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RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Intersection of Brazil's Racial Ideology and African Foreign Policy: The Geisel Administration at the Second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC'77)

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Abstract

This article examines the ways in which Brazil's African foreign policy during the Ernesto Geisel administration (1974–9) utilised notions of 'racial democracy' and the nation's Africanity in framing itself as an intrinsic partner to the continent across the Atlantic. It does this through an analysis of Brazil's involvement at the Second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC'77, 15 January–12 February 1977), hosted in Lagos, Nigeria. The international event celebrated past and present contributions of Black and African cultures to global civilisation. An assessment of the Brazilian government's delegation to FESTAC'77 shows how the Geisel administration attempted to depict Brazil as a harmoniously integrated society, where, through a historic process of mixing, the nation's racial identity was united into an equitable whole. In contrast, the propagation of these ideas at FESTAC'77 left the regime's racial ideology vulnerable to attack from international and domestic audiences.

Keywords: racial democracy; foreign policy; FESTAC'77; Ernesto Geisel; race; civil awakening; decolonisation; military dictatorship; Brazil; Nigeria; Gilberto Freyre; Abdias do Nascimento; Gilberto Gil; national identity; culture

During the Brazilian dictatorship (1964–85), successive military-led governments proclaimed the nation's inherent racial equality, rooted in the belief of a 'racial democracy' – an idea that society was formed through a historic process of mixing that created a culturally and ethnically homogenous Brazilian race. Considerable scholarship has challenged this interpretation of Brazilian race relations as nothing more than an 'insidious mirage disguising a bleak and violent landscape of racism' against non-white Brazilians, a tool used by a white elite to sustain their position at

the apex of the racial hierarchy.[1] While recent research has added nuance to this debate, by outlining the complexity of one's identity not being exclusively defined by the colour of one's skin and the very real association of Brazilians with a mixed racial identity, something of a consensus has been built around racial democracy shrouding Brazil's historic and contemporary racial inequalities.[2] Yet, one area of research that has been insufficiently covered is the ways in which Brazil's military dictatorship utilised these notions of racial democracy for their own political objectives and to what extent this came to undermine its very conceptualisation.

This article examines the dictatorship's propagation of the nation's racial democracy in its attempts to construct economic and political relations with African countries, and how this, in contrast, enabled a moment of resistance by domestic and international actors, who challenged the regime's conceptualisation of Brazil as a racially equitable society. Prior to 1974, President Emílio Garrastazu Médici's (1969–74) focus on the industrialisation of the Brazilian economy and the brutal suppression of regional leftist insurgents left little room for an expansive foreign policy.[3] However, once Ernesto Geisel took office in 1974, Brazil's *milagre econômico* (economic miracle, 1968–73) had come to pass and his presidency (1974–9) started a process of political liberalisation and democratisation known as *abertura* (political opening, 1974–85). During this time, Geisel engaged in a foreign policy of 'Pragmatismo Responsável' (Responsible Pragmatism), under which international objectives were pursued 'without commitments to any ideological principles which could hold back the search for Brazilian national interests'.[4] Part of this policy was a strengthening of ties with decolonising Africa, where the economic and political potential of newly independent countries was leveraged by what Geisel saw as the 'secret weapons' of Brazil's unique African identity and supposed racial equality in positioning the South American country as an intrinsic partner for its transatlantic neighbours.[5] While the government aimed to use Brazil's 'racial democracy' as part of their African foreign policy, the contradictions in this ideology came to be exposed by a range of critical actors who, in a moment

[1]Quotation from Paulina L. Alberto, *Terms of Inclusion. Black Intellectuals in Twentieth Century Brazil* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), p. 246; see also Marilyn Grace Miller, *Rise and Fall of the Cosmic Race. The Cult of Mestizaje in Latin America* (Austin, TX; University of Texas Press, 2004), pp. 96–119; Emilia Viotti da Costa, 'The Myth of Racial Democracy', in *The Brazilian Empire: Myths and Histories* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1985), pp. 234–46.

[2]Marshall C. Eakin, *Becoming Brazilians: Race and National Identity in Twentieth-Century Brazil* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017); Michael G. Hanchard, *Orpheus and Power: The* Movimento Negro *of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, Brazil, 1945–1988* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994); Patricia de Santana Pinho, *Mama Africa: Reinventing Blackness in Bahia* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010); Peter Wade, 'Rethinking *Mestizaje*: Ideology and Lived Experience', *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 37: 2 (2005), pp. 239–57.

[3]Thomas E. Skidmore, *The Politics of Military Rule in Brazil, 1964–85* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 105–60.

[4]Leticia de Abreu Pinheiro, 'Foreign Policy Decision-Making under the Geisel Government: the President, the Military and the Foreign Ministry', unpubl. PhD diss, London School of Economics and Political Science, 1994, p. 124.

[5]In the 1980 census, 46% of Brazil's population considered themselves non-white: Edward E. Telles, *Race in Another America: The Significance of Skin Colour in Brazil* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), p. 30; Jerry Dávila, *Hotel Trópico: Brazil and the Challenge of African Decolonization, 1950–1980* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), p. 8.

of global Black consciousness, opposed the state's racial narrative. In this article, an investigation into the Geisel administration's involvement at the Second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC'77, 15 January–12 February 1977), hosted in Lagos, Nigeria, highlights these contradictions, providing an analysis into how the regime's attempts to build an African foreign policy through its racial ideology were challenged domestically and internationally by a range of non-state actors.[6]

FESTAC'77, which saw 15,000 international artists and officials participate and over 35,000 visitors attend, celebrated the past and present contribution of Black and African cultures to global civilisation.[7] The majority of the official participants came from the 75 countries and communities that were formally invited to be part of the FESTAC'77 International Secretariat, including a wide range of nations from Africa and regions such as the Caribbean, North America, Europe and Australasia. Each delegation paid a US$10,000 registration fee to be included in the organisation and implementation of the Festival's activities.[8] The Brazilian delegation, which led the South American contingent of the Secretariat and was constructed by the military regime, participated in seven categories of the festival's events: Art, Dance, Music, Drama, Film, Literature and Academia (Colloquium). Brazil's main contribution was its art exhibition – *The Impact of African Culture on Brazil* – in which an array of sculptures, paintings, drawings and engravings by 13 contemporary Brazilian artists was presented. In the other categories, Brazil brought six academics, three films, and two artists each for music and dance.[9] The Brazilian delegation was assembled with a range of non-white and white participants, who were selected by the state to represent the nation's Africanity. However, as argued in the Rio de Janeiro-based newspaper *SINBA* (founded by the Sociedade de Intercâmbio Brasil–África (Society for Brazilian–African Exchange)), while this Festival created a chance for Afro-Brazilians to send 'legitimate representatives' of the nation's Black culture to the international arena, 'they had no right to a word'.[10] Therefore, FESTAC'77 provides a unique opportunity to examine how the Brazilian government attempted to impose its vision of Africanity and Blackness onto domestic and international audiences, and deny Black Brazilians the right to select and represent themselves. Yet, in reality, the event manifested as a moment of acute vulnerability for the regime, as the Festival's internationalised debates around Black

[6]There has been considerable scholarship written on FESTAC'77. For a contemporary account: Arthur Monroe, 'FESTAC 77 – The Second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture: Lagos, Nigeria', *The Black Scholar*, 9: 1 (1977), pp. 34–7. For post-colonial African perspectives: Andrew Apter, *The Pan-African Nation: Oil and the Spectacle of Culture in Nigeria* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2005); Etienne Lock, 'The Intellectual Dimension of the Second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC 1977) and its Relevance Today', *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 56: 1 (2022), pp. 37–55.

[7]FESTAC'77 International Secretariat, *Visitors Guide to the Festival* (Lagos: FESTAC'77, 1977), p. 1.

[8]FESTAC'77 International Secretariat, *FESTAC'77 Spotlight* (Lagos: FESTAC'77, 1977), p. 4.

[9]Clarival do Prado Valladares (ed.), *The Impact of African Culture on Brazil: Brazilian Exhibition, II FESTAC, Lagos, Nigeria*, ed. (Brasilia: Ministério das Relações Exteriores e Ministério da Educação e Cultura, 1977).

[10]'Quem deveria ter representado o Brasil no Festival de Arte Negra na Nigéria?', *SINBA*, no. 1 (July 1997), p. 4.

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and African identity enabled non-state actors to undermine the regime's narrative of racial equality and expose these weaknesses to domestic audiences.[11]

A recent wave of historiography, which focuses on the Brazilian state of Bahia in the latter half of the twentieth century, has identified how racial democracy and a region's African identity can be manipulated and appropriated for the interests of the ruling classes. In this scholarship, local governmental institutions are shown to have appropriated the region's heightened African identity in marketing Bahia as the 'Mecca of Blackness', with the aim of attracting tourists looking for an authentic Afro-diasporic experience.[12] A breadth of scholarship has highlighted an important dichotomy between the amplification and celebration of Bahia's African identity, for the purpose of developing the region's tourism industry, and the reality of the non-white population's second-class citizenry. This article was inspired by these arguments, and follows a similar dichotomy between the Geisel administration's appropriation of Brazil's African identity, for the purpose of developing an independent foreign policy, and the lived reality of Brazil's non-white population. The existing literature on Brazilian race outlines how racial democracy was utilised in the development of the military regime's African foreign policy.[13] However, this article offers a new analysis of how this strategy occurred at the conjuncture of political liberalisation in Brazil and a global movement towards Black consciousnesses and anti-colonialism. Through a study of FESTAC'77, this article is uniquely able to demonstrate how the Geisel administration's propagation of racial democracy, at this moment in time, highlighted the contradictions of this ideology to domestic and international audiences, and consequently came to underscore the non-white population's inequitable position in society.

