one of the most famous teams.

The particular experience of the dancers' leader is worth to look at closely. She went to Brazil during her first year in the university, and after finishing her studies, she has been traveling to Brazil and participating in the Carnival since 2008, with the exception of the Carnival of 2012. To be able to participate in one of the *escolas*, she has to pass an audition, this is why, even when the Carnival is in February, she needs to practice for the audition several months before. Once she has passed the audition, she stays all the remaining weeks practicing in Rio with the team. Hence, even though she has traveled to Brazil several times, she doesn't know anything about the rest of the country or the neighboring countries. For her the reality of the samba in Brazil is very clear: she can identify the people who participate in the carnival as those dwelling in the impoverished *favelas*, whom have dark skin. She has not been able to learn proper Portuguese since in these areas the people use a slang language that she relates to the black culture surrounding the *favelas*, a language related to poverty and samba. Even when the environment is challenging, the leader keeps traveling to Brazil and participating in Rio's Carnival. Samba has become part of her life, and she express that she can't imagine her present without it. In her own words:

「サンバが無くなったらどうするんだろうと思いますね、くらい大事ですね」

If I didn't have [or practice] samba, I don't know what I would do with myself. It is that important.

In the case of the interviews to the members, two of them were high school girls, who have been participating in the team since the very beginning, while the other two members are a house wife in her 30's and male musician in his 50's, both of them participating since around six years ago. Unfortunately, due to the convenience of the members, the interviews were short, between 10 to 20 minutes. Therefore, the interviewees didn't consider or discussed in detail the different questions.

Considering the experience of the dancers' leader, it could be expected that the rest of the team, especially the dancers, might have more specific knowledge about the background of samba and its socio-cultural meaning. Nevertheless, when asked about personal changes or important experiences, they express the same basic ideas than the previous Team A: strong group consciousness, the opportunity to participate in several events and general unawareness about Brazil and Latin America.

The members explain that they want to improve and be able to dance better, and work hard for the sake of the team as well as enjoy themselves with their fellow members and family through samba. They enjoy the opportunity they have to participate and compete in different activities.

When asked about Brazil or Latin American, besides knowing about Rio's Carnival, some expressed they know about other Latin American rhythms, like tango or salsa and some know about the Brazilian food thanks to stores in Kobe

that sell Brazilian products. Besides this particular knowledge, the unawareness is general, just as the questionnaires also showed.

Nevertheless, the experience of the male musician is a quite different from the rest of the interviewees. He has been involved in Brazilian music since his high school days and has had the opportunity to travel to Brazil. Just as the dancers' leader, he is aware of the social reality of the country and the environment surrounding samba music.

Considering this situation, the interviewees who have been able to travel to Brazil are the ones who, not only know about the country, but also demonstrate the existence of a personal connection with Brazil and its samba. As the male musician expressed:

「サンバがないってやっぱり、オゲサに言えば生きていけないって、そういう形になっていますね」

Without samba, definitely, and it might sound exaggerated, I couldn't continue to live. That is the form [or importance] it has taken [in my life]

Not all the members express such a fervent attachment to samba, but the practice of its music and dancing has helped them in another important aspect. The members expressed that it is through samba that they have the ability to encourage and cheer people up. So, samba is not only a bright expression for them, but it is brightness and positive energy that they can and want to share.

「人を楽しませたり感動させたりできる力があるっていうのは、それってやっぱりサンバって、すごいなと思いますね」

I think that the power samba has to entertain and to move people's feelings is really amazing.

So, the team FJ, even when they don't know about Latin America, the passion and positive energy associated with the region seems to be influencing them through samba music and dancing. Now, we are able to go back to the question previously suggested: could be possible that these stereotypes are reaching the Japanese and having a positive influence?

4.3. Final discussion

We have so far analyzed the case of two samba teams which participate in Kobe Matsuri, with different characteristics and but also points in common.

One of the points in common is related to the family tradition. In both teams the leadership is represented by a family group that had the initiative to start a samba team. This family unit is the symbol that brings together the rest of the members, creating a samba family and an important social group.

