

THESIS

INVENTED PASTS, IMAGINED FUTURES: WORLD'S FAIRS, CITIES, AND
NARRATIVES OF BRAZILIAN NATIONHOOD IN THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT,
1893-1976

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ABSTRACT

INVENTED PASTS, IMAGINED FUTURES: WORLD'S FAIRS, CITIES, AND NARRATIVES OF BRAZILIAN NATIONHOOD IN THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT, 1893-1976

In 1976, a deafening historical silence emerged from an empty square in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, after the former building of the senate ceased to exist. With the authoritarianism of the military dictatorship and the increasing industrial and urban development since the 1950s, the Monroe Palace suffered a gradual but violent loss of meaning. When the federal district moved from Rio de Janeiro to the utopic and modern Brasilia, in 1960, an intense debate around the future of the palace arose among intellectuals, architects, and statecraft agents. The palace, however, had a long history before its downfall, and its destruction in 1976 was just one piece of a broader, more abstract process of change over time. In the ideological dimension, specific ideas of *Brasilidade* – or Brazilian nationhood and cultural identity -- traveled through space and time and manifested in the physical world through world's fair pavilions in Chicago (1893), Saint Louis (1904), New York (1939), Brussels (1958), as well as in the Monroe Palace in Rio (1906-1976). These different ideas of *Brasilidade* referred to multiple meanings and ideologies of nationhood, modernity, modernization, tradition, past, and future that were attributed to those physical constructions. As my research demonstrates, the mutilations in the Monroe Palace and the trajectory of different Brazilian pavilions in world's fairs served as case studies to understand the maturation of Brazil's ideologies of nationhood in the twentieth century.

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For the many loved ones lost during the Covid-19 Pandemic,
We miss you.

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INTRODUCTION

When I still lived in Rio de Janeiro, I worked for two years at the State Parliament (the Tiradentes Palace), and my commute to work involved biking through the empty space where the Monroe Palace used to be. To bike through the historic downtown of the city of Rio can be an eye-opening experience. The area is dressed in social injustice, spatial deformity, and stains of time. The parasitic relationship between past and future is expressed in old buildings and townhouses that, in a decadent state, are devalued in the face of real estate speculation and rising skyscrapers. Some old constructions have become empty of individuals and meanings. The void left by the Monroe Palace, the former federal Senate, has always disturbed me: literally, an empty public square with a fountain in the middle and no signs of historic interpretation that mention the building besides a small, unofficial insignia.

The Monroe palace meant something to the people of Rio. It was part of people's everyday life, commute to work, and experience of time and space. It was someone's workspace, in the same way that the Tiradentes Palace, which housed the State parliament not far from there, paralleled my own workspace. It was also the stage for many popular protests, political riots, and democratic participation in the face of social dissatisfaction. At the same time, The Monroe palace embodied a certain ideology of nationhood based on a particular narrative about Brazil's past and future. In *Invented Pasts, Imagined Futures*, I rely on a transnational approach to investigate Brazilian ideologies of national identity and their manifestations in the physical realm through participation in world's fairs. I argue that the mutilations in the Monroe Palace and the trajectory of different Brazilian pavilions in world's fairs served as case studies to understand the maturation of Brazil's ideologies of nationhood in the twentieth century.

When I decided to investigate the history of how the Monroe Palace was destroyed, I was driven by four decades of emptiness and deafening historical silence of that square. Demolished in the 1970s during the Brazilian military dictatorship, the building was first constructed in Saint Louis to represent Brazil in the 1904 World's Fair and later rebuilt in Rio, the country's federal district. My undergraduate research sought to understand the process of demolition of the Monroe Palace as a direct result of the increasing national developmentalism in the country's economic policies, that led to the inauguration of Brasilia in 1960, coupled with the authoritarian modus operandi of the military dictatorship. Hence my research's initial focus on the decades of 1960 and 1970, and the preservation policies in Brazil during that period in face of real estate speculation and modernization. Something, however, made me want to go further. As I found myself spending hours in the archives of Rio trying to make sense of that process, I realized the limitations of my own research questions.

The archives pointed to a much deeper, century-long process. The palace was a historical artifact, material evidence of change over time, and the tangible manifestation of ideologies of nationhood that battled for narrative hegemony. Those walls and stairways connected Brazil and the United States and bridged past and future in one place. What I saw in the archives made me want to move beyond that empty square. To understand the process of how the palace went down, I needed to follow the story of how it traveled through time and space.

In a book published in 1994, John Brinckerhoff Jackson argued that "It is our sense of time, our sense of ritual, which in the long run creates a sense of place, and of community."¹ Spatial organization, architecture, urban planning, and the built environment play a role in how

¹ John Brinckerhoff Jackson, *A Sense of Place, A Sense of Time* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 160.

people, communities, and political entities interact with each other, their past, and their future. The intersections between time and space have long been the object of historical studies, and historians have discussed the many ways in which groups of people and organizations mobilize narratives about their past and future to create some sense of identity. As David Glassberg suggested in his book *Sense of History*, published in 2001, individuals and social groups create their own “sense of history” by combining the various versions of historical knowledge, produced by academic institutions, mass media, or the government, with their own personal histories and sense of self and identity.² Those narratives of time are often embedded in the built environment and urban landscapes that hold symbolic significance to a certain community.

When it comes to the crafting of national identities, place and spatial organization can also be powerful political weapons, and reflect broader patterns of modernization, power relations, and change over time. Throughout the nineteenth century, nation-building narratives legitimized economic imperialism and cultural domination of some nations over others. Intellectual European elites used symbolism and spatial narratives in the built environment to separate the “other,” non-European, non-white, or non-western, from the civilized, modern world. The *plaza*, or public square, in Spanish settlements, for example, held spatial and symbolic importance as the heart of the metropole’s political and religious power. *Plazas* also embodied narratives of time that reinforced the Spanish cultural hegemony over Native populations. By centralizing the church and reproducing specific aesthetic values of modernity in

² David Glassberg, *Sense of History: The Place of the Past in American Life* (University of Massachusetts Press, 2001), 7.

the built environment, the Spanish crown reinforced the superiority of a European tradition and cultural past translated into the physical world.³

A very similar process happened during the western expansion of the United States: Ideologies of imperialism and American exceptionalism solidified the country's cultural hegemony and American neocolonial practices towards Native populations and Latin American nations. Such ideas were often embedded in the symbolic organization of the American cities as metaphors of national grandeur. As historian James Gilbert suggested, for example, in the late nineteenth century, the city of Chicago expressed the urban utopianism embedded in the social mentality of the American middle-class.⁴ In turn, the middle-class developed itself as a consumerist, chauvinistic, and hyper-individualistic expression of American identity. The city of Chicago became the microcosmos of modernity and American exceptionalism.

Cities, however, are not the only metaphors of ideologies of national identity in the physical world. In 1851, the first world's fair took place in London. Known as The Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations, the event represented new market and industrial values that were embedded in the global capitalist economy. Through the next hundred years, world's fairs became diplomatic encounters between nation-states that would negotiate their power, influence, and economic prestige. Architect Niuxa Dias Drago argued that the fairs were the showcases of modernity that embodied bourgeois values and "their insights into the cultures of other people."⁵ Divided in two main spaces, the Chicago 1893 World's Fair represented the dichotomy between popular and civilized culture - the Midway Plaisance and the

³ Setha M. Low, *On the Plaza: The Politics of Public Space and Culture* (Austin: University of Texas, 2000). For an interesting case study on the city of Santa Fe, New Mexico, see Chris Wilson, *The Myth of Santa Fe: Creating a Modern Regional Tradition* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997).

⁴ James Gilbert, *Perfect Cities: Chicago's Utopias of 1893* (The University of Chicago Press, 1991), 83.

⁵ Niuxa Dias Drago, "Arquitetura e cenografia na representação do Brasil: pavilhões brasileiros de Londres a Milão," *O Percevejo Online*, vol. 8, n.º. 1 (January/July 2016), 33.

White City respectively - ultimately materializing ideologies of neocolonialism and civilizing progress (Figure 1).

The embodiment of American Imperialism in the spatial organization was common to the fairs that happened in the United States. In 1984, when the studies of the American world's fairs were still under development, historian Robert Rydell published his pioneering work that inaugurated a school of thought on the matter.⁶ Rydell offered a comprehensive perspective on world's fairs that happened in the United States as events that "showed off the nation's economic strength and artistic resources, highlighting new architectural forms and offering models for urban planning."⁷ In conversation with sociologists like Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, he understood the fairs as symbolic universes that not only legitimized the country's political and scientific authority, but also provided "a meaning for social experience, placing 'all collective

⁶ In fact, in 1977, John Allwood wrote a comprehensive history of the World's Fairs. Although an important and pioneering work, Rydell's account offered the path for other works in a more effective way. Other basic references on the topic include Paul Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vitas: The Expositions Universelles, Great Exhibitions and World's Fairs, 1851-1939* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988); and John Findling, Kimberly Pelle, *Historical Dictionary of World's Fairs and Expositions, 1851-1988* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1990).

⁷ Robert Rydell, *All the World's a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876-1916* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000): 2.



Figure 1: Souvenir map of the World's Columbian Exposition at Jackson Park and Midway Plaisance, Chicago, Ill, U.S. A. 1893. Library of Congress.

events in a cohesive unit that includes past, present, and future. (...).”⁸ Followed by others like Tony Bennett, that ultimately argued that fairs were meant to win the hearts and minds “as well as the disciplining and training of bodies,”⁹ Rydell effectively convinced a whole generation of scholars that the fairs were more than entertainment events and held deeper ideological

⁸ Robert Rydell, *All the World's a Fair*, 2.

⁹ Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (Abington: Routledge, 1995): 62.

meanings, relying primarily on documentation of the fairs' organizers and officials, and presenting a history from the perspective of the upper-level classes and governmental parties.

However, and maybe because of this kind of history, other scholars recently have warned against neglecting the experiences of fairgoers, who may not have absorbed the fair makers' messages. In 1991, James Gilbert's work discussed the attempts of Chicago's elites of dealing with the issue of diversity by promoting a homogeneous cultural narrative.¹⁰ In his account, Gilbert considered the World's Fair as one of the utopian ideals of the city in which the organizers tried to impose a specific social and cultural order to the audiences. However, as the author demonstrates, "Trying to create a controlled fair (a contradiction in terms, perhaps) and a careful cultural environment did not always work. Inevitably, the audience asserted its own priorities and interests."¹¹ This shift in the understanding of the fairs highlighted the perspective of the fairgoers and the discontinuities between the ideological messages the organizers promoted, and the ways visitors made sense of them.

More recently, in 2009, Gilbert also wrote about the memory of the 1904 Saint Louis World's Fair and again suggested that the scholarship of world's fairs usually described the events from the perspective of the organizers and failed to consider common people's experiences.¹² In this investigation, he relied on the assumption that fairgoers did not necessarily look at the fairs as symbolic universes of political and cultural legitimation and affirmation of national values. Instead, visitors would have very individualistic experiences as they would explore the grounds of the fairs and bring their own needs and curiosities to the space. This interpretation could be seen as a result of a broader historiographical shift in the last decades of

¹⁰ James Gilbert, *Perfect Cities: Chicago's Utopias of 1893* (The University of Chicago Press, 1991): 15.

¹¹ James Gilbert, *Perfect Cities*, 15.

¹² James Gilbert, *Whose Fair: Experience, Memory, and the History of the Great St. Louis Exposition* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2009).

the twentieth century towards individuals, groups, and classes that so far had been left out of the historical narratives. The Gramscian interpretation of cultural hegemony that underpinned Rydell's work decades before was left behind by scholars like Gilbert in an attempt to write a more comprehensive historical narrative of the fairs that considered and highlighted the public's experiences.¹³

This alternative school of thought on the fairs is not only defined by Gilbert's important works. The writer and filmmaker Eric Breitbart produced a documentary in 1994 that would later become a book: *A World on Display: Photographs from the St. Louis World's Fair 1904* relied mostly on historical images from the event and raised an important question regarding the meanings of those images to contemporary audiences. Breitbart asked, "Can we separate historical and contemporary meanings when looking at photographs?"¹⁴ The author's question has long been resonating among historians even before Breitbart produced his film or wrote the book. It speaks to the level of interpretation that we can offer to historical records without neglecting the meanings that individuals and historical subjects elaborated themselves in their own space and time.¹⁵

Although taking the visitors' perspective into account is undeniably a necessary step towards a more comprehensive history of world's fairs, historians shall not fall into the dangers of neglecting the intellectual elites and organizers' perceptions. Their original ideological messages on display in the fairs were nonetheless successful in communicating, either to the

¹³ About the concept of cultural hegemony, see Gramsci's works on the formation of intellectuals and organization of culture: Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci* (New York: International Publishers, 1992).

¹⁴ Eric Breitbart, *A World on Display: Photographs from the St. Louis World's Fair 1904* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997): 4.

¹⁵ Martha Clevenger also edited an important account on the St. Louis World's Fair of 1904 and relied on visitors' experiences. See Martha Clevenger, *Indescribably Grand: Diaries and Letters from the 1904 World's Fair* (St. Louis: Missouri Historical Society Press, 1996).

broader audiences or to concurrent participant nations, particular ideas of modernity and national values that ordained structures of cultural and social hierarchies and claimed their spot as imagined communities in the industrial western society.¹⁶ On the one hand, when looking at the fairs to discuss colonial structures and other power relations between participant nations, the investigation of the visitors' perception tells us little about the strategies that the elites of colonized countries appropriated to convey and ultimately display modern national identities. A thorough investigation of the intellectual elites' point of view, on the other hand, may still prove to be valuable to address the battle of representations that takes place on the grounds of every fair. It is not wrong to say, therefore, that a holistic interpretation of the world's fairs that considers the fair makers' message and the visitors' perception can offer valuable insights on the multiple meanings that underpinned these events in face of power relations and cultural hierarchies.

A good instance of scholarly work that demonstrates the importance of addressing the power structures at stake during world's fairs is Mauricio Tenorio-Trillo's rigorous work on the Mexican pavilions. The work highlights the participation of colonized nations in the fairs and their quest for a spot in the stage of modernity. Tenorio-Trillo argues that the Aztec Palace in the 1889 Paris World's Fair envisioned specific notions of past, present, and future of the country in order to showcase a modern identity.¹⁷ To some extent, the Mexican experience was not so divergent from those of other Latin American countries. Despite the evident social inequalities,

¹⁶ For more information on the notion of imagined communities, see Benedict Anderson's canonic work on nationalism as a political phenomenon. The work of Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger can also be a helpful theoretical resource in understanding the ritualistic dimension of Fairs and the resulting sense of collective identity they promoted. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006). Eric Hobsbawm, Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

¹⁷ Mauricio Tenorio-Trillo, *Mexico at the World's Fairs: Crafting a Modern Nation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996): 6.

economic inconsistencies, and political unrests, these countries envisioned homogeneous and progressive national identities that overshadowed those ruptures caused partially by a colonial and slavery-based past.¹⁸ Tenorio-Trillo's work speaks to the importance of a holistic investigation of the fairs that do not overlook the elites' perception. Moreover, when not limited to the American experience, research on world's fairs through a transnational approach can reveal important dynamics in the construction of cultural hierarchies between participating countries.¹⁹

Throughout the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Brazilian intellectual elites²⁰ conveyed nation-building narratives in the built environment of the fairs. Because the narratives changed in response to political, economic, and cultural circumstances, *Invented Pasts, Imagined Futures* also looks at change over time and space. In the face of increasing American imperialism and neocolonial practices, Brazilian fair makers adopted specific narratives of time that either rejected or embraced the colonial past of the country. As industrial development

¹⁸ An instance of work that explores the Brazilian participation in the New York World's Fair through a perspective that considers the ideological messages of the elites, and the representation of nationality is Aleca Le Blanc's "Building the Tropical World of Tomorrow: The Construction of Brasilidade at the 1939 New York World's Fair." *Hemisphere: Visual Cultures of the Americas* 2, no 1 (September 2009). <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/hemisphere/vol2/iss1/5>

¹⁹ Other important works on the construction of national identities in the fairs and the organizers' ideological (and economic) motivations include Graeme Davison, "Festivals of Nationhood: The International Exhibitions", In Samuel Lewis Goldberg and F. B. Smith, *Australian Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); Brian Horrigan, *Yesterday's Tomorrows: Past Visions of the American Future* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service and Summit Books, 1984); John Findling, "Opening the Door to the World: International Expositions in the South, 1881-1907" In *Studies in American Culture* 19, no. 2 (1996): 29-38.

²⁰ For the sake of this research, I use the term "intellectual elites" to refer to a heteronomous group of educated people who were somehow associated with the craft of the state, its symbolic representations, and the political and cultural identity of a nation. In Brazil, since the late nineteenth century, these groups included writers, artists, politicians, diplomats, architects, and engineers who decided which elements of Brazilian culture and history should be part of the official national narrative. Although conscious of the diversity of world views among different social groups, my research focuses on hegemonic representations of national identity that seemed to acquire state legitimization and broad acceptance among intellectuals of a certain period. Throughout the next pages, the term "intellectual elites" will serve as an intended generalization of those involved with statecraft and, more particularly, with the organization of world's fairs and its exhibits on the ideological dimension.

increased in Brazil, the narratives started to forget the past to emphasize an imagined future and particular notions of modernization.

My research suggests that world's fairs are multi-dimensional events that still have something to tell us about the power relations and structures of colonialism and cultural hierarchies between western nations.²¹ In the following chapters, I will explore some of the fairs that happened in the United States during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries and the Brazilian pavilions and exhibits in each of them: The Chicago's fair in 1893, the Saint Louis' fair in 1904, and the New York's fair in 1939. Further, in order to enrich the investigation, I will also discuss the importance of the only world's fair that took place in Brazil, the 1922 Rio de Janeiro's World Fair. In doing so, I will consider continuities and ruptures in Brazil's national narratives throughout the first decades of the republican regime. The intellectual environment in the early 1920s culminated in the emergence of an early nationalistic interpretation of architecture in Brazil, promoting the neocolonial style as the truthful representation of the country's cultural identity. Further, as a unique opportunity of power inversion between Brazil and the United States, hosting a world's fair enabled the intellectual elites of Brazil to nurture this national identity based on a certain narrative of time and challenge old colonial interpretations of their country by foreign nations, and in particular, the U.S.

In 1893, the Brazilian pavilion in Chicago was a prototype for the proudest architectural design representing the country to be displayed in Saint Louis eleven years later. Chapter 1 will explore both representations in Chicago and Saint Louis and investigate the narratives of time embedded in both constructions. As it happened in other fairs, the Brazilian national identity

²¹ Similarly, Robert Brain's work also presents a comprehensive perspective of the Fairs while considering both planners and visitors' experience and goals. Robert Brain, *Going to the Fair: Readings in the Culture of Nineteenth-Century Exhibitions* (Cambridge: Whipple Museum of the History of Science, 1993).

embedded in both architectural pieces also responded to the overall spatial narrative of the events. Symbolically positioned in relation to other Latin American countries, the U.S. Government building, and European nations, Brazil's building balanced its nation-building narrative with the imposed spatial language of the fairs that happened in the United States. Although the American fair organizers imposed notions of imperialism and neocolonialism on participating nations, Brazil challenged these notions with its own narrative of time by looking at the past and inventing a republican, federalist tradition for the country based on the late-nineteenth-century idea of modernity. The pavilion first prototyped in Chicago and later improved in Saint Louis was dismantled and transported to Rio de Janeiro, where it was named Monroe Palace and where it acquired political and symbolic significance by housing the federal senate.²²

In 1922, however, the Rio de Janeiro World's Fair reflected a significant turning point in the power relations between the United States, European colonial powers, and Brazil. For the first time, Brazilian fair makers had the opportunity to manipulate and impose a particular spatial narrative on participating nations, including the United States. Chapter 2 will explore this event as a moment of transition when Brazilian intellectual elites mobilized a specific narrative of time that embraced the colonial past as the most authentic element of the country's national identity. During the Rio World's Fair, the Monroe Palace housed the fair administration's headquarters and contributed to impose a specific spatial narrative on the United States and its pavilion. I

²² The name reflected the diplomatic relationship between the United States of America and the so-called United States of Brazil by the beginning of the twentieth century. Monroe referred to the ideas of the former American President James Monroe, which, in the first half of the nineteenth century, embedded a foreign policy of intolerance against European interference on the American continent. To some extent, the doctrine contributed to the American imperialist and expansionist practices during the following decades, especially in relation to the Latin countries of America. Jay Sexton's work offers a valuable contribution to the topic. Jay Sexton, *The Monroe Doctrine: Empire and Nation in the Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2011).

argue that this fair was a microcosmos of the 1920s intellectual environment in Brazil and the cultural shifts that happened in that decade, and it ultimately led to a completely different understanding of Brazilian nationhood in the 1930s. This time, the narrative of time did not look at the past, but at the future to convey the country's national identity. Chapter 2 will discuss this shift by exploring the Brazilian participation in the New York 1939 World's Fair as a tropical, yet modern and future-oriented nation. By then, intellectual elites purposefully forgot both the colonial and republican pasts in order to invent a future of progress based on the idea of modernization.

In Chapter 3, I will discuss the culmination of this century-long intellectual process of inventing a Brazilian nationhood. As I will demonstrate, the 1950s and 1960s saw the emergence of a nationalistic, authoritarian, future-oriented narrative of time among Brazilian intellectual and bureaucratic elites. The consolidation of the military dictatorship in the 1960s followed the construction of Brasilia as the new federal district that battled against former capital Rio de Janeiro for the symbolic and economic hegemony. This process resulted in the violent destruction of the Monroe Palace after it housed the senate for almost thirty years. The transfer of the capital to Brasilia symbolized the demise of Rio de Janeiro as the capital of progress and modernity, and consequently, of the narratives of time that glorified the nation's past that dressed the urban landscape of the city.

The next pages will follow the story of the Monroe Palace from its first conceptualization in Chicago and its apotheosis in Saint Louis, to its consolidation as a power symbol of the past and cultural tradition in the 1920s, to its tragic destruction in the 1970s. As the construction traveled over time and space, it acquired different meanings that mirrored the intellectual elites' understanding of what it meant to be Brazilian. The palace will serve as a point of familiarity

throughout the chapters of this thesis as it helps us understand the different narratives about past and future that constituted the Brazilian ideologies of national identity from the 1890s, the first decade of republican regime, to the 1970s, the zenith of the authoritarian, nationalistic, military dictatorship.

CHAPTER 1

“WAR OF PEACEFUL CONQUEST:” FAIRS AND IDEOLOGIES OF NATIONAL IDENTITY

On the first day of December 1904, the so-called “Francis Day,”²³ the last day of a carefully planned urban utopia, brought together people from many different places and backgrounds. At least two-hundred-thousand people gathered in the grounds of the Saint Louis World’s Fair sharing mixed feelings of sadness, apprehension, and nostalgia. Some traveled a couple blocks to see the fair and its president David Francis for the last time; others would soon be leaving the United States after months living a dream in which they could transit between cultural universes by walking. After seven months of a grand spectacle of colors, shapes, tastes, and sounds, it was time for the curtain call: the Louisiana Purchase Exposition was about to vanish from the city as if it was made of dust.

For the last time, fair officials walked through Skinker Road from the administration entrance towards the Louisiana Monument. At the back of the monument, separated by a huge lake, two of the main exhibit buildings were each surrounded by thoughtfully designed water ways, contributing to a generalized sense of order.²⁴ Francis David, the governor of Missouri, and the mayor of Saint Louis stood in front of the north side of the monument and addressed the crowd with their closing speeches. Governor Dockery said that the 1904 fair’s lesson was made evident to every visiting foreigner: that the United States was the greatest nation in the world. He also made sure to address the foreign commissioners gathered around the monument to warn

²³ *St. Louis Republic*, December 02, 1904.

²⁴ *Map of World's Fair grounds*. [1904]. Available through: Adam Matthew, Marlborough, World's Fairs, <http://www.worldsfairs.amdigital.co.uk/Documents/Details/P0166-00001> [Accessed March 25, 2021].

them about the ongoing “war of peaceful conquest” that would prove to every nation in the world the United States’ economic and commercial supremacy.²⁵



Figure 2: "World's Fair, St. Louis, 1904." Birdseye view of the 1904 World's Fair. Missouri History Museum.

It is unlikely that the crowd heard what he said in a world where microphones and amplifiers did not exist.²⁶ If fairgoers did not hear it, however, the symbolic arrangement of the space echoed the governor's words, and Francis and other members of the American intellectual elite listened proudly while foreign elite representatives applauded. In response to the United

²⁵ *St. Louis Republic*, December 02, 1904.

²⁶ James Gilbert, *Whose Fair: Experience, Memory and the History of the Great St. Louis Exposition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 8.

States' efforts of launching a national identity of hegemony over other countries, colonized nations used the fairs as opportunities to expose their own industrial accomplishments, romanticized narratives about their pasts, and promising images of their futures. This chapter argues that first, in 1893 in Chicago, and later in 1904 in Saint Louis, Brazil sought to legitimize a new political project through its main pavilions and exhibits. In both cases, the pavilions conveyed some of the values of the newly inaugurated republic by showcasing classical features, detailed ornamentation, and European cultural inheritance.

The pavilions in Chicago and Saint Louis had a paradoxical mission as allegories of the nation abroad. On the one hand, they were supposed to embody the Brazilian potential for industrial modernity, and on the other hand, they should showcase elements that could represent the country's past and European-inherited cultural tradition. Both enterprises constituted crucial aspects of Brazil's republican national narrative. Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the architecture, design, and symbolic arrangement of the fairs played an important role to either consolidate or challenge power relations between participating nations. If the fairs that took place in the United States had the potential to reinforce the American cultural hegemony and economic imperialism over other people, they also offered participating nations like Brazil the opportunity to promote their narratives of nationhood based on invented pasts and imagined futures. This chapter discusses how this narrative dominated the intellectual elites' mentality in late-nineteenth-century Brazil and informed the country's participation in two of the most important world's fairs that happened in the United States.

The United States was not the greatest nation in the world, and there was no "peaceful conquest," as Governor Dockery suggested, to prove the American economic hegemony to other countries. In fact, similarly to the western settlement in the nineteenth century, the ongoing

American hemispheric conquest in the new century was brutal, deadly, coercive, and contradictory to the ideas of civilized progress. With a large Philippine exposition in the 1904 fair, the United States intended to showcase its geopolitical and expansionist power resulting from abusive imperialism and neocolonial practices. To make this grandeur and cultural hegemony become true, however, American intellectual elites relied on a dynamic of ritual competition with participating nations and foreign elites. As the anthropologist Burton Benedict pointed out, like any other fair, the Saint Louis World's Fair was a "collective representation that symbolizes an entire community in a massive display of prestige vis-à-vis other communities."²⁷ Historian Robert Rydell suggested that the fairs were symbolic universes that provided "a meaning for social experience, placing 'all collective events in a cohesive unit that includes past, present, and future,'"²⁸ and therefore, the participation of foreign nations was crucial to the enterprise of consolidating – but, sometimes, challenging – colonial relations, power structures, and cultural hierarchies.

The 1893 Chicago's Columbian Exposition and the 1904 Saint Louis' Louisiana Purchase Exposition provided the Brazilian political and intellectual elites with the perfect opportunities to showcase their success in building a new republic. At both fairs, Brazilian architect Francisco Aguiar designed pavilions that highlighted the country's European cultural inheritance through eclectic and classical architectural features. For example, the Corinthian columns, large stairways to the entrances, and strong symmetry were important architectural features of the buildings in Chicago and Saint Louis. At the same time, Aguiar designed pavilions that also pointed forward

²⁷ Burton Benedict, *The Anthropology of World's Fairs: San Francisco's Panama Pacific International Exposition of 1915* (Berkeley: Scholar Press, 1983), 7. Benedict's work is an instance of Anthropological perspective that investigates the fairs' ritualistic dimension. The benefits of an Anthropological approach the fairs, in his understanding, is highlighting these events as modern international rituals with specific ceremonial features that happened when social relations and hierarchies went under major changes and needed ordination.

²⁸ Robert Rydell, *All the World's a Fair*, 2.

to the country's split from its colonial ties, to Republicanism, and to modernity. Simultaneously, the architectural features and spatial organization of the buildings conveyed narratives of time that invented a past and imagined a future for the country.

The national narratives told through the architecture of the Brazilian pavilions at Chicago and Saint Louis emphasized independence and republicanism. Constructed five years after the end of the African slavery system in Brazil, the 1893 pavilion embodied a new set of national values embedded in the republican model that had been adopted by the country in 1889. These values included American federalism, French-inherited ideas of progress, and a particularly European notion of modernity. A decade later, in Saint Louis, Aguiar created a new and improved pavilion design. Again, the architecture simultaneously embraced the United States' cultural hegemony and challenged European colonialism to distance Brazil from its own subordinate past.²⁹ Rejecting colonial representations, Francisco Aguiar promoted a specific national narrative about the country's past that could link its republican values to a common picturesque origin with the United States and European countries.