Through an engagement with an array of both primary and secondary sources, this article contributes a more internationalised perspective of how racial democracy was used by the state and challenged by non-state actors, centring the significance of global Black and African networks in repudiating the state's monopoly on the racial narrative. Academic works by authors such as Gilberto Freyre and Abdias do Nascimento are examined to elucidate the intellectual foundations and critiques of the regime's racial ideology. The quarterly *Resenhas de Política Exterior do Brasil* (Brazilian Foreign Policy Reviews), published by the Ministry of External Relations,

[11]Kimberly Cleveland has used FESTAC'77 as an example of how Afro-Brazilian art was appropriated by the Brazilian government as a 'cultural bridge' for creating relations with Africa between the 1960s and the 1990s: Kimberly Cleveland, 'Afro-Brazilian Art as a Prism: A Socio-Political History of Brazil's Artistic, Diplomatic and Economic Confluences in the Twentieth Century', *Luso-Brazilian Review*, 49: 2 (2012), pp. 102–19; Paulina Alberto outlined how Brazil's FESTAC'77 delegation depicted the nation's African identity as folkloric and summarised the critiques made by Abdias do Nascimento against the military regime during FESTAC'77: Alberto, *Terms of Inclusion*, pp. 252–6.

[12]Case Watkins, *Palm Oil Diaspora: Afro-Brazilian Landscapes and Economies on Bahia's Dendê Coast* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021); Tianna S. Paschel, 'Re-Africanization and the Cultural Politics of Bahianidade', *Souls*, 11: 4 (2009), pp. 423–40; Anadelia A. Romo, *Selling Black Brazil: Race, Nation, and Visual Culture in Salvador, Bahia* (Austin, TX; University of Texas Press, 2022); Pinho, *Mama Africa*. For Bahia as the 'Mecca of Blackness', see Romo, *Selling Black Brazil*, p. 7: 'Today over 80 percent of the state's population … identify as nonwhite, and the state … hosts the largest population of Afrodescendants outside of Nigeria'.

[13]José Flávio Sombra Saraiva, 'Construção e desconstrução do discurso culturalista na política africana do Brasil', *Revista de Informação Legislativa*, 30: 118 (1993), pp. 219–36; Dávila, *Hotel Trópico*.

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are scrutinised, amongst other governmental documents, to provide detail on Geisel's foreign policy. Official FESTAC'77 documents, created by the event's organisers and the Brazilian delegation, provide foundational information about the Festival and are analysed to demonstrate the Geisel administration's depiction of Brazil's Africanity. Furthermore, a wide-ranging engagement with newspaper sources provides insights into what Brazilians domestically knew about FESTAC'77 and how they reacted to it. Cultural reactions to FESTAC'77, such as musical works, interviews and documentaries are also utilised to understand how the official state racial ideology was challenged by non-state actors at the Festival.

The article begins with an overview of the conceptualisation of Brazil's racial democracy and its instrumentalisation in forming an African foreign policy. The main body of the article examines Brazil's involvement at FESTAC'77, addressing three key themes: it firstly outlines how the Brazilian government constructed a delegation that reflected its ideology of racial mixing and equality. It then analyses a dispute between Abdias do Nascimento and Brazil's FESTAC'77 delegation, assessing how the regime's racial ideology was challenged at the Festival. Lastly, it concludes with an examination into how alternative international ideas of Black and African diasporic identity were brought back to domestic audiences in Brazil through artists like Gilberto Gil, and how this came to undermine the state's conceptualisation of race.

The Origins of Brazil's Racial Democracy and African Foreign Policy

The intellectual development and popular dissemination of the belief that Brazil was a society defined by racial equality and mixture was fundamental to the establishment of the nation's African foreign policy that occurred in the 1970s. In the early twentieth century, the place of race in Brazil's national identity was acutely questioned, as the country received the highest number of enslaved Africans in the Americas and was the last to abolish slavery, in 1888.[14] Thomas Skidmore argues that, in the decades following abolition, white ruling classes 'experienced an intense feeling of inferiority vis-à-vis Europe and the United States', as these regions' racialised intellectual theories pervaded Brazilian society and brought shame to the nation's large Afro-descended population.[15] Brazilian intellectuals and artists looked to challenge this inferiority complex and sought 'to explain the originality of Brazilian civilization in terms of its racial and cultural hybridity'.[16] Gilberto Freyre was the prominent voice in this movement; his seminal work, *Casa-Grande e Senzala* (1933), ignited a shift in the nation's racial identification.[17]

[14]Approximately 5.8 million Africans were forcibly taken to Brazil during the trans-Atlantic slave trade: 'Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade – Estimates', https://www.slavevoyages.org/assessment/estimates (URLs last accessed 28 Oct. 2024).

[15]Thomas E. Skidmore, 'Racial Ideas and Social Policy in Brazil, 1870–1940', in Richard Graham (ed.), *The Idea of Race in Latin America, 1870–1940* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1990), p. 11.

[16]Christopher Dunn, *Brutality Garden: Tropicália and the Emergence of a Brazilian Counterculture* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), p. 13.

[17]Published in English as *The Masters and the Slaves: A Study in the Development of Brazilian Civilization*, trans. S. Putnam (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2022).

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Freyre's book argued that Brazil should not be ashamed of its African and Indigenous origins, but rather be proud of a society whose *mestiçagem*[18] created a population that had absorbed all their best attributes. Central to this argument was the Portuguese coloniser's propensity for racial mixing rather than segregation. The geographic position of Portugal in Europe, as a historic crossroads between European and African civilisations, meant that, according to Freyre, the Portuguese were predisposed to accepting a diversity of cultures and peoples into society. Freyre stated that 'it would be difficult to imagine a people more fluctuating than the Portuguese … conferring upon them an easy and relaxed flexibility'.[19] This tranquil nature meant that the Portuguese were inherently prepared to adapt and to integrate a variety of cultures and peoples into their colonial society. Through the sexual glorification of darker-skinned women, which Freyre outlined as a trait originating from the 'mixing' of Portuguese men and 'Moorish women' on the European Peninsula, the Iberian colonisers were inclined to 'taking wives and begetting offspring with a procreative fervor' that generated a 'mestizo population'.[20] Freyre contrasted this with the attitude of Portugal's European colonial counterparts, who pursued violence and segregation, rather than racial mixing and integration:

> The [Portuguese] social policy consisted in the utilization of the natives, chiefly the women, not merely as instruments of labor but as elements in the formation of the family. Such a policy was quite different from that of extermination or segregation followed for so long in Mexico and Peru by the Spanish … and, in a loose way, by the English in North America.[21]

By comparing Portugal's 'social policy' to that of other European colonisers, Freyre highlighted the exceptionalism of its colonial strategy in developing a unique and benevolent *mestiço* nation. Through the presentation of Portugal's 'special … proclivity for sexual and cultural mixing', Freyre's thesis reimagined Brazil's racially mixed identity as a 'national virtue' rather than a source of shame.[22] As a result, Freyre's book became the backbone for the popularisation of the belief that Brazil was a racial democracy, united by commonalities rather than segregated through racial hierarchies.

Freyre's thesis was part of a wider cultural movement of the 1920s/1930s, named '*Modernismo*', in which intellectuals and artists attempted to separate Brazil's cultural identity from that of European dominance. Racial democracy supplanted previous mainstream beliefs in the 'white colonial cultural' supremacy; elements of

[18]'*Mestiçagem*' is a Portuguese word that can be simply defined as the mixing of races. Yet, in the period under study, the word came to depict the historic process of social and genetic mixing in the nation of Brazil that created a supposedly modern and equitable Brazilian people. This idea concealed the reality of the nation's racial inequalities and can be perceived as derogatory to the lived experiences of non-white Brazilians. The word '*mestiçagem*' is used in this article to refer to the intellectual foundations that underpinned the military regime's racial ideology.

[19]*Ibid*., p. 7.

[20]*Ibid*., pp. 10–18.

[21]*Ibid*., p. 24.

[22]Dávila, *Hotel Trópico*, p. 12.

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African-descended culture like *samba de morro* were incorporated into a distinct Brazilian cultural character.[23] While Freyre was a fundamental figure in promoting *mestiçagem* at the heart of this new national identity, he was also fundamentally critical of the elitist São Paulo- and Rio de Janeiro-oriented *Modernismo*, as he wanted to create a more regionalist modernity that elevated the intellectual and cultural rigour of his native home in the northeast of Brazil.[24] Nonetheless, Paulina Alberto has outlined how the Getúlio Vargas regime (1930–45) utilised *Modernismo* as a political tool to proclaim a citizenry which, rather than being 'divided by race, ethnicity, and language', was united under the all-encompassing conceptualisation of '*Brasilidade*' (Brazilianness).[25] The Vargas regime enacted policies that welcomed typically Afro-descended cultural elements into the national identity, such as pronouncing the previously illegal *capoeira* as the national sport in 1937 and decriminalising the Afro-Brazilian religion *candomblé* in 1938.[26] Freyre himself had a complicated relationship with the Vargas regime: he self-exiled in 1930, supported an emerging opposition candidate José Américo de Almeida in 1938, and was imprisoned by the state in 1942. However, an 'ambiguous relationship' was created, where despite Freyre being critical of the state's authoritarianism, he allowed Vargas to instrumentalise the ideas of *mestiçagem* and racial democracy into the conceptualisation of *Brasilidade* and, consequently, assumed an instrumental role in the development of the country's identity.[27] Racial democracy was thus used as a political instrument by the Vargas regime to 'homogenize and completely integrate all its [Brazil's] inhabitants into one people' as a way of winning 'popular support and developing a specific political agenda'.[28]

Attempts to build African relations using these ideas of racial democracy arose briefly in the early 1960s, where Presidents Jânio Quadros (1961) and João Goulart (1961–4) pursued an independent foreign policy that challenged the bi-polar Cold War international system. This strategy was evident in a paper written by Quadros, 'Brazil's New Foreign Policy' (1961), in which he stated: 'Our country should become the link, the bridge, between Africa and the West, since we are so intimately bound to both peoples.'[29] In this statement Quadros highlighted the origins of using racial ideology in developing an independent African foreign policy. He emphasised how Brazilians, Africans and the people of the West were 'intimately bound' together. Such an assertion suggests a Freyrean logic, according to which Brazil's mixed population placed the country in a unique position to understand the needs of both peoples. Freyre confirmed this view at a lecture about African influences on Brazil's *mestiço* population, given to the Federação das Associações Portuguesas do Brasil in 1962: 'I believe it was from some of these ideas

[23]Styliane Philippou, 'Modernism and National Identity in Brazil, or How to Brew a Brazilian Stew', *National Identities*, 7: 3 (2005), p. 253.

