The Mansions and the Streets:  
Brazilian Cultural Tourism Development and the Architecture of Inclusion

Evan Ward  
Associate Professor of History  
Brigham Young University
The Mansions and the Streets: Brazilian Cultural Tourism Development and the Architecture of Inclusion

Abstract

The contemporary tourist landscapes of Brazil’s central and northeastern cities owe much not only to the profusion of colonial architecture in Paraty, Salvador da Bahia, and Recife, but also to the prominence given to these ensembles by Brazilian guidebook writers, officials of the former Departamento do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico Nacional, and tourism planners over the course of the 20th century. While such policies glorified readily accessible remnants of the Portuguese colonial presence, they also exerted a more harmful effect, effectively excluding Afro-Brazilian cultural traditions from mainstream tourism offerings until well into the 21st century. Using travel guidebooks, tourism white papers, and recent scholarship on Afro-Brazilian identity, this study explores the evolution of a narrative that privileged Luso-American architecture in the production of cultural tourism and contends that UNESCO tourism consultants, Afro-Brazilian activists, and African American tourists championed a more inclusive tourism that is still very much incomplete.

Key words: Brazil, tourism, architecture, inclusion, Luso-American

177 Professor Ward would like to thank Professor Christopher “Kit” Lund, director of Latin American Studies at the Kennedy Center, Brigham Young University, for a grant that enabled him to conduct research in Salvador de Bahia for two weeks in June 2013. The College of Family, Home and Social Science also provided financial support for an earlier trip to Rio de Janeiro in 2011 to assess national cultural tourism development policies. Dr. Ward is also indebted to archivists at the Fundação Pierre Verger (Salvador da Bahia), the Fundação Jorge Amado (Salvador da Bahia), DPHAN (Rio de Janeiro), UNESCO (Paris, France), and a list too numerous to recount of librarians and archivists at state and local archives in Salvador. All translations have been made by the author.
Brazil’s heritage… is found not in great ruins and monuments of past civilizations but in its living cities. Thus, its cultural heritage cannot be divorced from the life in these cities. This heritage draws its vitality from popular lore and customs, from the beliefs, rites and festivals, the music and literature which are all anchored in tradition and in the Brazilian pattern of life… It may need international cooperation to carry off its project successfully but this success will be a priceless gift that Brazil will offer to the world.

Michel Parent, 1968

Introduction

The contemporary tourist landscapes of Brazil’s central and northeastern cities owe much not only to the profusion of colonial architecture in Paraty, Salvador da Bahia, and Recife, but also to the prominence given to these ensembles by Brazilian guidebook writers, officials of the former Departamento do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico Nacional (cited hereafter as DPHAN), and tourism planners over the course of the 20th century. While such policies glorified readily accessible remnants of the Portuguese colonial presence, they also exerted a more harmful effect, effectively excluding Afro-Brazilian cultural traditions from mainstream tourism offerings until well into the 21st century. Using travel guidebooks, tourism white papers, and recent scholarship on Afro-Brazilian identity, this study explores the evolution of a narrative that privileged Luso-American architecture in the production of cultural tourism and contends that UNESCO tourism consultants (including Michel Parent, cited above), Afro-Brazilian activists, and African American tourists championed a more inclusive tourism that is still very much incomplete.

In a broader context, this essay addresses two converging streams in the historiography of 20th-century Brazil. The first concerns the growing body of scholarship interested not only in the deliberate suppression of Black Brazilian culture during the dictadura, but also the long 20th century, including in the wake of the abolition of slavery and the declaration of the Republic in 1889. Paulina L. Alberto’s Terms of Inclusion: Black Intellectuals in Twentieth-Century Brazil makes the case that Afro-Brazilians fought for recognition as Brazilians, not only during the late 20th century dictatorship, but stretching back a century earlier. Triumph came only after much travail often stained by disappointment. Similarly, the patterns of exclusion of Afro-Brazilian culture in the nation’s tourism offerings mirror the long-term trajectory of those struggles, even within the writings of its most preeminent defenders of Brazil’s “racial democracy.” This essay also parallels studies critiquing identity-based cultural tourism that emerged in the wake of Brazil’s democratic opening in 1986.178

---

178 For example, Patricia de Santana Pinho’s Mama Africa: Reinventing Blackness in Bahia (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010) critiques cultural tourism development focused on Afro-Brazilian identity politics.
The Intellectual Origins of Cultural Tourism in the Vargas-Era Brazil

In the space of roughly a decade (1934-1945), Gilberto Freyre, Jorge Amado, and Jose Valladares authored a handful of popular travel guides for the cities of Recife (Pernambuco state) and Salvador da Bahia (Bahia state), respectively. In addition to guiding tourists towards enduring historical markers, they offer compelling historic representations of Brazilian culture from the vantage point of its most influential arbiters. Both purposes are useful in understanding the intellectual evolution of Brazilian cultural tourism.

