

Brazilian Cultural Diplomacy in the Twentieth Century

"Pelo que é nosso!": a diplomacia cultural brasileira no século XX

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RESUMO

No decorrer do século XX, o Brasil desenvolveu uma diplomacia cultural original a fim de defender seus interesses econômicos e estratégicos no mundo. A partir dos anos 1920, o Itamaraty defendeu uma política cultural pragmática, cujos conteúdos e estruturas sofreram importantes modificações conforme o período, o regime político, a composição do corpo diplomático e as diferentes concepções de sua identidade nacional. O artigo analisa a gênese da diplomacia cultural brasileira através de suas instituições, meios de atuação, objetivos e países destinatários, e estuda a significação histórica da ação cultural para uma potência emergente do hemisfério ocidental.

Palavras-chave: relações internacionais; cultura; diplomacia; Brasil; século XX.

ABSTRACT

During the 20th century, Brazil developed a specific cultural diplomacy in order to defend its economic and geostrategic interests on the global chessboard. Beginning in the 1920s, the Brazilian Foreign Office – Itamaraty – mapped out tools for a pragmatic cultural promotion, the contents and structures of which fluctuated depending on the actors, political regimes and conceptions of national identity. A first synthesis on the subject, this article examines the genesis of Brazilian cultural diplomacy, considering its institutions, recipients and objectives, and analyzes the meaning of cultural politics for an emerging power of the Western World.

Keywords: international relations; culture; diplomacy; Brazil; twentieth Century.

“For what is ours!” With this expression, frequently used in the Rio de Janeiro press in the inter-war period, we intend to analyze the emergence and development of cultural diplomacy in Brazil during the twentieth century, in the limits of the debate about national identity and the definition of foreign

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policy. For a long time Brazil was considered a simple receptacle of European and US cultural policies, in accordance with the idea that the winds of culture only blew from East to West or North to South. “The geographic axis of the American continent is in a north-south direction, but another axis, which runs from east to west, cannot be ignored,”¹ wrote André Siegfried in 1934. Actually, this Latin American ‘giant’ was the privileged target of cultural policies developed by France – through the actions of the French Overseas Works Service, which notably participated in the creation of the University of São Paulo in 1934 – and by the United States, as part of its Good Neighbor Policy, and afterwards in the context of the “cultural cold war.”²

These exchanges, however, cannot only be analyzed in light of this: since its independence, Brazil had an active diplomatic service, which integrated the cultural dimension. Until the end of the nineteenth century, this was limited to the literary and official visits of foreign scholars. However, shortly before the First World War Brazilian cultural diplomacy matured, undergoing various developments during the twentieth century, making the country a pioneer in this field and placing it ahead of the other Latin American nations.

Ignored for a long time by researchers and now confined to memorials for completing the Rio Branco Institute course,³ the history of this cultural diplomacy is now the subject of innovative research, amongst which it is worth mentioning the work of Hugo Suppo and Mônica Leite Lessa (Lessa; Suppo, 2012). The aim of this article is prepare an initial summary of this subject by examining the structures, actors, content, and the political and cultural recipients involved by the Ministry of Foreign Relations – Itamaraty – between the 1920s and the 1980s. While cultural splendor is frequently interpreted as a reflection of political or economic power,⁴ what meaning was given to Brazilian diplomacy which for a long time suffered from a lack of economic and strategic independence? What are its characteristics and singularities in relation to the British, French, and US references which contributed to its definition? The historic archives in Itamaraty – the ones from before 1960 are kept in Rio de Janeiro, those from afterwards in Brasília – certify the progressive awareness of the importance of cultural action abroad, defined by the diplomat Edgar Telles Ribeiro in 1989 as “a factor of national development” (Ribeiro, 1989, p.76). To understand this process, we will analyze the introduction of cultural diplomacy in the inter-war period, before looking at its development and diversification in the policies carried out by Itamaraty in the second half of the twentieth century.

BETWEEN INTELLECTUAL COOPERATION AND PROPAGANDA: THE INTRODUCTION OF BRAZILIAN CULTURAL DIPLOMACY (1920-1945)

While the image of Brazil abroad was questioned during the period of the Empire, it was only during the 'reign' of Baron Rio Branco (1902-1912) that Itamaraty became, according to Gilberto Freyre, the "supreme organ for spreading or affirming the prestige of Brazil," a system for organizing and defining superior national values (Freyre, 2004, p.172). As also noted by Thomas Skidmore, who highlighted the 'gigantic work' done by Rio Branco to present a 'civilized' image of Brazil, especially naming writers to diplomatic positions or inviting European celebrities to visit the nation (Skidmore, 1974). In 1920, following José Manuel de Azevedo Marques' reform of the diplomatic corps, which introduced "the promotion of commercial, industrial, and intellectual missions for the benefit of Brazil" (Castro, 1983, p.262), cultural action officially became a prerogative of Itamaraty.