[24]Ana Carolina dos Santos Marques, 'A presença de Gilberto Freyre na formação cultural e política brasileira dos anos 30', *Spanish and Portuguese Review*, 3 (2017), p. 33.

[25]Alberto, *Terms of Inclusion*, p. 110.

[26]Philippou, 'Modernism', p. 253.

[27]Gustavo Mesquita, 'Gilberto Freyre e o Estado Novo: a trajetória de uma relação ambígua', *Cadernos do Desenvolvimento*, 8: 12 (2013), pp. 207–29.

[28]Eakin, *Becoming Brazilians*, p. 25; Paschel, 'Re-Africanization', p. 429.

[29]Jânio Quadros, 'Brazil's New Foreign Policy', *Foreign Affairs*, 40: 1 (1961), p. 24.

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[*mestiçagem*] that President Jânio Quadros took inspiration for a renewal of Brazil's foreign policy, which is still being followed by the current and illustrious President of the Republic of Brazil [Goulart].'[30]

However, after the 1964 military coup, the independent foreign policy developed by Quadros and Goulart cooled, as successive military leaders focused on a 'domestic repressive campaign' against subversive internal forces.[31] Attention to an African foreign policy returned only during the Médici presidency in the early 1970s. As the country exited its period of rapid economic growth (the *milagre econômico* of 1968–73, with 11 per cent annual growth) and was left exposed to the 1973 international oil crisis, Brazil found itself in need of Angolan and Nigerian oil resources and the opportunities to connect with developing markets across decolonising Africa.[32] However, African countries were suspicious of relations with Brazil for two reasons: one was Brasilia's close ties with Portugal, which continued to hold onto its African colonies beyond the initial wave of decolonisation that occurred in the 1960s; the second was Brazil's strong economic relations with apartheid South Africa, its largest African trading partner.[33] Both these factors resulted in Brazil being seen as a de facto supporter of colonialism and racism in Africa.[34]

When Geisel took office in March 1974, Africa became the focal point of his new foreign policy strategy, entitled 'Responsible Pragmatism', whereby domestic ideology would no longer be a restraint to finding external solutions to problems such as the country's sliding trade deficit and the long-term desire for a fairer international economic system.[35] The Carnation Revolution (April 1974), which heralded the end of Portugal's authoritarian 'Estado Novo' government and guaranteed the country's decolonisation from the continent, provided Geisel with the launching pad for his African foreign policy. The previously contradictory stance of supporting decolonisation while backing Portugal's presence in Africa was now avoidable. This was capitalised upon when Brazil became the first country to recognise independent Angola's Marxist Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (MPLA) government (11 November 1975), which went a considerable way towards attaining

[30]Gilberto Freyre, *O Brasil em face das Áfricas negras e mestiças* (Rio de Janeiro: Federação das Associações Portuguesas, 1962), p. 39.

[31]Benjamin Cowan, 'Sex and the Security State: Gender, Sexuality and "Subversion" at Brazil's Escola Superior de Guerra, 1964–1985', *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 16: 3 (2007), pp. 459–81; quote p. 460; Skidmore, *The Politics of Military Rule in Brazil*, pp. 105–10.

[32]In 1973, 80% of Brazil's oil came from imports, which resulted in Brazil's oil bill increasing by 299% between 1973 and 1974 and its overall Trade Index dropping by 19%: Matías Spektor, 'Origens e direção do Pragmatismo Ecumênico e Responsável (1974–79)', *Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional*, 47: 2 (2004). p. 198; Pinheiro, 'Foreign Policy Decision-Making under the Geisel Government', p. 113; Ministry of External Relations, *Brazil: Resources and Possibilities* (Brasilia: Ministry of External Relations, 1976), p. 503.

[33]Jerry Dávila, 'Brazilian Race Relations in the Shadow of Apartheid', *Radical History Review*, 119 (2014), pp. 122–45.

[34]'Gana recebe com cautela visita de Mário Gibson', *Jornal do Brasil* [Rio de Janeiro], no. 195 (1 Nov. 1972), p. 3.

[35]In 1974, Brazil had its largest annual trade deficit as a percentage of GDP (–5.68) between the years 1960 and 2024: 'External Balance on Goods and Services (% of GDP) – Brazil', https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NE.RSB.GNFS.ZS?locations=BR.

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'the confidence and sympathies' of African countries in erasing Brazil's 'past neglect of the Portuguese colonies'.[36] Yet what still remained was the sense that Afro-Brazilians were treated as secondary citizens in Brazilian society, which subsequently 'came to cause large difficulties for the government maintaining commercial and cultural relations with the African countries'.[37] With the contradiction of relations with Portugal nullified, Geisel's primary task was to convince African states not only of Brazil's racial harmony but of the uniqueness of the nation's Africanity.

Geisel endeavoured to do this by embarking on a blitz of anti-colonial and anti-racist rhetoric that presented Brazil's identity as intrinsically connected to Africa while also being the ultimate racial democracy. Brazil's position against colonialism and racism was often seen in the government's rhetorical repudiation of South Africa's apartheid. The Geisel administration looked to condemn apartheid while also situating Brazilian society's racial democracy as its 'virtuous' antithesis. In 1976, at the United Nations General Assembly, António Francisco Azerado da Silveira, Minister of Foreign Relations and joint mastermind behind Geisel's 'Responsible Pragmatism', stated: 'Discrimination, segregation and racial hatred constitute one of the maximum violations of human rights. Apartheid practices deserve condemnation, both ethically and legally, as well as politically, because, in addition to offending our moral conscience and transgressing the rights of man, they also represent a risk to peace.'[38] Azerado da Silveira shrewdly weaved the moral issue of racial segregation constituting the 'maximum violation of human rights' into a broader political point about Brazil's support for peace in Africa. The message was clear: Brazil renounced all forms of racial segregation, and its own racial democracy was tangible proof of its condemnation.

Brazil's historic racial mixing was a key element to this argument. This was seen in the statement made by Célio Borja, president of the Brazilian Senate (21 March 1975), when he highlighted how Brazil's unique colonial experience enabled the creation of a racial democracy: 'In truth, it adds to the extraordinary credit of the men of the [Portuguese] empire [the fact] that they knew how to maintain the territorial unity of Brazil [through] the conservation of racial and social democracy, the results of which we are now seeing today, when the national development of peace [comes from] the participation of all Brazilians in society.'[39] This analysis comes from the Freyrean logic that Portugal's 'benevolent' *mestiçagem* created a country where 'all Brazilians' equitably participated in society. Earlier, in 1963, Freyre had made a strikingly similar comment: 'Brazil's development as an American nation has been characterized, both as a colony and as a nation, by the fact that it has made greater progress perhaps than any other country in uniting its own widely differing ethnic and cultural elements into a harmonious and fruitful whole.'[40] Like Freyre, Borja connected the mixing of races with the creation of a

[36]Olga Nazario, 'Pragmatism in Brazilian Foreign Policy: The Geisel Years 1974–79', unpubl. PhD diss., University of Miami, 1983, p. 66.

[37]'Olga de Alaketo: objeto de consume do poder', *Lampião da Esquina* [Rio de Janeiro], no. 18 (Nov. 1979), p. 11.

[38]Ministério das Relações Exteriores, *Resenhas de Política Exterior do Brasil*, no. 14 (1977), p. 60.

[39]Ministério das Relações Exteriores, *Resenhas de Política Exterior do Brasil*, no. 4 (1975), p. 53.

[40]Gilberto Freyre, *Brazil* (Washington, DC: Dept. of Public Information, Pan American Union, 1963), p. 5.

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'peaceful' and 'harmonious' whole: racial democracy. This logic, formulated and developed since Freyre's thesis in 1933, was vital to the construction of anti-colonial and anti-racist arguments made in Geisel's African foreign policy.

In summary, the development of Geisel's African foreign policy relied upon the conceptualisation of the nation as a racial democracy. The creation and implementation of this policy was deeply entangled in the Freyrean logic of *mestiçagem* and the supposedly unique benevolent Portuguese colonisation of Brazil. With the understanding that the development of Brazil's African foreign policy was rooted in ideas of racial democracy, FESTAC'77 will now be used as case study to analyse the manifestation of this intersection. As the Brazilian delegation to FESTAC'77 attempted to depict Brazil as a mixed and equitable society to the international Black and African community, non-state actors at the festival were able to challenge this narrative and set in motion a domestic resistance to the Geisel administration's racial ideology.

FESTAC'77: The Brazilian Delegation's Propagation of the Nation's Racial Democracy to International Audiences

FESTAC'77 took place three years into Geisel's presidency, at a point in which Brazil's foreign policy had already taken significant strides towards a rapprochement with Africa. At the beginning of 1977, after Geisel confirmed in his address to the National Congress that Africa continued to be a 'diplomatic priority' for his administration, FESTAC'77 came as a timely opportunity to solidify the image of Brazil's racial democracy and African identity in front of the world's Black and African community.[41] The Brazilian delegation's official participation propagated the idea of the nation's equitable race relations to international audiences by utilising the Freyrean notions of *mestiçagem* in justifying their strengthening relations with African countries. These notions stretched the boundaries of the stated intentions of FESTAC'77 and resulted in non-state domestic actors challenging their veracity.