Another attribute that both teams share is that, even when their ways of expression are different, they try their best to show their originality through samba. They make their own costumes, music and choreographies. Through their songs, they want to transmit a particular message to the public and to the city. One of the teams wants to illustrate “a bright Kobe through a samba full of Kobe spirit” and the other one wants to show “the cool side of Brazilian samba”.

The understanding of samba is different for both teams, but both associate it with positive energy, cheerfulness and brightness. This guides us to an important issue related to the meaning of samba in Japan in contrast to the meaning in Brazil. Samba transmits energy, positive energy. It is cheerful, bright and powerful. Those who are involved in samba express that they can feel an especial vitality that supports their everyday life. So, in Japan, samba has nothing to do with dissatisfaction or the problems in society, but it is charged with positive feelings and brightness.

So, even when each participant has their own private reasons, they agree in one important thing: the brightness and positive energy the music transmits, a trait they associate not only with Brazil, but with Latin America. In other words, samba has become a cultural expression that has been deprived from all background leaving only the surface. Even so, even when the message of samba doesn't reach Japanese population, the Latin American energy does.

Nevertheless, we need to wonder about this influence we are discussing, the positive energy and cheerfulness. The influence can be really related to Latin American culture or is it another stereotype associated with the image that exists about Latin America? Considering that the participants who perform and dance samba know nothing of the music's background or meaning, and that the positive traits are only based in the intense rhythm, a direct cultural influence must be discarded. Instead of cultural influence, the different stereotypes related to the brightness and cheerfulness of Latin America, are the factors influencing the Japanese who performance samba music and dancing.

Stereotypes are usually associated with bad imaginary, but in the case at study, the situation is completely the contrary. These particular characterizations are not only positive in it selves but are also give rise to positive attitudes in the Japanese people who believe in them.

Another important matter to consider is if the appeal for samba music these positive stereotypes are associated to the current situation of Japanese society. The country is going through a difficult moment due to several economic and socio-cultural factors. Even when Japan remains one of the wealthiest countries in the world despite all the existing problems, the general feeling of hopelessness is generalized, and this situation is best represented by the suicide problem the country faces. As explained in several newspapers “Japan has one of the highest incidences of suicide in the world”⁶, and it is becoming an ever-

⁶ <http://www.tokyotimes.com/2012/suicide-in-japan-exceeds-30000-for-14th-year/>

growing crisis for the country. Demonstrations of positive energy could be a getaway from the pessimistic environment.

Taking into consideration the previous statement, samba is not only promoting mere stereotypes in Japan, but positive stereotypes, which are helping Japanese people to cope with the current situation in the country. Moreover, this encouraging influence is being spread by the different teams all over Japan. The vitality the participants experience through samba music and dancing is also being transmitted to the rest of the population, or at least, the teams consider they do their best to do so.

In conclusion, there is no Latin American cultural influence, but positive Latin American stereotypes: brightness, cheerfulness, positive energy and vitality; all treats that seem to be very necessary in present day Japan.

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Annexes

Annex No. 1

CD with audios and videos of the samba teams taken during a public samba class
and Kobe Matsuri, 2012

Annex No. 2

Pictures of the samba teams taken in the Kobe Matsuri of 2010 and 2011





Annex No. 3

Questionnaire

アンケート

はじめまして。大阪大学人間科学研究科博士前期課程二年に在学するサンチェス・シルビアと申します。私は、日本社会においてラテンアメリカの文化がどのような影響を及ぼしているのか、ということについて研究しています。そして、日本とラテンアメリカの間の文化交流の実態を知るために、ラテンアメリカの文化に関連するイベントに参加されている方々の経験や知識は大変貴重であると考えています。

つきましては、以下のアンケートにご協力いただけたら大変ありがたいです。どうぞよろしくお願いいたします。

1. 性別（いずれか当てはまる項目を○で囲んでください）
a. 男性 b. 女性
2. 年齢（いずれか当てはまる項目を○で囲んでください。以下同様）
a. 0－9歳 e. 40歳－49歳
b. 10歳－19歳 f. 50歳－59歳
c. 20歳－29歳 g. 60歳以上
d. 30歳－39歳
3. 居住地
a. 兵庫県（神戸市内） d. 京都府
b. 兵庫県（神戸市外） e. その他_____
c. 大阪府
4. このサンバチームへの参加理由（いずれかを○で囲んだ上で、その理由を具体的に説明してください）
a. サンバを踊りたかったから
b. 友達と出会う機会だと考えたから
c. サンバのことを聞いて、興味を持っていたから
d. その他_____