Nevertheless, during the First Republic (1889-1930), there was no systemic policy for disseminating Brazilian culture abroad, rather only sparse initiatives without much relationship with each other. One of them, however, had an interesting result: the participation of Brazil in the International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation (*Instituto Internacional de Cooperação Intelectual* – IICI), founded in 1924 at the initiative of France and under the sponsorship of the League of Nations (Dumont, 2009). Brazilian collaboration with the Institute began in 1925, upon the creation of a Brazilian Commission of Intellectual Cooperation, which little by little was placed under the guardianship of Itamaraty,⁵ while a *delegado*, Élysée Montarroyos, was also appointed as the intermediary between this body and the Ministry. Montarroyos, who was present throughout the history of IICI (1924-1946), rapidly understood the opportunity that his mission with the Institute represented, and principally the role of culture in international relations. In 1932, he wrote to his ministry about his responsibility: "Our government could give my position, in addition to the stability which it does not have, the scope involved, making me the agent of Brazilian propaganda in Europe. Propaganda is above all a problem of intellectual order." From this perspective, he proposed to the Ministry of Foreign Relations in 1932, to create a service which had the mission to develop "intelligent and opportune propaganda for Brazil abroad."⁶

Founded in 1934, the Intellectual Expansion Service had the aim of "discreetly spreading propaganda about the literary values of Brazil abroad, removing as much as possible the ostentatious character of 'official propaganda' from

this task.”⁷⁷ This required the construction of a positive image of the country and the consequent control of networks. As a bulletin published at the moment of the creation of Service stated,

organize a file with the address of all the writers, from all countries, capable of becoming interested in literature and the cultural life of Brazil, especially those who know Castilian, as they can more easily understand Portuguese; the same with the addresses of all cultural institutions, magazines, newspapers, and literary associations, capable of the same interest. (ibid.)

The document equally recommends favoring meetings between Brazilian and foreign intellectuals in order to establish solidarities and conveniences about what was possible following this in sustaining national propaganda. The Service was finally charged with spreading Brazilian works and publishing papers on themes considered ‘national.’

In 1937 the Intellectual Cooperation Service was officially established (a body linked to the International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation), which was the subject of numerous criticisms. It was Gustavo Capanema, Minister of Education and Health, who implemented this change. Deeming that the old service was “insufficient to fulfill this imperious necessity of showing the true image of Brazil” (Suppo, 2003, p.43), he proposed in 1936 to replace it with a modern and practical program of cultural propaganda of Brazil abroad, aiming to replace the ‘platonic exchanges’ underway with a broad-ranging and intense campaign of propaganda and intellectual cooperation based on the models of Italy, Russia, Germany, and Portugal. He foresaw amongst other actions: the revision of History and Geography books in the principal countries in the world with the purpose of introducing a complete and exact image of Brazil; the creation of grants for Brazilian students who wanted to go abroad; the concession of subventions to foreign magazines to publish works about Brazil and also for institutions to organize international scientific congresses. At the same time, Capanema suggested subsidizing, due to specific geo-political reasons, the Franco-Brazilian Institute of Advanced Scientific and Literary Culture (1922), the Luso-Brazilian Institute of High Culture, the German-Brazilian Institute, and the Italo-Brazilian Institute of High Culture (1934).

The principal mission of the Service, which became the Intellectual Cooperation Division (DCI) in 1938, was to “to do the work of the Ministry of Foreign Relations in relation to cultural relations with other countries, the

diffusion of Brazilian culture, and the publicizing of useful knowledge about our country in the principal foreign centers.”⁸

DCI, however, ran into some difficulties. Until 1939 it did not have its own independent budget for its activities. Bueno do Prado, who was in charge of it at this time, had to ask repeatedly for permanent financing from the Ministry, in order to work “with security and directives, within a previously studied program.”⁹ Basing his argument on the financial balance of 1938, he showed the displacement between available resources and fixed ambitions, thereby questioning the role attributed to cultural diplomacy in the sphere of Brazilian foreign policy. The activities of the Division also suffered from a lack of coordination between the Brazilian Service of Intellectual Exchange, which depended on the Ministry of Education, and the Department of Press and Propaganda (DIP), created in 1939 and part of the Office of the President (Fontes, 2004). The Publicity Division of DIP was supposed to promote the doctrine of the state and the relations of the government, which in the international sphere signified the prohibition of books or publications prejudicial to the country and its institutions; favoring a positive perception of social, cultural, and artistic events in Brazil; and stimulating the organization of courses, conferences, congresses, and exhibitions.