The next pages will follow the story of Aguiar's praised architectural design that encapsulated a specific idea of Brazil, and how it was first introduced in Chicago, successfully recognized in Saint Louis, and ultimately transported to Rio de Janeiro to become a powerful symbol of the new republic and political power. First, I discuss Brazil's participation in Chicago as the country's first attempt to convey the republican narrative of nationhood to the foreign community. Second, I look at the Saint Louis World's Fair and examine the architectural features

²⁹American President James Monroe, in the first half of the nineteenth century, inaugurated a foreign policy of intolerance against European interference on the American continent. To some extent, the doctrine contributed to the American imperialist and expansionist practices during the following decades, especially in relation to the Latin countries of America. For a valuable contribution to the topic, see: Jay Sexton, *The Monroe Doctrine: Empire and Nation in the Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2011).

and the spatial arrangement of the new pavilion more in depth. In 1904, as I demonstrate, the spatial narrative of the fair worked in favor of the Brazilian building and its national message. The chapter concludes by addressing some of the contradictions in Governor Dockery's speech and the fair's spatial narrative that reinforced American cultural hegemony. I suggest that a deeper investigation of the representations of colonized nations in the fairs can help us understand those contradictions and the fallacy of American exceptionalism.

Organizing culture in space: The new Brazil deserves a spot in the White City

Brazil's narrative of nationhood displayed in Chicago was based on newly invented traditions. Several Brazilian statecraft agents involved in the military coup d'état of 1889 that instituted the republican model were followers of Auguste Comte's positivist philosophy and political theory. The new republican model in Brazil, established in 1889, had the positivist motto of "love as the beginning, and order as the base; and progress as the end."³⁰ Although incipient, Brazilian fair makers brought the idea of an independent republic that could be modern, ordered, and based on progress to Chicago. As I will discuss in this section, the spatial organization of the fair, however, did not work in favor of this narrative of Brazilian nationhood and ultimately homogenized South American nations through a unifying language.

Brazil's presence at and participation in World's Fairs predates the 1893 Chicago fair. In 1876, when the United States hosted a world's fair for the first time, Dom Pedro II, Brazil's Emperor, opened the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia along with President Ulysses Grant. The two leaders turned on the steam that fueled the giant Corlis' Engine in the Machinery Hall, "bringing the whole display to life."³¹ The 1876 fair launched a powerful, reconstructed, and

³⁰ See Jose Murilo de Carvalho, *The Formation of the Souls: Imagery of the Republic in Brazil*. Translation by Clifford E. Landers. (University of Notre Dame Press, 2012).

³¹ John Allwood, *The Great Exhibitions* (London: Studio Vista, 1977), 55.

industrial image of the United States after the Civil War. The 1876 fair launched a powerful, reconstructed, and industrial image of the United States after the Civil War.

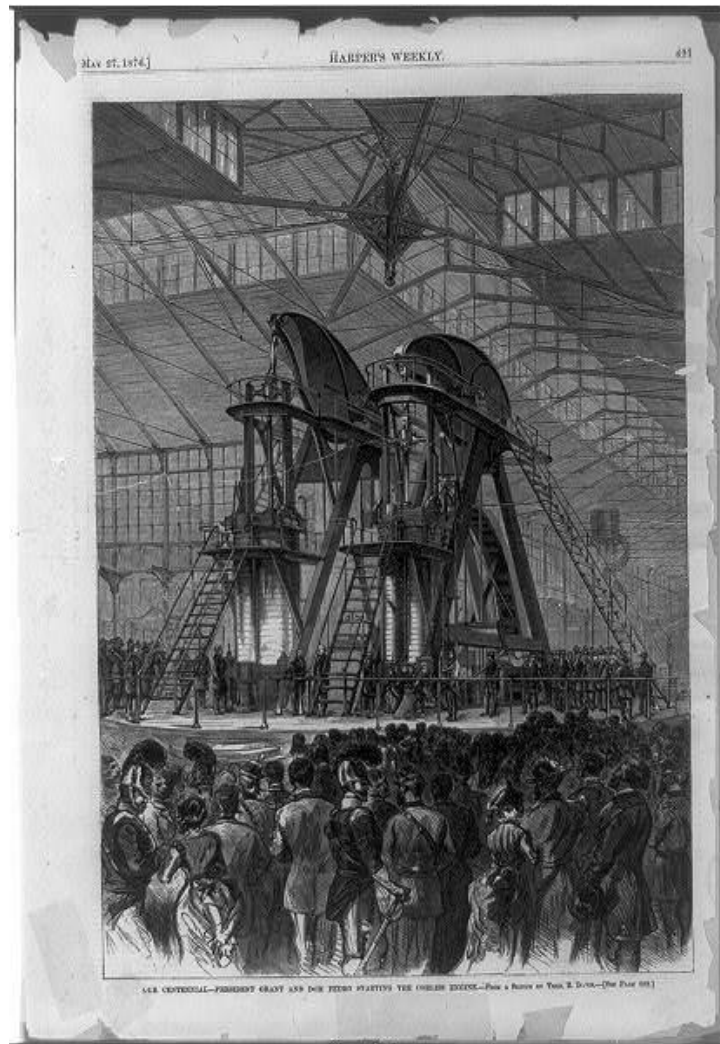


Figure 3: "Our centennial--President Grant and Dom Pedro starting the Corliss engine" from a sketch by Theo. R. Davis. Pennsylvania Philadelphia, 1876.

However, an equally clear and forceful message about Brazilian national, cultural, and aesthetic identity did not materialize at the fair. Rather, an American architect, Frank Furness, designed the Brazilian pavilion inside the main palace of the fair emphasizing Moorish culture (Figure 4). As Turkish architect Zeynep Çelik has discussed in her work, "the horseshoe arch and

the pointed arch (both scalloped), crenellations, the superposition of square-sectioned columns over circular ones to create height and an elongated effect, clusters of circular columns to mark entrances,”³² among other features reflected Furness’ professional identity as an architect rather than his knowledge of Brazilian culture. Furness’ choice linked Brazilian culture to European countries by emphasizing Iberian colonization, which is not a thoughtful interpretation of the country’s past.³³ Still, at the very least, the design spoke to ongoing changes in the international perception of Brazil’s place among the so-called western civilized nations – a position further emphasized by the opening ceremony that highlighted the diplomatic relationships between the U.S. and Brazil.

By the time organizers began to think about designs for the 1893 World’s Fair in Chicago, Brazil occupied a radically changed political position. In line with its new status as an independent Republic, the Brazilian intellectual elite sought to communicate a narrative in Chicago that highlighted Brazil’s new national identity: one of republican, federalist, civilizing, and democratic values.³⁴ Due to his well-known career as an engineer, architect, and military, Brazilian architect Francisco de Souza Aguiar was appointed as the general commissioner and pavilion designer for the 1893 fair.

³² Zeynep Çelik, *Displaying the Orient: Architecture of Islam at Nineteenth-Century World’s Fairs* (University of California Press, 1992), 167-168.

³³ Niuxa Dias Drago, “Arquitetura e cenografia na representação do Brasil: pavilhões brasileiros de Londres a Milão,” *O Percevejo Online* 8, no. 1 (Jan./Jul. 2016): 37. Accessed December 1st, 2019, <http://www.seer.unirio.br/index.php/opercevejoonline/article/view/5758>.

³⁴ This enterprise often resulted in invented national imagery that embodied political projects and conveyed notions of Brazilian nation-ness to its own population and to the rest of the world. On the building of nations as imagined communities and their political dimension, Benedict Anderson’s work offers a valuable contribution. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections of Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso 2006). See also Jose Murilo de Carvalho’s work on the invention of a Brazilian national identity through symbols and imagery: Jose Murilo de Carvalho, *The Formation of the Souls: Imagery of the Republic in Brazil*. Translation by Clifford E. Landers. University of Notre Dame Press, 2012).



Figure 4: Furness' Moorish design within the main exhibits pavilion. "Pavilhões do Brasil na Exposição Internacional de Filadélfia," Centennial Photographic Co., William Notman. *Brasiliiana Fotografia*, Biblioca Nacional, 1876.

In the 19870s, Aguiar graduated from the Military School with his engineering degree. Between 1879 and 1888, he served in a military engineering commission of the state of Rio Grande do Sul, where he participated in the consolidation of the borders between that state and Uruguay. As a Lieutenant Colonel, Aguiar demonstrated his expertise by designing many military headquarters that were later considered architectural models. Just a few years before Aguiar left to the United States as the Brazilian commissioner for the Chicago fair, the architect designed and supervised the construction of the *Hospital Central do Exercito*, or Central

Hospital of the Army, per request of President of Brazil Floriano Peixoto himself. By then, Peixoto also appointed Aguiar Minister of War, reaffirming his high social and political status.

Three years before the opening of the fair, in 1890, fair organizers created the Committee on Foreign Affairs. The work of the committee was to discuss the specifics of participating nations in the fair, their business expectations, and exhibit planning. The committee was made up of eight politicians – four Democrats and four Republicans, and each representing a different state.³⁵ William Curtis, representing the State Department at Washington, often submitted ideas, plans, and suggestions to the committee that emphasized the importance of having South American nations participating in the event – in this context, sometimes referred to as Latin American countries without much conceptual preciseness. Curtis was known for his expertise in Latin America and his Pan-Americanist ideas,³⁶ which gave the committee members enough reason to take them into consideration.

One of the main ideas Curtis submitted to the Committee of Foreign Affairs was his plan to employ agents in varied South American countries to ensure viability of exhibitions, fair transportation expenses, and logistics.³⁷ Aguiar and the Brazilian educated elites, who tried to come up with a solid ideology of national identity, hoped to convey their ideas in Chicago and cause a lasting impact. They were, however, out of luck. Before serving a national agenda, Brazil's republican narrative displayed in Chicago seemed to have served a bigger purpose of

³⁵ "C. M. Depew, New York, Chairman; C. C. Weller, Connecticut; D. P. Penn, Louisiana; M. H. Lane, Michigan; A. A. Wilson, District of Columbia; C. H. Way, Georgia; R. C. Kearnes, Missouri; and G. V. Massey, Delaware." *The Chicago Post*, "Aid for the Fair," October 20, 1890.

³⁶ William E. Curtis, "United States to Dominate Hemisphere," in *Today, Then: America's Best Minds Look 100 Years into the Future on the Occasion of the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition*, ed. Dave Walter (Helena, MT, 1992), 87–88 APUD Benjamin A. Coates, "The Pan-American Lobbyist: William Eleroy Curtis and U.S. Empire, 1884-1889," *Diplomatic History*, vol. 38, no. 1 (January 2014): pp. 22-48.

³⁷ *New York Herald*, "Chicago Fair Committees: Mr. Blaine wants especial attention paid to the South American exhibit," October 23, 1890.

consolidating power relations between the United States and Latin American countries. Fair makers materialized this purpose through the spatial organization of the fair.

The Columbian Exposition was foremost a celebration of the City of Chicago, and its spatial organization reflected the problem of cultural diversity in the city. Fair organizers planned to showcase the industrial development of the city, technological change, and the consequent pluralism through the narrative of a unified culture. As historian James Gilbert discusses, this unified narrative showcased in the fairgrounds was not a result of democratic participation of lower classes, immigrants, and workers that constituted Chicago's cultural and social landscape in the late nineteenth century. Instead, through the symbolic arrangement of the fair, the elites of Chicago imposed the narrative of unification based on the experience and expectations of the middle classes.³⁸ Ultimately, this unified narrative of culture provided the middle classes with the right amount of order in the face of the city's chaotic cultural diversity of the late nineteenth century.

The fair was intentionally divided in two main spaces. The Midway Plaisance, on the one hand, located mainly to the west of the railroad, included the so-called popular culture, uncontrolled cultural pluralism representative of the city of Chicago, and free market values as the main attractions. The White City, on the other hand, located to the east of the railroad, hosted most of the so-called civilized nations of the western world. Brazil, Guatemala, Haiti, Costa Rica, and Colombia had their pavilions spatially organized in a way that Curtis' plan for a strong South and Latin American exhibit could turn into reality. Latin American countries were among the high culture and contributed to the urban utopia of the White City, closely located to the United States Government building, and the French, German, and Canadian buildings as well.

³⁸ James Gilbert, *Perfect Cities: Chicago's Utopias of 1893* (The University of Chicago Press, 1991), p. 83.

When fair organizers thought about this division, they likely predicted the limitations of an exhibit language that invented a unified culture and ignored its contradictions. If so, they were right.

The organizers' agenda of a unified cultural landscape yet spatially divided in the fairgrounds faced many controversies and resulted in workers' strikes, fights, and ultimately deaths. In late August 1893, controversies between Native Javanese people from Indonesia and the fair administration brought to light the fallacy of the cultural unification message. The Javanese Village, one of the main attractions in the Midway Plaisance, was closed after the Native Javanese realized they could not sustain an exhibit under the work contract's circumstances. Much differently than what those Javanese people expected, fair organizers brought them to Chicago to be attractions, not exhibitors.³⁹ When that difference became clear, Javanese people demanded to be treated as exhibitors and have the right to sell their own products and profit upon their performances.

As part of the White City grounds, Brazil and other privileged nations did not encounter as many problems as the Native Javanese, the Turkish Village, and other "popular culture" attractions displayed in the Midway Plaisance. The president of the fair Harlow Higinbotham refused to meet the Javanese exhibitors' demands and left them with no other choice but to close business. When the fair closed, Chicago retail magnate Marshall Field bought the Javanese articles – and structures – and contributed to the inauguration of the Field Columbian Museum.⁴⁰ Records suggest that at least four Javanese people died before having the chance to leave the

³⁹ *The Chicago Evening Post*, "Java Village Closed," August 28, 1893.

⁴⁰ Laurie Margot Ross, *The Encoded Cirebon Mask: Materiality, Flow, and Meaning along Java's Islamic Northwest Coast* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), p. 50.

fairgrounds and go back home.⁴¹ While the narrative of a unified culture resulted in death for some of those people, its consequences for most of the South American exhibitors was incomparably less violent. These countries, including Brazil, were considered exhibitors and not attractions. The imposed unifying language did not stop Brazilian exhibitors from materializing the republican national narrative and actively broadcasting their own message – even if few managed to hear it.

The effort of Brazilian fair makers to convey their republican identity was evident. The impressive architectural style of the main pavilion introduced the very same elements that would be used in Saint Louis a decade later: to mention a few, coffee leaves ornamenting the walls, classical features like Corinthian columns, an imposing dome, and republican statuary dressed the building for the occasion of the Brazilian republic's debut (Figure 5). Aguiar envisioned a two-story building that embodied picturesque representations of the country's European-inherited past and highlighted republican national values. However, as I discussed above, due to the nature of the spatial narrative of the fair in Chicago and the broader unifying language that homogenized Latin American countries, the effort in representing Brazil through architectural symbolism did not achieve as much recognition as it did in Saint Louis. On the other hand, sculptures displayed in the Department of Fine Arts set the intellectual tone for the new political model, highlighting important male figures that contributed to the instauration of the republic: Martinelli and Rodolpho Bernardelli's main works exhibited in the fair included sculptures of Jose Bonifacio, a politician who played an important role in the country's political independence from Portugal in 1822, and Benjamin Constant, a positivist thinker who was considered the

⁴¹ *Chicago Daily Tribune*, "Death in the Javanese Village: Antonia Passes Away After a Lingering Illness-Mourned Her Dead Child," May 28, 1893; *Chicago Daily Tribune*, "Mournful Music in the Village," May 29, 1893.

ideological founder of the republic in the constitution of 1891.⁴² Both sculptures were originally exhibited in the National Gallery of Fine Arts in Rio, a significantly influential institution that relied mostly on French artistic principles to set the standards and expectations for the national production of art.



Figure 5: The Brazilian pavilion at the Chicago's World's Fair, 1893. C.D. Arnold and H.D. Higinbotham, RMP Archive.

Similarly, the Department of Ethnology, Archeology, and Physical Anthropology was invested in showcasing a romanticized, yet scientifically objectified version of Native culture

⁴² The Brazilian Commission, *Catalogue of the Brazilian section at the World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago* (Chicago: E.J. Campbell Printer, 1893).

and life in Brazil. Objects of spiritual value, tools of survival, and oil paintings representing Brazilian Indigenous people idealized their culture in accordance with the narrative of the heroic Indian.⁴³ Maybe even more than in previous fairs, Native culture from nations across the globe became intensively objectified as the anthropological interest on the matter increased. A decade later, as we will see further on in this chapter, the Saint Louis fair would take anthropological objectification of Native culture to another level with the Philippine exhibits.

Back in Brazil, government officials and members of the educated elite were delighted to hear about Aguiar's success in Chicago. Regardless of how much factual recognition the pavilion received, it was a magnificent introduction of the country to the stage of modernity: portrayed as a nation that is proud of its own art and architecture as part of a positive European inheritance, Brazil proved to be able to forget the dark past of colonization and slavery and move towards a civilized future.

The past that matters: The United States of Brazil and the European cultural tradition

In 1903, Lauro Muller, Brazilian minister of Industry and Public Works, wrote a report to President Rodrigues Alves about the country's invitation to participate in the Saint Louis Fair. The first invitation was frustratingly late, and the Brazilian government rejected participation alleging lack of resources and time. But when the fair had to be postponed an entire year, organizers made a second invitation, to which the minister acknowledged the importance of the event and told Rodrigues Alves that Brazil's participation was an undeniable national duty. In

⁴³ Although not as prominent as in the previous decades, literary and artistic examples of Indianism still prevailed during the early years of the republic. The sculptor Rodolpho Bernadelli, whose work was displayed at the fair, was one of the most relevant exponents of the movement. To understand more about Indianism, the heroicized image of Native people, and the anthropological appropriation of Native culture in Brazil during the nineteenth century, see: Jens Andermann, "Espetáculos da diferença: a Exposição Antropológica Brasileira de 1882," *Topoi*, v. 5, n 9 (Rio de Janeiro, Dec. 2004); Maria Sylvania Porto Alegre, "Imagem e representação do índio no século XIX," In Luís Grupioni (Org.) *Índios no Brasil* (São Paulo: Ministério da Educação e do Desporto, 1992).

Muller's words, the level of progress and civilization of each participating nation would be exhibited to potential consumers in the fair, and Brazil could showcase some of the exportation products and other riches of the country.⁴⁴ What sounded like a merely economic enterprise turned into a chance to do a better, larger, and louder display.

Aguiar's success in Chicago resulted in his nomination as the designer for the 1904 Saint Louis World's Fair. This time, he doubled the size of his design and brought to the United States a promising image of Brazil by exposing attractive possibilities to foreign investment, especially in mining. Most importantly, Aguiar's design for Saint Louis remembered and highlighted a specific past that responded to the needs of the newly inaugurated republic. Just like in Chicago, the narrative was republican and federalist. The prominence of the building in the fairgrounds, however, made it an even more successful enterprise than the pavilion for the Chicago fair.

During the Saint Louis fair, Aguiar combined picturesque representations of Brazil's past with republican values of the country's nationhood: a new political project for the country and a nation-building narrative that still sought legitimization inside and outside national borders. Eleven years after the fair in Chicago, Brazilian elites had a somewhat more precise concept of the country's identity as a democratic republic. According to the historian Margarida de Souza Neves, the building constructed for the Saint Louis fair signified the "illusion of progress as tangible reality."⁴⁵ The illusion was in the elites' incessant will to ignore the social, urban, and economic contradictions the country faced after the end of slavery and the proclamation of a vague and convenient republican constitution for dominant classes. Contradictions were even

⁴⁴ Lauro Severiano Muller, "June 2, 1903", in *Relatório apresentado ao exm. Sr. Lauro Severiano Muller, ministro da indústria, viação e obras públicas, pelo General F. M. de Souza Aguiar, presidente da comissão*, ed. Imprensa Nacional (Rio de Janeiro, 1905), 122. University of Missouri Digital Library. Accessed April 08, 2021. <https://dl.mospace.umsystem.edu/mu/islandora/object/mu%3A33638>

⁴⁵ Translation by the author. Margarida de Souza Neves, *As vitrines do progresso* (Rio de Janeiro: PUC-Rio, 1986), 17.

more evident in the republic's new capital: as historians Zephyr Frank and Johnson Lyman suggest, Rio de Janeiro's slave-based economy that lasted until the late nineteenth century solidified inequalities and social gaps in the city's cultural landscape.⁴⁶

At the fair, the Brazilian pavilion was one of the greatest, if not the greatest, exponents of eclecticism in its architectural design.⁴⁷ As Kristoffer Neville suggests, the origins of eclecticism are in a broader intellectual culture that are not limited to the visual arts, and it "encouraged a synthetic approach drawing on a broad range of ideas and traditions."⁴⁸ On the one hand, Aguiar drew from the French Renaissance architectural tradition with its round-arched fenestration and broken pediments, which connected Brazilian culture with Europe's invented past and artistic traditions. On the other hand, elements representing Brazilian national identity like coffee leaves and the names of the Brazilian states decorated the building's external ornamentation. Further, the building's classical motifs like Corinthian columns, large stairways, and republican statuary united the United States of Brazil and the United States of America in a shared political origin: Roman republicanism.

In the first decades of the twentieth century, intellectuals disseminated a perception and narrative of Brazilian nationhood that forgot elements from the country's colonial past in order to legitimize the new republican model through its European cultural inheritance. When Francisco Aguiar designed the building for the Saint Louis fair, he intended to combine French Renaissance style with elements of Brazilian nationhood to find the balance between European cultural tradition and national uniqueness. French Renaissance motifs in the building's design

⁴⁶ Lyman L. Johnson and Zephyr Frank, "Cities and Wealth in the South Atlantic: Buenos Aires and Rio de Janeiro before 1860," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 48, No. 3 (July 2006), p. 663-664.

⁴⁷ The local press in Saint Louis could only see the embellished version of Brazil and extensively complimented the pavilion's architecture, which won the first-place prize among the representative pavilions of the invited countries for its imposing and beautiful design.

⁴⁸ Kristoffer Neville, "The Theory and Practice of Eclecticism in Eighteenth-Century European Architecture," in *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, vol. 79, no. 2 (June 2020): 152.

suggested that the Brazilian past was inherently connected with the European cultural and intellectual traditions. The contradictions of that colonial history, however, were put aside and ignored at the occasion. Fair makers ought to legitimize the idea of an independent, federalist, and civilized society based on republican values by promoting a narrative of rupture with that colonial past, and more importantly, by ignoring the reminiscent social and economic contradictions of colonialism in the twentieth century.

With evident symmetry and strong ornamentation, the building had two loggias on either side that were meant to provide lightness to the construction. As was characteristic of eclectic buildings, the palace possessed some classical architectural features, including Corinthian columns and stairways in the entrance. Architects commonly chose Classicism to denote power, respect, and superiority. The columns did not present much ornamentation, except for the coat of arms of the country near to the base, the main republican symbolism that visitors could see all around the building. Above the columns, a dentil cornice, a low-decorated frieze, and the architrave right upon the capitals composed the entablature (Figure 5).

The entrances, stairways, and columns provided the building with a sense of power. The stairways offered a sense of magnitude to the visitors who had to go up large steps to enter the pavilion. Newspapers reported that the simple fact of walking up the main stairways was a delightful part of experiencing the exhibit. The principal entrance was a three-part door crowned by a great transom light and an even greater fanlight, important features to the indoor lighting of the building. Surmounting the fanlight, a sort of cartouche exhibited the year of the construction, “1904,” followed by a rectangular table in which read “Brazil.” Upon every group of columns (they were coupled in groups of three), one could see another cartouche foliated with coffee leaves. These cartouches had the names of the twenty-one states of the Federation sculpted.



Figure 6: Brazil's pavilion at the Saint Louis' World's Fair of 1904. Biblioteca Nacional.

Following the United States' model, Brazil adopted federalism as a political structure for the republic. Positioned high above, the cartouches with the names of the states represented the federalist ideal, as they demonstrated the significance of each state. As Aguiar intended, the twenty-one cartouches should help visitors familiarize with the states of Brazil, becoming not only a decorative, but also an educational feature.⁴⁹ The interior of the building had an expressive woodwork, for it both harmonized with furniture and showcased another great natural resource of the country. Four lion sculptures, intended to denote power and control over the environment, were placed externally to the building: two on the frontside, two on the backside.

⁴⁹ *The St. Louis Republic*, 10 April 1904. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Library of Congress. Accessed April 08, 2021. <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84020274/1904-04-10/ed-1/seq-33/>

Every feature in the architecture of the Monroe Palace was thoughtfully designed to embed power and grandeur.

The building's function as a pavilion in a world's fair also influenced its architectural design. The first-floor plan was a great and open hall, in which internal Doric columns going up to the ceiling called the attention of the visitors (Figure 7). Instead of the bright white painting of the outside, the inside had some shading to offer softness to the thirty Doric columns that supported the ceiling. The columns offered a sense of a sacred temple, as if the pavilion was the place to worship the motherland. As in every temple, rituals were expected to happen indoors: visitors found tables and chairs across this great hall extending to the east loggia, allowing them to sit and have the chance to taste Brazilian coffee in small and fancy cups.⁵⁰ One of the most important rituals that took place inside the pavilion was the visit of the President of the United States on November 26, 1904.

Theodore Roosevelt and his family arrived at the Brazilian building around lunch time. American and Brazilian flags decorated the exterior of the building. Aguiar received the presidential committee with enthusiasm while the Sixteenth Infantry Band played *Hail to the Chief*. The presidential family's visit spurred a colorful arrangement of the interior of the building: flowers decorated the main hall and letters that read "Roosevelt" and "1904" occupied one of the walls. In the middle of the hall (Figure 8), the statue named "Feast" represented the amusement and cheerfulness considered characteristic of Brazilians, who enthusiastically welcomed the United States as a leading, hegemonic nation in the West. The Roosevelts' visit was a ritualistic

⁵⁰ Francisco Marcelino de Souza Aguiar, *Relatório apresentado ao exm. Sr. Lauro Severiano Muller, ministro da indústria, viação e obras públicas, pelo General F. M. de Souza Aguiar, presidente da comissão*, ed. Imprensa Nacional (Rio de Janeiro, 1905), 137.

celebration of diplomatic purposes between the United States and Brazil, in particular, of the endorsement of the Monroe Doctrine in Latin America.



Figure 7: Interior of Brazil's pavilion in Saint Louis, first floor. Brazilian Commission's publication (1905).



Figure 8: Roosevelt's reception in the main hall of the Brazilian building, 1904. Brazilian Commission's publication, 1905.

However, not only did Brazil embrace the American cultural hegemony; the pavilion also challenged it. The ornamentation in the façade was mostly related to republican symbology and the empowerment of the Brazilian nation. The adornments, along the lines of classicizing Eclecticism, displayed crowns of coffee leaves adorning statues, stained glass, and the Corinthian capitals, in order to represent Brazilian economical potency. Markedly exhibited to visitors, coffee was one of the crux commodities of exportation in the second half of the nineteenth century. Inside the pavilion, a “loaded coffee tree brought from São Paulo and a

fountain that poured coffee beans”⁵¹ attracted visitors and provided a symbol of a thriving economy.

The use of coffee leaves as ornamentation became an important feature of Brazilian Eclecticism, an architectural style that draws upon other multiple European styles and was common on the façades of important buildings of the new republic. In government buildings built in the by-then federal capital, Rio de Janeiro, as well as in the future Monroe Palace, all the columns had pedestals, which refer to a certain entail with Ancient Roman architecture and emphasized the high standards of the republican values. Good examples of government buildings that followed this model are the Tiradentes Palace, which housed the National Parliament until the 1960s and now houses the Rio de Janeiro State Parliament, and the National Library, both constructed in the first decades of the twentieth century. This architectural language adopted during the first years of the republic intended to claim a certain connection between Brazil’s cultural identity and Europe’s classic past. The pavilion during the Saint Louis World’s Fair brought that language to a new level by promoting a republican image of the country to the United States and, therefore, consolidating a common narrative of origin between both countries regarding the Roman principles of republicanism, democracy, and law.