In 1934, the young sociologist Gilberto Freyre authored the *Guia prático, histórico e sentimental da cidade do Recife.*\(^{179}\) Freyre’s interest in tourism and travel transcended a purely literary interest, as manifest in his extensive writings related to tourism promotion in the state of Recife, as well as his extensive body of letters and travel memoirs. The centrality of travel and local tourism promotion in his work represents a disciplinary divide between how literary critics and historians assess the purpose of Freyre’s writings. For example, in *Cartas provincianas: correspondência entre Gilberto Freyre e Manuel Bandeira,* Silvana Moreli Vicente minimalizes the touristic function of Freyre’s travel guides to Recife and neighboring Olinda, suggesting their primarily literary value as examples of modernist discourse among the small circle of Brazilian writers in the 1920s and 1930s.\(^{180}\) While this is true to some extent, Freyre’s travel guides for Recife (and later the neighboring city of Olinda) were periodically updated for tourist convenience. The *Guia prático,* for example, went through at least four editions, the last of which was “revised”, “brought up to date”, and “muito aumentada.” His guidebook for Olinda, or the *Segundo guia prático, histórico e sentimental de Cidade Brasileira,* also went through several editions, though it appears to have been less of a commercial success.

Proof that his guidebooks surpassed his preoccupation with “local” color resound in his expressed interest for writing a guidebook for Salvador da Bahia, an ambition that Jorge Amado’s publication *Bahia de Todos os Santos* in 1945 may have precluded. In 1939, Freyre wrote: “I just finished writing Olinda... This is my second guide and perhaps a third will follow, on the city of Salvador da Bahia, and a fourth on Belem in Para and even – audacity of all audacities – a fifth, on Rio de Janeiro.”\(^{181}\) He intended his guidebooks for domestic travelers and


\(^{181}\) See Gilberto Freyre, “Um guia de Olinda,” *Correio da Manhã* (Rio de Janeiro), May 31, 1939, Biblioteca Virtual Gilberto Freyre, http://bgf.fgf.org.br/portugues/obra/artigos_impressa/um_guia.htm, accessed January 23, 2014. Freyre’s writings on his personal travels are also extensive. See, for example, the publication of young Freyre’s coming of age travel experiences in the United States and Europe in the two-volume set of articles written as a traveling correspondent for Brazilian newspapers, *Tempo de aprendiz,* vols. 1-2 (São Paulo: IBRASA/MEC, 1979); also see assorted letters from throughout Freyre’s entire life of travels in *Cartas do próprio punho sobre pessoas e coisas do Brasil e do estrangeiro* (MEC – Conselho Federal de Cultura e Departamento Federal de Assuntos Culturais, 1978). Freyre wrote an extensive literary travelogue of his trip to Portugal and Africa in the early 1950s, published in two volumes, one containing his impressions of the places he visited and a second volume documenting the presentations he gave during his extended sojourn. His impressions are published in *Aventura e rotina: sugestões de uma viagem à procura das constantes portuguesas de carácter e ação,* volume 77, Coleção
modeled them on the American Guide Series authored under the auspices of the Federal Writers Project in the United States.

The Guia prático offers an incipient version of Freyre’s concept of lusotropicalism, or the putative Portuguese affinity for cultural hybridity in its colonial settings, so evident in his sociological and historical writings, not to mention in his own travel narratives of trips he made to Portugal and Africa. Freyre scholars Peter Burke and Maria Lucia G. Pallares-Burke define lusotropicalism as “the idea that the Portuguese proved more adaptable to the tropics and so more successful colonizers than their European rivals.” The overriding theme is one of cultural harmony between diverse European and African races, ethnicities, and their systems of belief. In the first chapter of the Guia prático, for example, Freyre describes Recife’s cosmopolitanism. Among other aspects of the city, Freyre wrote of:

The Recife of the first Israelite cultural center in the Americas; of the first political assembly; the city that for some time united the most diverse population on the continent—blonds, brunettes, brown, black—Catholics, Protestants, Jews—Portuguese, native Brazilians, Flemish, Africans, Englishmen, Germans—noblemen, soldiers of fortune, New Christians, adventurers, commoners, exiles—people of diverse origins, creeds, cultures that mingled here, creating one of the most interesting types of Brazilians.

Appealing to his impressionistic bent, Freyre symbolically saw Recife as a point of convergence when he observed that, throughout history, one could stand on the top of chapels and gaze at ships arriving in the city’s port from Europe, Africa, and the Americas.