From 1937 onwards Brazilian cultural diplomacy gained strength, though it was dispersed among various ministries. These were confused about the attributions of each of the responsible bodies and submissive to the enmities arising out of the very heterogeneous composition of the Vargas government. For example, there were communication difficulties between DCI – which depended on Oswaldo Aranha, a well-known Americanist – and DIP – directed by Lourival Fontes, who did not hide his sympathy for fascist regimes. While DIP benefitted from more important a budget and number of staff than DCI, the latter lasted longer than its rival, which as a product of the *Estado Novo* did not survive the fall of this regime in 1945.

Nevertheless, DIP and DCI had to interact with each other in light of the objectives and content of Brazilian cultural diplomacy, a hybrid policy in which it is difficult to distinguish what was related to international cooperation and what resembled cultural propaganda: in the choice between the authoritarian model and the strategy *à la française*, Brazil took no position. Since 1927 Montarroyos demonstrated great awareness of the benefits which cultural diplomacy could bring to Brazil. After emphasizing how IICI represented an excellent vector for this concept, he highlighted that:

Provided, in effect, under the auspices of that institution, whose international character constituted in the eyes of the public a guarantee of impartiality, information about Brazil was treated with the suspicion which the type which only bears the brand of national propaganda is frequently received... Another consideration in favor of this project is that, judiciously led, the intellectual propaganda of a country opens new paths for its economic propaganda.¹⁰

Another motto of Montarroyos' correspondence was the 'moral prestige' which Brazil could obtain from its collaboration with IICI. He thus identified with Ildefonso Falcão, one of the first heads of SCI, and Gustavo Capanema, also enthusiastic about the belief that Brazil should not only support relation with the so-called 'civilized' nations, but also make a new contribution, a breath of fresh air, to the cultural and intellectual heritage of humanity, stopping being the "great unknown of the modern world."¹¹ According to them, it was necessary to fight the idea which described Brazil as a land of 'savages,' more known for its exuberant nature than the achievements of its people. Ildefonso Falcão wrote in this sense: "it is time for those outside to know us through our achievements so that they will stop seeing us as a vast *taba* of savage Indians and illiterate half-breeds."¹² He also added: "We need to '*Brazilianly*' end this depressing mistake."¹³

The modern work which Falcão spoke about was not confined to Europe: priority had to be given to the Latin American continent, thereby reinforcing unity in relation to great global transformations. In effect, although Europe had been the first target of Brazilian diplomacy through IICI, Latin America occupied an increasingly more important place in the dispositions put into practice by Itamaraty in the 1930s, with the signing of numerous intellectual cooperation agreements.¹⁴ Brazil intended in this way to prevent the formation of a Hispanic-American bloc which could be hostile to it, as well as ensuring its leadership in the subcontinent. Presenting itself, through the IICI, as an intermediary between Europe and America, the country sought to place itself in the position of leader amongst its peers.¹⁵

In relation to the United States, Brazil responded positively to Roosevelt's Good Neighbor policy and the 'seductive imperialism' which accompanied it (Tota, 2000). Vargas was aware of the opportunities offered by this new configuration in the cultural domain, sending musicians, singers, and coffee to the New York World Fair in 1939 (Vidal, 1942), or also by presenting himself as an icon of pan-Americanism (Melo, 2005). He thereby reinforced the 'pragmatic equidistance' which characterized his foreign policy. This expression,

created by Gerson Moura, was related to the Brazilian effort to place itself as neutral in regard to the pressures exercised by the Axis countries and democracies in the 1930s.¹⁶ Brazil was thus a protagonist in the Inter-American Institute of Intellectual Cooperation, a direct rival of the IICI, created by the 1928 Inter-American conference in 1928.¹⁷ On the other hand, Asia and Africa were not defined as targets of Brazilian cultural diplomacy in this phase. A special place was reserved for Portugal, which created in 1942, under the auspices of DIP and in partnership with the National Secretary of Information and Portuguese Popular Culture, the Luso-Brazilian Exchange Section, restricted to the literary, artistic, and touristic domains.