The primary language, however, was Eclecticism, and despite the strong classicism, the pavilion’s design had less traditional forms and structures. Even though the symmetry was still dominant, not all the windows had pediments, a departure from classical design. The symmetric fenestration was a compound of semicircular arch windows, some of them with small triangular

⁵¹ Translated by the author. Niuxa Dias Drago, “Arquitetura e cenografia na representação do Brasil: pavilhões brasileiros de Londres a Milão,” *O Percevejo Online* 8, no. 1 (Jan./Jul. 2016): 42. Accessed December 1st, 2019, <http://www.seer.unirio.br/index.php/opercevejoonline/article/view/5758>.

or rectangular pediments. Arch windows, as well as any other round structure in the building, meant to give some delicacy to the pavilion that had a rectangular body. On the roof, the central dome was decorated with a flag of the country and angelical figures that embodied the French representation of the Republic called Marianne, a very common figure in Brazil since the fall of the Empire. Marianne expressed the founding ideals of freedom and equality of the French Republic.⁵²



Figure 9: Photograph of Brazil's building, 1904. Saint Louis Public Library.

⁵² It is important to point out that feminine figures were commonly used as symbols of immaterial ideas. Comtism or Positivism played a crucial role in shaping this practice as it understood women as representation of the affective element of the society, and therefore, of certain moral values related to republicanism. See Comte's considerations on the matter for a comprehensive understanding of positivist ideals: Auguste Comte, *A General View of Positivism* (London: Reeves & Turner, 1880).

As a tropical country with abundant natural resources, Brazil challenged colonialism and the American cultural hegemony by emphasizing its economic potential and geographic, climatic, and geological advantages. Commonly, the Doric columns in the pavilion's central hall were ornamented with real plants and natural elements, resulting in a tropical experience for the visitors. The central role of coffee as a commodity to be known, consumed and exported, as well as the role of plants and flowers in decoration, speaks to the national narrative about natural richness and profitable resources that the pavilion conveyed in its architecture and interior design. Ultimately, everything in the building was thought to create a welcoming environment.

This fact had more to do with the end of slavery in Brazil than one could imagine by then. The African slavery in Brazil ended in 1888, just one year before the fall of the empire and rise of the republic, when Princess Isabel wrote the Aurea Law stating that all slaves were free.⁵³ However, this decision was not intended to the welfare of Black people as much as it responded to the international pressure the country had been suffering to end slavery.⁵⁴ Upon liberation, former slaves had no house, food or basic living conditions in the urban centers. Most of them made their ways to the peripheral zones of the cities; others had no other choice but to keep working for their former masters in exchange for food and a place to live. The end of slavery didn't end the economic gap between White and Black people in Brazil. In fact, it increased. However, as a great number of former slaves left the production farms and their coerced labor

⁵³ Walter Fraga, "Pós-Abolição; O Dia Seguinte," in Lilia Mortiz Schwarcz and Flávio dos Santos Gomes, *Dicionário da Escravidão e Liberdade: 50 Textos Críticos* (Rio de Janeiro: Companhia das Letras, 2018).

⁵⁴ For a comprehensive understanding of the matter, see Leslie Bethell's work situating the Brazilian Slave Trade within the Atlantic context and the British political and economic power. Leslie Bethell, *The Abolition of The Brazilian Slave Trade: Britain, Brazil and The Slave Trade Question, 1807-1869* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

positions, one of the main economic consequences of the abolition of slavery was the urgent need for labor to keep manufacturing, mining, and agriculture working.

Therefore, the pavilion in the Saint Louis Fair created a welcoming environment and highlighted good prospects for anyone who wanted to immigrate to Brazil. The coffee served at the loggias and at the principal hall reflected the work of the increasing immigrant presence in Brazilian coffee farms, at the same time it invited potential immigrants to move to the country and help sustain the production of not only coffee, but tobacco, cotton and other commodities as well. Mark Bennitt and Frank Parker, in their account on the history of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, mention the immigrant-welcoming environment in Brazil as they describe the country's participation in the event. In their words, "Immigrants and foreign capital are pouring into the country with increasing rapidity each year, as the natural resources and limitless opportunity for profitable investment are becoming more widely recognized."⁵⁵ That means, the more potentially profitable the country looked like, the more foreign investment and labor force could be acquired.

The goal to showcase a welcoming environment and a sense of progress and civilized conditions in the country spoke to the political and economic settings of Brazil during the first decades of the Republic. The Republican national narrative was meant to highlight the country's potential to leave its colonial and enslaved past behind, as well as its potential for modernization and industrial development. In an effort to distance the allegedly modern present from the backward colonial past, Brazilian intellectual elites faced the tensions between modernity and

⁵⁵ Mark Bennitt, Frank Parker, *History of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition: Comprising the history of the Louisiana territory, the story of the Louisiana purchase and a full account of the great exposition, embracing the participation of the states and nations of the world, and other events of the St. Louis world's fair of 1904, compiled from official sources* (Universal Exposition Publishing Company, 1905): 204.

tradition while formulating a republican nation-build narrative. Margareth Campos Pereira points out the two major dilemmas presented to these nation-builders. First, Brazil was insufficiently prepared to participate in the flow of innovations; and second, intellectuals didn't know exactly what should be remembered and celebrated from the same colonial past they intended to hide and forget.⁵⁶

The insufficiency to participate in industrial dynamics was either due to the absence of initiatives that stimulated the production of necessary specific knowledge; or due to the general reluctance to think of the country as a possible space for progress, considering its unremarkable colonial past.⁵⁷ It is also important to notice that the Brazilian "modernity" in the early twentieth century overlooked the urban contradictions and economic gaps between distinct social groups for the sake of a good national image. It was a tough task for that pavilion in 1904. To challenge colonialism and claim a spot among the modern and civilized nations was not only ambitious, but also required a sophisticated level of suppression of structural problems in social and economic life in the rhetoric dimension.

On the other hand, intellectuals and designers of Brazil's building had to choose elements of a bloody past that could constitute a nation proud of its achievements so far. They were aware, however, that these achievements did not reach Black people and former enslaved individuals.⁵⁸ The contradictions of the last country to abolish enslavement in the nineteenth century screamed to be heard by those who visited an embellished building with coffee leaves, natural arrangements, classical ordering, and monumentality. But no one heard. The architectural

⁵⁶ Margareth Campos da Silva Pereira, "A participação do Brasil nas Exposições Universais: uma arqueologia da modernidade brasileira," *Revista Projeto*, no. 139 (1992): 4.

⁵⁷ Margareth Campos da Silva Pereira, "A participação do Brasil nas Exposições Universais," 4.

⁵⁸ Margareth Campos da Silva Pereira, "A participação do Brasil nas Exposições Universais," 4.

enterprise seemed, to some extent, successful in challenging colonial structures in a narrative dimension.

Some of this success can be seen in the American press's positive response to the Brazilian pavilion. The *St Louis Republic* called the construction "a poem".⁵⁹ The press highlighted the welcoming environment the pavilion offered to the visitors, as well as the graceful design of the principal hall and loggias that were meant for the visitors to feel at home. The east loggia, in particular, was chosen to serve coffee because it had shadow in the afternoon. In Francisco Aguiar's own words, "We want everybody who calls on us to feel at home (...) We want them to drink our coffee and enjoy a rest and a bit of green goes a long way toward refreshing one."⁶⁰

Since Aguiar intended to represent Brazil as a major potency in South America, the ways in which the local press referred to the countries of Latin America also speaks to the positive reception of the construction. The *St Louis Post Dispatch*, for instance, stated that the American ideal as it emerged in the nineteenth century persisted in both Americas (North and South) until the present days. It also suggested that the ways in which the Latin American countries developed in the nineteenth century, although incomprehensible in the eyes of Americans, had great results.⁶¹ Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the Monroe Doctrine shaped the relationship between the United States and neighboring countries of Latin America.

Between March 1903 and January 1904, around the same time Francis Davis, Francisco Aguiar, and other commissioners planned the spatial organization of fair in Saint Louis, Charles

⁵⁹ The *St. Louis Republic*, April 10, 1904. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/76487623/>. Accessed November 28, 2021.

⁶⁰ Francisco Marcelino de Souza Aguiar in *The St. Louis Republic*, April 10, 1904.

⁶¹ *The Post-Dispatch*, May 24, 1904. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/138872204/>. Accessed December 13, 2020.

Melville Pepper went on a diplomatic trip as the U.S. representative throughout Latin America to understand the viability of joining resources for an ambitious economic enterprise: the construction of a Pan-American railway. The idea emerged from the Second International Conference of American States held in Mexico in 1902, in which the United States demonstrated their interest in expanding their commercial partnerships with other American countries and overcoming the interference of European capital in the continent. On March 12, 1904, Pepper sent to the U.S. Secretary of State a compelling report for each of the visited countries, including Brazil, highlighting the specific national circumstances that aroused a collective interest in the railroad project. In his conclusion of the report, he stated:

The attitude of the respective governments [of Latin America] and their strong desire for increased American investment has already been declared frankly and sincerely. It is not possible to expect that such governments will be able to avoid or completely hinder the investment of European countries but nevertheless, their preference for American companies and investment is very significant.⁶²

After Theodore Roosevelt transmitted the report to the Congress six days later, Congressmen approved the appropriation of necessary funds to promote the report's nation-wide distribution. The Saint Louis Fair, which would soon open its doors for the general public and world-wide potential business partners and companies, served as a sounding board for the idea of a Pan-American railroad.⁶³ Hence the main language of the fair. Reflecting Roosevelt's corollary

⁶² Translation by the author. "La actitud de los respectivos Gobiernos [de la America Latina] y su vehemente deseo de que se aumente la inversión del capital norte-americano, se ha declarado ya con franqueza y sinceridad. No es posible esperar que dichos Gobiernos puedan evitar ó estorbar por completo la inversión del capital europeo pero sin embargo, es muy significativa su preferencia de la inversión y las empresas norteamericanas." United States, *El ferrocarril pan-americano: informe del señor Charles M. Pepper, Comisionado por parte de los Estados Unidos de America, para entender en el asunto del Ferrocarril pan-americano / (traducción); Washington, D.C., Marzo, 12 de 1904; al Honorable Señor John Hay, Secretario de estado* (Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Nacional, 1906), p. 66.

⁶³ John Anthony Caruso, "The Pan-American Railway," *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, vol. 31, n. 4 (November 1951), pp. 621-622.

of the Monroe Doctrine and the economic interests of the United States towards Latin American countries, the fair in Saint Louis ought to collaborate in solidifying the American economic domination and imposition of cultural hegemony over Central and South Americas. Inevitably, the spatial organization of the fair reflected this power relation and the message that the United States was the greatest nation in the world. But this time, Aguiar managed to use this in his favor.

When designing the building, Aguiar considered the spatial organization of the fair, the site allotted for Brazil, and the surrounding structures to it. As it did in Chicago, the spatial organization of the fair in 1904 played an important role in materializing the narratives of national identity that foreign countries proudly exhibited in Saint Louis. In an interview for *The St Louis Republic*, Aguiar expressed enthusiasm and gratitude for the site allotted for his country's pavilion at the fair and an expectation to use the spatial narrative of the fair to outgrow the pavilions of other South American nations in design and presentation.

'The [Brazilian] Government recognized the Louisiana Exposition as the greatest the world has ever known, and, with governmental pride, we wanted to have, if possible, the finest of the buildings, particularly of the South American countries. You understand that this building represents our prosperity and our growth, our pride and the honor we feel in being given such a commanding site and so advantageous a position in the group of buildings allotted to foreign countries.'

Colonel Aguiar has not been guided by any set rules in the construction of this 'pearl in the diadem of foreign buildings.'⁶⁴

Despite Aguiar's ambition to outgrow "South American nations," Argentina was the only country of the region to have a pavilion of its own. However, considering the often-imprecise employment of the terms South America and Latin America to refer to countries located south to

⁶⁴ The St. Louis Republic, April 10, 1904. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/76487623/>. Accessed November 28, 2021.

the United States in that context, it is likely that Aguiar also considered other nations when stating his expectations for the building. A visual analysis of the fairgrounds suggests that Brazil's cultural contestants included not only Argentine, but also Mexico, Nicaragua, and Cuba. These countries, among powerful western nations like France, Great Britain, Italy, and Belgium, disputed over the spatial narrative of the fair in the same built environment of Brazil.

Following Aguiar's input, the news article stated that the pavilion was "a blending, as it were, of many structures; the evolution of his [Aguiar's] own ideas of a Fair study of the topography of the land and the grouping of surrounding structures."⁶⁵ Located approximately 600 feet southeast of the Fair Administration building, Brazil was just across the street from Cuba and Belgium, and both buildings could be seen from the north entrance of the pavilion. From the east loggia, visitors could enjoy a hot Brazilian coffee while looking at the significantly smaller Nicaragua building to the east and Great Britain's large construction to the northeast, both just a couple hundred feet away. Taking advantage of the overall spatial organization, Aguiar designed the pavilion to have the "loftiest point of any so far planned for the foreign reservation, having a central dome with an altitude of 132 feet."⁶⁶ From the fourth floor, visitors could access an observatory around the central dome where they found an impressive panoramic view of the fair grounds.⁶⁷ What visitors saw from the top of that observatory was an indispensable part of the spatial narrative that Aguiar and the Brazilian Commission tried to convey: Brazil stood out among other Latin American nations and their smaller, architecturally simpler, and less ambitious pavilions.

⁶⁵ The St. Louis Republic, April 10, 1904.

⁶⁶ St. Louis Globe-Democrat, "Brazil's Lofty Building Begun: Southern Republic to Have Pavilion with Towering Dome", November 19, 1903.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

In a different direction, Belgium's proximity was an unpredicted challenge to Aguiar's pretensions. Even before arriving in Saint Louis, the Belgian Commission's high expectations for the site of construction were a matter of debate among fair organizers. Belgian Commissioner Cridler sent an unusual request to the Exposition authorities requiring a permanent site for the pavilion. While every other foreign building had their fate sealed as temporary constructions made of staff, a very flexible material, Cridler's request indicated the Belgians' ambitious intention of leaving the building in Saint Louis, and the fair organizers did not seem to understand their reasons.⁶⁸ After looking at the building plans, Belgian king Leopold himself determined that the building should be larger and more imponent than what the original plan suggested.⁶⁹ In a statement reproduced at the *Globe-Democrat*, Leopold said that the Belgian people "are like the American people in that they're pushful and prosperous. I should like to see them still more prosperous, taking Americans for their models."⁷⁰

Belgium's pavilion turned out to have an impressive elliptical dome of 126 feet, almost beating Brazil's height. The rectangular pavilion, however, was only 50 feet tall in its ends while the Brazilian side loggias were 80 feet tall. When visitors arrived at the fair by the Saint Louis Suburban Railroad or the Transit Company, they would likely have laid eyes on the tallest domes of the space, that overshadowed Mexico, Nicaragua, and Cuba to their right, as soon as they entered through Skinker Road. Brazil and Belgium disputed the skies of the foreign grounds, and the resulting narrative materialized in this spatial organization suggested, at the very least, that

⁶⁸ Saint Louis Public Library, "Belgium's Building to Remain: Commissioner Cables Management for Site on Which to Erect Edifice," in Scrapbook of Newspaper Clips, p. 17.

⁶⁹ Saint Louis Public Library, "Leopold Still Hopes to Come: King of Belgians Has Not Abandoned Thought of Seeing Exposition," in Scrapbook of Newspaper Clips, p. 17.

⁷⁰ Saint Louis Public Library, "King Leopold Intends Coming: It is Now His Purpose to See the World's Fair, of Which He Speaks Highly," in Scrapbook of Newspaper Clips, p. 17.

the newborn Brazilian republic had the same level of national pride, cultural tradition, and political stability that the much older Belgian kingdom possessed.

By conveying the republican national narrative and taking advantage of the spatial organization of the fair, the pavilion in Saint Louis ought to incorporate modernity in its architecture, on the one hand, and a proud tradition that was “valued inseparably from the very idea of progress” on the other.⁷¹ Reflecting the efforts of the intellectual elites back at home, the Commission invented an idea of nationhood that embodied European cultural tradition and validated the new republic system by linking its present to a much older, respected, and civilized past – one that was very distant from the horrors of colonization, slavery, and Native genocide. The narrative created a welcoming environment at the fair that represented the need for labor force as a consequence of the late end of slavery in Brazil; it presented coffee as the chief element of Brazilian nation-ness; it displayed classical features that linked Brazil to European cultural traditions; it showcased federalism in its cartouches with the name of each state above the building; and maybe most importantly, it embraced a spatial narrative on the fairgrounds that pointed to the country’s economic growth and distinguished modernizing potency among other Latin American nations.

On that very same night of December in 1904, during “Francis’ Day,” a couple hours after Governor Dockery’s speech about the supremacy of the United States, the crowd loudly asked for another word from David Francis, the president of the Saint Louis fair. It was time to shut it down. Francis once again thanked those people for their support to the enterprise, and around nine o’clock, officials turned off the lights of the Saint Louis World’s Fair. Immersed in

⁷¹ Translation by the author. Pereira, “A participação do Brasil,” 3.

the sudden darkness and holding on to a sense of belongingness, people could hear each other's cries. Among the thousands of people gathered on the last day of the fair was Mrs. William Dee Becker, who remembered the lights, sounds, and tastes of the fair seventy-eight years later.

And the night that they are closed, you could hear people crying. We were packed person-to-person on the main plaza of the fair, esplanade, or whatever they called it. You couldn't have gotten another person in it. And they had some sort of speech, I suppose, Governor Francis was the president and a very elegant, very handsome man.

And he gave some closing remarks and then announced that the lights were going to be shut off. When that nice glimmer of light was shut off, people were visibly sobbing. We really were, everybody, men and women. It was so beautiful, and we'd all had such a marvelous, carefree, lovely time that to have it gone from our life forever just seemed too horrible, and that's the truth, because I was there crying like everybody else. And my husband cried too.⁷²

Francis, Governor Dockery, and other fair makers could swear that their mission was a success: those people seemed to understand the message that those buildings, monuments, fountains, lakes, and roads were meant to send. Mrs. Becker's testimony, however, puts this truth in question. Did visitors really learn about the United States' economic superiority and cultural hegemony? Or did fair goers only experience something beautiful and a carefree time in the fairs? Were foreign nations capable of seducing the audiences to a particular understanding of their cultures and economic potentialities? And most importantly, was the United States really the greatest nation in the world, as suggested by Governor Dockery a few hours before the lights went off?

In fact, Dockery and the other fair makers were wrong. Exactly twenty-four hours before the lights went off, three Native Igorot dead bodies were shipped back to the Philippines. They

⁷² *Interview with Mrs. William Dee Becker*. 14 Jul 1979. Available through: Adam Matthew, Marlborough, World's Fairs. Accessed March 25, 2021. http://www.worldsfairs.amdigital.co.uk/Documents/Details/MHM_Margaret_Becker.

had been objectified and exposed in the fair as examples of exotic, non-civilized culture, and died of pneumonia months before the end of the fair. Along with these dead bodies, other sixty-nine alive Igorot bodies were shipped back to their home country the night before Francis Day.⁷³ They did not have the chance of congratulating fair makers for proving the United States superiority as a civilized, modern, and progressive nation.

The Native Igorot's tragic example encapsulates the contradictions of the spatial narrative conveyed in Saint Louis and other fairs that followed. Throughout the twentieth century, the United States saw the world's fairs as an opportunity to solidify its cultural hegemony over other nations, perpetuate colonial structures and stereotypes towards Latin American peoples, and engage in imperialist and expansionist endeavors. However, American hegemony was not a solid truth shared by every participating social group in the fairs. In fact, representations of colonized nations in the fairs helps us understand the ways that intellectual elites find paths to contestation within hegemonic structures. Through architecture design, displays, and spatial arrangement, foreign nations challenged power structures and conveyed their own interests and political demands.

Francisco Aguiar's building had played an important diplomatic role before its pieces were taken back to Rio de Janeiro and rebuilt in 1906. For the next decades in Rio, the Monroe Palace housed important governmental institutions, events, and international conferences. First, still in 1906, it will host the Third Pan-American Conference, where its name will be formally changed to Monroe Palace. Later, in 1922, after housing the National Parliament for almost a decade, it served as the Administration Building for the Rio de Janeiro 1922 World's Fair. As we will see in Chapter 2, in the 1920s, the educated elites who still hoped to understand what it

⁷³ *The St. Louis Republic*, December 02, 1904.

meant to be Brazilian shifted their discourse of national ideology to embrace elements of colonial architecture as the only truthful and nationally original Brazilian style. The main language and spatial narrative of the Rio 1922 World's Fair encapsulated this transitional national identity. Chapter 2 examines this shift and demonstrates how Brazilian elites managed to dictate the main language of the only world's fair that took place in the country, inverting the symbolic power dynamics between Brazil and the United States through architecture, symbolic arrangement of the fair, and the built environment. The chapter will also investigate the resulting national narrative after this transitional moment. Interestingly enough, the idea of Brazilian nation-hood in the 1930s was very different from everything that the early twentieth-century elites showcased in Chicago, Saint Louis, and Rio. A completely reinvented Brazil will portray itself in the New York 1939 World's Fair.

CHAPTER 2

A NATION OF “GRIT AND PLUCK:” BRAZIL BETWEEN CULTURAL TRADITION AND MODERNITY

During the first half of the twentieth century, Brazil’s participation in some of the world’s fairs drove intellectual elites to identify the social and economic contradictions that needed to be obscured so that the country could be recognized as a modern civilization. After the Saint Louis fair, statecraft agents promoted brutal urban renovations in Rio de Janeiro to transform the city into a republican capital of progress and forget its colonial past. Progress, however, was much more dependent on tradition than those agents realized in the beginning of the century. Before fully embracing a narrative of nationhood that focused on the future, Brazilian intellectual elites had to invent a national tradition based on the colonial art and architecture that they hoped could convey the republican national sentiment. As this chapter will demonstrate, if the Rio de Janeiro 1922 World’s Fair embodied the once-forgotten colonial past as the key to Brazilian national uniqueness, the New York 1939 World’s Fair represented a new fabric of Brazilian nationhood that relied on the promising future of the country.

In the beginning of the century, American politicians and diplomats soon heard about the plans for reforming Rio’s urban landscape. In a special correspondence to *The Globe-Democrat* (CITY) newspaper in September 1903, American writer and diplomat Charles Pepper made public some of his observations during his visit to Brazil earlier that year. In discussing some of the specific strategies the Brazilian government adopted to overcome economic distress and improve internal infrastructure, he argued that “Grit and pluck are not alone for the United States

of North America. They have the same qualities in the United States of Brazil.” Pepper pointed to Rio de Janeiro’s urban development as an instance of modernizing progress:

I learned something of these matters while crossing the bay to take the railway which clammers by cogs up the steep mountain sides to Petropolis. When this ride is taken for the first time it is easy to understand why artists, poets, travelers, and even Jaded tourists go into rhapsodies over the green mountains and the blue waters and call Rio the grandest spot in the world. (...)

Further, he [my Brazilian companion] told me what the proposed harbor improvements are. They will be quite extensive and also expensive. (...)

(...) The big city, which in reality is a group of cities on the hillsides and in the hollows between them, is going to have more air to breathe. Broad streets, almost parks, are to be opened from the waterfront back to the congested quarters. It is the kind of municipal progress that takes money and makes the taxpayers nervous but it has to come, and the work of tearing down old buildings and widening the thoroughfares is soon to begin.⁷⁴

Since 1808, with the arrival of the Royal Family, Rio de Janeiro had become increasingly recognized as the capital of an overseas empire. In her article published in 1992, historian Margarida de Souza Neves, dealt with Rio’s development as an allegory of the nation.

Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the city hosted important national institutions like the National Library, the Fine Arts School, and the Brazilian Academy of Literature. It also housed the headquarters of important newspapers like *Jornal do Brasil* and *O País*. The presence of those institutions and offices gave the city the title of *cidade capital* and “Brazil’s heart”.⁷⁵

Neves uses the notion of *cidade capital*⁷⁶ to understand Rio de Janeiro as,

above all, a modern construction and somehow an allegory of power. This seems to occur as the reformulated cities assume a dimension of representation of a project, in this case,

⁷⁴ Charles Pepper, “Grit and Pluck Traits of Brazil,” Saint Louis Global-Democrat. August 10, 1903.

⁷⁵ Margarida de Souza Neves, “Brasil, acertai vossos ponteiros” In: Museu de Astronomia e Ciências Afins, *Brasil, acertai os vossos ponteiros* (Rio de Janeiro: MAST/CNPq, 1992), 56, <https://www.gov.br/mcti/pt-br/rede-mcti/mast/imagens/publicacoes/1991/brasil-acertai-vossos-ponteiros.pdf>.

⁷⁶ Giulio Carlo Argan originally conceptualized the notion in his work on baroque European cities of the seventeenth century. The concept of *cidade capital* also underlies Neves’ work. See: Giulio Carlo Argan, *l’Europe des capitales* (Genebra: Albert Skira Ed., 1984) *apud* Margarida de Souza Neves, “Brasil, acertai vossos ponteiros,” 58.

a national project. They are no longer closed cities to present themselves as open organisms and articulators of a given idea of the whole.⁷⁷

The changes that lasted between 1903 and 1906 demonstrated the efforts of state agents – from hygienists and intellectuals to engineers and politicians – to formulate an image of Rio de Janeiro consistent with the republican national project and the fundamental ideas of order and progress. In his testimony, Charles Pepper referred to urban renovations that Mayor Pereira Passos and his team of engineers planned for Rio in the early twentieth century. The once imperial city had its streets widened for the construction of distinguished buildings that were neoclassical in grandeur, yet eclectic in their entirety. Mixture and plurality were the main elements of the Brazilian republic to be showcased before other civilized nations.

⁷⁷ Margarida de Souza Neves, “Brasil, acertai vossos ponteiros,” 58.



Figure 10: Rio Branco Avenue, former Central Avenue, after Pereira Passos' urban reforms based on Paris as a model city. In the background, the Monroe Palace 1920c. Instituto Moreira Salles.

However, as Margarida Neves insists, the renovations were just a new attire for the colonial city that hid its contradictions, both in the urban landscape and the social mindset, beneath the new Parisian facades of the Central Avenue and the city harbors.⁷⁸ The concept of modernity attributed to the urban planning of Rio de Janeiro in the early decades of the twentieth century did not necessarily involve structural changes in the market dynamics of the former colony. Above that, the defining factor underpinning the reformations was the imposition – and maintenance – of the order. Symbolic and physical violence were part of Pereira Passos' “knock-it-down” policy and the new authoritarian posture of the city that forcibly pushed to the

⁷⁸ Margarida de Souza Neves, “Brasil, acertai vossos ponteiros,” 60.

peripheries those that did not conform with the new political project. Charles Pepper's prediction of the soon-to-be renovations as a "work of tearing down old buildings" became a tough reality for less privileged social groups in Rio.

Following the American model, the new political project grew on federalist principles: states, as autonomous entities, determined the political directions of the country. As the former heart of the Portuguese empire and now the Federal District, Rio de Janeiro matured as a city that mediated power relations. Although weakened by the change in the political regime in 1889, the capital city was not willing to give up its prominent position in the national political scene. In this sense, urban renovations not only clothed the new republican capital in Parisian aesthetic but symbolized civilizing progress to its citizens and consequently legitimized the maintenance of a hierarchical order. Progress could only be true where order prevailed. In Neves' words,

Led by this thread, though tenuous, many had the illusion of defeating the monster of backwardness. Few realized it [the backwardness] in its fragile reality. "To find order" in this maze of meanings is to rediscover the same old exclusionary and hierarchical logic of colonial society in new forms. However, the grandeur of the reforms causes the permanencies to be forgotten and underlines the discontinuities: the city articulates an efficient discourse of the new, whose subject is the country, metaphorized in its capital.⁷⁹

The efforts to make Rio de Janeiro a modern, civilized, and republican capital city meant more than the state's appreciation of the internal order and the legitimation of the national project in the public imagery. In 1908, a National Exposition was held in Rio in which the most imposing pavilions represented the states of São Paulo and Minas Gerais. The grandeur of these buildings reflected well the new political molds to which the country fit: conventionally, São Paulo and Minas Gerais were the only two states with enough political power to elect presidents throughout the early decades of the republic. The pretext for the exposition was to commemorate

⁷⁹ Margarida de Souza Neves, "Brasil, acertai vossos ponteiros," 63.

the centenary of the opening of Brazilian ports to the foreign market. The exhibits had a pedagogical character regarding the singularities of each Brazilian state in its new federalist formation. Visitors could clearly understand the regional potential of the country and its most striking features. In addition, in the context of foreign policy, the event promoted solid advertising of Brazilian industrial products. Given the country's need to maintain some economic visibility, the intention to participate more actively in upcoming world's fairs was a priority. The 1908 National Exhibition became, therefore, some sort of laboratory to organize the country's catalog of wealth, preparing its participation in the 1910 Exposition in Brussels.⁸⁰

Since renovations in urban morphology had the main purpose of transforming Rio de Janeiro into a capital of progress, these efforts were intimately connected to the enterprise of participating in world's fairs. The objective of a National Exhibition two years after Passos' renovations was not only to organize the country's economic wealth to participate in these great events abroad, but also a way to optimistically point to the signs of modern maturation in the country – including in urban planning. The first exhibition of the kind was held in Rio in 1861, in preparation for the first-ever world's fair that happened in London in the following year. On that occasion, Brazil was still a monarchical regime and any effort to promote a modern national identity abroad was obscured by the reminiscences of a colonial past in the urban, social, and economic realms.⁸¹ After the rise of the republican model in 1889, intellectual elites felt confident in demonstrating the country's potential for progress and modernity, and between the

⁸⁰ Margarida de Souza Neves, *As vitrines do progresso* (Rio de Janeiro: PUC-Rio/FINEP/CNPq, 1986), p. 40.