For the most part, however, Afro-Brazilians remain near the margins of Freyre’s guide. A black woman dressed in red and blue shawl might be spotted in a religious procession. Passing the local cathedrals, Freyre reminds the reader that, in days past, black Brazilians tolled the bells and played music in the churches. Vacant squares in front of other churches once hosted black dancers and musicians, only a fraction of which could still be viewed on occasion. He passes beaches near Olinda, where black men dressed in white imbibed alcohol and worshipped the sea. Further afield at Pina, “The European will find it of utmost curiosity (curiosíssimo)” to pass by the beaches with its “variety of colors of the local people,” almost as if color were an

Documentos Brasileiros (Rio de Janeiro: Livraria Jose Olympios Editora, 1953). The compendium of his presentations was published the same year as Um Brasileiro em terras Portuguesas: Introdução a uma possível luso-tropicalogia, acompanhada de conferências e discursos proferidos em Portugal e em terras lusitanas e ex-lusitanas da Ásia, da África, e do Atlântico, 76, Coleção Documentos Brasileiros (Rio de Janeiro: Livraria Jose Olympio Editora, 1953). Among the many secondary sources that explore the impact of travel in Freyre’s life and later works, see especially Maria Lucia G. Pallares-Burke, Gilberto Freyre: um vitoriano dos trópicos (São Paulo: Fundação Editora da UNESP, 2005).

Peter Burke and Maria Lucia G. Pallares-Burke, Gilberto Freyre: Social Theory in the Tropics (Oxfordshire, UK: Peter Lang, 2008), 120.

Freyre, Guia prático, histórico e sentimental, 16-17.

Freyre, Guia prático, histórico e sentimental, 20.

Freyre, Guia prático, histórico e sentimental, 25.

Freyre, Guia prático, histórico e sentimental, 39.

Freyre, Guia prático, histórico e sentimental, 100.
exotic rarity. References to class might also be interpreted as bearing on race, as well. Eighty thousand shanties scarred the landscape, he observes along the city’s periphery - a blight on otherwise picturesque landscapes. “The miserable and lazy population that Recife attracts is great,” he points out, “attracted from the entire northwest with its hospitals and the fame of its high salaries.” Candomblé, or a syncretic religion linking African gods to Brazilian realities, also known as xangos in Recife, were a ghostly remnant of the past. “Some still exist,” he assures us, “but now they are corrupted.” Written for an elevated tourist class, Guia práctico diverges subtly from the spirit of a shared heritage.

In 1945, more than a decade after the publication of Freyre’s guidebook to Recife, novelist Jorge Amado published a guide for Salvador, entitled Bahia de Todos os Santos. In contrast to Freyre’s portrayal of Recife as a cosmopolitan conduit, harmonizing disparate cultural traditions in Brazil’s northeast, Amado’s guidebook emphasized the fractious cultural, economic, and social legacies of slavery and the African diaspora in contemporary 20th-century Brazil. “Your eyes will be dazzled by the picturesque,” Amado writes, “but you will also become sad in the presence of all the misery that fills these colonial streets where skyscrapers [now] begin to climb.”

Amado’s text, influenced by class-based critiques that reflect the author’s early Marxist leanings, accented the independent, yet integral, nature of Afro-Brazilian culture on Bahian landscapes. In Amado’s Bahia, for example, African saints cry out in the night for visitors perceptive enough to hear them. Amado also calls attention to the contemporary social and economic conditions on streets paved with stones “while the sun shone above at midday, [leaving] spots of blood.” Thus, in contrast to Freyre’s unified vision of Recife, viewed through a colonial lens, Amado offers his readers a living city that is “multiple and unequal.”

Amado’s guidebook moves temporally between past and present, reifying contemporary inequalities rooted in colonial practices like slavery. Pelourinho, euphemistically named for its role as a staging ground for punishing slaves in the colonial era, but better known in the 20th century as a picturesque vista for tourists taking photographs becomes part of the city’s exploitative past. In contrast to the surrounding colorful façades, Amado writes:

Pelourinho was located where slaves were punished. The large stones that line the hill must keep terrible secrets, painful cries leaving the chests of the harshly punished slaves. From the windows of the large homes [facing the hill] the young ladies watched, with some pleasure, with a sharp sensation, the torture of the blacks… Anciently nobles lived here… The black slaves came to be made an example of, from the balconies the young,

