


Ethnic Tourism and Intangible Heritage: Analysis of Maracatu in the Night of the Silent Drums in Recife PE

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ABSTRACT

Due to its natural beauty and cultural richness, the capital Recife is one of the Brazilian destinations that stand out the most, especially during the carnival period. With the support of bibliographic and documentary research on Afro Ethnic Tourism and Intangible Heritage, this work aims to analyze the Maracatu Nação in the event Night of the Silent Drums in Recife PE, as well as its contribution to the strengthening of the Afro-Brazilian identity. Through the bibliographic survey and field research, it was observed that the attractiveness of the Maracatu groups has high potential to preserve the Afro-Pernambuco Culture and contribute to the development of tourist activity in the capital of Pernambuco.

Keywords: Intangible Heritage, Maracatu, Afro Ethnic Tourism.

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INTRODUCTION⁴

The capital Recife is considered by MTur - Ministry of Tourism (2015) the sixth most sought after destination by Brazilians. G1 (2018) reported that the state of Pernambuco received more than 1.7 million tourists, moving around R\$ 1.6 billion in the 2018 carnival alone. The value is almost 30% higher, compared to the previous carnival.

The bibliography used for the elaboration of the research is based, mainly, on bibliographic references such as Leal (2008) and Porta (2002) that talk about Cultural Heritage.

For the discussions on Tourism and the Afro Ethnic Tourism segment, sources such as Dias (2006), Ministry of Tourism (2019), World Tourism Organization (2001), Bahl (2009), Bahia (2009), among others, will be used.

The object of study of this research is the event "Night of the Silent Drums" held since 1968 in the neighborhood of São José, in Recife (PE). The ceremony is held in the Pátio do Rosa, a place where Afro-descendant festivities traditionally take place. Today, the ritual is a highlight in the Pernambuco carnival, it is part of the calendar of Momo festivities, being honored by revelers, residents and tourists from all over Brazil and even abroad.

Night of the Silent Drums.



Source: Diário de Pernambuco, 2018.

According to Andrade (2018), the event is the meeting of all Maracatus Nação groups from the state of Pernambuco with the purpose of praising the Virgin of the Rosary, patron saint of blacks, and revering African ancestors who suffered during slavery in Colonial Brazil.

⁴ The present work arose from the discussions carried out by the study group TAUR - Tons Afros Unesp Rosana with the aim of developing research linking tourism and its potential to preserve cultures of African origins. Tons Afro Unesp Rosana (TAUR) is a NUPE - Unesp Black Nucleus for Research and Extension approved by the Dean of University Extension of the São Paulo State University and is present in the Rosana nucleus. The group aims to discuss themes related to ethnic, cultural, artistic and religious richness, covering content on discrimination, prejudice, racism, religious intolerance and empowerment. Therefore, the group aims to discuss the historical context of Afro-descendants in Brazil and apply action plans in educational institutions in the municipality of Rosana-SP, thus promoting awareness about the contribution of African culture in the process of formation of Brazilian national identity.



The celebration begins with the reading of the poem *Lamento Negro* in memory of the slaves who never had the right to play carnival, which is why the event is held at this time. At midnight, the ritual reaches its peak when all the lights in the São José neighborhood are turned off and everyone falls silent. Torches are lit and carried to the door of the church by the leaders of the maracatus. Praises to Our Lady of the Rosary. The silence is interrupted by the intermittent beating of the drums of all the maracatus nations, which sing songs of Xangô (one of the most popular, prestigious and publicized orishas of candomblés, terreiros, macumbas). The march of the dancers is marked by the beat of the drums. At this moment, the babalorixá, responsible for the ritual, aligns the drums and conducts a choir of mães-de-santo who pray with him, and ends the service by blessing the members of the maracatus and the public present at the ceremony (ANDRADE, 2018).