This special attention given to the former metropole should be seen as one of the efforts made by SCI, since its creation, to spread the Portuguese spoken in Brazil. Present here was the French ‘model’ of cultural diplomacy, according to which language is a necessary instrument to understand a culture. This tropism in relation to Portugal, this interest demonstrated for the Portuguese language, has to be read in terms of the debate about national identity which had agitated Brazilian intellectuals since the 1920s. We can, thus, highlight the existence of a dichotomy between the contents valorized by foreign policy – which globally corresponded to erudite culture – and the elements of popular culture privileged by the *Estado Novo* in the national scenario – such as samba, Carnival, football, or *feijoada* (Williams, 2001).

It was during the interwar period that Brazilian cultural was introduced and defined its principal characteristics, some of which would last after 1945, even after the change in the political context. Above all, we can highlight three elements: a certain institutional disorder associated with the weight in important personalities; a high level of pragmatism in the understanding of questions and the choice of destinations; and the disassociation between what was valorized in the internal spheres and what was shown about Brazilian culture in the international scenario.

FROM INTELLECTUAL COOPERATION TO CULTURAL DISSEMINATION: THE STRUCTURING AND EXPANSION OF BRAZILIAN CULTURAL DIPLOMACY (1945-1980)

After 1945 Brazil’s foreign cultural policy developed rapidly and gained the name of ‘cultural publicity.’ During the New Republic and later during the Military Dictatorship, cultural diplomacy saw its field of action develop in

three directions. First, the sector gained importance in the core of the various Brazilian political agencies. Next, the content of the actions adopted was modified, with popular culture gaining space alongside erudite productions. Finally, the recipients were diversified, both in relation to the relevant spaces and publics.

Between 1945 and 1978 successive reforms of the Ministry of Foreign Relations were intrinsic to the development and structuring of the cultural sector in the Itamaraty center of administration – the Secretariat of State, located in Rio de Janeiro, and after 1970 in Brasília.¹⁸ Since 1945, the Intellectual Cooperation Division was reformulated in a structural reform led by the ministers Pedro Leão Veloso and José Linhares. Decree Law 8.324 created a Cultural, Economic, and Political Department (DPEC), consisting of four divisions, amongst which was the Itamaraty Cultural Division (DCI), created in April 1946 after the enactment of Decree Law 9.121. Despite an apparent continuity linked to the maintenance of the acronym DCI (present in the Intellectual Cooperation Division), the transition from ‘intellectual cooperation’ to ‘cultural action’ signified an expansion of the Division’s attributes. Its responsibilities also came to include technical and scientific cooperation, as well as the diffusion of Brazilian arts, literature, language, and music throughout the world.

In 1961, further reforms increased still further the weight of the sector in the Ministry. In accordance with Law 3.917, adopted on 14 July 1961, DCI became part of the Cultural Information Department (DCInf), directed by Vasco Mariz, which from then on would be directly linked to the general secretariat of Itamaraty. The agency consisted of three divisions: the Division of Intellectual Cooperation (DCInt), the Division of Cultural Diffusion (DDC), and the Information Division (DI). Responsible for “assisting the General Secretariat in the planning and implementation of cultural exchanges, publicizing information abroad about all aspects of Brazil, maintaining all Brazilian agencies abroad up-to-date about Brazil, [and] clarifying Brazilian public opinion about Brazil’s international actions” (apud Garcia, 2003, p.61), this structure witnessed the expansion of its activities during the 1960s and 1970s in a new political scenario created by the 1964 coup.

After DI was annexed to the General Secretariat of Itamaraty in 1968, DCInf reoriented its activities related to scientific and cultural activities, transforming them into the Cultural Department (DC), and afterwards into the Department of Cultural, Scientific, and Technological Cooperation (DCT). In 1975, DDC, DCInt and the Technical Cooperation Division (DCTec) were

amalgamated. The creation of the Publicity Division (DDI) in 1978, in order to “publicize Brazilian reality abroad with an emphasis on questions related to cinema and television,” also annexed the responsibilities of DCT, thereby achieving, according to Cícero Martins, its widest field of action (*ibid.*, p.64).