---

188 Freyre, Guia práctico, histórico e sentimental, 104.
189 Freyre, Guia práctico, histórico e sentimental, 55-56.
190 Freyre, Guia práctico, histórico e sentimental, 106.
191 Jorge Amado, Bahia de Todos os Santos (São Paulo: Revista dos Tribunais, 1951), 15.
192 Amado, Bahia de Todos os Santos, 15.
193 In sum, Amado’s guide provides a sobering corrective to the narrative of Portuguese exceptionalism and Afro-European harmony in the tropics. While this approach of “the living city” would pass out of fashion under the dictatorship in the 1960s, it would parallel Michel Parent’s call for broader definitions of Brazilian cultural patrimony as part of his UNESCO technical consultations in 1966 and 1967.
smiling women, watched the spectacle. The blood ran from the backs of the blacks over
the stones, the cries filled the heavens. These walkways of Pelourinho are full of these
lacerating cries, that hill is full of pain, from the suffering that has been prolonged until
today in the modern slaves of the poor houses.\textsuperscript{194}

Here, Amado links narratives of contemporary black oppression to historically decontextualized
20th century representations of colonial architecture. The contested history of places like
Pelourinho bequeaths multiple narratives to sanitized cultural landscape.

Contrasts between Freyre and Amado’s very different tour guides to their respective
cities went beyond content to more epistemological concerns. Freyre's represents Afro-Brazilian
culture in Recife, which was largely non-material in nature, from an ahistorical position. The text
is predominantly framed with historical references to Recife’s colonial architecture and imperial
Portuguese history. In contrast, Amado locates Bahia’s Afro-Brazilian presence in historical time
and space. For example, while Freyre paints literary portraits of black street vendors and holy
mothers (mães santos), leaving them largely outside the realm of the historical chronology that
he affords to European and North American traditions in Northeast Brazil, Amado outlines the
chronological history of black revolutions in Bahia since the 18th century for his audience. Thus,
Freyre suggests that Europeans were largely responsible for the advancing the historical narrative
of Recife, shaping a more permanent, physical colonial landscape while nameless slaves and
their posterity played timeless, secondary roles in Recife’s urban saga.

Museologist and writer Jose Valladares (founder of Bahia’s Museu de Arte da Bahia)
also authored a travel guide to Bahia, though its distribution was limited to three hundred copies.
Like Amado’s guide, it offered the reader a more fulsome view of Afro-Brazilian culture in
Bahia than Freyre’s guide for Recife. Almost the entirety of his observations about black culture
in Bahia is made in a chapter entitled “Bahia Pitoresca (picturesque Bahia).” Valladares begins
the chapter acknowledging: “[the] great majority of Bahía’s population is of mixed origin.” As if
this were a negative trend, he assures the reader: “Nevertheless, the population is lightening.”\textsuperscript{195}

Valladares first situates the practice of Candomblé in Bahia. He notes that, while the
practice of “black magic” occurred throughout the country under different names, Bahia served
as a center of its authentic practice. Its ritualization reached such a level of prominence there, the
author noted, that, when a prominent saint died around the time the book was published, a
replacement arrived from Rio de Janeiro by plane to officiate at his funeral.\textsuperscript{196} As with the
population, he observed, Candomblé’s adherents grew increasingly “lighter” as years passed.
“Historically Candomblé was a subject for blacks,” he writes, “[but] today, despite continued
control by people of color, includes an elevated number of whites – even very fair skinned
whites – among its initiates.”\textsuperscript{197} More generally, traces of street culture still pulsated with an
Afro-Brazilian flavor. The “holy mothers” of Candomblé still graced the city’s plazas with their

\textsuperscript{194} Amado, \textit{Bahia de Todos os Santos}, 97-98.
\textsuperscript{195} Jose Valladares, \textit{Beaba da Bahia: guia turístico} (Bahia: EDUFBA, 2012), 79.
\textsuperscript{196} Valladares, \textit{Beaba da Bahia: guia turístico}, 80.
\textsuperscript{197} Valladares, \textit{Beaba da Bahia: guia turístico}, 82.
“blouse[s] and turban[s], and multi-colored bracelets and necklaces.”\textsuperscript{198} Black Bahians ran traditional restaurants near the pier and sundry female vendors hawked food on the streets.\textsuperscript{199}

Like Freyre, Valladares noted that the subversive significance of black festivals had faded into the past. The pantheon of African gods, however, persisted in local lore. On the third week in January, devotees gathered to observe the festival of Bonfim at the eponymously named \textit{terreiro} (house of worship). There, offerings were made to the cult of Oxala by way of a cleansing of the church. Carnival, too, featured the sacred presence of Candomblé houses “with a pronounced African flavor” in the form of large gatherings all along Seventh Avenue, the main thoroughfare of the city.\textsuperscript{200} Apart from this section of the book, however, Valladares restricts his text to a survey of historical architecture, decrying the steady modernization of the city. Highway construction, he contends, rendered the city practically unrecognizable to those familiar with the city even only a few years removed from the guide’s 1951 publication. Like Freyre’s guide to Recife then, \textit{Beaba da Bahia: guia turístico} is an homage to past glories of this urban keystone to African culture.