⁸¹ Ruth Levy, *Entre Palácios e Pavilhões: A Arquitetura Efêmera da Exposição Nacional de 1908* (Rio de Janeiro: EBA-UFRJ, 2008), 67.

first attempt in Chicago and the second in Saint Louis, they were quite successful in reshaping the narrative about the country's identity.



Figure 11: 1908 National Exhibition, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Photo by Augusto Malta, Biblioteca Nacional.

In the 1908 National Exhibition's Official Guide, organizers stated that "The Saint Louis Fair, which was so fruitful to us in practical results and promoted curiosity and interest among the United States and other nations about us [Brazilians], came to wake us up from this sleep in which we lived for so long."⁸² The guide implied that, just like the Monroe Palace, brand new ideas of progress and urban morphology traveled from Saint Louis to Rio de Janeiro and consolidated intellectual elites' willingness to promote a notorious national exhibit. The 1908 National Exhibit was luxurious, unprecedented in its dimensions, and prestigious in its location.

⁸² *Guia da Exposição Nacional do Rio de Janeiro* (Rio de Janeiro: José de Salermo, 1908), 27 Apud Ruth Levy, *Entre Palácios e Pavilhões*, 202.

It prepared the Brazilian capital of progress to host an international exhibition fourteen years later, in celebration of the centenary of the Independence of Brazil. The Rio de Janeiro 1922 World's Fair, or as it was called, Universal Exposition, was the city's debut as a modern republican capital.⁸³

Although the urban changes in Rio started in the late nineteenth century and intensified with Pereira Passos and hygienist Oswaldo Cruz in the first decade of the twentieth century, they persisted over the following administrations. For the preparation of the 1922 Universal Exposition, the reformations culminated in one of the greatest removals in Rio's history: the dismantling of the hill called *Morro do Castelo* (Figure 12). Situated in the central area of the city, the hill was one of the first places in the city to be occupied during colonization. Its removal occurred under the administration of Carlos Sampaio, the mayor appointed by President Epitácio

⁸³ In discussing the title of "universal exposition" attributed to the 1922 Fair and many of these events, Margarida de Souza Neves argues that the universal values of civilized progress were central in determining the scope of the expositions: "(...) These Expositions become universal, even if in the first of them the "universe" is reduced to some countries of Western Europe and the United States: they are universal insofar as these countries are carriers of the values of progress, which by virtue of inexorable logic of internationalized capital, so often accompanied on the new colonial continents by the argument of weapons, would transform the world into a new Empire, legitimated this time, not by the Christianization of the Gentile, but by the values of Civilization." Margarida de Souza Neves, *As vitrines do progresso*, 21.



Figure 12: The Morro do Castelo, or Castelo Hill, being removed in 1922. The world's fair happened where the hill used to exist.
Photo by Augusto Malta, Brasileira Fotografia.

Pessoa in 1920 who also became the president of the Exposition Committee. The Castelo Hill was home to the least privileged sections of Rio's society and had been the target of failed dismantling projects since the late nineteenth century. Carlos Sampaio was entrusted with the double responsibility of dismantling the hill and promoting the Centenary commemoration through the Exposition. Both tasks were part of a larger effort to push Rio de Janeiro into a modern future. According to historian Carlos Kessel,

The expectations surrounding the commemoration of the Centenary of Independence effectively depended on the City Hall's work. The Exposition pavilions - which would host displays of the main products and activities of Brazil and 14 foreign countries - would be built in two adjoining areas, which would extend from the Monroe Palace to the Praça XV market, and [the areas] should be mostly built by landfills from the Castle. As a

confirmation of the interdependence between the two achievements - razing the Castle and [building the] Exposition – responsible for both was the same figure: the mayor.⁸⁴

Hosting an event intended to welcome the western civilized nations promoted Rio de Janeiro as the capital city of progress. The world's fair was a sign of the advances of the Brazilian republic. In Kessel's words, the fair was a *dupla vitrine* (double showcase): it both displayed the country's economic potential to the international community and the wonders of modernity abroad to Brazilians themselves. This “mirror function” was fundamental as it solidified an invented idea of nationhood in the hearts and minds of the Brazilian people.

According to Kessel:

The Exposition would not only have the character of a double showcase, where visitors from abroad would know the richness and potential of the country and where Brazilians would have the opportunity to get in touch with the foreign wonders; the space taken along the sea and the Castle should also be a mirror, where the city and the nation could seek the image they truly wanted, and should project the image of progress, civilization, hygiene and beauty. Day by day, in the bustling year of 1922, Rio de Janeiro watched the daily spectacle of the past represented by the Castle withering into mud through the hydraulic hoses, while over the resulting landfill the palaces and avenues took shape.⁸⁵

This dialogue between past and future highlighted by Kessel shaped the Federal District throughout its drastic urban changes in the first half of the twentieth century. It is important to consider the intentions behind these operations at the level of the social imaginary: Pereira Passos, Carlos Sampaio, and other members of the political and intellectual elite aimed to impose a national project on the public imaginary based on invented traditions. At first, as indicated by Brazil's presence in Saint Louis, such a project sought to reaffirm the European – especially the French – and American cultural heritage in the Brazilian republican identity. Nonetheless, as

⁸⁴ Carlos Kessel, *A vitrine e o espelho: O Rio de Janeiro de Carlos Sampaio* (Rio de Janeiro: Arquivo Geral da Cidade do Rio de Janeiro, 2001), 60.

⁸⁵ Carlos Kessel, *A vitrine e o espelho*, p. 61.

Kessel points out, a “neocolonial outbreak”⁸⁶ gained significant expression throughout the 1920s and redefined the elites’ ideas of nationhood. Immersed in the *geist* (the spirit of the time),⁸⁷ Carlos Sampaio summoned renowned architects to carry out the projects of the buildings for the world’s fair in neocolonial style. The preference for the neocolonial style in both architecture and art during the 1922 Exposition sought in the colonial past what could symbolically and genuinely represent Brazilian art. The effort demonstrated the intention to promote and showcase an identity of Brazil with strong national aspirations, civilized, and culturally unique – a sense of nationhood and cultural identity that could be called *Brasilidade*. Rio de Janeiro itself metaphorically represented this project.

Comparing Rio’s urban development to New York’s in a piece he wrote originally for a Parisian magazine, Carlos Sampaio justified the dismantling of the Castelo Hill with the necessity of impressing the fairgoers. Besides the benefits of razing the Hill to the circulation of people and products around the city, the mayor also pointed to economic, aesthetic, and hygienic reasons.⁸⁸ It would not be wrong to refer to the 1922 World’s Fair as the peak of Rio de Janeiro’s development as a *cidade capital* – and beyond that, the capital of progress. Through gradual remodeling of the artistic and architectural language of the Federal District, authorities sought

⁸⁶ *Ibidem*, 61.

⁸⁷ Historian of language and modern discourse Theo Jung wrote an illuminating piece in 2014 on the use of the German term *Zeitgeist* in political discourse. Historicizing the use of the concept in different languages and contexts, Jung provides an overview of its meanings from temporal legitimacy, where phenomena and people could be considered “in accordance with” the spirit of a time, to historical inevitability, where change is inevitable, and progress of history was inexorable. For the purpose of this research, the idea of *zeitgeist* is distanced from both extreme usages, and it is better understood as the overall intellectual and cultural environment in which elites, during a specific epoch, matured their world views and ideas such as nationhood, urbanization, and modernity. In the 1920s, Brazilian elites disputed their views in the symbolic field of production, and this dispute resulted in a general valorization of cultural traditions as an important step for achieving progress and modernity. For a comprehensive study on different uses of the concept, see Theo Jung, “The Politics of Time: ‘Zeitgeist’ in Early Nineteenth-Century Political Discourse,” *Contributions to the History of Concepts*, vol. 9, n. 1 (2014), pp. 24-49.

⁸⁸ The piece was originally published in the Parisian *Amerique Latine* in 1923 and later published again in Rio’s *Tipografia da Gazeta da Bolsa* in 1925. Carlos Sampaio, “O arrasamento do Morro do Castelo,” *Tipografia da Gazeta da Bolsa* (1925), p. 4 Apud Ruth Levy, *A Exposição do Centenário e o Meio Arquitetônico Carioca no Início dos Anos 1920* (Rio de Janeiro: EBA/UFRJ, 2010), p. 64.

legitimation of the republican model and the consolidation of a cultural identity for the city of Rio de Janeiro as the heart of *Brasilidade*, or the Brazilian nationhood and cultural identity. It is important to acknowledge the existence of many projects of *Brasilidade* that were not significantly promoted by the dominant social groups in the early twentieth century but have solidified over the years in new national narratives. These narratives, like any cultural representation produced by a social group, would come into dispute in the field of symbolic production as they represented distinct projects of the Brazilian national identity. As we will see, disputes over what it means to be Brazilian happened throughout the entire first century of the republican model. What came into dispute in 1922 were ideas of nationhood that both celebrated and rejected the colonial past.

The Rio World's Fair embraced a specific architectural and spatial language that conveyed the dominant group's ideas of Brazil in the 1920s. But that is not to say that those ideas were not contradictory; they came into dispute in the field of symbolic production and resulted in a very ambiguous project of *Brasilidade*. In this project, the clash between tradition and modernity highlighted contradictions of the republican regime and the ongoing process of defining a genuinely national architectural identity for Brazil. In the urban realm, the dismantling of the Castelo Hill and the organization of the world's fair in the Federal District metaphorized this contradiction. The Hill represented the colonial backwardness intellectual elites sought to erase while the fair and its neocolonial architectural language showcased the architects' willingness to promote an original national identity based on the very same past. In 1923, a prestigious journal of architecture highlighted the work of the architects responsible for the Brazilian session of the fair who had the intention of promoting a style that reflected both "the delicate character of our people and the modern architectural tendencies that *will* constitute the

national style.”⁸⁹ The journal seemed to recognize that, although fair organizers decided to adopt the neocolonial style as the official language of the fair, it still represented a transition to future modern tendencies of the national architecture.

A collaboration between many different writers, historians, and intellectuals resulted in a book called *Livro De Ouro* (the Golden Book) published in 1923 that commemorated the Exposition. The almost two-thousand-page long *Livro de Ouro* presented a comprehensive breakdown of Brazil’s historical and cultural maturation, from the beginning of colonization in the 1500s to the modernist movement in the twentieth century. The first part of the book discussed matters of theater, art, music, religion, press, law, literature, architecture. The second described the 1922 Universal Exposition, its organization, buildings, major events, and how it ended. But the *Livro De Ouro* was much more than just about the fair, and the following three parts combined more detailed and specific historical accounts of the country and each of the states represented in the fair.

In discussing the architecture of the exposition and the definition of colonial style, the book argued that Brazilian architects and intellectuals had to dive into this “art of the past that has in it the key to the national tradition, but this art is extensively unknown in its own country, and so vast, that it requires a long campaign of perseverance, of propaganda, and of efforts of investigation.”⁹⁰ It seems right to suggest that promoting the colonial style as the architectural language of the fair was part of an enterprise of inventing a national tradition and winning hearts and minds both of Brazilians and foreigners about a new identity of nationhood based on a

⁸⁹ Emphasis added. “A Exposição Internacional do Centenário,” *Architectura no Brasil*, year II, vol. IV, n. 24, Rio de Janeiro, September 1923, 144.

⁹⁰ *Livro De Ouro Comemorativo do Centenário da Independencia do Brasil e da Exposição Internacional do Rio de Janeiro* (Rio de Janeiro: Anuario do Brasil, Almanak Laemmert, 1923), 284.

modernized past. The book stated that the architecture of the Centenary Exposition “reconstituted the old colonial forms, giving them a new color and new expression. This rebirth that will be the artistic success of the national certamen will also be the first example of Brazilian architecture.”⁹¹ Here, the combination of modernity and tradition becomes clear as architects sought to reaffirm their loyalty to the colonial style while still creating something new and modern out of it.



Figure 13: Rio's 1922 World's Fair, Colonial (North) Entrance. Photo by Augusto Malta, retrieved from the ImagineRio Project. Instituto Moreira Salles.

In this sense, the Centenary Exposition demonstrated that modernity and progress could only be achieved through tradition and heritage. The same prestigious journal that characterized the neocolonial movement as a transitional style in Brazil's architectural journey also

⁹¹ *Livro De Ouro*, p. 284.

acknowledged, in accordance with other press vehicles and foreign opinion, that “the national character of the pavilions whose architecture had been inspired in the motifs of colonial Brazil, constituted the most interesting note of the Centenary Exposition.”⁹² The piece proceeded to describe many of the main constructions of the event, starting with the pavilions representing the national session and their architectural details. Industries, Fishing and Hunting, Aviation, Electricity, Music, and other thriving areas had their own pavilions, situated close to the States pavilion and the Federal District pavilion. Together, these constructions that represented the national exhibit were the first thing visitors saw after entering through the Colonial Entrance (North Entrance) characterized by a very flamboyant colonial arch. The *Architectura no Brasil* journal addressed how successful these buildings were in representing the national character through colonial motifs. In this sense, the architectural language of the world’s fair demonstrated how modernity and the future depended on tradition and the past – here, the colonial past.

The fair was divided in two main sections and two main entrances gave access to the event. The first section, accessed through the Main Entrance (or South Entrance), encompassed the main pavilions of the foreign nations, also called “honor pavilions.” This area was spatially organized by the fair’s main avenue called *Avenida das Nações* (Nations Avenue) that extended from the Monroe Palace to the central area of the fair, the Amusement Park. The second section of the fair, accessed through the Colonial Entrance (or North Entrance), occupied the port zone at the Mauá Square and included pavilions and exhibits about Brazil’s economic prowess. Some foreign nations also constructed auxiliary pavilions to house the industrial exhibits in this area. As the name of the Colonial Entrance suggests, the Brazilian architects responsible for the

⁹² “A Exposição Internacional do Centenário,” *Architectura no Brasil*, year II, vol. IV, n. 24, Rio de Janeiro, September 1923, 143.

national pavilions of this area of the fair were faithful to the colonial style, or to what could be called “modernized colonial” style.⁹³ Foreign nations in the south section of the fair disposed of more autonomy to determine the style and decoration of their pavilions limited by the assigned areas of construction.



Figure 14: *The Avenida das Nações at Rio's 1922 fair. Photo retrieved from the ImagineRio Project. Arquivo Público Mineiro.*

Portugal had one of the most prominent buildings. The Portuguese pavilion of industries was a particularly large two-story construction with an area of 4000 square meters and an 87-meter-long façade. It was one of the few constructions located to the right side of Avenida das Nações, but it was originally intended to be constructed at the Mauá Square along with the other pavilions of industries.⁹⁴ Exceptionally, both the Portuguese pavilion of industries⁹⁵ and the Portuguese honor pavilion were on Avenida das Nações. The building was designed in

⁹³ Relatório dos Trabalhos, vol. 1, 332 Apud Ruth Levy, “A Exposição do Centenário e o meio arquitetônico carioca no início dos anos 1920,” p. 201.

⁹⁴ Ruth Levy (org.), *1922/2012: 90 Anos da Exposição do Centenário* (Rio de Janeiro: Casa12 Projetos & Edições, 2013), 39. No sources consulted for this research mentioned a reasonable explanation for why the Portuguese pavilion ended up separated from the others of industries.

⁹⁵ Some nations had their exhibits divided into two main spaces: pavilions of industries, focusing on industrial prowess and economic development, and honor pavilion, with broader exhibits on the countries’ material culture and national identities.

Portuguese Baroque style, also known as Joanino style in reference to King John V. The style prospered in Portugal during the first half of the eighteenth century, right after the start of mining exploration in Brazil. The wealth of the exploration impacted the architecture of the country, and new constructions reflected John V's ambition of copying Roman constructions. The choice of the Joanino style for the pavilion of industries emphasized Portugal's history of overseas expansion and colonization, and linked Brazil's successful modernization to a Portuguese inherited tradition. If the colonial past offered the key to a uniquely Brazilian modernizing tradition, Portugal claimed part in this process of modernization of Brazil by bringing to the exposition a strong and Joanino representation of the country.



Figure 15: Portuguese pavilion of industries at the Rio's 1922 fair. Picture retrieved from <https://restosdecoleccion.blogspot.com/>.

The official publication by the Exhibition Committee entitled *A Exposição* reveals how the fair organizers perceived the foreign pavilions as contributing to the event's objectives. In describing Argentina's participation, the publication suggested that the neighboring country did not have its own style, which justified the Argentine architect Alexandre Christophersen's choice to design the pavilion in Neoclassic style. In the piece, the Exhibition Committee claimed that "when there is no style unique to the country that translates the national sentiment, as it occurs with us, this [the Neoclassic style] is undoubtedly the best criterion to be adopted in terms of architecture, so that the latter is not subordinated to representative formulas that are foreign to the country's traditions."⁹⁶ Contradictory, Brazilian intellectual elites were inventing a national tradition based on colonial art and architecture that could possibly convey the republican national sentiment. They acknowledged, however, that this invented tradition would require a lot of effort to become a solid idea in the public imagery.

In a different direction, the United States main pavilion, located on Avenida das Nações, was intended to be a permanent home for the American Embassy in Rio after the event, and therefore, differently from other foreign pavilions, it had to conform with the area's urban organization and the overall architectural language of the fair. Since colonial motifs and style became the language through which Brazil represented its progress and modern character, the American architect Frank Packard responsible for the building's design hoped to approximate its creation from the so-called Brazilian tradition, consequently inverting the power relation once represented in Chicago and Saint Louis through architecture and the built environment: this time,

⁹⁶ "O Pavilhão Argentino," *A Exposição de 1922*, n. 12-13, Rio de Janeiro, 1923.

Brazil dictated the rules, and the American pavilion could not show the same pomposity it had previously shown in American fairs.

However, as historian Ruth Levy suggests, the American tradition was still prominent in the construction and somehow managed to overcome the limitation of the imposed colonial style.⁹⁷ Levy compares the pavilion with Boston's Public Library and attributes the renaissance aspect of the building to the Chicago School. The American honor pavilion had 2000 square meters of area – it is worth noting how small it was compared to the Portuguese pavilion of industries – and it was made of bricks and cement with gray granite from Rio decorating details like windows sills. The ornamentation reflected the architectural language of the fair with colonial motifs, arches, and tiles. The pavilion also had a prominent belt course and cornices. Behind the building, two other temporary pavilions, one with 300 square meters and other with 700 square meters of area, were erected to respectively showcase American commodities and to display a film about the industrial development and natural resources of the country. Lastly, a pavilion of industries, a construction made of steel joined the industrial section of the fair.

⁹⁷ Ruth Levy, *A Exposição do Centenário e o meio arquitetônico carioca no início dos anos 1920*, 216.

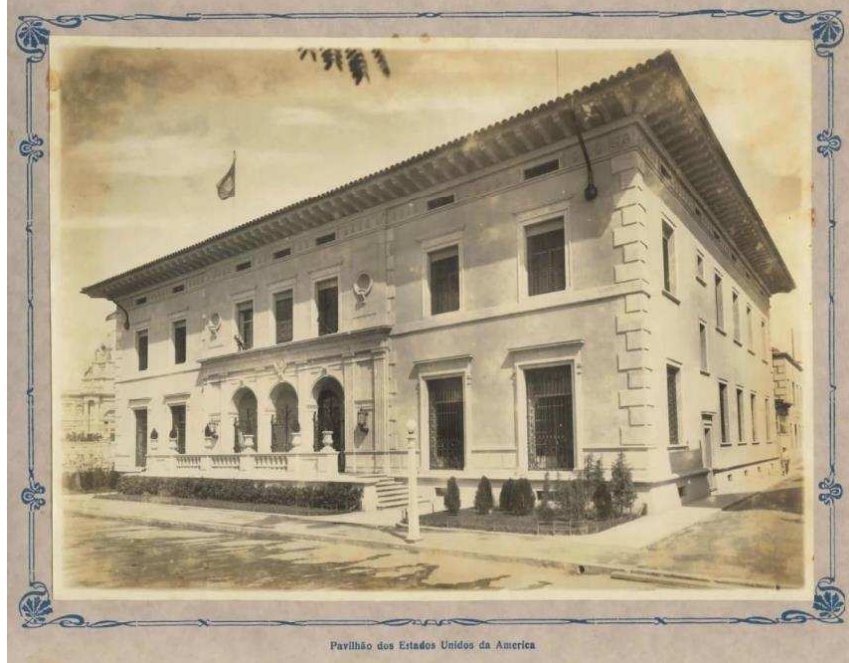


Figure 16: The American pavilion at Rio's 1922 fair. Photo retrieved from the ImagineRio Project. Arquivo Público Mineiro.

The official guide of the United States' participation in the 1922 Exposition emphasized the importance of the event as a symbol of the friendly relations between the U.S. and Brazil. The American Committee suggested that the participation offered “a great opportunity to kindly reciprocate not only for Brazil’s participation in the Centenary of Independence of the United States and other national expositions, but also to demonstrate profound sentiment of friendship between both countries, through the century of independence, that the Exposition celebrates.”⁹⁸ The Guide also emphasizes that the United States was the first to recognize the Brazilian republic, as well as Brazil was the first nation to recognize the Monroe Doctrine. While Brazil’s participation in Saint Louis World’s Fair in 1904 reinforced the ideas of the Monroe Doctrine and sought to erase the colonial past from the narrative, in 1922 the architectural landscape and

⁹⁸ Comissão dos Estados Unidos da América, *A Participação dos Estados Unidos da América na Exposição do Centenário da Independência do Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro: Typographia Leuzinger, 1923), 23.

the spatial narrative of the Exposition, to some extent, reapproximated Brazil from an inherited artistic and cultural tradition from Europe and the very same past once obscured in Saint Louis.⁹⁹

Brazilian and American narratives of nationhood in dispute during the 1922 World's Fair had a legacy in the built environment of the city of Rio. The spatial narrative of the fair indicated a strong political proximity between Brazil and the United States, yet with a new emphasis on what makes Brazil unique in face of other modern nations. Brazilian elites' search for a modernizing tradition that embraced the colonial past encouraged the American elites to reinforce the Monroe Doctrine and a solid relationship between the Americas through their participation in the fair. Nonetheless, as a result of an international trend of industrial development and modernization that affected most of the western nations, the winning narrative about *Brasilidade* based on the colonial past was soon to be replaced again. In 1952, the American Office of Foreign Buildings Operation (FBO) hired the architectural firm Harrison and Abramovitz to design the new Embassy in Rio. The former pavilion was therefore demolished, and the new thirteen-floor building "was designed in this modern architectural style, which was seen as an expression of unique American ideals."¹⁰⁰ As we will see in Chapter 3, these ideals took over Brazil's cultural landscape and urban development during the 1950s and reached an apex with the transfer of the Federal District to a newly inaugurated, modernized city of Brasilia.

⁹⁹ It is worth noting the centrality of the Monroe Palace in this celebration. Housing the Federal Chamber of Deputies since 1914, the building was designated as the Bureau of the Executive Committee of the Centenary Exposition in 1922. With the Exposition main entrance located right on the palace's front yard, the building was perfectly incorporated in the event. Argentina's pavilion was located just across the street and less than fifty meters away from the Monroe Palace. The American pavilion, in turn, was the closest building to the Entrance and the Monroe Palace after Argentina's. In 1922, the American politician Charles Hughes donated a monument to Brazil called *Amizade Entre os Povos* (Friendship Between the People) in celebration of the centenary of Brazilian independence and of Brazilian-American friendly relations. The monument was reinaugurated on July 4, 1942, in front of the former American pavilion and by then the house of the United States Embassy. The public square in which the monument was reinaugurated is called Fourth of July Square.

¹⁰⁰ U.S. Embassy & Consulates in Brazil, "The Consulate General of the United States of America in Rio de Janeiro," <https://br.usembassy.gov/embassy-consulates/riodejaneiro/>.

The transition to this new stage of modernity and the new ideals of *Brasilidade* started as early as the 1930s. With the coup d'état by Getúlio Vargas in 1937, the senate was shut down and the Monroe Palace emptied. For nine years, Brazil had no legislative power, reflecting the imposition of the authoritarian regime called *Estado Novo* (or New State). While the Monroe Palace was empty of significance and people, two years after the coup, Brazilian elites were back in the United States to represent their unique ideals of *Brasilidade* in another world's fair. This time, the stage was New York City.

Forgetting the past: Nationalism, industrialism, and modernism in the “New Brazil”

South and Central America are preparing to play a prominent role in the \$150,000,000 New York World's Fair in 1939. Every one of the Latin-American countries has signified its intention to participate in the Fair (...) All the Central American republics have taken space and are considering a proposal to present a joint, Pan-American exhibit.

– Gohnny Johns, Special World's Fair Writer. June 1938.¹⁰¹

During the authoritarian regime of Getúlio Vargas, Brazil participated in another important world's fair.¹⁰² In 1930, Getúlio Vargas had taken the power by a coup d'état, allegedly against the old, bloody, and oligarchical politics, in concert with sectors of the military class. He proclaimed that the movement rose “to reacquire liberty, to restore the purity of the republican regime, for the national reconstruction.”¹⁰³ Although new elections were expected for 1938, Vargas led a second coup d'état in November of 1937 and established a state of siege that interrupted the political and legal systems and suspended the heated electoral debates. The

¹⁰¹ Johns, Gohnny. “International Phases of the New York World's Fair.” *World Affairs*, vol. 101, no. 2 (June 1938), pp. 91-94.

¹⁰² According to Marshall Eakin, similarly to Franklin Delano Roosevelt, “Vargas was a conservative modernizer, a member of the elite who recognized the need to accommodate new political and economic forces into the old system. Although firmly rooted in the old Brazil, Vargas acted as the midwife for a new Brazil.” Marshall Eakin, *Brazil: the once and future country* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 42-43.

¹⁰³ Getúlio Vargas, *A Nova Política do Brasil, Volume I: da Aliança Liberal às Realizações do Primeiro Ano de Governo, 1930-1931* (Rio de Janeiro: José Olympio Press, 1938), 63.

Estado Novo, or New State, had begun.¹⁰⁴ In 1939, the New York World's Fair brought a futuristic theme by focusing on the "world of tomorrow," as the official name of the event suggested; the past and narratives of common origin were no longer at the core of the fair makers' strategies.¹⁰⁵ Since the First World War and the uncertainties followed by the Great Depression, the future was a common topic. In the world's fair, promises of an inventive, technological, peaceful, and comfortable future brought hope to thousands of visitors every day. The 1939 World's Fair was a promise itself.

After 1929, the global market crisis affected Brazil's economics and overall self-representation to foreign nations. While coffee and other commodities were the predominant exportation products in nineteenth-century Brazil, historian Thomas Skidmore points out that the "specter of overproduction and the accompanying problem of violent price fluctuations had become acute" in the following century.¹⁰⁶ As part of the government's solution to Brazil's agricultural dependence, Vargas purchased and burned huge quantities of coffee surpluses, paving the path to an overwhelming state interventionism and rampant promotion of national industrialization. In the late 1930s, coffee could still represent Brazil; but it could no longer dictate its economic potential. In the New York fair, a modern, industrial, and future-based nation would present itself to the United States and broader international community.

The architects of the Brazilian pavilion in New York were Lucio Costa and Oscar Niemeyer. At that time, both considered themselves heirs to the principles of Le Corbusier and to

¹⁰⁴ Thomas E. Skidmore, *Politics in Brazil, 1930-1964: An Experiment in Democracy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), 30.

¹⁰⁵ Due to high costs and low profits of the fair in its first year, the New York World's fair remained open for a second season in 1940. In this work, we focus in particular on the 1939 season of the fair, since the 1940 season shifted its main theme to world's piece as a response to the start of the Second World War.

¹⁰⁶ Thomas E. Skidmore, *Politics in Brazil, 1930-1964*, 43.

the “New Architecture.”¹⁰⁷ Until the 1920s, Lucio Costa was among the school of architects that advocated for the neocolonial style as a representation of Brazilian domestic architecture.