The organisers of FESTAC'77 had a clear vision of strengthening a modern and distinct Black and African identity throughout the Afro-diaspora. This vision was explicit in the FESTAC'77 International Secretariat's official aims, which focused on the 'revival and promotion of Black and African cultural values' being 'universally' acknowledged and accepted.[42] The aims were orientated around ideas of Négritude, solidarity amongst Black and African peoples, and the striving towards an African modernity.[43] During a speech at FESTAC'77, Léopold Sédar Senghor, president of Senegal (1960–80), host of the first 'World Festival of Black Arts' (FESMAN, 1966), and godfather of the Négritude movement, stated that there was 'no problem more important for Black people than the problem of Black

[41]Ministério das Relações Exteriores, *Resenhas de Política Exterior do Brasil*, no. 12 (1977), p. 17.

[42]For list of aims: International Festival Committee, *Festac'77* (London: Africa Journal Limited and Lagos: International Festival Committee, 1977), p. 136.

[43]Négritude was a 'cultural and political project' that started in Paris during the 1930s to raise awareness of a distinct Black and African history and culture. During the period of African decolonisation, these sentiments grew throughout the continent and in the diaspora: Gary Wilder, *Freedom Time: Negritude, Decolonization, and the Future of the World* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015), p. 22.

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culture'.[44] Senghor saw that the distinctness and value of 'Black and African cultural values' were being undermined by international racial discrimination. Global solidarity was key to overcoming this, as seen in the invitation of not only Afro-diasporic delegations to FESTAC'77 but also of non-white communities from Australia and India.[45] A considerable challenge to this was shifting from notions of a prehistoric and backwards Black and African culture to a thriving and prosperous international identity. General Olusegun Obasanjo, head of the Nigerian state and host of FESTAC'77, affirmed this at the Festival's opening ceremony: 'The event will certainly lead to the abandonment of the museological approach to our culture, practised by men from other cultures who see it only in terms of prehistoric objects that must occasionally be cleaned.'[46] This required a novel form of African identity 'that was at the same time modern and protected its origins'.[47] These attempts to modernise and internationalise a Black and African identity contrasted starkly with the Brazilian delegation's perceptions of its nation's Africanity.

According to the ideology supported by the military regime, Brazil was a society in which historic racial groups had been mixed into a unified cultural and genetic whole. Any attempt to heighten the contemporary uniqueness of a specific racial group posed a threat to the homogeneity of Brazil's racial democracy. Thus, FESTAC'77's aims to raise a greater global consciousness of a distinct Black and African identity amongst diaspora communities opposed Brazil's position as a racially united society. For instance, Amaury Pedrosa, political commentator for the *Diário de Pernambuco*, critiqued the Festival's vision of a global Black identity that, in his opinion, excluded people of mixed race and was therefore incompatible with Brazil's mixed racial identity: 'These all (from the dark mulatto to the light moreno) cannot be treated as enemies of pure Blacks, as if they were criminals of their own race.'[48] Here Pedrosa highlighted concerns over Brazil's population being excluded and vilified from a transnational Black and African identity, which encouraged those who were deemed 'pure Blacks' to differentiate themselves from a mixed Brazilian identity. Such an analysis aligned with an earlier argument made by Freyre, who in 1962 had stated that 'African politicians' who wanted to 'de-Europeanise Africa' were 'racists as repugnant as the Aryanist'.[49] Freyre was an ally of Portugal's African colonies, which he viewed 'as a present-day laboratory demonstrating the processes of cultural and racial mixture that he described in colonial Brazil'.[50] Therefore, his criticism of anti-imperial African politicians, and the argument made by Pedrosa, followed Freyre's *mestiçagem* hypothesis to its

[44]'Houve o sonho. E a realidade?', *Jornal do Brasil* [Rio de Janeiro], no. 283 (19 Jan. 1977), Caderno B, p. 4.

[45]Sylvia Moore, *The Afro-Black Connection, FESTAC 77: Report for the Dutch Ministry of Culture, Recreation and Social Work* (Amsterdam: Royal Tropical Institute, 1977), p. 11.

[46]'Houve o sonho. E a realidade?'

[47]*Africa, Mundo Novo*, dir. José Antonio Barros Freire (documentary, 1977), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NdV_1Vnc2NE, 4:23.

[48]'Dark mulatto' and 'light moreno' are descriptions of skin colour: Amaury Pedrosa, 'Inclusive, por determinação', *Diário de Pernambuco* [Recife], no. 156 (11 June 1977), p. A-11.

[49]Freyre, *O Brasil em face das Áfricas negras e mestiças*, p. 40.

[50]Dávila, *Hotel Trópico*, p. 15.

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logical conclusion, in which the glorifying or condemning of any specific race was prejudicial to a harmoniously integrated society. For the military regime, this was at the heart of their conceptualisation of racial democracy and went to the root of the delegation's incompatibility with FESTAC'77's promotion of a distinct international Black and African identity.

As a result of this incompatibility, the delegation strategically framed their involvement at FESTAC'77 around *historic* African influences on Brazil's identity, rather than any emphasis on a separate contemporary Afro-Brazilian community within the country. This strategy followed a logic observed by Azerado da Silveira when he welcomed the Kenyan delegation to Itamaraty (headquarters of Brazil's Ministry of Foreign Affairs) in 1975: 'The bonds that unite these nations, Minister, are not born of simple deliberation. They have existed since the most remote times of our nation's formulation, that is, in the origins even of the Brazilian people, that boasts with the pride of its blood and culture received from the neighbouring continent.'[51] Instead of recognising that Afro-Brazilians had a distinct connection to the African continent, Azerado da Silveira celebrated the 'blood and culture' that *all* Brazilians were influenced by. This ambiguous connection suited both the conceptualisation that there were no individual racial groups in Brazil and the ability for the regime to control in what ways African influences contributed to the nation's identity. As a result, the regime was able to positively frame the nation's Africanity, omitting any elements that could have harmed the perception of Brazil's 'benevolent' historic connections with Africa. Therefore, the delegation's reflection of this broad ideology at FESTAC'77 enabled a celebration of Brazil's Africanity while avoiding conformity with the Festival's aims of creating a modern and distinct international Black and African identity.

This can be observed in the name of the Brazilian delegation's official FESTAC'77 book, *The Impact of African Culture on Brazil*, which was carefully titled to avoid any assertion of a separate or modern Afro-Brazilian identity.[52] Ruben Rodrigues dos Santos, journalist at the pro-military regime newspaper *O Estado de S. Paulo*, praised the government for not focusing on any 'nuclei' of African culture within the book's title: 'There is only one "Brazilian culture", which should contain diversified elements that are integrated in it but are never isolated or presented without the characteristics of our very own cultural homogeneity.'[53] Brazil's historic racial mixing was vital to explaining how African culture influenced the nation's identity without being a contemporary 'isolated' characteristic within it. Euro Brandão, Brazilian Minister of Education and Culture, emphasised this point during his speech at the opening of Brazil's FESTAC'77 art exhibition: 'The Brazilian is based on the tripartite formation: European, Amerindian and African.'[54] By highlighting the nation's mixed origins, Brandão made the Freyrean argument that Brazil was historically influenced by African culture, yet no one racial or diasporic group could be distinctly recognised in a modern Brazilian identity.

[51]Ministério das Relações Exteriores, *Resenhas de Política Exterior do Brasil*, no. 5 (1975), p. 64.
[52]Valladares (ed.), *The Impact of African Culture on Brazil*.
[53]'Termina festival de arte negra', *O Estado de S. Paulo* [São Paulo], no. 31,259 (13 Feb. 1977), p. 30.
[54]'Euro Brandão abre festival na Nigéria', *Correio Braziliense* [DF], no. 5,119 (15 Jan. 1977), p. 9.

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As Freyre's *mestiçagem* required genetic and cultural mixing to have taken place in the distant past, it inherently encouraged a historic interpretation of African influences on Brazil's identity that contradicted FESTAC'77's desire to move towards modern representations of Africanity. However, the concept of *mestiçagem* did not demonstrate a historic equitable mixing of all cultures, but rather a hierarchy of influences, at the apex of which were placed European characteristics. As summarised by Patricia de Santana Pinho, in the book *Mama Africa* (2010), the idea of *mestiçagem* still required 'the mixture of races and thus does not overcome the very notion of race'.[55] Brazil's focus on this concept at FESTAC'77 did not prove the country's racial democracy but predisposed the government to follow a narrative that appropriated and misrepresented the country's African identity. This was most evident at the FESTAC'77 Brazilian art exhibition.

The Brazilian National Exhibition, also named *The Impact of African Culture on Brazil*, was one of 13 exhibitions at FESTAC'77; Brazil was the only non-African nation to receive its own show. The art selected for each exhibition was the sole 'responsibility' of the country for whose display it was.[56] For the Brazilian delegation, works from 13 contemporary artists, and various other historic creatives, were selected by Clarival do Prado Valladares, curator of the Exhibition, to represent the country's cultural mixture. In a statement made prior to the Festival, Valladares noted: '[The Exhibition has been] organised by the Brazilian government to show the various aspects of our acculturation, syncretism and ability to create a new existence in the diversity of the universe.'[57] Accordingly, Valladares wanted to demonstrate how African influences were part of a wider amalgamation of different cultural stimuli on Brazilian artistry.[58] For instance, in the official Brazilian FESTAC'77 book, edited by Valladares, one of the selected artists, Miguel dos Santos, was described as 'a mestizo, an authentic Brazilian, with Indian [Indigenous] and African racial traits'.[59] The expression 'authentic Brazilian' implies that Santos was the archetypal citizen, whose mixed 'racial traits' made him the perfect representation of Brazil's amalgamated artistic identity. This terminology was similarly used when describing another selected artist, Francisco Biquiba dy Lafuente Guarany, as an 'authentic Brazilian with predominance of negro ethnic characteristics'.[60] While this description emphasises his African physiognomic traits, Valladares goes on to explain how his long name represents a mixed background (Biquiba: African, Dy Lafuente: European, Guarany: Indigenous), further exemplifying the belief that an 'authentic Brazilian' is an individual who derives from a racial mixture, even if certain 'ethnic characteristics' are predominant in their appearance.