＜理由＞

5. サンバに関する知識の有無（チームに参加する以前の時点で）
a. あった b. なかった
- a の「あった」を選択された場合、どのような知識を持っていたのか、具体的に書いてください
6. ブラジルに関する知識の有無
a. ある b. なし

a の「ある」を選択された場合、どのような知識を持っているのか、具体的に書いてください。

7. ブラジルに関してあなたが持っているイメージを書いてください
(チームに参加した後の時点で)

8. このサンバチームに参加して一番よかったと思うことは何ですか？
(いずれかを○で囲んだ上で、その理由を具体的に説明してください)

- a. いい友達ができた
- b. 前より人生が楽しくなった
- c. 遠い地域のことを学べた
- d. ブラジル、あるいは、ラテンアメリカとの文化交流ができた
- e. その他_____

<理由>

9. あなたにとってサンバとは何ですか？ (いずれかを○で囲んだ上で、その理由を具体的に説明してください) (情熱的な音楽や踊り)

- a. 楽しい音楽や踊り
- b. 活発な音楽や踊り
- c. 芸術的な音楽や踊り
- d. その他_____

<理由>

10. あなたにとってサンバは何をするための手段ですか？ (いずれかを○で囲んだ上で、その理由を具体的に説明してください)

- a. ストレスを発散する手段
- b. 友人を作る手段
- c. 仲間と協力して芸術を創造する手段
- d. 自分らしさを表現する手段
- e. その他_____

<理由>

11. このチームに参加してから、自分の考え方（ものの考え方、生き方、など）に関して、何か変わったことはありますか？ (いずれかを○で囲んだ上で、具体的に説明してください)

- a. ある
- b. なし

a の「ある」を選択された場合、具体的に、どのような面で変化があったのか選んでください

- ① 以前より、ものごとを自由に考えられるようになった
- ② 新しい人生の楽しみ方を発見した
- ③ 家族の大切さをより意識するようになった
- ④ 友人の大切さをより意識するようになった
- ⑤ 勉強や仕事以外にも、大事なものがあると思うようになった
- ⑥ その他_____

<理由>

12. 今、あなたがラテンアメリカ全般（ブラジルは除く）に関して持っている知識

- a. ある
- b. なし

a の「ある」を選択された場合、どのような知識を持っているか、具体的に書いてください

13. 今、あなたがラテンアメリカに関して持っているイメージを書いてください（いずれかを○で囲んだ上で、その理由を具体的に説明してください）

- a. 気楽さ
- b. 情熱的
- c. 反抗的
- d. 努力
- e. その他_____

以上です。どうもご協力ありがとうございました。

Annex No. 4
Interview guides

- インタビューガイド（チームリーダーに対して）
- ①. 年齢、居住地、教育年数、所属
 - ②. サンバに関する活動はどのように、いつから始まった？
 - ③. サンバチームの構造
 - ④. メンバーはプロフィールがある？
 - ⑤. 自分にとってサンバという音楽はなに？
 - ⑥. サンバのエロチシズムへの意見
 - ⑦. 日本サンバはブラジルサンバの様々な意味の影響を受けている？
- インタビューガイド（チームメンバーに対して）
- ①. 年齢、居住地、教育年数、所属
 - ②. サンバに関する活動はいつから始まった？
 - ③. 他の活動（ex. スポーツ、モダンダンス、など）に対して、どうしてサンバチームを選んだ？
 - ④. 自分にとってサンバという音楽はなに？
 - ⑤. チーム参加して個人として変化はある？（人生観、考え方、など）
 - a. サンバからの影響
 - 音楽
 - 踊り
 - 歌詞
 - 演奏
 - b. サンバチームとしての意識
 - ⑥. サンバのエロチシズムへの意見
 - ⑦. ブラジルおよびラテンアメリカに関しての知識、チーム参加する前後