\textbf{DPHAN and the Architecture of Exclusion}

Three years after the \textit{Guia prático} was published, Gilberto Freyre collaborated with Rodrigo Mello Franco de Andrade in the creation of DPHAN, the government’s institutional agency charged with identifying, cataloging, and preserving the nation’s cultural heritage. While Freyre published the first (\textit{Mucambos do Nordeste: Some notes about the primitive, but common house of northeastern Brazil}), and, in all likelihood, only DPHAN document primarily dedicated to the cultural legacy of the African Diaspora in Brazil, until the 1997 issue of \textit{Revista do IPHAN}, Freyre’s contributions to DPHAN’s journal exclusively associate Luso-Brazilian and European architecture with Brazil’s cultural patrimony.

In the first issue of \textit{Revista do DPHAN}, Freyre argued that assessing the impact of Portuguese colonization on the material culture of its host societies was the first order of business for the fledgling organization. Signaling a more explicit iteration of \textit{lusotropicalism} than he had in \textit{Guia prático}, Freyre wrote of the Portuguese as “a people with the unique capacity to perpetuate themselves with other peoples,” yet whose imperial footprint remained evident in the form of “houses, buildings, gardens, [and] ships.”\textsuperscript{201} Although the art of the Americas, Africa, Asia, and Oceania reflected the receptive colonial culture, the predominant forms remained true to their “Hispanic roots.” He then made an important distinction between the origins of cultural genius in Brazil. He wrote: “Religious architecture retained its Portuguese influences almost without alteration. Military structures as well. In the great patriarchal mansions, so full of new combinations and unexpected differences, the dominant themes

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{198}] Valladares, \textit{Beaba da Bahia: guia turístico}, 85.
\item[\textsuperscript{199}] Valladares, \textit{Beaba da Bahia: guia turístico}, 86.
\item[\textsuperscript{200}] Valladares, \textit{Beaba da Bahia: guia turístico}, 89-90.
\item[\textsuperscript{201}] Gilberto Freyre, “Sugestões para o estudo da arte brasileira em relação com a de Portugal e a das colônias,” \textit{Revista do serviço do patrimônio histórico e artístico nacional}, volume 1, 41-44, cited hereafter as \textit{Revista do DPHAN}.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
remained Portuguese.” In contrast, it would only be in the arts of the kitchen, the garden, religious reliquaries, and toys that “the creative force of the Portuguese, instead of imposing itself with imperial intransigence, linked itself in Brazil with the artistic power of the Native and the Black, and later, to that of other people, without meanwhile disappearing: retaining its [Portuguese] character in almost every element.”

In the rather extraordinary period of the ensuing three decades, DPHAN paid scant attention to Afro-Brazilian culture. In its defense, it might be argued that according to the norms of the day, cultural traditions and immaterial heritage had not acquired the currency it now enjoys under the auspices of UNESCO. However, the philosophical foundations of DPHAN policy relegated Afro-Brazilian influences to a lower rung on the hierarchy of cultural relevance. Not long before his passing, Rodrigo Mello Franco de Andrade, the first director of DPHAN (from 1937 until 1967), spoke in Minas Gerais on the 257th anniversary of Ouro Preto’s designation as an established community (vila). He emphatically stated: “The handiwork of slaves from the era of settlement did not leave behind imprints of their African or native origins in the architecture, sculpture, or painting that happened here, although it may be found in some of the utensils and other products of domestic artistry.” Instead, the artistic heights reached by “mulattos” proceeded from “the effects of miscegenation.” In the same speech, Andrade attributed the outstanding artistry manifest by “mulatto” artists during Gold Rush in Ouro Preto to miscegenation. They were indeed artists, but never architects. Thus, both Freyre and Andrade stopped short of according equal artistic capacity to all influencers of Brazilian cultural identity. According to such logic, activist Abdis Nascimento was not far from the mark when he later observed: “We have Africa[ns] in our kitchens, America[ns] in our jungles, and Europe[ans] in our waiting rooms (salas de visitas).”