Brazilian architect Zilah Quezado Deckker suggests, however, that Costa changed his mind in 1930 “when he believed he saw a parallel between the functionalist principles of Le Corbusier (1887–1965) and the constructional honesty of colonial architecture.”¹⁰⁸ Lucio Costa's intellectual shift reflects a broader change in the Brazilian intellectual environment and the ideas of nationhood that happened between the decades of 1920 and 1930. Costa's and Niemeyer's building in the 1939 fair represented a new understanding of modern architecture and a broader shift in the country's aesthetic values. Most importantly, it represented a new fabric of *Brasilidade* that relied on the promising future of the country and obscured its colonial past.

The pavilion gave an indication of the overall political and economic settings of the time: programs of national development, increasing nationalism, preliminary projects of industrialization and intense urban changes in major cities came to dominate the 1930s and following decades. The complexity of Getúlio Vargas' regime solidified an image of Brazil as a developing, independent nation that departed from its colonial past and increasingly occupied a power position among nations of Latin America. At the same time, however, it negotiated the hegemony of the United States and its influence in Brazil's cultural, social, and urban environments in face of turbulent conflicting ideologies world-wide. As Lucio Costa and other members of the intellectual elite imagined nationhood, they represented Brazil by the use of reinforced concrete, functionalism as an architectural principle, self-sufficiency, and modern

¹⁰⁷ Lucio Costa wrote in 1936 in defense of a functionalist and technical architecture that responds to social demands of its own time and reality, pointing Le Corbusier as a good instance of originality and fidelity to his time. See: Lucio Costa, “Razões da Nova Arquitetura,” *Revista da Diretoria de Engenharia da Prefeitura do Distrito Federal*, vol. 3, no. 1 (January, 1936).

¹⁰⁸ Zilah Quezado Deckker, *Brazil Built: The Architecture of the Modern Movement in Brazil* (New York: Spon Press, 2001), 11.

constructions like skyscrapers – some of them much based in contemporary American buildings and Frank Lloyd Wright’s ideas.¹⁰⁹ Not everyone, however, was happy about these new values.

The shifting intellectual environment in the new regime was not homogenous and again new ideas faced opposition. In 1930, the newly organized Ministry of Education and Health appointed Lucio Costa Director of the *Escola Nacional de Belas Artes* (National School of Beaux-Arts) to supplant José Mariano, an important neocolonial advocate. The appointment spoke to the new values and ideas of modernization and nationalism the Vargas’ regime stood for: in architecture and urbanism, constructions should present originality and faithfulness to the modern national character. Traditionally, in order to distance Brazil from Portugal after Independence in 1822, the *Belas Artes* formed students in accordance with the international trends of architecture and the French *Beaux-Arts* movement. Since 1914, however, as we previously discussed in this chapter, architects, art critics, and engineers started to advocate for the neocolonial style as a radical alternative that solidifies a national identity in face of international trends.¹¹⁰ Still during the 1930s, some architects saw the style as the most modernistic while still faithful to Brazilian original domestic architecture from colonial times. Lucio Costa disagreed.

When Costa assumed the directorship, he reformed the institution’s architectural education and created a Functional course that formed students under the principles of Le Corbusier and what he called “New Architecture.”¹¹¹ Professors of the *Escola* stood against Costa’s ideas and opposed his administration. In the core of this dispute of ideas, representations

¹⁰⁹ Zilah Quezado Deckker, *Brazil Built*, 13.

¹¹⁰ José Mariano and Ricardo Severo were important examples of Neo-Colonial advocates. See Zilah Quezado Deckker, *Brazil Built*, 9.

¹¹¹ Zilah Quezado Deckker, *Brazil Built*, 15.

of Brazilian nationhood battled for legitimation. The strong opposition led Costa to resign in September of 1931, and students protested in response. In the following month, during the heated revolt that claimed the students' right to study under modernist professors, these students, the future generation of Brazilian architects, would encounter the American architect Frank Lloyd Wright.¹¹²

The students were a delegation from some seven hundred or more students of the Brazil Belles Artes, out on what they called (borrowing from us) a 'strike.' The institution was modeled by and on the French, of course. Latins for the Latins. The Beaux Arts professors of the [Escola de] Belles Artes had ruled me out altogether by banning my books and forbidding magazines on modern architecture in their library, together with all of my kind. The youths were a delegation sent by the student body to ask me for help.¹¹³

Invited by the Pan American Union to represent the United States as a judge in a drawing competition for a memorial to Columbus, Wright arrived in Rio de Janeiro in October of 1931 in the company of diplomats and the Finnish American architect Eliel Saarinen. The students from the *Escola de Belas Artes* waited for them in the harbor early in the morning. Upon their arrival and the immediate encounter with the future architects, Saarinen told Wright he should be attentive: "This is a revolutionary country – first thing you know SSSKKK [he drew a finger across his throat] – and it will be all over with you."¹¹⁴ Most likely, Saarinen's words and gestures referred to the coup d'état by Getúlio Vargas that had taken place eleven months earlier. The architect's understanding of Brazil had nothing to do with that picturesque past once represented in Saint Louis: in face of the omnipresence of a new future in 1931, that was a forgotten past.

¹¹² Frank Lloyd Wright, *An Autobiography* (London: Faber & Faber Limited, 1932), 447.

¹¹³ Frank Lloyd Wright, *An Autobiography*, 447.

¹¹⁴ Frank Lloyd Wright, *An Autobiography*, 447.

Wright took the risk. The architect supported the students in their fight for a modernistic education to the extent that he could. He wrote extensive articles about the cause for two of the most important newspapers in Brazil; offered inspiring speeches in the *Belas Artes* building, in the Architects Society of Brazil, and in the National Academy; ultimately, he brought the matter to the attention of important intellectuals from the field. In his autobiography, Wright seems to have overattributed the students' victories to his support. When told that the students were able to secure their demands, Wright said "The students of the Belles Artes were free to grow up to serve the future of Brazil!"¹¹⁵

In the 1939 New York World's Fair, the future that Wright referred to was at display. Vargas' second coup in 1937 solidified an authoritarian, nationalist, and economically interventionist state to which modernization was a principle. According to Skidmore, it was during the *Estado Novo* that Vargas "increased the appeal to Brazilian sentiments of economic nationalism. (...) The practical effect of economic nationalism was to create support for policies of industrialization as well as increased state intervention in the economy."¹¹⁶ In opposition to the attractive environment presented in 1904 during the Saint Louis fair, the pavilion in 1939 also embodied anti-foreign-capital sentiments characteristic of Vargas' regime. According to Marshall Eakins, however, until the 1950s, the much-valued industrial development was "somewhat illusory,"¹¹⁷ and therefore, much more about the future that elites imagined than it was about the present or the past.

¹¹⁵ Frank Lloyd Wright, *An Autobiography*, 450.

¹¹⁶ Thomas E. Skidmore, *Politics in Brazil, 1930-1964*, 45.

¹¹⁷ Marshall Eakins points out that "The movement toward economic diversification built on industrialization using government intervention began in these years [1930s], eventually climaxing in the massive industrialization and intervention of the 1970s." Marshall Eakins, *Brazil*, 219-220.

Imagining the future: *Brasilidade* and tropical modernism in the 1939 pavilion

The art historian Aleca LeBlanc described the Brazilian pavilion in the New York World's Fair as "tropical modernism."¹¹⁸ Its representation of *Brasilidade* "and its contents were a strategically orchestrated combination of what were presumed to be universal forms and national images in an attempt to represent Brazil as both tropical and modern, proving that these terms were not mutually exclusive."¹¹⁹ The pavilion, however, was more than that; tropical modernism was only a piece of a larger puzzle of identity. The design of the building and its exhibits not only presented stereotypes of Brazil's exotic environment and culture, but they also mobilized a futuristic perspective of Brazil's nationhood to negotiate the United States' cultural hegemony and challenge power structures and colonialism.

By promoting an image of an economically self-sufficient Brazil that embraced and took advantage of its tropical reality, the pavilion also made it possible for the United States to strengthen its cultural relations with the southern neighbor during times of problematic and conflicting ideologies. As the fascist and Nazi threats increased in Europe, U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt needed to ensure cultural and political hegemony in Latin America, and Brazil was strategically important for the enterprise.¹²⁰ The New Deal and the Good Neighbor Policies were influential to Vargas' regime and the adoption of diplomatic politics. The United States, as a paramount commercial and political partner, negotiated stereotypes and images of *Brasilidade* with Vargas' *Estado Novo* that could better suit both countries' interests and demands. On one hand, while American popular audiences had access to these stereotyped

¹¹⁸ Aleca LeBlanc, "Building the Tropical World of Tomorrow: The Construction of *Brasilidade* at the 1939 New York World's Fair," *Hemisphere: Visual Culture of the Americas* 2, no. 1 (2009): 26-45.

¹¹⁹ Aleca LeBlanc, "Building the Tropical World of Tomorrow," 32.

¹²⁰ Daryle Williams, *Culture Wars in Brazil: The First Vargas Regime, 1930-1945* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), 199-200.

imageries of Brazil through personalities like the singer Carmen Miranda and the Walt Disney Studios Brazilian character Zé Carioca, Vargas' regime tried to shape foreign understandings of Brazilian cultural identity through the New York World's Fair and other international expositions.¹²¹

Lucio Costa and Oscar Niemeyer's pavilion was an L-shaped, two-story structure of reinforced concrete with particularly small size and mass (Figure 17).¹²² In contrast to the Saint Louis pavilion in 1904, which embraced monumentality as a synonym of greatness, the New York pavilion in 1939 embodied principles of simplicity and functionalism that spoke to Le Corbusier's modernist ideas. *Brisés-Soleil*, a common feature to the International Style, were deployed in the building's design to help regulate heat and internal lightning, covering most part of the upper floor of the longest elevation. Along with the *brises-soleil*, glass walls helped illuminate the inside of the pavilion. Visitors could either walk straight to the ground floor and find a beautiful coffee bar, a dance floor, and a restaurant connected to a tropical garden, or go through a curved ramp to access the exhibitions on the second floor.

¹²¹ *Ibid*, 201.

¹²² The Brazilian Pavilion stood right next to the French building, which was evidently greater in size and mass. Lucio Costa wrote about the challenge of designing a pavilion so close to the monstrous French representation: "In the particular case of the pavilion, the pre-existence of the neighboring construction had to be considered in the first place. Hence the distance to the extreme limit of the ground and the adopted principles of light and open, in order to stand out by the contrast instead of being completely dominated by the compact, heavy, taller and much larger mass of the French pavilion." Translated by the author. Lucio Costa in *Direção da Representação do Brasil na Feira Mundial de Nova York de 1939, Pavilhão do Brasil: Feira Mundial de Nova York de 1939* (New York, 1939).



Figure 17: Brazil's pavilion at the New York 1939 world's fair.

On the first floor, to the left of the entrance, coffee officially welcomed the visitors as the most immediate product in sight. Beside the coffee bar, one could find a diverse showcase of coffee beans and photographs of the process of coffee making. The coffee bar also produced Brazilian tea, which became very popular among fair visitors. Among the things that called most attention, a drawing on a glass wall immediately to the right of the entrance compared the overlapping maps of Brazil and the United States and demonstrated the richness that both countries had in common: large territories.¹²³ Every detail in the pavilion represented Brazil as the greatest country in South America and, therefore, as powerful as the United States.

¹²³ First Floor Plan and Photo of the Maps in Direção da Representação do Brasil na Feira Mundial de Nova York de 1939, *Pavilhão do Brasil: Feira Mundial de Nova York de 1939* (New York, 1939).

As LeBlanc suggests, this comparison was much more of a fantasy than reality in the end of the 1930s since the political rhetoric in Brazil during Vargas' regime relied on a strong sense of nationalism and responded to the Good Neighbor policy of Franklin Roosevelt.¹²⁴ Brazil, however, also challenged the United States' hegemony over the rest of the continent. The overlapping maps showed that the United States had 3.026.789 square miles, while Brazil had 3.285.319 square miles, proving that Brazil had an even bigger territory.¹²⁵ The unsaid rhetoric behind this fact was insinuated that the United States were not the biggest country in the continent and put its political, economic, and cultural dominance in question.

Still, the restaurant's ground floor had an open patio with a tropical garden, in which species of birds found in Brazil were displayed in an aviary. The lagoon had water lilies, lily pads, and tropical fishes (Figure 18). The official publication of the Brazilian fair organizers stated that "the pavilion's garden called the attention of the visitors due to its original design," and "its collection of exotic aquatic plants."¹²⁶ LeBlanc points out that these elements together "tempered the austerity of the modern architecture to convey a sense of its tropical modernism."¹²⁷ The pavilion's design, its interior decoration, and exhibits conveyed stereotypes of *Brasilidade* without undervaluing the country's modernizing potential.

¹²⁴ Aleca LeBlanc, "Building the Tropical World of Tomorrow," 33.

¹²⁵ Photo of the Maps in Direção da Representação do Brasil na Feira Mundial de Nova York de 1939, *Pavilhão do Brasil: Feira Mundial de Nova York de 1939* (New York, 1939).

¹²⁶ Direção da Representação do Brasil na Feira Mundial de Nova York de 1939, *Pavilhão do Brasil: Feira Mundial de Nova York de 1939* (New York, 1939).

¹²⁷ Aleca LeBlanc, "Building the Tropical World of Tomorrow," 30.



Figure 18: The lagoon and garden on the first floor of the Brazilian building, 1939.

When visitors accessed the second floor through the curved ramp, they encountered an auditorium, one of its walls displaying the names of important Brazilian personalities. The hall in front of the wall was called “The Good Neighborhood Hall,”¹²⁸ and the name was self-explanatory about the relationship between the Vargas’ regime and Roosevelt’s external politics. Along with historical flags of the country and art murals of the modernist Brazilian artist Portinari, a bust of Getúlio Vargas called visitors’ attention, surrounded by the most important ores in Brazil: gold, iron, manganese, chrome, and nickel. Behind the bust, the coat of arms of the republic decorated a curtain. Differently from the Saint Louis pavilion, this one embodied anti-federalist ideas by promoting a more unifying and centralized image of the nation instead of highlighting regional differences. Symbolically, Vargas’ authoritarian regime had burned the

¹²⁸ Second floor plan in Direção da Representação do Brasil na Feira Mundial de Nova York de 1939, *Pavilhão do Brasil: Feira Mundial de Nova York de 1939* (New York, 1939).

state flags on November 27, 1937, at Roosevelt Square in Rio de Janeiro, speaking to the invention of a unified nationhood legitimized by the new Constitution.

The second floor also provided access to a mezzanine, in which products like rubber, Indigenous manufactures, and cattle were displayed. Further, a strong exhibit about Brazil's medical advances and technologies occupied the space, giving special attention to the most futuristic procedures like the X-Ray and sterilization. The curved lines of the mezzanine defined the flow of the exposition. In fact, due to the predominance of curved lines in every wall, ceiling, and plan, the entire building seemed to flow along the exhibited products and materials. Together with the garden, the lagoon, and aviary, the silhouettes of the building gave the visitors a full experience of what the fair makers called tropical modernism.

This time, cupolas and classical ornamentation were not part of the design. Instead, a flat roof, white-colored sober walls, and functional support columns defined the architectural identity of the country.¹²⁹ No direct references to Brazil's colonial past could be found since the principle of honesty and faithfulness to its own time and space dominated the New Architecture language. In Quezado Decker's words, the jury of the competition to define Brazil's pavilion in the New York fair "seemed to have freed themselves of the desire for historical references."¹³⁰ Costa and Niemeyer conveyed principles of the new architectural language that were easily recognizable as contemporary – and therefore, modern – by international audiences.

However, the architects also challenged colonial structures of power imposed by European nations and the United States by combining modern language with original elements

¹²⁹ The Ministry of Education and Health building, the Ministry of Labor, Industry and Commerce building and the Santos Dumont Airport are good examples.

¹³⁰ Zilah Quezado Deckker, *Brazil Built*, 56.

that conveyed Brazilian nationhood in the pavilion's design. The curved lines were the most important feature of the building, and in Costa's own words, their use "directed the whole scheme."¹³¹ The curvilinear forms were a point of confrontation with the formality of Le Corbusier's work, in which straight lines were predominant, indicating Brazil's modernity held singularity in face of international trends. The "sensual" curves represented not only the country's topography but, in Niemeyer's words, "the body of the beloved [Brazilian] women."¹³² This appropriation of stereotypes, combined with universal elements of international modern architecture, provided a sense of *Brasilidade* that relied on the political rhetoric of superiority among Latin American nations.

The exhibits in the pavilion complemented the architecture itself and harmonized with the principles of modernization and national development. According to architect Paul Lester Wiener, responsible for designing the internal decoration of the pavilion, "Together, the showcases and interior configuration are intended to interpret a combination of government dignity and cordiality, and to embody the very character of the "Brazil of Tomorrow, " respecting the traditions from which that future evolves. (...) The architectural style of the internal design and the exhibits compose unity with the style of the building."¹³³

It is important to remember that, similarly to the Saint Louis fair, the New York fair had its own architectural language. It required that buildings assimilated into the fair's main theme

¹³¹ Translated by the author. "O aproveitamento da curva bonita do terreno comandou então todo o traçado." Direção da Representação do Brasil na Feira Mundial de Nova York de 1939, *Pavilhão do Brasil: Feira Mundial de Nova York 1939* (New York, 1939).

¹³² Oscar Niemeyer, *The Curves of Time: The Memoirs of Oscar Niemeyer* quoted in Aleca LeBlanc, "Building the World of Tomorrow," 31.

¹³³ Translated by the author. "Em conjunto, os mostruários e os interiores se propõem interpretar uma sinfonia da dignidade e cordialidade governamental e a traduzir o caráter mesmo do "Brasil de Amanhã ", respeitando as tradições de onde evoluir esse futuro." Direção da Representação do Brasil na Feira Mundial de Nova York de 1939, *Pavilhão do Brasil: Feira Mundial de Nova York de 1939* (New York, 1939).

by obeying specific visual guidelines. However, researchers of the matter are unsure about the imposition of a style to foreign pavilions. To some extent, the Brazilian pavilion still responded to some of these guidelines, which leads us to conclude that Costa and Niemeyer had to simultaneously convey national singularity and embrace the fair's language in their design. The "World of Tomorrow" was represented by a "horizontal, aerodynamic style evocative of speed and technology. Consequently, the visual continuity between each national pavilion was rather surprising at times."¹³⁴

Historian Marco Duranti has investigated how the outbreak of the Second World War disrupted the New York World's Fair on many scales. The original spatial organization of the fair conveyed the *zeitgeist* of the 1930s, showcasing a utopian future based on progress and economic development. As the war persisted in 1940, however, the utopian theme of the "World of Tomorrow" was replaced by the nostalgic theme "Peace and Freedom." Recognizing that the fair was not a static event in time, Duranti suggests that the narrative shift reflected the worry of visitors that the United States would eventually enter the war. Fairgoers demonstrated growing interest in foreign pavilions that represented things from the past instead of the futuristic and worrisome world of tomorrow.¹³⁵ More and more, a dispute between past and future solidified in the symbolic field of production and among western intellectual elites.¹³⁶

In the art historian Robert Rosenblum's words, the New York 1939 World's Fair "succeeded by imagining a future after a decade of depression and scaling those wonders down

¹³⁴ Aleca LeBlanc, "Building the Tropical World of Tomorrow," 37.

¹³⁵ Marco Duranti, "Utopia, Nostalgia, and World War at the 1939-1940 New York World's Fair," *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 41, no. 4 (October 2006), 673-674.

¹³⁶ This research considers Pierre Bourdieu's concepts of "field of symbolic production" and "symbolic power," which would later underlie Roger Chartier's theorizations of collective representations. See Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, trans. Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), 179.

to a manageable size, including millions of trinkets and souvenirs.”¹³⁷ For decades, and maybe centuries, the so-called usable past served to boost patriotism and offer hope, sense of belongingness, and collective memory to western societies. In the end of the decade of 1930, however, for those members of the intellectual elites that mobilized the past in search for answers and moral purpose, the future became what the historian Francis O’Connor calls the usable and tangible future. Discussing the shift in the intellectual elite’s attitude towards the end of the decade, O’Connor states that “the new technocrats promised a future of material plenty for the masses – one which would permit a richer, less onerous, more streamlined life for every citizen.”¹³⁸ Brazilian technocrats, architects, and artists did not fall out of the rule.

In Brazil, participation in the war did not seem as imminent as it seemed in the United States. Brazilian intellectuals were convinced that the future, modernization, and industrial development were the key to a strong sense of national identity. As discussed in the previous chapter, the invention of Brazil’s nationhood in the 1920s sought elements in the colonial past to represent originality, modernity, and cultural traditions. Throughout the 1930s and 1940s, however, scholars, intellectuals, and architects involved with federal institutions of historic preservation rejected the ornamented architectural styles and references to the country’s past. Instead, incipient industrialization and authoritarian nationalism shaped the spirit of the time and prompted elites to look forward to Brazil’s potential for progress.¹³⁹

¹³⁷ Robert Rosenblum, “Remembrance of Fairs Past,” in Queens Museum, *Remembering the Future: The New York World’s Fair From 1939 to 1964* (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 1989), 22.

¹³⁸ Francis O’ Connor, “The Usable Future: The Role of Fantasy in the Promotion of a Consumer Society for Art,” in Queens Museum and Helen A. Harrison, *Dawn of a New Day: The New York World’s Fair, 1939/40* (New York: New York University Press, 1980), 57.

¹³⁹ Stefan Hyman Robock argued that “Government policies until the 1940s were generally passive toward industrial development, but a striking exception was the case of iron and steel.” Stefan Hyman Robock, *Brazil: A Study in Development Progress* (Lexington: D.C. Heath and Company, 1975), 23.

Brazil's pavilion in 1939 conveyed the political, economic, and cultural reality of the country during the 1930s, but most importantly, it invented the nation's future reality of the upcoming decades. As this chapter tried to demonstrate, the Brazilian "usable future" presented in 1939 was not unsubstantiated. Rather, the pavilion represented a more profound domestic shift of aesthetic and national values that Brazil was going through during the Vargas regime. Tropical modernism was part of a larger architectural language embedded in the pavilion's design, as it also challenged the United States' cultural hegemony and colonial structures by appropriating stereotypical ideas of *Brasilidade*. As in 1904, this contestation was intrinsic to the built environment in a fantastic event of rivalry among intellectual elites.

The next chapter, however, tells us the story of how this invented, usable future showcased in 1939 climaxed in "the massive industrialization and intervention of the 1970s."¹⁴⁰ The years that followed Vargas' downfall in 1945 solidified the country's new political identity by which Rio de Janeiro lost its prestige as *cidade capital*, and Brasilia became the new model of urban modernity and national development. The new capital, inaugurated in 1960, was antagonistic to the colonial past on many scales, but more than that, it was antagonistic to any idea of the past altogether. Brasilia was the future. And whatever remained from the colonial, imperial, and republican past should be erased as per the new project of *Brasilidade* – the Monroe Palace itself included.

¹⁴⁰ Marshall Eakin, *Brazil*, 219-220.

CHAPTER 3: HOW THE FUTURE DESTROYED THE PAST: BRASILIA, MODERNIZATION, AND THE OLD PALACE

Since the end of World War II, ideas of *Brasilidade* encapsulated principles of modernization that contrasted with the early twentieth-century ideas of modernity. Increasing nationalistic development, real estate speculation, industrial progress, and new urban ideals resulted in the Monroe Palace's gradual, but violent loss of meaning. With the transfer of the federal district from Rio de Janeiro to Brasilia, intellectual elites solidified a new idea of *Brasilidade* that rejected the country's past. This new *Brasilidade* expressed itself in the construction of Brasilia and the country's pavilion in Brussels during the world's fair of 1958. Combined with the increasing state authoritarianism after the military coup of 1964, futuristic narratives of Brazilian nationhood based on modernization ultimately led to the dismantlement of the Monroe Palace and its historic significance associated with early-twentieth century ideas of *Brasilidade*.

As historian Luiz Bresser Pereira argues, during the war period, Brazil's industrial development was largely dependent on imported equipment. Since warfare efforts forced developed countries to reduce their exports of industrial equipment, the war slowed the pace of Brazilian industrialization.¹⁴¹ With the end of the war, the authoritarian regime of Getúlio Vargas was weakened by its own contradictions. In 1945, sectors of the military forced Vargas to step down. Efforts to rebuild a democratic republic, however, fell short in the long run. After two

¹⁴¹ Luiz Bresser Pereira, *Development and Crisis in Brazil, 1930-1983*. Translation by Marcia Van Dyke (Boulder: Westview Press, 1984), 20-21.

decades, the nationhood based on an invented future imagined in the 1930s reached new levels of nationalism, massive industrialization, authoritarianism, and the so-called progress.

After the end of the Second World War, the prevalent nation-building narrative found its principles in a new idea of modernity that obscured the past represented in Saint Louis and highlighted a new future. In fact, modernization, not modernity, formed the core of this new prevailing narrative. In contrast to the early-twentieth-century notion of modernity, modernization reflected ongoing industrial endeavor, growing urban centers, and integration of Brazil into a global capitalist economy. Architects, intellectuals, and politicians were committed to modernization in the second half of the twentieth century as much as their predecessors were committed to modernity in the early 1900s. As a result of this shift in the elites' prevailing ideas of Brazilian nationhood, the Monroe Palace in Rio de Janeiro suffered a gradual, but violent loss of meaning. After thirty years housing the Federal Senate, the palace lost its prestige and ultimately faced demolition in 1976. This tragic end, this chapter argues, resulted from three decades of increasing nationalistic development, industrial progress, real estate speculation, and the rise of new urban ideals.

The future is now: Postwar Brazil, Brasilia, and economic development

In the 1950s, Brazil's democratic politics were favorable to the expansion of the government's economic role. As economist Stefan Hyman Robock points out, during World War II, Brazil's lack of self-sufficiency to produce the necessary warfare technology created a domestic demand for massive industrialization and modernization.¹⁴² The author suggests that both the Great Depression of 1929 and the war enabled a national consensus about the need for a stronger government interventionism in the economy and for the promotion of a proactive

¹⁴² Stefan Hyman Robock, *Brazil: A Study in Development Progress*, 24.

industrial development. In 1943, recognizing Vargas' ideological proximity with fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, the United States came up with a strategy to assist Brazil in "planning for greater economic self-sufficiency."¹⁴³ The strategy was called Cooke Mission, a high-level technical mission that offered Brazilian policy makers a valuable awareness of options for economic growth. The mission played a significant part in building a sound basis for Brazil's national development.

After that, many other American initiatives were crucial to the Brazilian industrial process. During Dutra's presidency (1946-1951), a new stage of Brazilian-American cooperation began, and largely impacted the economic growth of the following years. In 1951, already during Vargas' new (and this time, elected) administration, a joint Brazil-U.S. commission for development called *Comissão Mista* was established. The commission's work was crucial to create national institutions of economic planning and development, such as Brazil's National Economic Development Bank (BNDE) and PETROBRAS in the area of petroleum exploitation. Government companies had all the necessary support to establish and increase monopoly in many areas, including energy and transportation.

Although uneven in the various industrial sectors, postwar Brazil experienced industrial development like never before. Economist William G. Tyler reminds us that agriculture and exports in the 1950s and early 1960s, largely dominated by coffee, were "heavily discriminated against by the constellation of economic policies."¹⁴⁴ Instead, since the end of Vargas' regime, Brazil imported the necessary equipment to strengthen national industrialization and adopted, as Bresser Pereira calls it, a "rigid system of import controls."¹⁴⁵ This new system facilitated

¹⁴³ Stefan Hyman Robock, *Brazil: A Study in Development Progress*, 25.

¹⁴⁴ William G. Tyler, *The Brazilian Industrial Economy* (Lexington: D.C. Heath and Company, 1981), 4.

¹⁴⁵ Luiz Bresser Pereira, *Development and Crisis in Brazil*, 23.

importation of machinery and raw materials on very low prices while creating exchange barriers to the importation of consumer goods. As a result, national producers benefitted from a stronger governmental participation in the country's economic planning and growth. Interventionism, however, would achieve its peak as an economic policy in the following years.

To solidify industrial development through federal interventionism was on top of President Juscelino Kubitschek's agenda. JK established a strong automobile industry in Brazil. During his administration, between 1956 and 1960, the country produced 133,078 vehicles, 90 percent of which stayed within national borders.¹⁴⁶ Kubitschek's government policy and overall attitude towards the idea of progress and modernization were key elements to the consolidation of the nation-building narrative that underpinned the military dictatorship a few years later. In Bresser Pereira's words, "his unlimited optimism was a direct negation of the colonial inferiority complex, particularly in relation to people of Anglo-Saxon origin, that was then widespread in Brazil."¹⁴⁷ Kubitschek's famous plan of economic development called "50 years in 5" set the tone for the administration and culminated in the construction of the most important representation of the new, modern, and developed country – the city of Brasília.