Valladares' depiction of Brazil's racial mixture could also be seen through his selection of artists who were not of 'African or Black origin'.[61] These white artists

[55]Pinho, *Mama Africa*, p. 18.

[56]FESTAC'77 International Secretariat, *FESTAC'77 Spotlight*, pp. 22–3.

[57]Ministério da Educação e Cultura, *Boletim do Conselho Federal de Cultura*, no. 22 (1976), pp. 69–70.

[58]See 'O Brasil em Lagos – I', *Tribuna da Imprensa* [Rio de Janeiro], no. 8,346 (22 Dec. 1976), p. 10, for the selection of non-Black artists.

[59]Valladares (ed.), *The Impact of African Culture on Brazil*, p. 56.

[60]*Ibid*., p. 36.

[61]'Brazil: Example of Ambivalence', *The Times* [London], no. 59,910 (18 Jan. 1977), p. 6.

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were chosen because of the inclusion of African elements in their art. This can be seen in an interview with Valladares, where he defended his selection of the white artist Cândido Portinari's work: 'I chose him because, as one of the most important white Brazilian artists, the Black person appears frequently in his work.'[62] The belief in Brazil's modern homogenous culture, constructed through historic racial mixing, meant that white Brazilians, as much as Black Brazilians, were influenced by African culture. Therefore, for Valladares, the demonstration of African influences on Brazilian art was not just through the selection of African-descended artists, but through the representation of the nation's cultural mixing in the work of all Brazilian artists, irrespective of their racial identification.

Despite Valladares' selection of artists to represent a perceived equitable mixing of artistic cultures, what can be identified was the depiction of a hierarchy of influences, where African and Indigenous art was folklorified and alienated from its origin. Brazil's official FESTAC'77 book stated that: 'The Africans in Brazil were early absorbed into artistic production according to the taste of the whites, and cultural production to the patterns of the original framework perished completely.'[63] Such a statement highlighted a 'whitening ideal', where, in place of an equitable mixing of cultures, the Brazilian delegation showed how the 'primarily white elite' had extracted 'valuable cultural traits' from their distant contacts with Africa,[64] while the 'original framework' of African art had 'perished'. This resulted in the conceptualisation of African art, in its original form, being engulfed by European civilisation and lost as a relic of the past, while Brazil's contemporary Africanity was presented as 'depoliticized' and 'ancient'.[65]

In sum, the objectives of FESTAC'77 to strengthen a global Black and African identity clashed with the Brazilian regime's visualisation of a racially homogenous society. For the Geisel administration to emphasise the nation's Africanity, without highlighting any distinct diasporic identity in society, the delegation relied upon a narrative of *historic* African influences being part of an equitable mixture of cultures. While the propagation of this racial mixture and equality narrative was intended for international audiences and foreign policy objectives, the frailties in the delegation's ideology were exposed by domestic non-state actors who were able to use the Festival as a means of challenging the regime's appropriation of Brazil's Africanity. The article's next section assesses this challenge to the regime's propagation of its racial ideology through the lens of a dispute that occurred at FESTAC'77 between the Afro-Brazilian scholar, Abdias do Nascimento, and the Brazilian delegation.

FESTAC'77: 'Silenced at All Costs' – A Challenge to the State's Racial Narrative

The delegation's presentation of Brazil as a racial democracy at FESTAC'77 contradicted the reality of the non-white population's wide-ranging societal inequalities.

[62]'Festival de Lagos', *Jornal do Brasil* [Rio de Janeiro], no. 279 (15 Jan. 1977), Caderno B, pp. 4–5.
[63]Valladares (ed.), *The Impact of African Culture on Brazil*, p. 83.
[64]Skidmore, *Black into White*, pp. 173, 192.
[65]Alberto, *Terms of Inclusion*, p. 254.

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This contradiction was brought to light through a dispute that occurred during the Festival between the Brazilian delegation and the Afro-Brazilian academic, artist and dramatist Abdias do Nascimento. The clash concerned Nascimento's submission of the paper 'Democracia racial no Brasil: mito ou realidade?' ('Racial Democracy in Brazil: Myth or Reality?') to the FESTAC'77 Colloquium, in which he repudiated the claims that Brazil was a racially equitable society. While interference by the Brazilian military regime resulted in the paper's rejection by the Colloquium, Nascimento's self-distribution of the essay to delegates throughout the event and its publication in full by the Nigerian press in 1976 meant that his arguments were prevalent throughout FESTAC'77.[66] Furthermore, Nascimento's ability to intervene on the plenary floor in his role as an observer at the event meant that he was an active insider during the Colloquium's proceedings, able to directly contest the Brazilian delegation.[67]

Nascimento was a lifelong activist for causes that supported Brazil's Afro-descended population: prior to FESTAC'77 he had most famously participated in the Frente Negra Brasileira (Brazilian Black Front: 1931–7) and was the founder of the Teatro Experimental do Negro (Black Experimental Theatre, in existence 1944–61).[68] While in exile (1968–78) for his criticisms of the military dictatorship, he took up a visiting professorship at the University of Ifè in Nigeria, where he was asked in 1976 by the then organiser of the FESTAC'77 Colloquium – Professor Pio Zirimu – to write a paper on Brazil's race relations.[69] The subsequent paper, 'Democracia racial',[70] followed two lines of thought: the first challenged the Freyrean logic that Brazil had experienced a benevolent *mestiçagem*; the second argued that Afro-Brazilians had experienced a cultural and demographic genocide since the abolition of slavery in 1888.[71] On the former, Nascimento stated that the 'brutality and cruelty' committed against enslaved Africans in Brazil was as 'extraordinary and inhumane' as any other instance in the New World. The main argument was against the Freyrean notion that the Portuguese man's 'lack of preconceptions' against different races meant that he was able 'to maintain a healthy sexual integration with Black women'. Such an assertion was challenged by Nascimento as a vast misrepresentation of the sexual violence that Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous women

[66]Elisa Larkin Nascimento, 'Ogun's Warrior', *Transition*, 132 (2021), p. 420. See note 69 for the publication history of the paper.

[67]Rule 6C enabled observers to participate in debates during the Colloquium, without being part of any official delegation: FESTAC'77 International Secretariat, *General Colloquium Programme* (Lagos: FESTAC'77, 1977), p. 7.

[68]For overviews of Nascimento's career: Elisa Larkin Nascimento, 'The Ram's Horns: Reflections on the Legacy of Abdias Nascimento', *Journal of Black Studies*, 52: 6 (2021), pp. 588–601; Zachary R. Morgan, 'Soldier and Scholar: Abdias Nascimento and the Origins of Afro-Latin American Studies', *Journal of Black Studies*, 52: 6 (2021), pp. 602–26; Anani Dzidzienyo, 'A Legacy to Brazil and the World: Remembering Abdias do Nascimento', *Callaloo*, 34: 3 (2011), pp. 676–81.

[69]Abdias do Nascimento, *Racial Democracy in Brazil: Myth or Reality?*, trans. Elisa Larkin Nascimento (1st edn: Ilé-Ifè: University of Ifè, 1976; 2nd edn: Ibadan: Sketch Publishing Co., 1977); *Sitiado em Lagos: autodefesa de um negro acossado pelo racismo* (Rio de Janeiro: Nova Fronteira, 1981), p. 23.

[70]Abdias Nascimento, 'Democracia racial: mito ou realidade?', *Versus* [São Paulo], no. 16 (Nov. 1977), p. 40, http://www.marcosfaerman.jor.br/Versus16.html?vis=facsimile.

[71]This argument was expanded upon in Nascimento's book: Abdias Nascimento, *O genocídio do negro brasileiro: processo de um racismo mascarado* (Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1978).

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had suffered throughout Brazil's colonial period and he juxtaposed the 'patriarchal family structure' that the Portuguese brought to the country.[72]

The second part of Nascimento's argument stated that through 'intellectual, religious and sociological theories, the governing classes promoted and exercised a political plan of physical, cultural and social genocide'.[73] One of the primary methods highlighted in enacting this genocide was the post-abolition 'immigration project' that looked to replace enslaved labour with 'European workers'.[74] Nascimento not only believed that this project was a systematic attempt at building 'a white nation', but that it also excluded previously enslaved peoples from economic participation, cementing their socio-economic second-class status.[75] This could be seen during Vargas' presidency, when, despite his adoption of the racially blind *Brasilidade* national identity (see 'The Origins of Brazil's Racial Democracy and African Foreign Policy', above), he implemented a 'whitening' immigration policy: 'The admission of immigrants will take into account the necessity to preserve and develop, in the ethnic composition of the population, the most appropriate characteristics of its European descent.'[76] Furthermore, Nascimento identified cultural attempts at removing the African component from any active part in Brazilian society. His argument was that Afro-Brazilians were 'alienated and deprived of their identity', where all references to the nation's Africanity were 'folklorified'.[77] Therefore, Nascimento's critiques posed a significant risk to the delegation's activities at FESTAC'77, which explains why the regime took significant steps to prevent his involvement at the Festival's Colloquium.

The FESTAC'77 Colloquium was an event which brought together representatives from 50 countries, over a two-week period, to discuss global academic issues that were impacting Black and African culture. Before the event, 238 academic papers had been accepted by the Colloquium's central committee; these were

[72]Nascimento, 'Democracia racial'.