The Military Dictatorship and an Inclusive Brazilian Cultural Tourism

About the same time as Andrade’s comments, a military dictatorship assumed control of Brazil (1964-1986). DPHAN officials – in an unrelated move – established a formal relationship with UNESCO to the end of improving patrimonial preservation throughout Brazil. Rapid industrialization and interstate highway construction prompted widespread institutional concern for the declining state of historical assemblages of architecture, particularly in urban areas. Once UNESCO established a formal presence in Brazil, Brazilian officials requested the assistance of a formal mission for the express purpose of making an inventory of its cultural patrimony.

---

202 Freyre, “Sugestões para o estudo da arte brasileira em relação com a de Portugal e a das colônias,” Revista do DPHAN 1, 41-44.
203 Freyre, “Sugestões para o estudo da arte brasileira em relação com a de Portugal e a das colônias,” Revista do DPHAN 1, 41-44.
204 Rodrigo M.F. de Andrade, “Palestra proferido por Rodrigo M.F. de Andrade, em Ouro Preto, a 1-7-68,” Revista do DPHAN, volume 17, 14-15.
205 Andrade, “Palestra proferido por Rodrigo M.F. de Andrade, em Ouro Preto, a 1-7-68,” Revista do DPHAN 17, 14-15.
At the time, UNESCO had mounted a major initiative in developing countries to stimulate tourism development through cultural preservation. The Parisian-based organization sent one of its most distinguished officials, Michel Parent, to Brazil to conduct the inventory, as well as to suggest methods for more effective tourism development. Over the years, Parent developed expertise in the safeguarding of physical monuments, as well as specialized in the promotion of festivals associated with holidays and regional traditions throughout France. Parent made two trips to Brazil as part of his mission in 1966 and 1967.

In large measure Parent’s nearly 130-page report suggests that he primarily visited the buildings and architectural ensembles that DPHAN wanted him to see and that he largely accepted the concept of Brazil’s harmonizing influence on its native, European, and African inhabitants. To this end, he noted elsewhere: “Brazil is privileged in being the meeting point of three currents of thought and culture: Indianism, Africanism, and Latin Christianity. These currents have become so intermingled that, though they may be discernible to the scientific eye, for the people of Brazil, they are fused into an inseparable whole [encompassing] many fine shades of differences.”

Parent’s prescient report also detailed the consequences of rapid development on Brazilian culture, the environment, and society. Following the latest trends in cultural preservation, he stressed the importance of achieving a proper balance between development and patrimonial protection. Brazil’s growth should not endanger its historical built environment, which in turn would doom its immaterial culture, much of which resonated with the voices and echoes of Afro-Brazilians. Likewise, patterns of environmental exploitation called for better planning if an accurate record of Brazil’s indigenous past were to be unearthed at a later date.

Parent stressed that cultural preservation and tourism development include all of Brazil’s cultural traditions, including those of Afro-Brazilians and the indigenous population, which were under fire by the ruling regime. Unlike Freyre and Andrade, in the observations they made about the subordinate role of Afro-Brazilian creativity in the country’s built environment, Parent saw a more forceful, living tradition. Despite all attempts to negate its influence, Parent wrote: “they contributed to the creation of a very diverse and particular Brazilian culture.” He emphatically challenged anyone that might try and sweep such cultural contributions under the rug. As a result, he insisted: “it is important that the tourism infrastructure not appear, at any time, as an alibi or prolongation of internal or external economic domination.” In other words, any pretended show of Brazil’s imperial past could not mask the realities of its African roots. It would not be enough, then, for tourists to see Candomblé houses of worship divested of their spiritual significance. Their commodification should not trump “the preservation of all its authenticities.” “Outside of this sacred context,” he insisted, “Brazil is no longer Brazil, merely a cosmopolitan shadow of itself.”

Finally, Parent considered Rio’s favelas worthy of artistic merit. “Leaving aside [their] picturesque [nature],” he contended, “there exists in the favelas of Rio more architectural and urban innovations (especially at the peaks of Corcovado) in the practically continuous wall of concrete that imprisons and immerses Copacabana, which is consigned to proprietary speculation.” Devising a system of housing for all Brazilians seemed to be the great challenge facing the country at a time of unprecedented architectural creativity.

Parent’s stirring call for cultural inclusion suggested a fundamental reorientation of DPHAN, one that might have jeopardized the self-perceived stability brought on by the military regime. From a political perspective, what makes Parent’s vision of a more inclusive Brazilian tourism program so improbable are the ways in which his ideals diverged not only from the plans of DPHAN, but also from the political, economic, and social objectives of local officials for tourism development in former colonial cities like Salvador de Bahia. Given his limited prior exposure to Brazil, however, it is doubtful that his comments were intended to challenge the ruling dictatorial regime. Still, in hindsight, they reflect Parent’s progressive worldview, informed by a more inclusive, holistic vision of material and immaterial cultural traditions.