In 1955, two years before Lúcio Costa and Oscar Niemeyer won the contest to design the project of Brasília, another Brazilian architect named Sergio Bernardes, often associated with Costa and Niemeyer, won a contest himself to design a new project for the Senate building in Rio (Figure 19). During this period of fierce modernization, Sergio Bernardes was a prominent name within the modernist movement. As historian Ana Luisa Nobre points out, Bernardes' work emphasized metal structures, use of industrial materials like steel, aluminum, and plastic.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁶ Luiz Bresser Pereira, *Development and Crisis in Brazil*, 26.

¹⁴⁷ Luiz Bresser Pereira, *Development and Crisis in Brazil*, 27.

¹⁴⁸ Ana Luisa Nobre, "Brussels World's Fair of 1958: The Brazilian Pavilion," *ARQTexto*, n. 16 (Porto Alegre: 2010), 101.

Although a well praised project, the architect never implemented it. The idea of dismantling the Monroe Palace to raise a new, modernist building for the Senate in its place, in Nobre's words, "was ran over by the '*meta-síntese*' [the metaphor and synthesis] of JK's administration – the construction of Brasília – and it did not become reality."¹⁴⁹

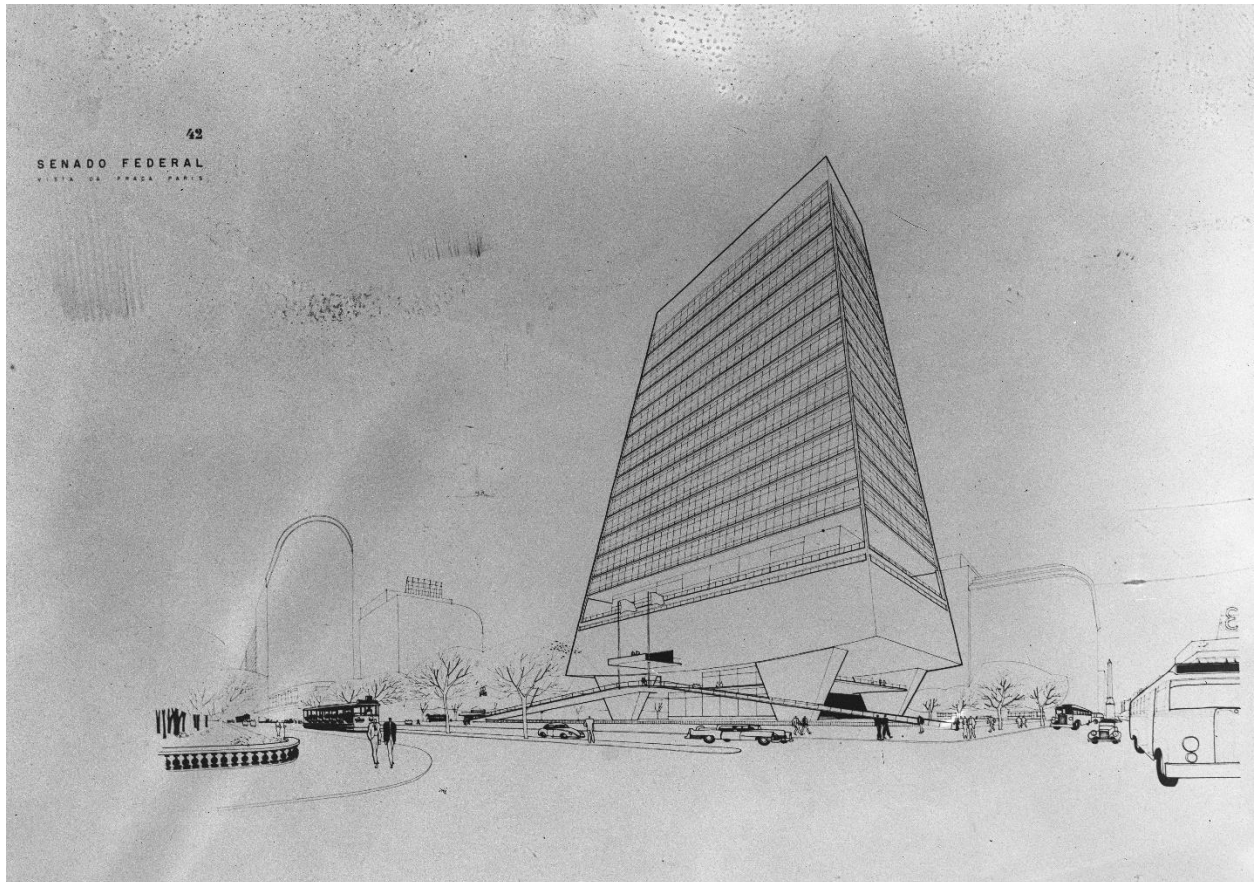


Figure 19: Sergio Bernardes' design for the new senate building to take the Monroe Palace's place in Rio, 1950s. Wikimedia Commons.

The depreciation of the Monroe Palace signified a larger shift in the intellectual elites' concept of *Brasilidade* based on the future and their notion of modernization. Designed to be 110-meter tall, the new senate building would be the highest construction in the central region of the city. In 1957, however, when Juscelino Kubitschek formally included Brasília in his five-

¹⁴⁹ Ana Luisa Nobre. *Fios Cortantes: Projeto e Produto, Arquitetura e Design no Rio de Janeiro (1950-70)* (Rio de Janeiro: Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro, 2008), 155.

year plan and approved Lúcio Costa's Pilot Plan, the very idea of transferring the Federal District out of Rio de Janeiro interrupted the plans for a new senate in Rio and saved the Monroe Palace from destruction. At least for two more decades. In 1976, with the remaining offices of the Senate finally transferred from Rio to Brasília, an empty public square took the Palace's place.

Urban geographer Dominique Couret discussed the contradictions between Brasília's original, ideologically progressive project and its current materialization of social inequalities and distance between classes. Brasília, she argued, became a societal and urban enigma. Built upon the importance of distance as a defining element of urban life, the city with large spaces, automobilist planning, and a functionalist structure combined both the sentiment of progress and futuristic urban life with the feeling of emptiness and openness. Couret argues that Brasília's uniqueness, for the time period in which it was constructed, relied on its lack of diverse encounters. In her words, the city became a place "against (social) nature where apparently everything contributes not to make society, a city organized not to be a medium for meetings, communications, and heterogeneous crossings but, on the contrary, of maximum distance between the different social classes."¹⁵⁰

Reaffirming his prestige among other modernist architects of the time, Sergio Bernardes was appointed in 1958 to design another very important piece of JK's nationalist development. The first world's fair after World War II recognized by the *Bureau International des Expositions* (BIE), the Brussels Expo 58, strategically took place in the same city where the newly inaugurated United Nations established its headquarters. The official theme of the fair, *Bilan du*

¹⁵⁰ Translation by the author. "(...) une ville contre nature (sociale) où apparemment tout contribue à ne pas faire société; une ville organisée non pas pour être support de rencontres, de communications et de croisements hétérogènes mais au contraire d'éloignement maximal des différentes classes sociales..." Dominique Couret, "Introduction. Brasília: Une ville contre nature (sociale)?" In Marcia Regina De Andrade, Mathieu Ignez Costa Barbosa Ferreira, and Dominique Couret, *Brasília, Ville Fermée, Environnement Ouvert* (Paris: IRD Éditions, 2006). <https://books.openedition.org/irdeditions/361>

Monde, pour un—Monde Plus Humain, or “Evaluation of the World, for a More Humane World,” spoke to the postwar *zeitgeist* that focused on both healing from the traumas of the war and avoiding a new conflict in the future. Juscelino Kubitscheck’s administration saw the opportunity to showcase Brazil’s new, industrial, and modern nation-building narrative through architecture and the built environment in Brussels. In that same year, Brazil’s Ministry of Foreign Relations developed an exhibit on Brasília to be showcased first in Rio de Janeiro and later abroad – as many times as possible. Brasília was still under construction. However, its ambitious project and the impressive rhythm with which an entire Federal District was emerging in the geographic heart of the country were enough reasons to make the progress widely seen abroad.

With Kubitscheck’s approval, Sergio Bernardes designed the Brazilian pavilion for the occasion (Figure 20). According to Nobre, the construction in Brussels was “governed by a clear objective of defining the image of JK’s Brazil abroad.”¹⁵¹ Describing some of the defining features of the pavilion in Brussels, she points to the prominence of an internal garden in the center of the construction on a lower level. If, on the one hand, in the New York 1939 world’s fair the pavilion had a ramp that took visitors to the second floor, where the main exhibits were displayed, in Brussels, on the other hand, a continuous ramp around the central garden took visitors down to a lower level instead. A 40 x 60-meter “concrete sheet,” in Nobre’s words, sheltered the entire construction. In the center, a huge red balloon hovered “even higher than the Brazilian flag.”¹⁵² When the weather was good, the balloon would go up and provide the central garden with an open sky and sunlight. When it rained, however, the balloon collected water and later created a controlled waterfall effect over the garden.¹⁵³ Interestingly, the idea of the balloon

¹⁵¹ Ana Luisa Nobre, “Brussels World’s Fair of 1958: The Brazilian Pavilion,” *ARQTextos*, n. 16 (Porto Alegre: 2010), 101.

¹⁵² Ana Luisa Nobre, “Brussels World’s Fair of 1958: The Brazilian Pavilion,” 104.

¹⁵³ Kyla Bernardes and Lauro Cavalcanti, *Sérgio Bernardes* (Rio de Janeiro: Artviva, 2010), 60.

came from the French film *Le Ballon Rouge*, “The Red Balloon,” that showcased urban aspects of the city of Paris while a boy and a red balloon followed each other through the city. Although looking back again to old Europe as an urban model, the reference to the red balloon was foremost about the urban development in Brazil. The balloon suggested that the urban development in Brazil, although recent, was comparable to the urban complexity of Paris and the notoriety of older European capitals. Inside the pavilion, exhibits focused on the country’s industrial prowess, urban development, and most importantly, the new capital Brasília.



Figure 20: Sergio Bernardes' pavilion at the Brussels 1958 World's Fair. <https://www.bernardesarq.com.br/>

Anthropologist James Holston defines modernization as “an ideology of development in which governments, regardless of persuasion, seek to rewrite national histories.”¹⁵⁴ In 1966, in a lecture offered at the University of Arizona, by-then former president Juscelino Kubitschek compared the opening of Brasilia to the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, celebrated in the Saint

¹⁵⁴ James Holston, *The Modernist City: An Anthropological Critique of Brasília* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1989), 5.

Louis World's Fair. In his words, "The construction of Brasília was symbolic of our efforts to provide the nation with a foundation on which to build the future."¹⁵⁵ He continued and said that Brasília was "the indispensable first step in Brazil's westward expansion, a tangible challenge to those wishing to overcome geographical barriers to continental integration."¹⁵⁶ As Holston points out, intellectuals and state agents who defended and practiced modernist theory in architecture and urban planning believed that the construction of a modern capital could enable them "not only to generalize its innovations throughout the nation, but moreover to propel society into a planned future (...)."¹⁵⁷ Brasília not only allowed the political and intellectual elites to determine the next steps of the nation, but also legitimized their project of a national future based on modernization and industrial development.

Brasília became the repudiation of everything that used to represent *Brasilidade* in the first half of the twentieth century. It was not only a clash between urban models, but also a dispute in the symbolic field of production between modernity and modernization: the former, civilizing, occidental, and European; the latter, functional, sober, and industrially developed. It was also the expression of the dispute between ideological projects of Brazilian nationhood. Historian Marly Silva da Motta defines the *ciudades capitais* as spaces of cultural and political monopoly. As a "core of intellectual sociability and symbolic production," Rio de Janeiro played a crucial role in the making of Brazilian nationhood.¹⁵⁸ In this symbolic, economic, and political dispute, Brasília obliterated Rio as a *cidade capital*.

¹⁵⁵ Juscelino Kubitschek, "Latin America Today – Rieker Memorial Lecture II, 1966" (Tucson: University of Arizona, 1967).

¹⁵⁶ Juscelino Kubitschek, "Latin America Today."

¹⁵⁷ James Holston, *The Modernist City*, 78.

¹⁵⁸ Marly Silva da Mota, "De grande capital a mera cidade: o destino do Distrito Federal após a transferência da capital para Brasília," Rio de Janeiro: CPDOC/FGV, 1994, 5. <http://hdl.handle.net/10438/6827>.

The transfer of the Federal District in 1960 was only the start of a gradual process of political, economic, and symbolic erasure of Rio de Janeiro. Architectural historian Norma Evenson emphasized the contrast between Rio de Janeiro and Brasilia in the symbolic realm. In her words, “While Rio still provides an embodiment of romantic natural beauty, Brasília presents the vision of a totally man-made environment.”¹⁵⁹ When Brasilia became the new pole of modernization, development, and political power, the reminiscent elements of Rio’s identity as the pole of the early-twentieth-century modernity became obstacles for the consummation of the power shift. In the urban and political realm, Rio’s pomposity from the beginning of the century persisted with the presence of important national institutions that did not follow the transfer to Brasília. The architectural conjunct of the Avenida Rio Branco, including the Monroe Palace, was a crucial part of the city’s resisting status.

Hence the problem of two capitals that, for two decades after April 1960 with the inauguration of Brasília, haunted the federal government and statecraft agents. One major difficulty in erasing Rio’s former identity as *cidade capital* to consummate Brasilia’s symbolic power resulted from Rio’s loss of status as a politically independent city. The former Federal District was first designated a new state called Guanabara, a forged political identity that did not resonate with its residents. In 1975, the invented state and former capital had to be incorporated as a municipality into the larger, diverse, and complex state of Rio de Janeiro. To erase the previous identity of the city, statecraft agents and intellectuals had to come up with a new, social identity that could unify residents of the state.¹⁶⁰ Historian Marieta de Moraes Ferreira discusses these obstacles and points out that this process required a reduction of the city’s autonomy and

¹⁵⁹ Norma Evenson, *Two Brazilian Capitals: Architecture and Urbanism in Rio de Janeiro and Brasília* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), 103.

¹⁶⁰ Marieta de Moraes Ferreira, “A fusão do Rio de Janeiro, a ditadura militar e a transição política” In: Alzira Alves de Abreu (Org.), *A democratização no Brasil: atores e contextos* (Rio de Janeiro: FGV, 2006), 178.

power over the reminiscent national institutions in its territory. The construction of a new regional identity, Moraes Ferreira argues, was on the federal government's agenda.¹⁶¹

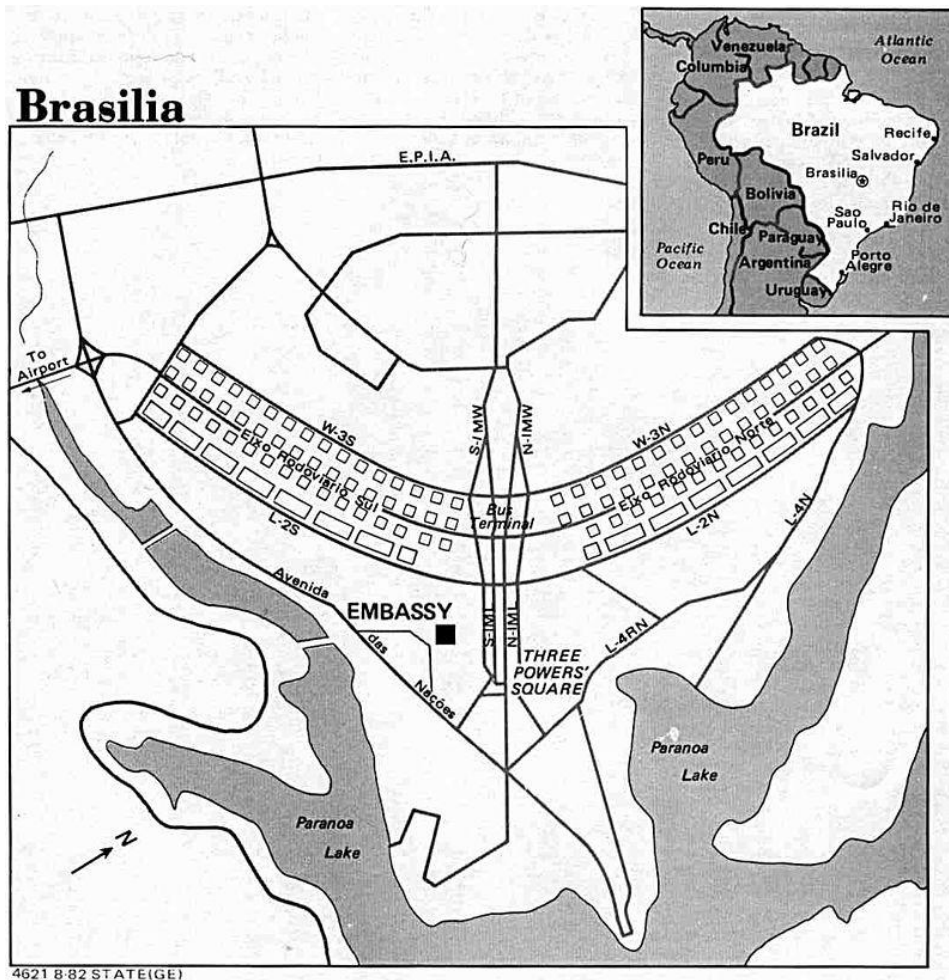


Figure 21: Brasilia's urban plan resembling the shape of an airplane. Wikimedia Commons.

In discussing the issues of two capitals in Brazil, Evenson observed that the administrative center of a country does not necessarily coincide with the place that best reflects the national character. In the United States, she suggests, although New York materialized national temperament, Washington reflected a more controlled urban environment in which the government forces do not have to coexist with competing social forces. In her words, “it is the

¹⁶¹ Marieta de Moraes Ferreira, “A fusão do Rio de Janeiro, a ditadura militar e a transição política,” 179-180.

very qualities which make New York a characteristically American city which might make the city unsuitable, in the eyes of many, for a national capital.”¹⁶² We must, however, point out that, in Brasília’s case, the city’s own contradictions that developed over time may bring about skepticism of Evenson’s statement. As professor of law David G. Epstein observed, the emergence of shantytowns (or *favelas*) in Brasília as early as the 1960s reflected not the failure of the city as a metaphor of modern national identity, but the contradictions that are fundamentally intrinsic to a modern capitalist economy and the distribution of wealth in Brazil. In his words, “These workers moved from dependent status in one part of the society to a similar status in Brasília. Their work was essential to the crash construction of the new capital, but the provisions made for their housing were minimal.”¹⁶³ Social class distinctions were not erased from the future that the elites elaborated for Brazil.

Tear the past down: Urban modernization and bureaucratic authoritarianism

As much invested in modernization and promoting social change as they were, many Brazilian intellectuals soon realized that economic development did not necessarily come with democratic values. Economists Werner Baer and Adolfo Figueroa observed that the increase of state presence in the economy after the military coup of 1964 “was related to the policy makers’ goal of again achieving a high rate of growth.”¹⁶⁴ By strengthening state enterprises, the authors contend, the Brazilian authoritarian regime created a negative impact in the distribution of income that contributed to social inequity. Further, it can be misleading to think of the Brazilian military regime as less authoritarian than other dictatorships because of its presidential

¹⁶² Norma Evenson, *Two Brazilian Capitals*, 209.

¹⁶³ David G. Epstein, *Brasília, Plan and Reality* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 16.

¹⁶⁴ Werner Baer and Adolfo Figueroa, “State Enterprise and the Distribution of Income: Brazil and Peru,” In Thomas C. Bruneau and Philippe Faucher (eds.), *Authoritarian Capitalism: Brazil’s Contemporary Economic and Political Development* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1981), 61.

succession and the consequent circulation of government officials. As political scientist Ben Ross Schneider argues, circulation was a unique aspect of the authoritarian regime in Brazil.¹⁶⁵ It was an example of what Argentine political scientist Guillermo O'Donnell describes as bureaucratic authoritarianism, a regime associated with an institution rather than an individual.¹⁶⁶

O'Donnell contends that the post-1964 Brazilian regime was a conservative reaction to advancing industrialization, parliamentary democracy, and increasing political participation of masses. The regime, he suggests, was “a coalition of the public bureaucracy and the propertied sectors (including a subordinate industrial bourgeoisie) against the peasantry and an emerging urban proletariat.”¹⁶⁷ Thus, O'Donnell's conceptualization of the regime complicates our understanding of Brasília as a metaphor and synthesis of new, modern, and industrial Brazil. As discussed before, Brasília embodied its own contradictions over time, and by the mid-1960s, the modernist city had enough social and class distinctions that reflected the precariousness of the urban proletariat. The working class built the capital and materialized the prevalent project of nationhood only to be excluded from the political scene by a frightened bourgeoisie.

Political scientist Philippe Faucher argues that the so-called “economic miracle” between 1968 and 1973 was a fortunate moment for the bourgeoisie, both national and foreign, for it benefitted from the economic policy aimed “not only at maintaining but also at stimulating the rhythm of growth.”¹⁶⁸ The military government favored a specific mode of production based on accumulation, that meaning, increasing the consumption activity. In the 1960s and 1970s, foreign capital controlled the “most dynamic sectors of production that act as the driving force for

¹⁶⁵ Ben Ross Schneider, *Politics within the State: Elite Bureaucrats and Industrial Policy in Authoritarian Brazil* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1991), 92-93.

¹⁶⁶ Guillermo O'Donnell, *Modernization and Bureaucratic-Authoritarianism: Studies in South American Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 91.

¹⁶⁷ Guillermo O'Donnell, *Modernization and Bureaucratic-Authoritarianism*, 88-89.

¹⁶⁸ Philippe Faucher, “The Paradise That Never Was: The Breakdown of Brazilian Authoritarian Order” In Thomas C. Bruneau and Philippe Faucher (eds.), *Authoritarian Capitalism*, 14.

growth,”¹⁶⁹ which ensured prosperity for the bourgeois sectors of Brazilian society. The military dictatorship did not create class distinctions and social inequality, but it increased the distance between less privileged social groups and the political-administrative system. In fact, the choice of Brasília’s location so distanced from the historically consolidated urban centers embodies the same anti-democratic spirit.

With all its underpinning values of modernization and economic progress, Brasilia itself was a rupture for the city of Rio de Janeiro. It was – and it still is – antagonist of the colonial past, the outdated traditions, and the stains of time often so visible in Rio’s streets. One of these stains of time, the architectural conjunct on the Avenida Rio Branco, still manifested the early republican regime in the physical world. With the rise of nationalistic authoritarianism, even more than the National Library, the Municipal Theater, and other nationally significant buildings of the conjunct, the Monroe Palace became target of heavy debates regarding its fate after the transfer of the capital to Brasília. One of the most prominent voices in favor of the palace’s demolition was Lúcio Costa.

¹⁶⁹ Philippe Faucher, “The Paradise That Never Was,” 14.



Figure 22: Orderly planned Brasilia, 2015. Wikimedia Commons.

In the 1970s, Costa's professional opinion was still impressively valued to determine nominations of historically or artistically significant sites around the country. Not coincidentally, in the same period, Costa complied with Governor Negrão de Lima's request to design and plan an urban project for a new neighborhood in the city of Rio: the *Barra da Tijuca* neighborhood.¹⁷⁰ The project promised a new lifestyle for the *cariocas* (how residents of Rio have been historically referred to). Historian Marcia Chuva argues that, since the 1930s, Costa and other intellectuals "became, at once, dedicated workers of the SPHAN [the National Service of Historic and Artistic Heritage], where they solidified an entire thought on Brazil's historic and artistic heritage, and the geniuses and founders of a modern nation."¹⁷¹ According to her, as

¹⁷⁰ Natália Padilha Sánchez. *A invenção da Barra da Tijuca: a anticidade carioca* (São Paulo: Universidade Presbiteriana Mackenzie, 2009), 53.

¹⁷¹ The *Serviço do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico Nacional* (SPHAN), or the National Service of National Historic and Artistic Heritage was established by Getúlio Vargas with the *Estado Novo* in 1937. Costa served as the head of the Preservation Division of the SPHAN for the following three decades. Every process of historic or artistic nomination of a building, site, or district went through Costa's evaluation and professional opinion.

statecraft agents, they had a common belief in the universality of the art that underpinned their understanding of Brazil's cultural heritage and how it related to the civilized world.¹⁷²

For Lucio Costa, “architecture gave materiality to the nation, and this should be the primordial function of the SPHAN – to give the nation concreteness.”¹⁷³ Chuva suggests that Lucio Costa's centrality in the Service's activities relied on his involvement with three fundamental issues: cultural preservation, modern architectural production, and the professional formation of architects. In this sense, by adopting a modernist conceptual framework while working in the SPHAN and determining what elements characterized the national architecture, Costa became the bridge between modernization and cultural tradition.¹⁷⁴ When values of modernization and industrial development clashed with representations of the past in the symbolic realm, Costa's input on the Monroe case was not only necessary but determinant.

In examining the urban transformations imposed on Rio de Janeiro in the beginning of the twentieth century, historian Daniel Levy de Alvarenga suggests that the Monroe Palace represented the logic of civilizing modernity and Brazil's determination in getting a seat at the table of nations in the early republican regime.¹⁷⁵ The presence of the Monroe Palace in the city of Rio represented a specific set of architectural, urban, and national values, as well as the old concept of modernity from the turn of the century. Lucio Costa's opposition to the nomination of the Monroe Palace as a historically significant building on the national level reflected his professional identification with the ideas of modernization. Lucio Costa himself argued against the preservation of the Monroe Palace based on the repudiation of the eclectic style. Eclecticism,

¹⁷² Márcia Regina Romeiro Chuva. “Fundando a nação: a representação de um Brasil barroco, moderno e civilizado,” *TOPOI*, v. 4, n. 7 (July-December 2003), 314. <http://revistatopoi.org/site/numeros-antecedentes/topoi/7/>.

¹⁷³ Márcia Regina Romeiro Chuva. “Fundando a nação,” 320.

¹⁷⁴ Márcia Regina Romeiro Chuva. “Fundando a nação,” 321.

¹⁷⁵ Daniel Levy de Alvarenga, *Memórias, resistências e ressonâncias no processo de destruição do Palácio Monroe* (Rio de Janeiro: Universidade Federal do Estado do Rio de Janeiro, 2018), 93.

he argued, was an outlier in time and space, “a gap in art history,” and consequently, in architectural history.¹⁷⁶ The ideas of modernity and tradition coexisted in the making of the national historic and artistic heritage. According to Chuva, both ideas constituted the originality and particularity of Brazilian modernism, a movement that set the standards to define what is worth remembering or forgetting in the build of a national identity.

In this sense, elites in the 1970s defined what constituted “good architecture” as one that conveys modernization and cultural tradition. On June 12, 1974, the president and dictator of Brazil, Ernesto Geisel corresponded with Justice Minister Armando Falcão about the nomination of the Monroe Palace as a historic site, former house of the Senate in Rio. Geisel expressed the federal government’s determination in erasing the imprints of Rio’s status of *cidade capital*. The dictator was not in favor of the Palace’s nomination; rather, he recommended the completion of the process of transfer to Brasilia by moving the residual offices and departments of the Senate in the Monroe Palace to the new Federal District.¹⁷⁷

The palace was dismantled in January 1976 after a long nomination process that passed through every department of the *Instituto do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico Nacional* (IPHAN), the former SPHAN. Members of the *Instituto* recommended the preservation of the entire architectural conjunct on the Avenida Rio Branco for its historic significance related to the *Belle-Époque carioca*. The failure of the IPHAN in preserving the palace reflected internal disagreements regarding which Brazilian cultural identity should be legitimated in face of the rapid urban changes. Those who were against the palace’s nomination and its preservation as a historic site were also the intellectuals who conceived a future-based notion of *Brasilidade*. In

¹⁷⁶ Instituto do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico Nacional (IPHAN). *Processo de Tombamento nº860-T-72 (Volume I)*. Nomination Process nº 860-T-72, volume 1. Rio de Janeiro, 1972.

¹⁷⁷ FERREIRA, Marieta de Moraes. A fusão do Rio de Janeiro, a ditadura militar e a transição política, *op. cit.*, p. 179-180.

their narrative about the country's cultural identity, modernization was above tradition and the past – two elements that were well marked in the urban reality of Rio de Janeiro.