No existing study allows the annual budget of the cultural sector of Itamaraty to be established during this period. Constant organizational changes and the way of classifying diplomatic archives prevent the establishment of a continuous series, even to develop a global analysis of the place given to culture within the Ministry. The few authors who have focused on the question have highlighted the lack of proportion between the objectives and the financial resources allocated to the Cultural Department. In 1983, the diplomat Sérgio Arruda lamented “the low relative importance attributed in our country to cultural diplomacy, and as a result, to the correlated activities of international publicity” (Arruda, 1983, p.56). He further reported that the Ministry had less than US \$3.4 million available for its cultural activities in 1978, while the United States had US \$7 million solely for its cultural policies related to Brazil. However, there is no objective study which assesses the budget since the creation of SCI in 1937. Carried out under the auspices of the Rio Branco Institute, these works were frequently used as instruments to convince the rest of the diplomatic corps of the need to increase the budget.

Despite the lack of reliable quantitative studies about the financial resources of the cultural department of Itamaraty, it is clear that its administrative apparatus grew continually from the post-war period to the beginning of the 1980s, when – not by chance – the first studies and the divulgation and role of cultural diplomacy in Brazilian international policy were carried out. Many elements certify the progressive integration of cultural problems by the Brazilian diplomatic corps. In addition to the evolution of the organizational structure and the publication of the first studies of the question, diplomatic correspondence demonstrates the emergent importance of the sector, with the issuing of circulars defining the policies carried out in each artistic domain: the inclusion of a balance of cultural activities in monthly reports sent to embassies in Rio, and later in Brasília; the frequent assessments requested from legations in order to focus the means of cultural actions. In the latter, Brazilian cultural diplomacy is seen in light of its ‘models,’ namely: “the United States, the *British Council*, *Alliance française*” and to a lesser extent, “Japan, Germany, and Russia.”¹⁹ Brazil implemented an equally active cultural policy through international organizations such as the Organization of American States (OES) and UNESCO, obtaining considerable success – such as the appointment of

Arthur Ramos as head of the Department of Human Sciences and Luiz Heitor Corrêa de Azevedo as responsible for music and an executive member of the International Council on Music, both linked to UNESCO, or the promotion of large-scale research about the “cultural diversity of Brazil” carried out by that institution (Maio, 1999; Fléchet, 2013).

However, the publicizing of Brazilian culture abroad was not restricted solely to the attributions of Itamaraty. As in the inter-war period, the Ministry submitted this responsibility to other political agencies, such as the Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC) and the Federal Council of Culture, founded by the civil-military regime in 1967 with the purpose of defining the cultural policy of Brazil through national campaigns and international exchanges (Azevedo, 2006). The multiplicity of actors involved in the definition of cultural diplomacy demonstrated a growing desire among Brazilian intellectual and political elites to promote Brazilian culture abroad – irrespective of the political rupture which occurred in 1964.

For what is ours! While this slogan, used by the Rio press to hail the success of Brazilian artists in Europe after the First World War, it seemed increasingly apt after 1945. However, it was still necessary to establish the content, objectives, and means of Brazilian cultural diplomacy in a context marked by the Cold War, decolonization and the globalization of economic and cultural exchanges. From this point of view, it is worth highlighting the surprising continuity of the two objectives established by cultural diplomacy after the creation of SCI in 1937: the defense of national identity and the economic interests of Brazil abroad. Certainly the facts evolved during the century. In the economic sphere the search for industrial investments and new opportunities for Brazilian exports, as well as the promotion of international tourism, replaced the simple valorization of the country’s agricultural and mineral resources. In relation to Brazilian culture, its definition was the subject of numerous debates in artistic circles and in the political field, especially after the creation of the national security regime and the strengthening of the repressive system following AI-5 in 1968. Nevertheless, these two principal axes remained identical throughout the period, as noted by the diplomat Edgar Telles Ribeiro in 1989: “Cultural diplomacy is the specific use of cultural relationships to achieve national objectives, of a not fully cultural nature, but also political, commercial, or economic” (Ribeiro, 1989, p.23).

On the other hand, the content and recipients of cultural policies underwent multiple changes from the 1950s onwards, breaking away from certain orientations adopted during the inter-war period. In relation to the themes

involved, the development of cultural diplomacy was translated through a diversification of the policies used, based on an ever broader definition of 'Brazilian culture.' Thus, popular culture made its appearance in the actions carried out by Itamaraty, especially in the musical domain, as shown by the pragmatic circular from December 1945:

Considering the growing interest attracted by Brazilian music abroad and the excellent opportunity to defend it in an effective way, the Secretariat of Foreign Relations is in the process of choosing a minimal music library of this music, *both erudite and popular*, to be sent to all Brazilian diplomatic mission and consulates, as well as, through the intermediation of the latter, to the most important radio and television stations in the countries where they are accredited, and eventually to representative cultural entities which can have a real interest in receiving one of these collections.²⁰