Nevertheless, Parent’s recommendations set in motion the first steps of efforts to showcase Afro-Brazilian culture at a moment when such efforts appeared contrary to prevailing practices of the ruling dictatorship. It is widely known that the regime discouraged Afro-Brazilian history and identity as part of school curriculum and continued to discourage open practice of traditional religious and cultural practices that celebrated African identity.

At the same time, Brazil’s foreign ministry pushed for closer ties with African nations. This created a space for maneuvering in which those dedicated to Afro-Brazilian culture (at least within the white community) could promote ties between the peoples of the adjacent continents. Pierre Verger was one such individual. French by birth, Verger wandered the world as a photographer in the early 20th century. He traveled to Brazil for the first time in the 1930s and chose to make it a second home. He developed a variety of mediums for pursuing his fascination with Brazilian and African cultural exchanges. He wrote a doctoral dissertation on cultural connections between northern Brazil and Western Africa. He continued to photograph Afro-Brazilians. Finally, he promoted exchange between museums on both continents. In the late 1950s, for example, historian Jerome Souty noted that he journeyed around Nigeria by car, collecting artifacts for the Nigerian Museum in Lagos. Verger performed similar services for the Historical Museum of Eida in Dahomey, which included an exhibit “dedicated to the mutual influences between Dahomey and Brazil.”

Nearly a decade after Parent’s second visit to Brazil, the Ministry of Foreign Relations (cited hereafter as Itamaraty, its abbreviated moniker) saw the exhibition in Dahomey as an attractive model for a similar installation in Bahia. The Ministry of Foreign Relations tasked

213 Anadelia A. Romo, Brazil’s Living Museum: Race, Reform, and Tradition in Bahia (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 191.
the Federal University of Bahia with the commission to create just such an institution in Salvador.\footnote{Souty, Pierre Fatumbi Verger: do olhar livre ao conhecimento iniciatício, 87-88.} Although individuals, including Jacyra Oswald, received initial credit for the Afro-Brazilian cultural initiative, Verger should be recognized as the steady force behind the acquisition of artifacts for the Afro-Brazilian Museum in Bahia, as well as its most faithful advocate in the face of bureaucratic intransigence.

Verger travelled to West Africa on two occasions in 1974 and 1975 to acquire original materials from a variety of African cultural traditions, as well as commission copies of more valuable pieces that could not be purchased for the museum. During a three-month sojourn in the late spring and early summer of 1975, he centered his research in the Nago-Yoruba regions of present day Benin and Nigeria, the point of departure for many of Bahia’s slaves. Like a cultural magician, Verger collected approximately 250 pieces for just under the 3,000 dollars Itamaraty had allotted for the museum’s collection. “Despite the modest budget at my disposal,” he wrote to the director for Cultural Affairs at Itamaraty, “I have been able to purchase a few pieces that will bring honor to the Museum.”\footnote{Pierre Verger to the Director of the Cultural Affairs Department, Ministry of Foreign Relations, Itamaraty Palace, Brasilia, Brazil, July 7, 1975, Arquivos da Fundação Pierre Verger, “Museu da Bahia Afro-Brasileiro, 1975-1989 (17/07/74-21/10/89)” Folder.} These included objects from “a number of woodcrafters in Dahomey, Dagbe, Pobe, Ifanhin, [and] Tori, who have donated copies of traditional carvings, [including] masks of [the god] Oxe Xango and plates and cups of Ifa.”\footnote{Pierre Verger to the Director of the Cultural Affairs Department, Ministry of Foreign Relations, Itamaraty Palace, Brasilia, Brazil, July 7, 1975, Arquivos da Fundação Pierre Verger, “Museu da Bahia Afro-Brasileiro, 1975-1989 (17/07/74-21/10/89)” Folder.} “Unfortunately,” Verger noted, “the deplorable state of the roads in the high rainy season prevented me from traveling to Ketu, the hometown of the founders of the notable Bahian Candomblé centers.”\footnote{Pierre Verger to the Director of the Cultural Affairs Department, Ministry of Foreign Relations, Itamaraty Palace, Brasilia, Brazil, July 7, 1975, Arquivos da Fundação Pierre Verger, “Museu da Bahia Afro-Brasileiro, 1975-1989 (17/07/74-21/10/89)” Folder.} At great expense and effort, Verger trusted his treasure to shipping networks and Brazilian diplomats in Africa. “Most of the pieces forming this collection have been packed in six large trunks and a wooden box, [and] were shipped on July 1… [to Benin] on the vessel Athens Sky and then transported without cost, thanks to the efforts and kindness of Mr. Francois Paraiso… (director of SITRAM… [a maritime shipping agency]) to the port of Abidjan, Ivory Coast,” he explained. “The Brazilian ambassador in Abidjan… will do what is needed to take send these packages on a boat on July 10 from the Ivory Coast and have them transferred to a Brazilian ship destined for Rio de Janeiro.”\footnote{Pierre Verger to the Director of the Cultural Affairs Department, Ministry of Foreign Relations, Itamaraty Palace, Brasilia, Brazil, July 7, 1975, Arquivos da Fundação Pierre Verger, “Museu da Bahia Afro-Brasileiro, 1975-1989 (17/07/74-21/10/89)” Folder.} Verger also lent a steady hand to the organization of the museum prior to its opening in 1982. Arranged into seven rooms at the former Federal University of Bahia’s College of Medicine, the museum ultimately filled a pedagogical as well as a leisure function.\footnote{“Museu Afro-Brasileiro Será Mais Uma Atração no Pelourinho,” Monumento (Salvador da Bahia), volume 1, number 7 (September 1980), 1-8, Arquivos da Fundação Pierre Verger, “Museu da Bahia Afro-Brasileiro, 1975-1989 (17/07/74-21/10/89)”.”}
The Limits of Inclusion