The dismantlement of the Monroe Palace and the erasure of its historic significance were articulated with the federal government's efforts to solidify Brasília as the capital of modernization and solve the problem of "duality of capitals," as expressed in a memo to President Ernesto Geisel in 1973.¹⁷⁸ A private dispatch by the Justice Minister Armando Falcão addressed to Geisel in the following year expressed the military government's intention of destroying the Palace and manipulating the press to convince the public opinion about the enterprise. The document stated:

Monroe Palace – In alignment with Mr. President's thoughts, regarding the fate of the "Monroe Palace," in Rio, I took care of discussing the matter with the direction of *O Globo*, *Jornal do Brasil*, *Manchete*, and other propagation vehicles, in order to create, in the spirit of public opinion, favorable circumstances for the demolition of the old building. Many notes were already published in accordance with the government's sentiment.¹⁷⁹

The manipulation of public opinion through the press was not uncommon during the military dictatorship. The endeavor to solidify a negative image of the palace in the public imagery manifested in a solid campaign for the destruction of the building with the crucial support of the *O Globo*, the most prominent and important newspaper during the period. The *Jornal do Brasil*, another significantly big press vehicle, did not adhere to the campaign. The reasons behind the newspapers' adherence or not to the federal government's "suggestions" are

¹⁷⁸ Arquivo Ernesto Geisel, *Documentos enviados a Ernesto Geisel apresentando sugestões ao futuro governo*, October 15, 1973. <http://www.fgv.br/cpdoc/acervo/arquivo-pessoal>.

¹⁷⁹ Translation by the author. "Palácio Monroe – Dentro do pensamento do Sr. Presidente, com referência ao destino do "Palácio Monroe", no Rio, diligenciei junto à Direção de "O Globo", "Jornal do Brasil", "Manchete" e outros órgãos de divulgação, a fim de criar, no espírito da opinião pública, clima favorável à demolição do velho imóvel. Várias notas já foram publicadas, no rumo do pensamento governamental." Arquivo Ernesto Geisel, *Documentos referentes ao Ministério da Justiça, principalmente despachos do ministro Armando Falcão com o presidente Ernesto Geisel*, July 9, 1974. <http://www.fgv.br/cpdoc/acervo/arquivo-pessoal>.

out of the scope of this research, but certainly could help us understand the extent of the role of these vehicles in the process of dismantling the Monroe Palace.

In a different dispatch of June 12, 1974, Minister Falcão mentions a conversation with Senator Paulo Torres, by-then President of the Congress. In this conversation, Falcão manifested his opinion about the transfer of the remaining offices of the Senate in Rio, also called “little Senate,” to Brasilia. He also suggested the eventual demolition of the palace given its “torn apart” conditions – allegedly caused by the construction of the Metro system.¹⁸⁰ A few days later, the minister clearly demonstrated the federal government’s desire to eventually take the building apart:

Confirming the agreement I had with Senator Paulo Torres, President of the National Congress, about the transference to Brasilia of the portion of the Senate yet existent in Rio (...), allow me to suggest that arrangements are made in regard of removing of the Monroe, similarly, the representation of the Estado-Maior das Forças Armadas (“EMFA”) [Army Forces Institution], that also exists there, as well as the “Confederação das Associações de Ex-Combatentes” [Confederation of Veterans Associations]. This is the shortest path to the complete emptying of the building, of which the pickaxes will take care later.¹⁸¹

Besides enabling a solid interpretation of the federal government’s intention to erase the Monroe Palace, this documentation leads us to believe that the very idea of demolition might have emerged from the highest governmental level. It also leads us to interpret the Monroe case as a symptom of the institutional weakness of the IPHAN as an autonomous organization. It’s no

¹⁸⁰ Arquivo Ernesto Geisel, *Documentos referentes ao Ministério da Justiça, principalmente despachos do ministro Armando Falcão com o presidente Ernesto Geisel*, July 12, 1974. <http://www.fgv.br/cpd/doc/acervo/arquivo-pessoal>.

¹⁸¹ Translation by the author. “Confirmando o entendimento que tive com o Senador Paulo Torres, Presidente do Congresso Nacional, sobre a transferência para Brasília do núcleo do Senado ainda existente no Rio (meu despacho de 12.6.74, item 3), permito-me sugerir se adotem providências no sentido de retirar do Monroe, igualmente, a representação do Estado-Maior das Forças Armadas (‘EMFA’), que lá existe, assim também a ‘Confederação das Associações de Ex-Combatentes’. É o caminho mais curto para o esvaziamento total do prédio, do qual, depois, as picaretas cuidarão.” ARQUIVO ERNESTO GEISEL. *Documentos referentes ao Ministério da Justiça, principalmente despachos do ministro Armando Falcão com o presidente Ernesto Geisel*. 19 jul. 1974. Disponível em: <<http://www.fgv.br/cpd/doc/acervo/arquivo-pessoal>>. Acesso em: 21 set. 2019.

surprise that the IPHAN had less autonomy and power to preserve historic and architectural resources in face of the bureaucratic-authoritarian regime. The divergences in the policies of heritage preservation were evident, not only in the resulting demolition of the palace, but also in the disagreement among intellectuals who worked at the *Instituto* regarding historic and artistic significance of the architectural conjunct on the Avenida Rio Branco.

It is crucial, therefore, to discuss some of the internal debates in the IPHAN and among associated intellectuals that resulted in the erasure of the Monroe Palace. These debates shed light on the larger disputes in the symbolic field of production between Rio de Janeiro and Brasilia, modernity and modernization, and consequently, between different notions of Brazilian nationhood. The dismantling of the Monroe Palace was part of the loss of meaning suffered by the city of Rio de Janeiro. During the 1960s and 1970s, intellectuals, specialists, and technicians battled for discursive hegemony over the collective representations of *Brasilidade*.

When preservation failed: The Nomination Process 860-T-72

In February 1976, historian Feliciano Moraes who worked at the *Instituto de Geografia e História Militar do Brasil*, published a letter in the newspaper *Jornal do Brasil* about the palace's demolition, which had started in January. Moraes wrathfully wrote that the auction of the materials of the palace "prolonged the grief of those who – like me – were against the demolition of the property."¹⁸² He blamed the IPHAN for its weakened operation and questioned the reasoning behind the dismantlement. "Curiously, the *Palácio Conde dos Arcos*, on the *Praça da República* [Republic Square], is nominated and preserved as the former house of the Senate

¹⁸² *Jornal do Brasil*, February 5, 1976.

during the Empire and the Republic. How about the Monroe, which housed the republican Parliament and Senate, didn't it deserve the same protection?"¹⁸³

The dismantling happened after a well-articulated attempt of preserving the palace as a site of national historic and artistic significance. The IPHAN Nomination Process number 860-T-72 recommended the preservation of the entire architectural conjunct of the Avenida Rio Branco for its historic significance during the early twentieth century. It pointed to the symbolic importance of the buildings in representing Rio de Janeiro's status as *cidade-capital* of modernity. The Process also nominated the avenue itself and the obelisk to the west entrance of the Monroe Palace that signaled the avenue's inauguration in 1906, the same year that the palace was rebuilt in Rio. The documentation on the nomination process contains a detailed overview of the bureaucratic steps through which historic districts nominations went through since the 1960s. As Brazilian historian Maria Cecília Londres Fonseca suggests, because they are chronologically organized, we can see the history of this process of resignification of a property" and the criteria that underpinned the preservation practice in the 1970s and 1980s.¹⁸⁴

What motivated the nomination was the threatening idea of constructing a skyscraper in place of one of the historic buildings of the conjunct, the Jockey Club. The historic and material value of the building was threatened by real estate speculation and rapid urban growth. As the nomination process contended, the historic significance of the buildings was best expressed in their unity as a district. After internal disagreements in the IPHAN, however, the institution decided to preserve the conjunct with the appalling exception of the Monroe Palace and the 1906 Obelisk. Again, the fate of the palace was the target of debates.

¹⁸³ *Jornal do Brasil*, February 5, 1976.

¹⁸⁴ Maria Cecília Londres Fonseca, *O Patrimônio em processo: trajetória da política federal de preservação no Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora UFRJ, 2017), 194.

As I persistently sought to demonstrate thus far, the palace had been immersed in the daily dynamics of the city and its inhabitants for at least seventy years. Residents and workers established bonds of belonging and a sense of place towards the palace.¹⁸⁵ However, the palace was also important for the commemorative meanings that intellectual elites attributed to it. French historian Pierre Nora observed that places of memory are unique for combining the will of remembering and the agency of time. Places of memory, he contended, exist because of the impossibility of spontaneous memory. They are built in response to the threat of forgetfulness towards a specific past or memory.¹⁸⁶ In the beginning of the century, intellectuals forged a Brazilian nationhood based upon an invented national memory. The rebuilding of the palace in Rio in 1906 suggests that those intellectuals were aware of the fragility of this invented narrative of a national past – one inherited from European cultural traditions that justified the republican regime. In Rio, the palace served as a place of memory: a material reminder of that past and those values in the face of a rapidly changing republic of Brazil.

Since the inauguration of the SPHAN in 1937, heritage preservation policies changed and adapted many times over the following decades. For instance, when the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) adopted the Venice Charter in 1964, Brazil and other western nations involved with heritage preservation adhered to the practice – or, at least, the discourse – of preserving urban areas as historic monuments. The first article of the Venice Charter defined historic monuments as “not only the single architectural work but also the urban or rural setting in which is found the evidence of a particular civilization, a significant development or a historic

¹⁸⁵ Here, I understand the notion of “sense of place” as per John Brinckerhoff Jackson’s conceptualization. Sense of time and ritual, he argued, creates a sense of place and of community. John Brinckerhoff Jackson, *A Sense of Place, A Sense of Time*, 160.

¹⁸⁶ Pierre Nora, “Entre memória e história: a problemática dos lugares,” Translation by Yara Aun Khoury, *Projeto História: Revista do Programa de Estudos Pós-Graduados de História* (December 1993), 13.

event.”¹⁸⁷ Further, the document determined that the goal for preserving an urban conjunct or isolated property should be “to safeguard them no less as works of art than as historical evidence.”¹⁸⁸ The lack of consistency in the IPHAN’s practices of preservation, during the 1960s and 1970s, resulted in the disregard of the palace’s historical evidence while the artistic and architectural worth became the core criteria for determination of eligibility.

During the Nomination Process 860-T-72, the museologist and head of the Arts Division of the IPHAN Lygia Martins was among the technicians and experts who opposed the preservation of the Monroe Palace. Both the palace and the obelisk, she contended, “in the context of the new standards, lost scale and were reduced to inexpressive elements.”¹⁸⁹ In her feedback to the director of the IPHAN Renato Soeiro, she critically analyzed each building individually to support her argument that there is no unity or artistic value at all in the conjunct. She also suggests that the historic significance of the district mattered to the city of Rio de Janeiro only and not the nation, and therefore, the state preservation agency should take on the responsibility. Here, the tension between Rio and Brasília is manifested in a broader distinction between Rio and the entire nation as the former can no longer represent the latter in the intellectual elites’ mentality. Further, the tension demonstrates the political nature of preservation and the problems of scale of significance at the local, state, and national levels.

¹⁸⁷ ICOMOS, “Venice Charter,” II International Congress of Architects and Technicians of Historic Monuments, 1964, Article 1.

¹⁸⁸ ICOMOS, “Venice Charter,” 1964, Article 3.

¹⁸⁹ IPHAN, *Processo de Tombamento n°860-T-72 (Volume I)*, 24.



Figure 23: Oil Painting of the Monroe Palace by José Ferreira, 1974.

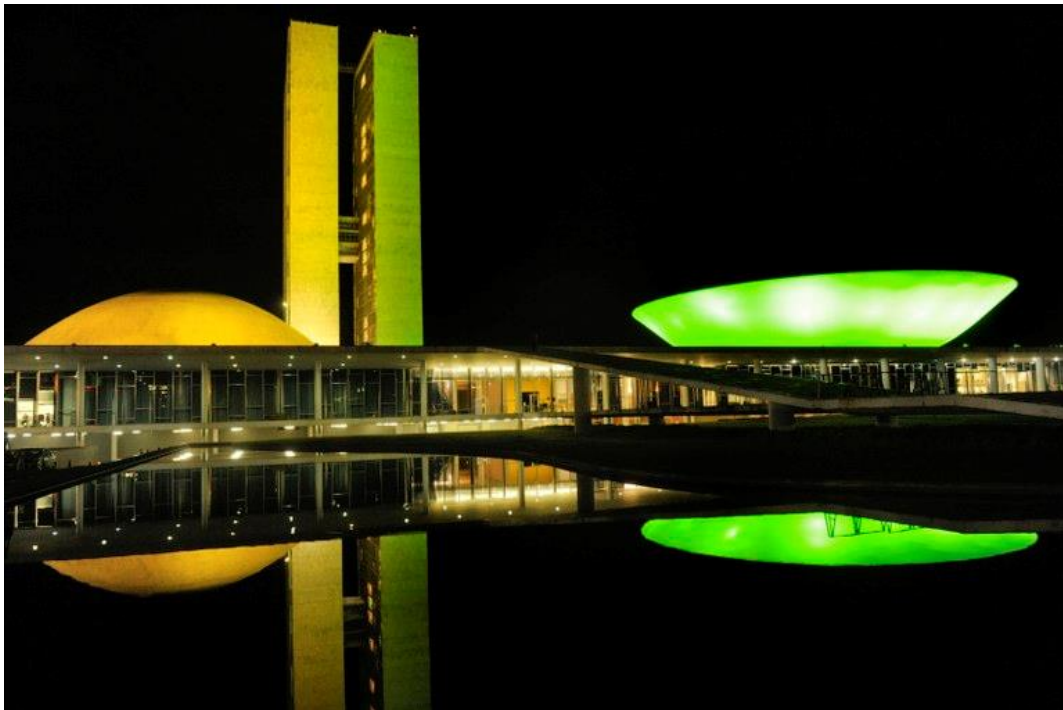


Figure 24: The current house of the senate and the chamber of deputies in Brasilia, 2014.
<https://www2.congressonacional.leg.br/>

Lygia Martins' arguments were refuted by IPHAN advisor Paulo Santos, who emphasized the importance of the conjunct's historical testimony not only for the city of Rio, but for the entire nation. Furthermore, Martins' suggestion of passing on the responsibility to the state agency of preservation lost its validity when Paulo Soares remembered a good number of nomination processes in Rio that the IPHAN had engaged with before. According to Soares, the conjunct kept alive "the memory of sumptuous, proud and somewhat naïve Rio de Janeiro of the *Belle-Époque*."¹⁹⁰ To sustain his argument, the architect referred to the Venice Charter and mentioned examples of Brazilian urban conjuncts that were nominated and preserved before in accordance with the international guidelines of the ICOMOS, like Ouro Preto, Paraty, and Alcântara.

Although the advisor's discourse recommended the nomination of the Monroe Palace and its surrounding conjunct,¹⁹¹ four years later the argument proved worthless. Brazilian historian Regina da Luz Moreira argues the metal structure of the palace was the main reason for the demolition since advocates of the new modern architecture disliked it.¹⁹² While some intellectuals based the idea of demolition on the artistic and architectural values embedded in the building, as well as its materials, style, and attributed functions, those who defended the construction focused on the symbolic dimension and the historic testimony and significance of

¹⁹⁰ IPHAN, Processo de Tombamento nº860-T-72 (Volume I), 17.

¹⁹¹ Paulo Santos changed his perspective regarding the preservation of the Monroe after Lúcio Costa expressed his opinion. Paulo Santos' final input on the process was for the "timely demolition" of the building, although the architect did not seem fully convinced of the lack of meaning of the construction. The alterations the palace suffered over time were Santos' main reason to ultimately deny the possibility of restoration.

Paulo Santos muda sua perspectiva quanto à preservação do Palácio Monroe após a manifestação de Lúcio Costa. A opinião final de Santos, no Processo, é pela oportuna demolição, embora nem mesmo o próprio arquiteto pareça ter se convencido da falta de significado da edificação. Contudo, as mutilações na forma do Palácio lhe serviram de argumento para negar a possibilidade de uma restauração.

¹⁹² Regina da Luz Moreira, O palácio que virou memória: o Monroe e a construção do metrô carioca, polêmica em tempos de ditadura. In Ângela de Castro Gomes, Direitos e Cidadania: memória, política e cultura (Rio de Janeiro: FGV, 2007), 235.

the building. This division within the IPHAN reflected discontinuities in the preservation policies during the period of national developmentalism. According to Londres Fonseca, Paulo Santos' opinion, at this moment, is in favor of the historic significance of the conjunct while also admitting the validity of the eclectic style as an expression of its time.¹⁹³

The dismantling of the Monroe Palace mirrored the new trends of urban development, real estate speculation, and the architectural models consecrated by official institutions involved with heritage preservation. Real estate speculation, in fact, was a big obstacle for those who advocated for the conservation of historic buildings in the 1960s and 1970s. Historian Londres Fonseca suggests that the inconsistency of preservation practices during that period resulted from the difficulties that the IPHAN and other agencies faced dealing with the rapid urban growth inherited from the 1950s. The former SPHAN, she argues, operated through a markedly cultural understanding of heritage, but in face of the new developmentalist economic model, preservation practices incorporated “nationalism to the values of modernization. It was the golden age of industrialization, urbanization, and development of rural regions, all stimulated by the construction of Brasília. The consequences for the preservation [practice] of this model of development reverberated not only on the symbolic level – for this ideology was antagonistic to continuity and tradition – but also on the economic and social levels (...).”¹⁹⁴

Juscelino Kubitscheck's economic model strengthened real estate speculation and modernization of growing urban areas. Hence, the divergence among architects and other intellectuals of the IPHAN regarding the preservation of the Monroe Palace, many times characterized as a *trambolho* (a large, material burden) that harmed urban mobility and occupied such a valuable space of the city. The threat of a new skyscraper in place of the Jockey Club

¹⁹³ Maria Cecília Londres, *O Patrimônio em processo*, 204-205.

¹⁹⁴ Maria Cecília Londres, *O Patrimônio em processo*, 150.

building, one of the contributing properties to the historic district of the Avenida Rio Branco, was not an isolated case. In such a transitional period, these statecraft agents had an important role in reshaping preservation policies and practices to reflect the undeniable reality of industrialization and modernization. They soon realized that, from there on, heritage preservation could only exist simultaneously to urban innovation.

As the historic significance of the building was out of consideration, the Monroe Palace could only be nominated as an artistically valuable site that represented eclectic architecture and therefore a particular moment of national architectural history. Since both history and art have been historically related in Brazilian preservation policies, the historic value of a construction only existed in association with its aesthetic qualities until the 1970s.¹⁹⁵ Although ideas of what constituted artistic value started to shift in face of emerging and more complex perceptions of history and the past, in the Monroe's case, not even the Venice Charter or the Malraux Law¹⁹⁶ were enough to facilitate its conservation.¹⁹⁷ The examination of the Nomination Process 860-T-72 leads to the conclusion that the dispute of narratives among statecraft and preservation agents reflected a conflict between values related to art history, political history, and architecture. In Lúcio Costa's opinion, the definition of "good architecture" delegitimize eclecticism as an architectural style. In this sense, the argument in favor of historical testimony and the argument against the architectural style stood out in a newspaper article published on the *Tribuna da Imprensa* in August 1974:

¹⁹⁵ Maria Cecília Londres, *O Patrimônio em processo*, 206-207.

¹⁹⁶ In 1962, André Malraux established the Malraux Law that enabled the conservation of urban conjuncts that were representative of a specific historic period.

¹⁹⁷ The notion of "conservation" or *conservação* is used here in accordance with the broad notion conceptualized in Brazil in the 1960s. Leonardo Barci Castriota contends that this new idea of *conservação* embraces the inevitability of change and the necessity of creating strategies to manage it. Meanwhile, the concept of preservation in 1960s Brazil seemed to be associated with the petrification of the property or resource. Leonardo Barci Castriota, "Intervenções sobre o patrimônio urbano: modelos e perspectivas," *Fórum Patrimônio*, volume 1, n1 (Fall 2007), 18. http://www.forumpatrimonio.com.br/seer/index.php/forum_patrimonio/article/view/59

Senator Paulo Torres did what was possible and in his reach to avoid the demolition of the old Palace, whose inauguration happened in 1903. The president of the Congress argued that the building deserved to be preserved, not exactly for its exterior presentation that, indeed, do not represent any stage of the global engineering, but for what it signifies for the republican life of the Country as a whole.¹⁹⁸

The symbolic character of the Monroe Palace was not inherent to the property. Like any other cultural resource to be preserved, the symbolism is attributed to the palace over the years because of the varied functions it undertook after it was rebuilt in Rio de Janeiro. In discussing some of these attributed meanings, Daniel Levy de Alvarenga refers to the concept of cultural reference, also present in Londres Fonseca's work. He contends that, although a material resource, the palace's immaterial and symbolic dimension refers to an intentional elaboration of an architectural narrative and, consequently, national narrative. In Alvarenga's words, the building had the pretension to "symbolize the nation's alignment with the civilized world" and therefore it was a "material support that constituted itself as a cultural reference" to which specific social groups attributed a meaningful and distinctive value.¹⁹⁹

The arguments in favor of the conservation of the Monroe Palace often brought up the idea of historical testimony as a central motivation to nominate the property as a national heritage site. This justification speaks to the perspectives in Brazilian historic and artistic preservation that overcome the limited and more technical standpoint of engineers and architects on urban conservation adopted by IPHAN until the 1960s. Besides the IPHAN, however, another reputed institution that played an important role in building a Brazilian "imagined community"²⁰⁰ throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was the *Instituto Histórico e Geográfico*

¹⁹⁸ Highlight by the author. *Tribuna da Imprensa*. "O fato nacional," Rio de Janeiro, August 6, 1974, 5.

¹⁹⁹ Daniel Levy de Alvarenga, *Memórias, resistências e ressonâncias no processo de destruição do Palácio Monroe*, 112.

²⁰⁰ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006).

Brasileiro (IHGB), or Brazilian Historic and Geographic Institute, which also participated in the debates about nominating or destroying the Monroe Palace in the 1970s. The IHGB created a special commission of architects and engineers – including Paulo Santos who was associated with both IPHAN and IHGB – to discuss the historic, artistic, and symbolic values attributed to the Monroe Palace that could justify its nomination. In August 1974, the commission presided over by former chief of Armed Forces Nelson Freire Lavenère-Wanderley published an official motion about the matter. After summarizing the history of the building and highlighting its success as the Brazilian pavilion in Saint Louis, the motion concluded by defending the nomination of the building. It emphasized its historic significance, but also its architectural value:

The Monroe Palace is an edification of undeniable historic and architectural value (...). The way it was originally constructed, it became a glory of the national architecture; it is one of the few examples in which a building, projected and constructed by a Brazilian engineer, had an international repercussion during a time when Brazilian engineering and architecture had not yet achieved the high international reputation that they have today. Later, the Monroe Palace had its architecture disastrously disfigured, especially because of the added floor on the level of the base of its dome and the closure of the external colonnades with glass walls. In the same way that the palace was disfigured, it can be restored. Consequently, the Commission designated by the president of the *Instituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro* agrees, by the majority of votes, that the Monroe Palace shall not be demolished and that efforts shall be done so that the edification be restored to its original form as much as possible. In doing so, we will be preserving a notable historic and architectural value of Brazil and we will safeguard a construction that, seventy years ago, gloriously projected the name of Brazil abroad.²⁰¹

This motion suggests that the idea of preserving the building was based on the necessity of restoring its architectural form according to the original project. On the one hand, some advocates of the palace's nomination believed that the historic testimony of the building prevailed in face of the extensive alterations it suffered over time. On the other hand, others contended that there was no sense in preserving it because of the same *mutilações*, or

²⁰¹ IPHAN. Processo de Tombamento nº860-T-72 (Volume II), 1972.

mutilations. Although the IHGB recommended the nomination and repudiated the idea of demolition of the property, the institution adopted a preservationist perspective yet fundamentally based on aesthetic and architecture. This perspective ultimately resulted in the dismantling of the palace.

The press coverage of the matter reflected the divisions among intellectuals, and even the population. *O Globo* promoted an astonishing campaign for the destruction of the palace, often including the opinion of technicians and preservationists that expressed dissatisfaction with what they called “monstrosity,” “worthless,” and “architectural detritus.” However, in opposition to the negative propaganda by *O Globo*, other newspapers featured pro-conservation voices. The *Jornal do Brasil* often published letters of readers advocating for the conservation of the building. The historian Feliciano de Moraes was published in the *Jornal do Commercio* to sustain the argument for conservation. He pointed out how incoherent was the idea of “destroying the heritage of the people with no compensation”²⁰² because of its precarious condition when many properties of the federal administration suffered from the same problems. In another newspaper, *Tribuna da Imprensa*, a reader expressed indignation by suggesting that the Monroe was a “monument of the past” and a “relic of the present” for the context of its construction.²⁰³

The arguments that emphasized the aesthetic elements of the palace instead of its historic significance were legitimized by the federal administration. Aligned with the president’s intentions to erase the meaningful identity of Rio de Janeiro as *cidade capital* and to consolidate the symbolic, political, and economic power of Brasília, intellectuals who advocated for the demolition of the Monroe Palace achieved certain narrative hegemony in this process. The

²⁰² *Jornal do Commercio*. “Historiador justifica restauração do Monroe,” August 21, 1974.

²⁰³ *Tribuna da Imprensa*. “O fato político,” June 24, 1974.

defenders of the “god architecture” did not overlook the mutilations over time on the exterior of the building. According to Márcia Chuva, the repairs done to a property over time were considered “bad intervention” in the qualities of a historic or architectural resource.²⁰⁴ For Brazilian modernist architects, only a pure and unalloyed past could be preserved in the built environment.

Rio de Janeiro’s political and symbolic identity was, however, still expressed among Senators who felt harmed by the transfer to Brasília. In a book published in 1976, the year of the Monroe Palace’s demolition, Senator Daniel Krieger reported his dissatisfaction with the change of capital. In his words, “The new metropole did not have conditions to support the weight of a capital of the Republic. Only a government obsessed with the idea of change could have set the date of April 21, 1960,” allegedly the same date of the start of colonization in Brazil, “to promote the transfer of the capital.” Krieger pointed out that the unfinished aspect of the city made him, and other senators miss Rio de Janeiro even more. He goes on to conclude that the “first and pernicious consequence of the change” was the weakening of civil power. The capital of a nation, he maintained, “cannot be distanced from a big center where life pulses, where public opinion is heard, where press exists and finds repercussions.”²⁰⁵

Conclusion

The dispute between Rio and Brasília was at the core of the larger battle between different ideas of *Brasilidade* among intellectual elites. Since the 1937 creation of the SPHAN, every process of historic or artistic preservation on a national level embodied intention and choice: what should be forgotten and what should be remembered about the country’s past were

²⁰⁴ Márcia Regina Romeiro Chuva, *Os arquitetos da memória* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora UFRJ, 2017), 30.

²⁰⁵ Daniel Krieger, *Desde as Missões... saudades, lutas, esperanças* (Rio de Janeiro: José Olympio Editora, 1976), 140.

decided by those elites in order to elaborate – or formalize – a specific idea of Brazilian nationhood. It is out of the scope of this research to discuss the many dimensions through which nationhood is manifested – literature, art, music, law. Our investigation, however, has focused on the architectural representations of those ideas, and how they materialize in the built environment. As much as world’s fairs, Brasília was an urban utopia that conveyed a specific spatial narrative about the past and the future. The ways that elites mobilized these two categories to project and legitimize their notions of nationhood sheds light on the story of maturation of a country into a western, industrial-capitalist nation.

In 1976, the son of Francisco Aguiar, the architect who designed the Monroe Palace for the Saint Louis World’s Fair, Louis de Souza Aguiar, published a book addressed to the preservation agencies in a last attempt to avoid the ongoing dismantling of his father’s construction. The book included many opinions of different individuals against the demolition who recognized the historic significance and artistic value of the edification for Brazil’s nationhood. Wittingly, in the introduction, the author referred to the architecture as “one of the forms of expression of art and culture of a people,” arguing that “its evolution at times characterizes defining moments of its story.”²⁰⁶ In the same direction of Paulo Santos, the Engineering Club, the IHGB, and the Brazilian Architects Institute, Souza Aguiar’s efforts to avoid the erasure of the palace reiterated the value of historic testimony attributed to the edification. To oppose the demolition, the author articulated the palace not only with a history of Rio de Janeiro but with a national history. Wrathful, he affirmed that history cannot be made “when organizations responsible for the preservation of artistic and historic values of a nation remain indifferent and silently watch the aggressions suffered by its cultural heritage.”²⁰⁷

²⁰⁶ Louis de Souza Aguiar, *Palácio Monroe: da Glória ao Opróbrio* (Rio de Janeiro, 1976), 1.