Certainly, the integration of popular culture was progressive and the projection of an image of a black Brazil – traditionally in contrast to what was desired by elites, which was one of a 'civilized' country – met strong resistance in diplomatic circles.²¹ In 1959, for example, the Ministry refused the inscription of the Franco-Brazilian film *Orfeu negro* in the Brazilian selection for the 1959 Cannes Festival, leaving to France alone the prestige of the Palme d'Or. The production featured black actors from Rio de Janeiro favelas and consequently, in the vision of this institution, to the projection of a 'bad' image of the country.²² Similarly, the musical diplomacy of Itamaraty was limited to erudite compositions until the end of the 1950s, despite manifesting intentions in favor of popular music (Fléchet, 2012).

Nevertheless, the content of Itamaraty's policy towards art and popular practices changed rapidly, marking a new orientation of the Ministry. Brazilian cultural diplomacy obtained some of its greatest successes in the audiovisual and popular music domains from the 1960s onwards, especially following the launch of Bossa Nova in Carnegie Hall (1962), the creation of the Rio de Janeiro International Song Festival (1966) and the Brazilian Cinema Week of Buenos Aires (1978) (Fléchet, 2013, Chps. 7 and 8; Ribeiro, 1989, p.72). At the beginning of the 1980s, cinema, television, and records continued to be privileged instruments for Brazilian cultural diplomacy, alongside more traditional actions involving intellectual cooperation and linguistic promotion.

How to understand the mutation in the cultural approach advocated by Itamaraty? In first place, it is worth noting that the Cultural Department

answered the requests of embassies, which had been incapable of meeting repeated requests from foreign cultural institutions. Amongst other examples, DCI financed the radio program *Aquarelles du Brésil* which presented “through popular music and folklore, various aspects of the Brazilian landscape and man” to French radio listeners between 1957 and 1975, after the Parisian embassy had told the Ministry about the demands of French producers interested in importing Brazilian records.²³ Cultural diplomacy did not serve in this case to introduce a cultural product (MPB and samba), but rather to consolidate a pre-existing interest of a target public (European fans of Latin dances). Generally speaking, the aim of cultural *dissemination* demanded by Itamaraty had to be relativized. In the majority of cases observed, Itamaraty’s cultural action was not born from the desire to disseminate Brazilian artistic productions still unknown in the world. To the contrary, it was the popularity already acquired by Brazilian cultural productions abroad – especially in the domains of cinema and music – which gave rise to the introduction of specific policies, whose objective was to defend the economic and strategic interests of the country. From this perspective, popular culture appears from the 1960s onwards as an efficient means to promote the interests of Brazil abroad and to compensate the chronic lack of resources of the Cultural Department of Itamaraty, taking advantage of the successes obtain previously by the private sector. Following this orientation the Ministry of Foreign Relations sought to take advantage of the attraction exercised by samba, Bossa Nova and *Cinema Novo* among the European and US public to develop international tourism to Brazil, as shown by the actions of Varig airline and the tourism company Embratur.²⁴

Pragmatism equally commanded the definition of actions carried out in each of the cultural domains. Itamaraty supported actions based on their success in the international scenario and not on aspects related to internal policy. Cultural diplomacy moved away from repeated governmental policies, defending abroad an image of the country different from the predominant representations in the country itself. This divergence was particularly sharp during the military dictatorship after the adoption of Act Institutional no. 5 in December 1968, which suspended *habeas corpus*, marking a hardening of the repressive regime, especially in the cultural sphere, forcing many artists into exile. Within the country the message was clear: musicians and film-makers – such as Cacá Diegues, Nara Leão, Caetano Veloso, Chico Buarque, Elis Regina and Gilberto Gil – appear as “the principal agents of a group of singers and composers with a pro-communist orientation, currently working openly in the cultural area,” exercising a nefarious influence over the public.²⁵ However, abroad the

situation was far from being so direct: Itamaraty sponsored artists known for their opposition to the regime, due to their success with the public. The Ministry, for example, financed the Brazilian nights of the International Music Editing Fair in Cannes between 1966 and 1975, in which there participated, amongst others, Edu Lobo, Chico Buarque and Gilberto Gil (Fléchet, 2013, Chp. 8).