[73]Abdias Nascimento, 'Democracia racial: mito ou realidade? – 2', *Versus* [São Paulo], no. 17 (Dec. 1977–Jan. 1978), pp. 40–1, http://www.marcosfaerman.jor.br/Versus17.html?vis=facsimile.

[74]Between 1872 and 1972, 79% of immigration to Brazil came from Portugal, Italy, Spain and Germany: Jeffrey Lesser, *Immigration, Ethnicity, and National Identity in Brazil, 1808 to Present* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 16; Zeila de Brito Fabri Demartini, 'Immigration in Brazil: The Insertion of Different Groups', in Uma A. Segal, Doreen Elliott and Nazneen S. Mayadas (eds.), *Immigration Worldwide: Policies, Practices, and Trends* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 411.

[75]'Democracia racial', *Versus*, no. 17; this argument was particularly relevant at the time of publication, when according to nearly all socio-economic indicators (education, employment and living conditions) those who considered themselves 'non-white' were increasingly worse off than the white population: George Reid Andrews, *Blacks and Whites in São Paulo, Brazil, 1888–1988* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), p. 191; Nelson do Valle Silva, 'The Cost of Not Being White in Brazil', in Pierre-Michel Fontaine (ed.), *Race, Class, and Power in Brazil* (Los Angeles, CA: University of California Center for Afro-American Studies, 1985), p. 54; Carlos A. Hasenbalg, 'Race and Socioeconomic Inequalities in Brazil', in Fontaine (ed.), *Race, Class, and Power in Brazil*, pp. 30–1; Carlos Alfredo Hasenbalg, 'Raça, classe e mobilidade', in Lélia Gonzalez and Carlos Hasenbalg, *Lugar de Negro* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Marco Zero, 1982), p. 92.

[76]Decreto-Lei No. 7.967, de 18 de Setembro de 1945, art. 2; Antonia Aparecida Quintão, 'Africa in Brazil: Slavery, Integration, Exclusion', in Gerhard Seibert and Paulo Fagundes Visentini (eds.), *Brazil–Africa Relations: Historical Dimensions and Contemporary Engagements, from the 1960s to the Present* (Rochester, NY: Boydell and Brewer, 2019), p. 167.

[77]'Democracia racial', *Versus*, no. 16.

analysed and used as the foundations for establishing topics of discussion at the symposium.[78] The first week of the Colloquium was dedicated to 'Working Groups', where official representatives were split into five separate units that discussed topics relevant to the research papers that they had submitted. In each Working Group delegates presented their papers, debated the findings, and created reports on what had been discussed. In the second week, these reports were brought to the plenary floor, where the entire Colloquium attendance (including observers) were able to debate the Working Groups' findings and formulate a final Colloquium report named 'The Lagos Programme'.[79] Unlike the other six categories of events at FESTAC'77, the Colloquium was explicitly of an academic nature, which actively encouraged scrutiny of the delegates' ideas. Therefore, more so than at any other section of the Festival, the Brazilian delegation was vulnerable to challenges from the international Black and African community of scholars, who were able to intellectually interrogate the regime's racial ideology.

As a result, the Brazilian military regime collaborated with the Nigerian government – for reasons that will become apparent below – to restrict Nascimento's influence at the Colloquium. Prior to the start of the Festival, in early December 1976, the Nigerian president of FESTAC'77, Commander Ochegomie Promise Fingesi, had a meeting with the Brazilian ambassador to Lagos, Geraldo Heráclito Lima, and the then head of the Colloquium, Professor Zirimu. It can be inferred that this meeting led to the rejection of Nascimento's paper, as he was informed of its denial only a short time after (15 December 1976).[80] In Nascimento's book *Sitiado em Lagos* (1981), in which he reflected upon his FESTAC'77 experiences, he argued that his paper breached none of the Colloquium's rules and that its rejection highlighted the vulnerability of the Brazilian regime. 'It was the first time that a Black Brazilian was coming before the international community with a different version of the "racial democracy" … My discourse came as a dissenting voice that challenged the norms dictated by the ruling and governing classes. It therefore had to be silenced at all costs.'[81] Consequently, Nascimento's position was limited to that of observer at the Colloquium, which prevented him from taking part in the Working Group discussions but enabled him to interject and debate their findings on the plenary floor.[82]

The silencing of Nascimento was also seen during the Colloquium's proceedings. Owing to Nascimento's distribution of his paper at the Colloquium and its publication by the Nigerian press, delegates in Working Group IV were able to utilise his arguments to challenge Brazil's racial democracy.[83] This could be seen in statements

[78]FESTAC'77 International Secretariat, *General Colloquium Programme*, p. 7.

[79]*Ibid*., p. 8; Moyibi Amoda, *FESTAC Colloquium and Black World Development: Evaluation of FESTAC Colloquium Agenda Lagos Programme 1977* (Lagos: Nigeria Magazine, 1978), pp. 9–10.

[80]Nascimento, *Sitiado em Lagos*, p. 24. Professor Zirimu, a Ugandan scholar, was praised by Nascimento. He believed that Zirimu had tried to ensure the neutrality of the event until his death (30 Dec. 1976) before the start of FESTAC'77.

[81]Abdias Nascimento, 'Sitiado em Lagos', in Ntone Edjabe and Akinwumi Adesokan (eds.), *FESTAC'77: 2nd World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture* (London: Chimurenga and Afterall Books, 2019), p. 203.

[82]FESTAC'77 International Secretariat, *General Colloquium Programme*, p. 7.

[83]Nascimento, *Sitiado em Lagos* (1981), p. 55

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made by Dr Aleme Eshete, member of the Ethiopian Colloquium delegation, to Working Group IV: 'The participants learned from the same author [Professor Mourão, the Brazilian delegate] that Brazil was a multiracial and multicultural society. Nonetheless, this affirmation was strongly rejected by the other Brazilian professor, Nascimento, who said that, in Brazil, being the colour Black was considered inferior and that Brazilians of African blood suffered discrimination.'[84] This statement stimulated discussions about the validity of Brazil's supposed racial democracy and led to the recommendation by Working Group IV for 'further research to be made on the position of the assimilation and contribution of Africans in Brazil'.[85] The recommendation had the support of Ethiopia, Zambia, Guinea-Conakry, Cuba and the United States. The Brazilian delegation was particularly aggrieved by the United States' support for the recommendation, believing that it was for political reasons that the United States wanted to position 'Brazil, not the United States', as the new model of apartheid globally.[86] Fearing any conclusions that would undermine Brazil's image as a racial democracy, the psychiatrist Dr George Alakija, head of Brazil's Colloquium delegation, threatened the Festival organisers with 'complications and difficulties in the relations between Brazil and Nigeria … if this recommendation, [which arises from] political motives, is approved'.[87] As a result, Commander Ahmadu Ali, the Nigerian commissioner of education and chairman of the Colloquium Steering Committee, ensured that Nascimento's recommendation was vetoed and not adopted in the Lagos Programme.[88]

To understand the Nigerian government's cooperation in silencing Nascimento's influence, it is important to quickly note the growing economic and political relations between the two countries at the time of FESTAC'77. In a speech made only a month after the conclusion of the Festival, Geisel commented that 'Nigeria, supplier of petroleum to Brazil, is our principal commercial partner in Black Africa, absorbing 60% of Brazilian exports to that area.'[89] As such, it is clear that the partnership between Brazil and Nigeria was on the ascent during the period of FESTAC'77 and the Nigerian leadership was willing to take a Realpolitik stance to prioritise relations with Brazil over the general FESTAC'77 objectives of solidifying a modern and distinct Black and African identity throughout the Afro-diaspora.

Yet, it is important to recognise the limitations of these efforts to silence Nascimento, as he was able to effectively use his position as an observer at the Colloquium to participate in debates and outline his protests against the regime. In his interventions Nascimento branded Brazil as a 'racist nation', a 'version of South Africa in South America' where Afro-Brazilians were 'presented as integrated, but in reality could not even ascend to the middle classes',[90] a critique

[84]Nascimento, *O genocídio do negro brasileiro*, p. 31.

[85]Amoda, *FESTAC Colloquium and Black World Development*, p. 245.

[86]Nascimento, *Sitiado em Lagos* (1981), p. 39.

[87]*Ibid*., p. 42. Dr Alakija had submitted a paper to the Colloquium about the 'trance state' in the Afro-Brazilian religion Candomblé. Nascimento was highly critical of the supposed 'scientific' nature of this contribution.

[88]Commander Ali became chairman of the Colloquium after the death of Professor Zirimu.

[89]*Resenhas de Política Exterior do Brasil*, 12, p. 22.

[90]Barros Freire, 'Nigéria. A grande festa da arte negra', *Manchete* [Rio de Janeiro], no. 1,300 (19 March 1977), p. 65.

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that was not only received by attendees to the Colloquium but also reported back to audiences in Brazil through the newspaper *Manchete*. Sylvia Moore, a spectator who wrote a report at FESTAC'77 for the Dutch government, argued that Nascimento emerged as a 'folk hero', and that he 'hammered home major issues' that were being ignored.[91] One intervention that received unparalleled attention was Nascimento reading out a letter to Colonel Ali, in which he asked which of the three criteria (1. Submitted late; 2. Not to academic standard; 3. The propagation of ideological beliefs) his paper had fulfilled in order that it be rejected.[92] Not only did the reading of this letter receive a 'standing ovation' from the crowd, despite far exceeding the time limit set for speakers, but the subsequent response from Colonel Ali attained wide-ranging exposure from the Nigerian press.[93] According to Nascimento, Nigeria's newspapers were responsible for the 'complete failure of the plan, orchestrated by the Brazilian embassy, to isolate him from the Festival'.[94] Nascimento's interventions and the subsequent international attention bestowed on him was a 'diplomatic earthquake for the Brazilian government', as the 'myth of peaceful race relations in Brazil was deeply shaken' by the publicity he received.[95] Furthermore, owing to his constant pressure on the event's proceedings, Nascimento built relations with fellow activists such as Dr Maulana (Ron) Karenga, head of the United States' Colloquium delegation.[96] This relationship saw Karenga use his official position at the Colloquium to attack the Brazilian delegation and at the event's concluding session he called out the South American government for being a 'white minority oppressor from a country of Black majority African descendance'.[97] Therefore, despite the various attempts to silence Nascimento and his critiques of the regime's racial ideology, the Brazilian delegation was effectively challenged by domestic and international actors. The final section of this article demonstrates how these arguments manifested throughout Brazilian society during a moment of global Black consciousness.