²⁰⁷ Louis de Souza Aguiar, *Palácio Monroe*, 1.

Souza Aguiar also addressed the threat of real estate speculation and modernization. He contended, “We see everyday architectural pieces that were part of a determined period of our history, after being nominated and preserved, not resist to the impact of the advance of the economic power in the modern consumer society, in which it is necessary to sell something new even if, in order to do so, one shall sacrifice the values of a remote past that elevated the name of our Fatherland among other nations.”²⁰⁸ Here once again, the categories of past and future appear to be at the core of the dispute between ideas of Brazilian nationhood in the symbolic field of production. The problem of modernization, industrial, and urban development, Souza Aguiar recognized, were priorities of statecraft agents of the time. The mention of a “modern consumer society” expresses a symbolic and ideological distance from the early twentieth-century Brazilian society, when values of modernity materialized in the built environment of the *cidade capital* Rio de Janeiro. The commodification of the “new” and the contempt of the “old,” as Souza Aguiar seemed to understand, often resulted in aggressive attitudes towards the built environment representative of the past.

It is not wrong to say, therefore, that the national developmentalism adopted in the 1950s and enhanced during the military dictatorship in the 1960s and 1970s rejected the invented traditions of the beginning of the century that brought Brazil closer to the European nations and the United States. Economic historian Eduardo Navarro Stotz referred to the “modernizing role” of the military dictatorship that, he contended, involved diffusing certain values that were fundamental to the expansion of capitalism. According to Stotz, “the military regime sought to convey, in official propaganda, the identification between notions of *pátria* [fatherland] and

²⁰⁸ Louis de Souza Aguiar, *Palácio Monroe*, 1.

progress.”²⁰⁹ The destruction of the Monroe Palace signified the fall of a material and ideological construction. It embodied the victory of a conception of *Brasilidade* over its alternatives, and the prominence of the future over the past.

²⁰⁹ Eduardo Navarro Stotz, “As faces do moderno Leviatã: ideologia, poder político e classes sociais no regime military,” In Maria Amélia Melo (org.), *Vinte anos de resistência: alternativas da cultura no regime military* (Rio de Janeiro: Espaço e Tempo), 1986, 26.

CONCLUSION

The Monroe Palace as a material artifact was dismantled twice in its century-long history, but the physical destruction of the palace was just one piece of a broader, more abstract process of change over time. In the ideological dimension, a disembodied national building traveled through space and time and manifested in the physical world through the pavilions in Chicago, Saint Louis, and New York, as well as in the Monroe Palace in Rio and in the pavilion in Brussels. This disembodied national building refers to the multiple meanings and ideologies of nationhood, modernity, modernization, tradition, past, and future that were attributed to those physical constructions. For every time and space through which it existed, the disembodied national building acquired different meanings that reflected broader political, economic, and cultural circumstances in Brazil and often responded to particular nation-building narratives of the United States. As this thesis has demonstrated, the mutilations in the disembodied building served as a case study to understand the maturation of Brazil's ideologies of nationhood in the twentieth century.

During the Chicago World's Fair, the disembodied national building responded to the necessity of inventing a republican tradition for the country after the Proclamation of the Republic in 1889. Architect Francisco Aguiar and other fair makers attributed specific meanings to the pavilion in 1893 in order to insert Brazil in the realm of civilized, modern nations. Here, the disembodied building was constituted of federalist, republican, and democratic values. Picturesque narratives of time alluded to a common origin story with the United States and a European-inherited past. The country's debut on the stage of modernity, however, was cut short

by the spatial narrative of the fair and the broader unifying language that homogenized South (or Latin) American countries.

Eleven years later, in Saint Louis, the disembodied national building manifested in the physical world through a bigger, improved, and better located pavilion. The very same meanings once expressed in Chicago were now put forth to reinforce the country's readiness to forget the dark past of colonization and enslavement and move forward as a republic. French and American ideals of liberty, equality, and democracy based one of the country's most significant participations at world's fairs. The physical building signified the illusion of progress as something tangible that ignored social, urban, and economic contradictions just two decades after the abolition of slavery. Brazilian intellectual elites used the disembodied and physical buildings to respond to the spatial narrative of the fair and its intrinsic idea of American cultural hegemony.

Later, this research showed how the cultural changes in 1920s Brazil prompted intellectual elites to reject the original disembodied national building that manifested in the physical world in Chicago and Saint Louis. This time, the physical construction followed the disembodied national building from Saint Louis to Rio de Janeiro, where it held its attributed meanings for at least two decades. During the Rio de Janeiro World's Fair, however, those statecraft agents sought a nationalistic and more authentic narrative of time that embraced colonial traditions. While the physical construction - now called Monroe Palace - housed the fair administration office, the disembodied building manifested its new attributed meanings in the spatial narrative of the event with a strong presence of the neocolonial architectural style. Brazil inverted the power relations with the United States by imposing neocolonial narrative and style on the American pavilion, the second closest pavilion to the Monroe Palace. Based on the idea of

a modernizing tradition, the spatial narrative indicated a strong political proximity between both countries, but now with new emphasis on what made Brazil unique in face of other modern nations.

When Getulio Vargas shut down the senate and emptied the physical building of significance and people in 1937, the disembodied national building incorporated new ideologies of national identity based on modernization, industrial development, and an invented future that obscured the colonial past. This new narrative of time rejected neocolonial motifs and style to embrace modernist, sober, and functionalist architecture. Two years after Vargas' coup d'état, in New York, Lucio Costa and Oscar Niemeyer materialized the disembodied building in the Brazilian pavilion. Its contemporary architecture combined elements that could represent Brazil as both tropical and modern, challenging the idea that these terms were mutually exclusive. The building expressed an economically self-sufficient, tropical idea of Brazil that was largely based on an invented future that was yet to become true.

Since the end of World War II, the disembodied national building encapsulated principles of modernization that contrasted with the early twentieth-century ideas of modernity. Here, modernization meant real estate speculation, new urbanistic values, increasing nationalistic development, and industrial progress. Meanwhile, in the physical world, the Monroe Palace suffered a gradual, but violent loss of meaning. With the transfer of the federal district from Rio de Janeiro to Brasilia, economic policies of national developmentalism reached the zenith, and solidified new narratives of time in the public sphere that completely rejected the country's past - both the colonial and the republican pasts. With its new attributed meanings, the disembodied building expressed itself both in the city of Brasilia and the national pavilion in Brussels during

the world's fair of 1958. Both manifestations in the physical world represented the repudiation of everything that used to represent *Brasilidade* in the first half of the twentieth century.

With the increasing state authoritarianism after the military coup of 1964, debates in the public sphere of what constituted Brazil's cultural identity largely emphasized the importance of a nationalistic image of the country based on progress and economic development. Tragically, and even paradoxically, the new meanings attributed to the disembodied national building resulted in the dismantlement of the Monroe Palace and the erasure of its historic significance. As a place of memory, the palace served as a material reminder of a specific national past once highlighted in Chicago and Saint Louis in the face of a rapidly changing nation. Often characterized as a *trambolho* (a large, material burden) that harmed urban mobility and occupied a valuable space in the city, the palace and its disfigured architecture were the target of criticism among politicians, architects, and artists. When intellectuals involved with historic preservation tried to nominate the palace as a historic site, they were at a disadvantage against those who denigrated the palace's artistic significance and ignored the historical meanings attributed to it.

The process through which this abstract, disembodied national building matured into a new, future-oriented, ideology of national identity speaks to more profound disputes in the symbolic field of production between different narratives of the Brazilian past and future. Those narratives of time changed since the Proclamation of the Republic in 1889 and throughout the twentieth century, manifesting in different forms through the built environment, architecture, and urban planning. The history of the Monroe Palace in the physical world, and the disembodied, ideological, national construction that was constructed with it, illustrates how Brazil mobilized its past and future to convey ideas of modernity, modernization, colonial heritage, and republican tradition to the western international community.

The disembodied construction remains, and its volatile nature will adapt to new ideologies of Brazilian nationhood over time. Today, the square where the Monroe Palace once stood, now called Mahatma Gandhi Square, sits on a new underground parking lot, a product of real estate speculation that outgrew preservation policies and the values of the past. But there is still, on a hidden and barely visible pole, next to the street sign that marks the name of the square, a small insignia that resists erasure and challenges the historical silence and emptiness of the site. The small plaque reads: "Monroe Palace." Perhaps it is possible, through this plaque, to remember future generations what happened in that place of memory. Perhaps this one plaque is what reconnects the old Monroe with its disembodied construction, assigning it new meanings. That site is the place where the past still resists in the face of the future that instigate destruction.

EPILOGUE

In the fall of 2021, the Department of History at Colorado State University supported me on a research trip to Saint Louis, Missouri, where I planned to conduct both archival and field research on the grounds of the Saint Louis 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition. Thanks to the invaluable help of Kevin Worthington, the Geospatial Data Manager of the Geospatial Centroid at CSU, I arrived in Saint Louis with a georeferenced historic map of the fair containing vector data stored as polygons that represented the fair buildings. Using ArcGIS FieldMaps, I followed my professor and co-advisor Jared Orsi's suggestion of doing an "act of imagination" at Forest Park, where the fair happened 118 years ago. I walked through non-existent buildings, pathways, and exhibits, and imagined how the message of the fair organizers impacted the visitors' perception of the space. Walking from the Main Entrance of the fair through The Pike, where "exotic" exhibits created a sense of amusement park, I used the data I gathered from archival research on coordinates, height, size, and shape of the buildings to imagine what visitors could have seen during that walk: The answer was the edge of the cupola of the Brazilian pavilion at the horizon hanging over the smaller constructions that surrounded it.

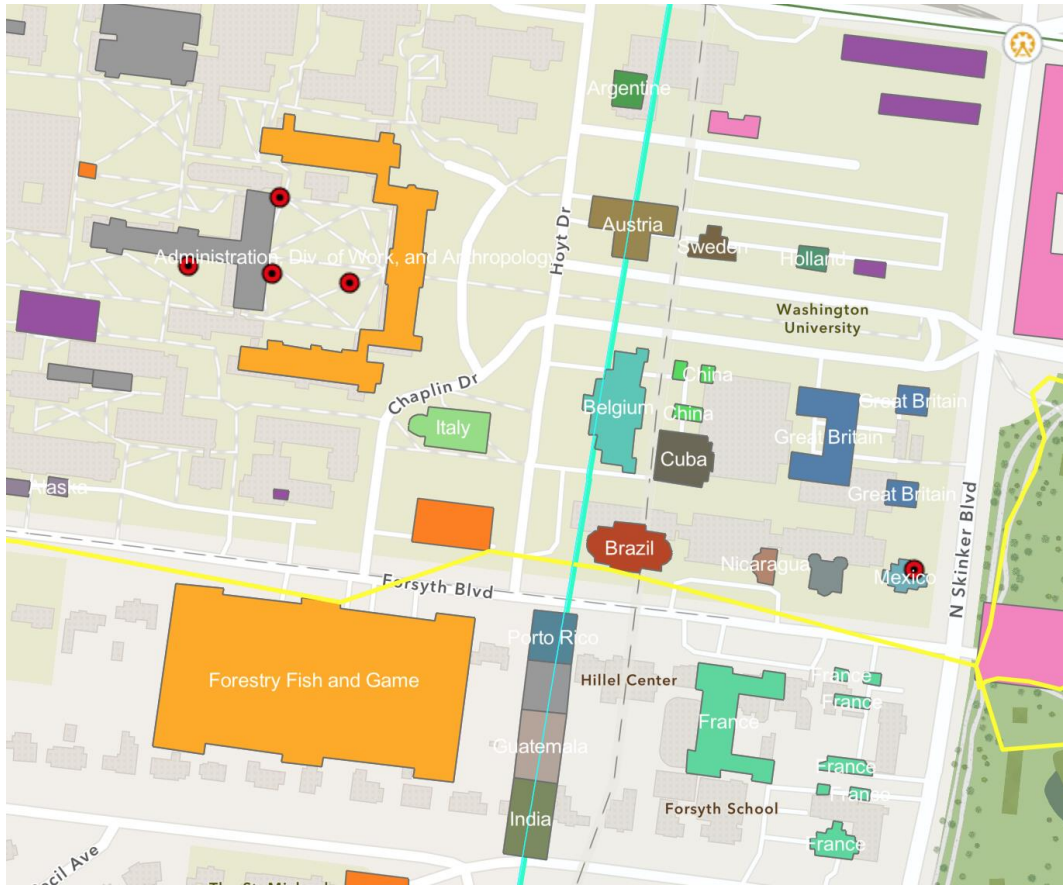


Figure 25: Lucas Avelar, Saint Louis 1904 World's Fair spatial collection WebMap: The Foreign Exhibit. ArcGIS Pro, April 11, 2022.

I was interested in walking through the current landscape and assessing the spatial narrative of the fair with the help of geographic information systems. As Chapter 1 demonstrated, the future Monroe Palace was the highest building on the grounds, and it stood right south of Cuba, China, and Belgium, west of Nicaragua and Mexico, and north of Puerto Rico, Guatemala, and India.²¹⁰ The French complex and the British pavilion stood a couple hundred feet away from Brazil to the southeast and northeast respectively. Horizontally aligned,

²¹⁰ Sources vary on numbers; some reported a 185 feet tall cupola while others said that the building rose 285 feet, for example. In both cases, the Brazilian pavilion would still be the tallest construction in the perimeter. Missouri Historical Society, Vertical Files: "Wreckers begin to demolish stately Brazilian building," (c.1905). St. Louis Globe-Democrat, "Brazil's Lofty Building Begun: Southern Republic to Have Pavilion with Towering Dome", November 19, 1903.

Austria, Sweden, and Holland separated Argentina from the other countries, and the Argentine building was less than 900 feet north of Brazil. The administration building with all its grandeur had its façade oriented to the east towards the center of the foreign exhibits. Italy, the closest foreign pavilion to the administration building, was only a couple hundred feet northwest of Brazil.

When I arrived at the site of Brazil's pavilion, I noticed it was a place of emptiness and historical silence much similar to what I had seen in Rio. By the end of the fair, newspapers reported the process of dismantling the building that required at least sixty-five men's workforce. The same newspaper clip I encountered in the archives of the Missouri Historical Society described the building as "one of the most difficult to remove" due to its steel construction. The intended permanency of other buildings, such as the administration building that was later incorporated to Washington University's campus, determined the materials used in their construction. In the Brazilian pavilion's case, however, intended permanency did not necessarily mean fixing the palace in space, but fixing it in time.

WRECKERS BEGIN TO DEMOLISH STATELY BRAZILIAN BUILDING.

HANDSOME PAVILION, ERECTED AT A COST OF \$150,000, WILL
SOON DISAPPEAR FROM THE WORLD'S FAIR GROUNDS
—ONE OF THE MOST DIFFICULT TO REMOVE.



—Murlilo Photo.

BRAZILIAN PAVILION AFTER WRECKERS BEGIN WORK.

The Brazilian pavilion, which was adjudged one of the prettiest buildings on the World's Fair grounds, has come under the wrecker's ax, and its beauties will live in memory only. The state-ly structure, with its imposing columns, three golden domes, and immense windows of stained glass, excited universal admiration in those who attended the Exposition, and its demolition is met with expressions of regret from all who visit the Fair grounds.

In addition to being one of the prettiest buildings, the pavilion was also probably the most substantial structure on the Fair, aside from the permanent buildings, being of steel construction, with double flooring, lined with felt. Floors and stairways were of hardwood finished with costly Brazilian tiling at the portals.

The entrance to the pavilion was had through four big double glass doors, while

150 large windows furnished light. In all, sixty-five columns, each 1½ feet in diameter, are scattered about the building, the outer ones being artistically ornamented.

Highest on the Grounds.

The Brazilian pavilion was the highest building on the grounds, rising 285 feet, having about the same height as the Ferris wheel. It was erected at a total cost of \$150,000.

The pavilion is being wrecked by the Chicago wrecking company, under the supervision of W. O. Adams, a former member of the St. Louis police force. On account of its height and the costly glasses and flooring, it is probably the most difficult building on the grounds to demolish. Sixty-five men have been working on it for a week, but the main outlines remain untouched. The glass and floors, however, have now been removed and the work of demolition will proceed with greater rapidity.

Figure 26: Newspaper Clip, Vertical Files, Missouri Historical Society.

I was not sure if I would find any reminiscent material evidence of the presence of the construction in Saint Louis. I did, however, expect to find something. Not necessarily a plaque that read “Brazilian pavilion,” as I eventually found one that read “Monroe Palace” in Rio; rather, something that spoke to the legacy of the fair in the cultural landscape and the built environment of the city and the park in particular. Although there were no signs of permanency on the site of the Brazilian construction, there were continuities in the built environment and the organizational layout of the space that spoke to the world’s fair. Walking around the grounds of the fair, I collected vector data stored as points that represent signs of permanency, continuity, or legacy between 1904 and 2021: plaques, monuments, historic interpretation signs, or buildings of the fair that are now incorporated into the landscape of the city. They are represented as red points on the map.

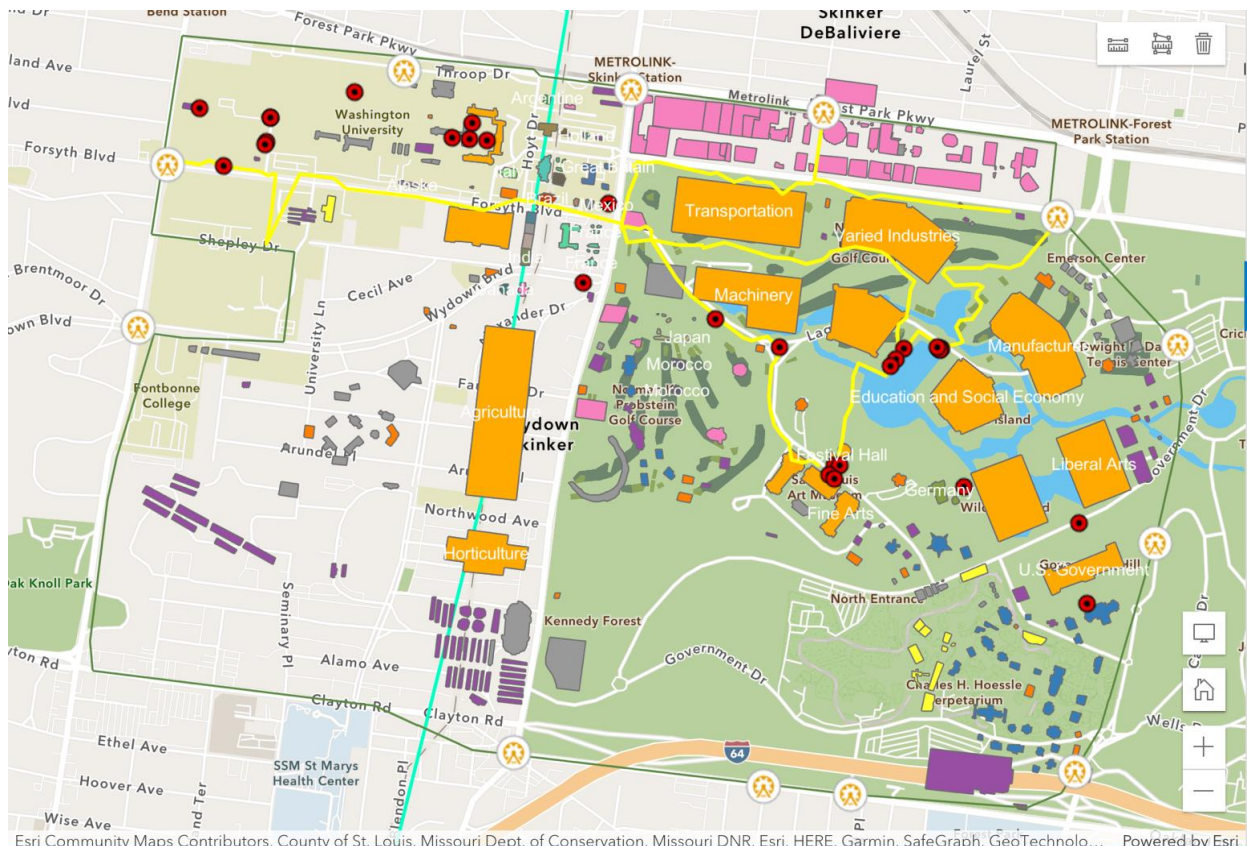


Figure 27: Lucas Avelar, Saint Louis 1904 World's Fair spatial data collection WebMap. ArcGIS Pro, April 11, 2022.

Not all the red points are equally significant, but some of them give us insight about continuity and permanency of the fair and its message in the physical world. A good example I found was a hidden plaque on a bench, close to the Main Entrance of the fair, that said “Memorial to Dr. Samuel W Jackson, Sold tickets at the 1904 World’s Fair.” Archival research provided me with enough information on the location of the entrances of the fair and the different types of access to it (train, vehicle, walking), and it led me to believe that the tickets booth in 1904 was close in location to where this small, but significant memorial sign is today. In the data point’s attributes table, I signaled if the point constituted a historic interpretation sign, what kind of land cover type it was (park, campus, urban), visibility quality (scale of 1 to 3), access quality (binary scale of 0 or 1), and related date the point is associated with.

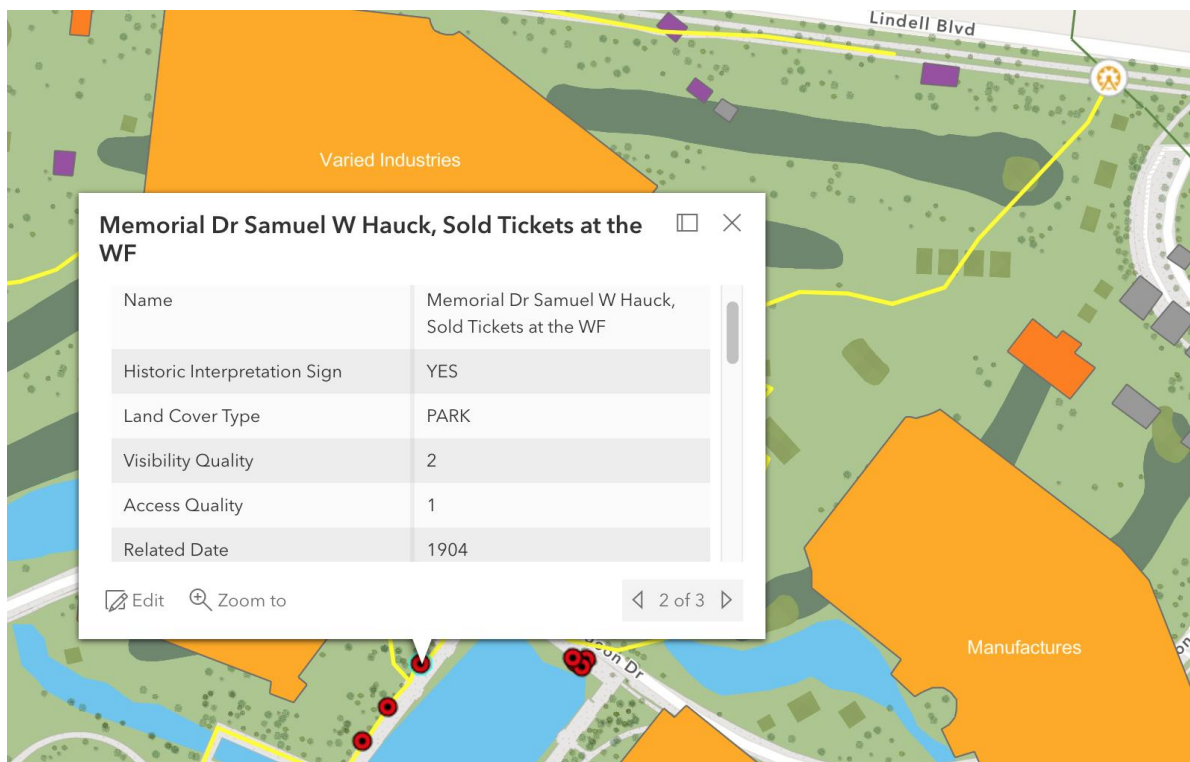


Figure 28: Lucas Avelar, Saint Louis 1904 World's Fair spatial data collection WebMap: Memorial to Samuel W Hauck. ArcGIS Pro, April 11, 2022.



Figure 29: Lucas Avelar, Photo taken during field research on the grounds of the fair: Memorial to Dr. Samuel W. Hauck who sold tickets at the fair. November 12, 2021.

Another example of correlation between today's landscape and the fair is a monument dedicated to Friedrich Ludwig Jahn, a German nationalist and gymnastics educator who is credited with the founding of German-American gymnastic clubs. The monument was inaugurated in October of 1913 and then rededicated in August of 1972. Interestingly, despite the time distance between the end of the fair and the monument's inauguration, the location of the monument presents correlation with the location of the former German pavilion during the fair.

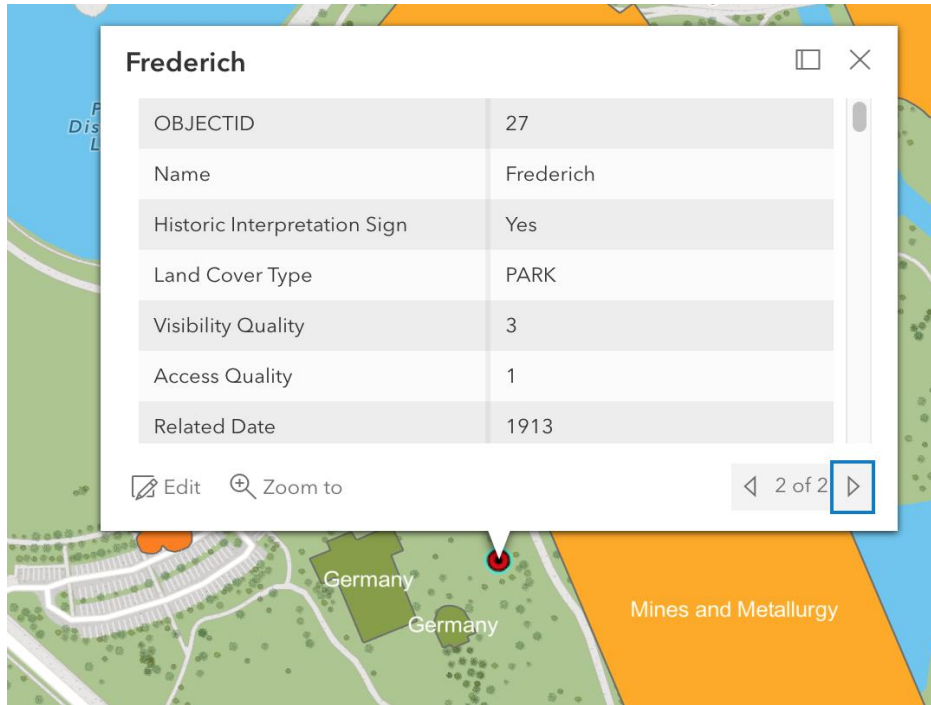


Figure 30: Lucas Avelar, Saint Louis 1904 World's Fair spatial data collection WebMap: The German Pavilion (1903-1905) and the Monument to Friedrich Ludwig Jahn (1913-2022). ArcGIS Pro, April 11, 2022.



Figure 31: Lucas Avelar, Photo taken during field research: Monument to Friedrich Ludwig Jahn. November 12, 2021.

In a different direction, the vector data stored as lines indicate the paths that I took on the grounds of the fair. With the georeferenced historic map of the fair, I tried to assess to what extent the current layout of the space benefits from continuities of the spatial organization of the fair. Another interesting question would be how long visitors took from the main entrances of the fair to the foreign exhibit, the Brazilian pavilion, or the U.S. Government building. What did they see first when walking through the Administration Entrance, the closest entrance to the foreign exhibit? What were the intended paths for visitors to take, according to fair makers expectations, and what does that tell us about the message and the perception of ideologies of national identity, American imperialism, and cultural hegemony?

As much as I would have liked to run a more in-depth spatial analysis of the collected data and assess the legacy and heritage of the fair on today's cultural landscape and in the built environment, finding the time during a 2-year graduate program was a determining obstacle. The spatial data collection and analysis was left unfinished, but it opened my eyes for further research possibilities. I hope to have the opportunity to do the same type of spatial data collection on the grounds of Chicago's Columbian Exposition and New York 1939 World's Fair. I hope to understand how these events embodied a spatial narrative of modernity and historicized notions of the past and the future of Latin American nations, and what patterns of urban changes over time can be recognized through the examination of these spaces using interdisciplinary methodologies of digital humanities and GIS. What else can space tell us about time?

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