Despite its best efforts to shape, package, and transmit its own representations of Brazilian culture, the military regime could not control its reception and reformulation, particularly in affluent markets that had also been part of the African diaspora. Up to this time, the dictatorship, through EMBRATUR and state and local tourism organs, had generally supported the inclusion of a folkloric African aspect of its cultural offering to tourists. Yet the emergence of a more politicized focus on living elements of African culture in Brazil, denominated “roots tourism,” attracted African Americans to northeastern Brazil in search of African cultural authenticity as transmitted in the Atlantic world and passed down through families and cultural institutions in post-abolition Brazil.

The prospect of raising the question of black exploitation as an inherent component of Brazilian history contradicted the projection of “racial democracy” abroad, which had become the foundation of Itamaraty’s overtures to new African nations. Historian Jerry Davila asserts that, while Itamaraty cultivated closer ties with emerging Portuguese-speaking African states, suppression of Afro-Brazilian culture on the home front remained a patent reality. Davila chronicles the efforts of EMBRATUR in the late 1970s to delicately balance explicit representations of African cultural folklore in northeast Brazil with the potential political fallout of tourist excursions in Brazil that emphasized the shared oppression of discrimination, exploitation, and conflict associated with the African diaspora and its contemporary consequences. This paradox highlights the problematic juxtaposition of pro-African Brazilian foreign policy and its more exclusionary domestic cultural policies. In the context of tourism development, however, Davila’s research underscores the explosive political potential of events and attractions, acknowledging the discriminatory consequences of race relations in Brazil during the dictatorship.

With reference to an invitation of African Americans to a proposed World Festival of the African Diaspora, which would be held in Rio de Janeiro and Salvador in 1978, Davila notes that Brazilian foreign policy advisors complained that the very title of the event, including the phrase “African diaspora” “indicated] that the Festival [was] inspired by a vision of the black problem that is incompatible with the traditions of Brazilian society and the position of the Brazilian government.” officials at Itamaraty declined official sanction for the event because, they averred: “[We] do not accept that the idea of a ‘diaspora’ is applicable to Brazilians of the black race. Diaspora is a concept that in its true sense belongs to a cultural and religious tradition that is totally different… our society is organized not only against discrimination, but also in favor of racial integration.” This statement, perhaps better than any other, demonstrated the intersection of Brazil’s intellectual history of culture, international tourism strategies, and foreign policy during the dictatorship. It also clearly underscored the dogged commitment of the dictatorship to the idea of “racial democracy” and how national officials desired to construct compatible representations of their country to visitors. A museum might win their approval, but emphasizing black exploitation remained out of bounds under the regime’s watch.

221 Davila, Hotel Tropico, 249.
Conclusion

Ultimately, while Brazilian writers and preservationists defined their national culture and tourist attractions as primarily architectural in nature in the early to mid-20th century, it would be outsiders that expanded the cultural umbrella to include Afro-Brazilian culture for later visitors, both domestic and foreign. All this happened at the most improbable of times: during the twenty years that are best known as an age of cultural repression. Michel Parent and Pierre Verger acted in conformity to their own progressive preferences, but such actions flew in the face of accepted practices under the two-decade-long military dictatorship. The gradual shift in cultural representations resonates today with a broadening definition of Brazilian culture in both formal and informal circles, but remains a work-in-progress. Ultimately, Parent and Verger’s work in Brazil highlight what often fails to happen in the world of international aid initiatives: meaningful change that benefits Brazilians, as well as tourists.