After the 1960s and 1970s pragmatic interest and the desire to better serve the economic aspirations of the country ensured a certain continuity in Brazilian cultural diplomacy, keeping it more open to popular forms. Throughout this period, the recipients of Itamaraty's cultural policy were transformed at the same time as their content. Previously aimed at European and American countries, at the beginning of the 1960s Brazilian cultural diplomacy opened up to the African continent. The 'independent foreign policy' launched by President Jânio Quadros in 1961 aimed in this way to develop bilateral relations with the new states in West and Southern Africa, highlighting the ethnic and historic affinities which linked Brazil and Africa. Momentarily suspended after the 1964 Coup, the military government returned to this policy in the 1970s with the aim of assuring the economic interests of the country in the African continent and of fighting against the strong US influence (Saraiva, 1991). In order to highlight the 'natural solidarities' between the population of Brazil and black Africa, Itamaraty financed various cultural activities. After having sent a notable delegation to the World Festival of Black Arts, the Ministry launched in March 1974 an ambitious "program of cultural cooperation between Brazil and African countries" – in collaboration with MEC, the government, and the Federal University of Bahia –, foreseeing the creation of an Afro-Brazilian museum in Salvador, the development of teaching and research about Afro-Brazilian culture, as well as welcoming students with grants and inviting African professors.²⁶ While Africa did not become the privileged destination of Brazilian cultural diplomacy in this period – due to the priority given above all to Hispanic America, the United States, and Europe –, these initiatives show that there was a growing diversification of spaces of interest, heralding the policies adopted by the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries after 1996 (Saraiva, 2001).

Concluding this brief historical outline, we can state that precocity, continuity, and pragmatism are three characteristics of Brazilian cultural diplomacy. Brazil actually understood very early that *soft power* was an appreciable tool for a secondary power wishing to strengthen its place in the international scenario and to affirm its economic positions. While the country was

not an exception in South America – Argentina and Chile equally were part of this dimension in the inter-war period –, it was the first to create a “cultural diplomatic machine”²⁷ with the foundation of specific services in the Ministry of Foreign Relations. The priority conceded by Itamaraty explained the elements of continuity observed in the objectives and content of Brazilian cultural diplomacy despite the changes in the regime. The *Estado Novo*, the New Republic, and the military dictatorship showed similar concerns about the image of Brazil abroad and the commercial destination of cultural policies.

Certainly the objects and the recipients of this diplomacy developed at the beginning of the 1960s, when Itamaraty added a popular dimension to ‘national culture’ and reactivated the old South Atlantic solidarities in the dual context of decolonization and cultural globalization. The approximation, however, remained unaltered: the pragmatism of Brazilian foreign policy equally inspired the cultural sector. Thus, Afro-Brazilian culture, for long kept separate, became a protagonist once it contributed to establishing economic and strategic proximities with Africa. Similarly, Brazil sought to maintain a ‘pragmatic equidistance’ between the different cores of its diplomacy, defining the recipients of its cultural policies – Hispanic America, the United States, Europe, and Black Africa.

However, the precocity and the relative coherence of Brazilian cultural diplomacy should not mask either the relative institutional disorder at the core of MRE and the different governmental agencies charged with cultural affairs, or the chronic lack of resources denounced many times by the actors responsible for their implementation. While the cultural sector developed and strengthened itself during the twentieth century, it was above all the result of the engagement of people such as Montarroyos, Capanema and Vasco Mariz. On the other hand, it benefitted from the competition between Brazil and Argentina for regional leadership, since Brazilian diplomats would under no account consider having less cultural activities than their colleagues from the Platte River – or at least the idea that the latter had done more in this area. Throughout this period, the cultural policy of Brazil was based on the long diplomatic tradition of the country and on a competent homogenous professional diplomatic corps, preserving a relative independence in regard to political power. This “republic of diplomats,” as Alain Rouquié called it (2006, pp.333-338), was the master key in the implementation of ambitious and innovative cultural activities, linked to economic pragmatism and the invention of national identity.

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NOTAS

¹ Original quotation, translated by the authors: “L’axe géographique du continent américain est en direction nord-sud, mais ne méconnaissons pas un autre axe, celui des influences de la culture, qui va de l’est à l’ouest”, em SIEGFRIED, 1934, pp.9-10.

² About France, see, amongst others, MATTHIEU, 1991; LESSA, 1997; SUPPO, 2000. About the United States, see : MOURA, 1993; TOTA, 2000; NIÑO RODRÍGUEZ; MONTERO, 2012; CÂNDIDA-SMITH, 2013.

³ Instituto Rio Branco was a pioneer in studying this question. Cf. ARRUDA, 1983; RIBEIRO, 1989; GARCIA, 2003.