FESTAC'77: The Domestic Consequences of the Brazilian Government's Internationalised Racial Discourses

The challenges brought against the Brazilian delegation at FESTAC'77 not only had immediate complications at the Festival, but they were also carried over to domestic audiences in Brazil, at a time when young Afro-Brazilians were increasingly aware of their own inferior place in society. The historian James Kennedy has highlighted how 'the gradual relaxation of the repressive atmosphere of the military regime', during Geisel's *abertura*, led to a 'remarkable increase in Black consciousness'

[91]Moore, *The Afro-Black Connection*, p. 51.
[92]*Ibid.*
[93]*Ibid.*, p. 54.
[94]Nascimento, *O genocídio do negro brasileiro*, p. 28.
[95]Hermano Penna, 'Africa. Mundo Novo', in Edjabe and Adesokan (eds.), *FESTAC'77*, p. 213.
[96]For more on Nascimento and Karenga's relationship, see Maulana Karenga, 'Abdias Nascimento at Palmares: Resistance, Affirmation, and Self-Produced Possibility', *Los Angeles Sentinel* (2 June 2011), p. A7.
[97]Nascimento, *Sitiado em Lagos* (1981), p. 40.

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amongst Brazil's young Afro-Brazilian population.[98] New generations were growing up in a society with increasing access to information, in which they were starting to gain greater exposure to international events such as 'the fight for civil rights in the United States and the wars of liberation in Portuguese-speaking Africa'.[99] In line with the official objectives of FESTAC'77, racial solidarity was increasingly being expressed with oppressed Black and African people across the world. This resulted in a growing number of comparisons, according to which 'struggles against racism and colonialism in Africa in the mid-1970s provided more than an inspiration for local Black activism – they provided a metaphor for Brazil'.[100] The military regime's loosened grip on the press enabled an increase in magazines that reported on Black and African national and global issues. For instance, the magazine *Cadernos Negros* brought together young Afro-Brazilian poets who wrote about 'the fight for freedom that was expanding on the continent of Africa and the protests against discrimination towards Blacks in the United States'.[101] Additionally, the magazine *Versus*,[102] which reported on 'popular struggles' and 'social injustices', published Nascimento's paper 'Democracia racial' (over two issues, in 1977 and 1978). Thus, while the regime did, to a certain extent, limit public criticism during FESTAC'77, it struggled to control alternative and internationalised conceptualisations of Africanity in an increasingly liberalised Brazil.

The Geisel administration, nonetheless, did attempt to control the domestic narrative of FESTAC'77. The TV documentary *Africa. Mundo Novo*, filmed for the Brazilian network TV Globo, which gave an overview of FESTAC'77 and Brazil's involvement in it, was censored by the military regime, despite the network's close association with the dictatorship.[103] While no reasons were provided for why this documentary was not aired, it suggests paranoia inside the Geisel administration over the domestic reception of FESTAC'77: despite originally sanctioning its production, sometime during the Festival Brasilia decided that its publication would do the regime more harm than good. One can infer from this that the growing solidarity of young Afro-Brazilians with international Black and African movements, and the dissemination of Nascimento's dispute amongst foreign and domestic audiences, meant that any further attention on FESTAC'77 in Brazil would risk spurring on greater activism against the regime's conceptualisation of race.

One area that particularly concerned the Geisel administration was the Festival's encouragement of countercultural movements that celebrated a separate and vibrant Afro-Brazilian identity. During the mid 1970s there was an Africanisation of Brazil's counterculture, which saw Afro-Brazilians appropriate cultural products to challenge 'the nationalist ethos of *Brasilidade*'.[104] The 'Black

[98]James H. Kennedy, 'Political Liberalization, Black Consciousness and Recent Afro-Brazilian Literature', *Phylon*, 47: 3 (1986), p. 204.

[99]Lélia Gonzalez, 'O movimento negro na última década', in Gonzalez and Hasenbalg, *Lugar de Negro*, p. 30.

[100]Alberto, *Terms of Inclusion*, p. 295.

[101]Nazareth Soares Fonseca, 'Cadernos negros: Sobre a história da coleção', *Afro-Hispanic Review*, 29: 2 (2010), p. 55.

[102]'Marcos Faerman: Jornal *Versus*', http://www.marcosfaerman.jor.br/versus.html.

[103]Penna, 'Africa. Mundo Novo', p. 213.

[104]Dunn, *Brutality Garden*, p. 178.

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Rio' movement, originating in Rio de Janeiro during the mid 1970s, took inspiration from African-American soul music in emphasising a unique Black identity within Brazil. Young Afro-Brazilians were able to use international symbols of 'Blackness' to present 'racial democracy and mestiçagem as oppressive "myths" obfuscating a racist reality'.[105] FESTAC'77, and its objective of presenting 'Black and African culture in its highest and widest conception', threatened to provide further impetus to such countercultural movements. Therefore, while FESTAC'77 offered unique opportunities for the regime to emphasise Brazil's racial mix and equality, it also posed the contradictory risk of undermining the ideology that they were attempting to assert.

A significant problem for the military regime in managing the impact of FESTAC'77 on Brazil's counterculture was its inability to control the effect that the Festival had on Brazilian delegates. The musician Gilberto Gil, an official member of the Brazilian delegation, exemplified the intersection of opportunity and risk for the military regime at FESTAC'77. Gil was one of the founding members of the 'Tropicália' movement, which started as a 'cannibalistic critique' of Brazilian culture in the late 1960s, and later evolved in the mid-1970s to focus on exploring Brazil's connections with its African identity.[106] Forced into exile for his criticism of the military dictatorship between 1969 and 1972, Gil was a surprising choice for the FESTAC'77 delegation. Yet as one of Brazil's most famous Black musicians, he was a relatively clear symbol of the nation's African identity. While the dictatorship, to a certain degree, could control Gil's actions during FESTAC'77, they were unable to regulate the experiences and knowledge that he gained from the Festival itself. Through the events that he attended and the various African and diasporic delegates he met, Gil's conceptualisations of race and Africanity were altered.

This reinterpretation was realised in the development of his music after FESTAC'77, in which the themes of the Festival were pervasive throughout. In 1977, once Gil returned from the Festival, he released the album *Refavela* ('Re-slum'), which he considered 'a product of his participation in FESTAC'77.'[107] Christopher Dunn described *Refavela* as a 'homage to Black Rio', and that the album 'captured' a contradictory moment when Afro-Brazilians started to study at university and join the professional job market, while at the same time running into considerable 'racial barriers', pushing them towards 'political and cultural organizations that emphasized Black identity'.[108] The name of the album derived from Gil's comparison of the living conditions of Nigerians as seen in Lagos and the rapid urbanisation of the periphery of Brazilian cities: 'Nigeria is a little bigger than the state of São Paulo but has a population equal to that of Brazil. This over-population forces a process of incredible '*refavelamento*' [re-slumming] on the people brought [to the cities] by industrialisation, who will live in shacks

[105]Paulina L. Alberto, 'When Rio was Black: Soul Music, National Culture, and the Politics of Racial Comparison in 1970s Brazil', *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 89: 1 (2009), pp. 3–39; quotation p. 32.

[106]Niyi Afolabi, *Afro-Brazilians: Cultural Production in a Racial Democracy* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2009), p. 128.

[107]'Uma noite para a refavela, de Gilberto Gil', *Cidade de Santos*, no. 3,623 (17 Aug. 1977), p. 15.

[108]Christopher Dunn, *Contracultura: Alternative Arts and Social Transformation in Authoritarian Brazil* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2016), p. 174.

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in the city.'[109] Here Gil is observing the industrialisation of Nigeria and the subsequent need for its population to reside in slums on the periphery of cities. Yet the use of the word 'Refavela' drew an obvious comparison between the Brazilian understanding of urban peripheral living, an experience disproportionately felt by Afro-Brazilians, and that of the Nigerian urban poor.[110] Thus, through its title, the album became a cultural reference point, in which solidarity between Afro-Brazilians and Nigerians was created, and the favela symbolised a link between race and poverty.

Not only was Gil motivated at FESTAC'77 to raise awareness of Afro-Brazilians' inferior place in society, but his work also came to celebrate 'Blackness'. In the 1979 song 'Sarará miolo', Gil wrote about taking pride in the Blackness of people with mixed racial origins, rather than in the disproportionate celebration of 'whiteness' in Brazilian society. The lyrics of the song state: 'This white disease, that you want to have straight hair, when you already have blond hair. Hard [afro] hair is needed, that's for you to be you, *crioulo*.'[111] In these lyrics, Gil problematised the feeling imposed on Brazilians with mixed racial identities that they needed to accentuate white physical characteristics and, through the example of 'Afro hair', he encouraged them to take pride in Black characteristics.[112] 'Why this white sickness, this infantile hegemonising sickness, this need to wipe out any possible Black trait, submitting oneself entirely to the value of the white race and completely devaluing the Black race?'[113] In this observation, Gil was making strong parallels with the arguments of cultural genocide outlined in Nascimento's paper, according to which a 'hegemonising' whiteness tried to silence any trace of an active and separate Black cultural identity in Brazil. Gil has recently stated in an interview with the TV show *Roda Viva* how Nascimento had 'participated in an extraordinary way in the creation of the [Black Brazilian] community' and that his FESTAC'77 'manifesto' was 'very interesting' to him.[114] This demonstrates how Nascimento's ideas

[109]'Uma noite para a refavela, de Gilberto Gil'.