⁴ For a global discussion of the question, see: IRIYÉ, 2004; DULPHY; FRANK; MATARD-BONUCCI; ORY, 2010; FRANK, 2012 (Chapter 19).

⁵ Unesco Historic Archive, Paris: IICI. A III 14, 15 February 1937.

⁶ Itamaraty Historic Archive (AHI), Rio de Janeiro: 78/3/13, Letter from Montarroyos to Afrânio de Mello Franco, 5 Nov. 1932.

⁷ AHI, Rio de Janeiro: 542. 6/995. 16141, *Informação*, from Ribeiro Couto to the General Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Relations, 1 Mar. 1934.

⁸ Bulletin of Ministry of Foreign Relations, 1938, apud FERREIRA, 2006, p.104.

⁹ AHI, Rio de Janeiro: 542. 6/995. 16141, Letter from Bueno do Prado to Oswaldo Aranha, 29 Nov. 1938.

¹⁰ AHI, Rio de Janeiro: 276/2/4, Letter from Montarroyos to Otavio Mangabeira, 5 Sept. 1927.

¹¹ AHI, Rio de Janeiro: 542. 6/653. 9813, Interview with Ildefonso Falcão in *Careta*, 16 Nov. 1935.

¹² AHI, Rio de Janeiro: 542,6, 995/16141, Article in *Diário de Notícias*, Rio de Janeiro, 2 Feb. 1936.

¹³ AHI, Rio de Janeiro: 542,6, 653/9813, Article in *Careta*, 16 Nov. 1935, emphasis added.

¹⁴ We can highlight especially a series of agreements referring to the revision of school manuals and the teaching of history, amongst which the first was signed in 1933 by Brazil and Argentina. (See: *La*

coopération intellectuelle. Paris: IICI, 1933. p.645). For an analysis of these agreements, see DUMONT, 2013, pp.464-467, 730-736.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.368, 378-381.

¹⁶ MOURA, 1980. See also: CERVO, 1994; ROLLAND, 1999.

¹⁷ In 1926 Xavier de Oliveira, professor at the University of Rio de Janeiro and a doctor, published a series of articles in *Jornal do Brasil* proposing the creation of an American intellectual cooperation body. In 1928, a resolution of the Inter-American Conference in Havana made the project concrete, which was to be examined in 1930 by the *Inter-American Congress of Rectors, Deans, and Educators in General*. In this conference the organization of the Institute was discussed which, however, never came to exist. About this project, see DUMONT, 2013, pp.359-365 e 479-500.

¹⁸ Created by Oscar Niemeyer, Itamaraty Palace was opened on 21 April 1970 in Brasília, in other words ten years after the new capital. The transfer from Rio de Janeiro to the new political center of the country was done without any great concern for the conservation and preservation of archives, which complicates the work of historians in the present day.

¹⁹ AHI, Rio de Janeiro: DCI/542. 6/no 86: “Meios de ação cultural empregados. Conveniência de uma análise cuidadosa”, 11 April. 1950.

²⁰ AHI, Rio: DCI./540. 36/Circular 171: “Propaganda da música brasileira no exterior”, emphasis added.

²¹ This resistance was long-dated. Roberta Maria Lima Ferreira cites, amongst other actions, the recommendations of the Brazilian Embassy in Washington during the filming of *That Night in Rio* (1941) that a scene with the dancing of blacks be removed (FERREIRA, 2006, p.196).

²² AHI, Rio: Emb. Paris/Reservado/no 241/640. 612(00). Letter from Ambassador Carlos Alves de Souza Filho to Minister Francisco Negrão de Lima, Paris, 20 May 1959. In relation to this episode, see: FLÉCHET, 2009.

²³ AHI, Rio de Janeiro: Emb. Paris/Ofícios 1957/481/675(85), “Programa de música brasileira na Radiodifusão francesa”.

²⁴ AHI, Brasília: DDC/640. 0(B46), Difusão Cultural 1972-1977 et 640. 361(B46)(F37), “Festival do disco. Carnaval brasileiro”, 7 jan. 1975.

²⁵ Report of the Information Service of the Second Battalion of São Paulo, cited by NAPOLITANO, 2004, p.110.

²⁶ “Programa de cooperação cultural entre o Brasil e países africanos”. *Afro-Ásia*, n.12, pp.247-251, 1976.

²⁷ We draw on here the expression created by Robert Frank about France. FRANK, 2003, pp.325-331.