[110]Brazil's rapid urbanisation (1960s–1970s) saw a 'peripheralization of poverty' in which the 'poorest, least educated and mostly nonwhite population' were marginalised away from the centre of urban areas in inadequate housing conditions known as 'favelas'. Leticia Olivarria Berenguer, 'The Favelas of Rio de Janeiro: A Study of Socio-Spatial Segregation and Racial Discrimination', *Iberoamerican Journal of Development Studies*, 3: 1 (2014), p. 113; Janice E. Perlman, *The Myth of Marginality: Urban Poverty and Politics in Rio de Janeiro* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1976), p. 6.

[111]Gilberto Gil, *Gil: Todas as letras*, ed. Carlos Rennó (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2022), p. 184. '*Crioulo*' has a variety of meanings in the Brazilian context. Historically, it referred to a person born in colonial Brazil of either European or African descent. It is also a modern-day term that refers to a non-white Brazilian of African heritage, which can be used in a derogatory manner.

[112]During the 1970s, Afro hairstyles came to symbolise 'Black beauty, celebration and resistance'. The political philosopher Frantz Fanon wrote about the lasting impacts of psychological colonialism instilling a self-defeating desire for 'whiteness' amongst global Black populations and Malcolm X, the civil rights activist, critiqued how Conks (an Afro-American straight hairstyle) became a popular fashion choice (1920s–1960s) amongst Afro-Americans who wanted to 'whiten' their appearance. Such internationalised debate clearly influenced the music of Gil: Fatima Seck, 'Fanon and Hair', *Journal of French and Francophone Philosophy*, 30: 2 (2022), p. 103; Malcolm X, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (New York: Grove Press, 1965), p. 62.

[113]Gil, *Todas as letras*, p. 184.

[114]Interview with Gilberto Gil, *Roda Viva*, 22 May 2022, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6cmRKAvWh0M&t=784s, 12:33–12:58.

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were processed by Gil and inspired the music he created in the years that followed. Through FESTAC'77, Gil was influenced by internationalised ideas of Black and African identity that challenged the status quo of racial thinking in Brazil, and the military regime was then powerless to prevent the domestic dissemination of these influences through his work.

In summary, through Nascimento's interventions on the plenary floor and the dissemination of his paper during the Festival, the Brazilian delegation's exploitation of the nation's African identity and negation of its racial inequalities was challenged. Not only did this criticism materialise at FESTAC'77 but these ideas were carried back to audiences in Brazil, where cultural figures such as Gilberto Gil were inspired to celebrate alternative Black and African identities that opposed the regime's racial ideology. An assessment of the challenges that the regime faced at FESTAC'77 heightens our understanding of the racial ideology that the state propagated internationally in its African foreign policy and the contradictory consequences this ideology brought about in undermining the dictatorship's own ideas of cordial race relations domestically.

Conclusions

This article has offered an examination of the relations between Brazil's racial ideology and its African foreign policy, with the aim of showing how the former was appropriated by the military regime and challenged by an increasingly active Afro-Brazilian population. From Vargas to Geisel, successive governments utilised the notion of Brazil's supposed racial democracy in consolidating a unified image of the nation's identity. In the early 1960s, Presidents Quadros and Goulart leaned on this racial ideology, and the country's historic African ties, in constructing a novel African foreign policy. The need for an expansion in overseas markets in the early 1970s led the Médici administration to an African rapprochement. These attempts climaxed during Geisel's presidency, during which Portugal's African decolonisation enabled the military regime to strengthen ties with the continent through a rhetorical campaign of anti-colonialism and anti-racial discrimination.

FESTAC'77 provides a microcosm allowing us to understand the manifestations and consequences of the military regime's utilisation of Brazil's Africanity and supposed racial democracy in implementing its African foreign policy. An initial conclusion to make from the analysis pursued is how the nation's African identity was appropriated for the interests of the white ruling classes. The delegation's depiction of a modern Brazilian identity being created through a historic and harmonious mixture of cultures and genetics was a fallacy. In fact, African influences on this identity were portrayed as inferior, told through a 'whitening ideal' that left European civilisation at the apex of the country's racial hierarchy. The purpose of the regime's presentation of this narrative was not to celebrate Brazil's modern and distinct African identity, in line with the wider aims of FESTAC'77, but to appropriate it for the military regime's African foreign policy.

Yet at FESTAC'77, like in Brazilian society, this appropriation of Brazil's African identity and assertion of a racial democracy was challenged. Through the lens of the Nascimento dispute, it can be seen how the Geisel administration's strategy backfired. Nascimento's arguments, presented both in his paper and involvements

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during the Festival, resonated with international delegates, who saw the contradictions in the Brazilian regime's arguments. These arguments against the regime coincided with the gradual democratisation of the Geisel administration during the *abertura*. An analysis of the musician Gilberto Gil shows that the regime had little capacity to control the experiences he acquired during FESTAC'77 and the subsequent impact they had on the music he produced when he returned to Brazil. Young Afro-Brazilians became increasingly engaged with counterculture and international Black movements that brought news of fights against colonialism and racial injustice to Brazil. FESTAC'77 was just one of many sources that offered an alternative conceptualisation of a Black and African identity which challenged the 'traditional Brazilian thinking' on race.[115]

The backlash against the Geisel administration's strategy at FESTAC'77 highlights a fundamental contradiction in the regime's African foreign policy: the appropriation of Brazil's Africanity in constructing foreign relations, at a time of political liberalisation, was bound to come with an equal flow of international ideas that challenged the regime's racial ideology. While the regime attempted to monopolise the narrative of Brazil's racial ideology in its foreign policy, it in contrast became an obvious reference point of contradiction, that served to undermine rather than strengthen its own conceptualisation of race. This article shows how, in a growing moment of political liberties in Brazil during the late 1970s, Geisel's attempt to abuse the nation's African identity was exposed by the anger of the non-white population, who were emboldened by international ideas of Black and African equality and resistance. Once Geisel opened the door to Africa, to boast of the regime's ideologies on race and identity, opposing notions that contradicted and exposed the myths of these ideas were equally able to flow back the other way. FESTAC'77 exemplifies how the regime underestimated the agency of Afro-Brazilians to connect with an international moment of solidarity against racism and colonialism. This brazenness by the military regime contributed to an undermining of the racial ideology that had glued together the Brazilian state's social fabric since the creation of *Brasilidade* in the 1930s. This research lays the foundations for further examining the historic role of racial democracy in the social cohesion of Brazilian society, the ways in which it has been abused to exert political power and the importance of international ideas and solidarity in exposing its 'myth'.

La intersección entre la ideología racial de Brasil y su política exterior africana – la administración de Geisel y el Segundo Festival Mundial de Arte y Cultura Negra y Africana (FESTAC'77)

Este artículo examina las formas en que la política exterior hacia África de Brasil durante la administración de Ernesto Geisel (1974–9) utilizó las nociones de 'democracia racial' y la africanidad nacional para ubicarse a sí mismo como un aliado intrínseco del continente al otro lado del Atlántico. El material lo hace a partir del análisis de la participación brasileña en el Segundo Festival Mundial de Arte y Cultura Negra y Africana

[115]Pedrosa, 'Inclusive, por determinação'.

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(FESTAC'77, 15 de enero–12 de febrero de 1977), en Lagos, Nigeria. El evento internacional celebró contribuciones pasadas y presentes de culturas negras y africanas a la civilización global. Una evaluación de la delegación gubernamental brasileña al FESTAC'77 muestra cómo la administración de Geisel intentó presentar a Brasil como una sociedad armoniosamente integrada donde, por medio de un proceso histórico de mestizaje, la identidad racial de la nación se unió en un todo equitativo. Por el lado contrario, la propagación de estas ideas en el FESTAC'77 hizo que la ideología racial del régimen fuera blanco de ataques de parte de audiencias internacionales y domésticas.

Palabras clave: democracia racial; política exterior; FESTAC'77; Ernesto Geisel; raza; despertar civil; descolonización; dictadura militar; Brasil; Nigeria; Gilberto Freyre; Abdias do Nascimento; Gilberto Gil; identidad nacional; cultura

A interseção entre a ideologia racial do Brasil e a sua política externa africana – o governo Geisel no Segundo Festival Mundial de Artes e Cultura Negra e Africana (FESTAC'77)

Este artigo examina as maneiras pelas quais a política externa do Brasil na África durante o governo de Ernesto Geisel (1974–9) utilizou noções de 'democracia racial' e a africanidade da nação para se enquadrar como um parceiro intrínseco do continente do outro lado do Atlântico. Isso é feito por meio de uma análise do envolvimento do Brasil no Segundo Festival Mundial de Artes e Cultura Negra e Africana (FESTAC'77, 15 de janeiro a 12 de fevereiro de 1977), realizado em Lagos, Nigéria. O evento internacional celebrou as contribuições passadas e presentes das culturas negra e africana para a civilização global. Uma avaliação da delegação do governo brasileiro no FESTAC'77 mostra como o governo Geisel tentou retratar o Brasil como uma sociedade harmoniosamente integrada, onde, por meio de um processo histórico de mistura, a identidade racial da nação foi unida em um todo equitativo. Em contrapartida, a propagação dessas ideias no FESTAC'77 deixou a ideologia racial do regime vulnerável a ataques de públicos internacionais e nacionais.

Palavras-chave: democracia racial; política externa; FESTAC'77; Ernesto Geisel; raça; despertar civil; descolonização; ditadura militar; Brasil; Nigéria; Gilberto Freyre; Abdias do Nascimento; Gilberto Gil; identidade nacional; cultura

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