Since Maracatu, in its two variations (Nation and Rural), is recognized as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Brazil by IPHAN (National Institute of Historical and Artistic Heritage) since 2014, the objective of this research aims to describe the Maracatu Intangible Heritage and the event Night of the Silent Drums of Recife PE and thus carry out an analysis of this cultural manifestation on the recognition of Afro-Brazilian Culture and its contribution to the development of of the tourist activity in the carnival of Recife.

The idea of Afro Ethnic Tourism adopted for this work is related to the understanding of Silva (2016) when he claims that this segment involves "activities, experiences and experiences of Afro-Brazilian culture". From this perspective, the research aims to investigate to what extent the people who attend this cultural manifestation have a recognition of the Afro-Brazilian culture? Do they understand the real meaning of the event, or in fact the Night of the Silent Drums is just another attraction of the carnival of Recife/Olinda that causes curiosity?

Due to this context, it is noteworthy that the present study was carried out, aiming to analyze in a more in-depth way some theoretical concepts to better understand the dynamics of Afro Ethnic Tourism and its relationship with Intangible Heritage. The research may contribute to the deepening of new debates and academic works that focus on discussions related to tourism and the approaches consistent with the cultural issues of the Afro-descendant people in the formation of national and Pernambuco identity.

METHODOLOGY

For a better understanding of the theme, an exploratory research was carried out from a bibliographic survey, with subjects focused on the discussion about Tourism and Intangible Heritage. A documentary research was carried out on the Portals of UNESCO, IPHAN and the Ministry of Tourism to gather information about Maracatu and the tourist activity in the carnival of Recife (PE). Because:



Primary source documents are first-hand documents from the very agencies that carry out the observations. They encompass all materials, not yet elaborated, written or not, that can serve as a source of information for scientific research. They can be found in public or private archives, as well as in statistical sources compiled by official and private bodies (LAKATOS, 2001).

A trip was also made to the city of Recife (PE) during the 2019 carnival, where the Municipal Department of Culture was visited by the City Hall of Recife and the Afro-Brazilian Culture Center (responsible for holding the event) to collect more materials and information about the Night of the Silent Drums.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSIONS

The emphasis given to tourism as an activity for the promotion, development and sustainability of cultural heritage in the efforts of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) for the preservation of cultural heritage is remarkable. This can be seen when a brief analysis of the *Heritage Charters was carried out*, which are documents referring to the meetings that discussed the protection of cultural heritage that took place in several cities around the world. In these meetings, there is a great deal of space for debate on tourism over the years (LEAL *et al*, 2008).

According to the concept established by the World Tourism Organization - UNWTO (2001), officially adopted by Brazil, tourism comprises "the activities that people carry out during trips and stays in places other than their usual surroundings, for a period of less than one year, for leisure, business or other purposes". The Activity Tourism has a range of segments that understand the demands of the market. Among the different segmentations, cultural tourism stands out and is associated with:

other tourist activities, such as an educational leisure activity that contributes to increasing the visitor's awareness and appreciation of the local culture in all aspects - historical, artistic, etc. Thus, cultural tourism is a segmentation of the tourist market that incorporates a variety of cultural forms, including museums, galleries, cultural events, festivals, festivals, architecture, historical sites, artistic presentations and others, which, identified with a particular culture, are part of a set that identifies a community and that attract visitors interested in knowing the unique characteristics of other peoples (DIAS, 2006. p. 39).

In this context, cultural tourism has characteristic displacements for religious, mystical, civic and ethnic purposes, where each locality starts to receive tourists who have specific interests in relation to its attractiveness, as is the case of Recife, which also stands out for the offer of ethnic tourism. According to Bahl (2009), ethnic tourism arises through two assumptions that contribute to the formation of the identity of a social group:



the first is associated with the social and cultural apparatus of a locality as its mark of identity and differentiation, while the second, with the idea of publicizing the existence of a particular ethnicity or group with a view to its recognition and insertion in a national and international context (BAHL, 2009).

According to the Ministry of Tourism (2006), Ethnic Tourism:

It consists of tourist activities resulting from the experience of authentic experiences in direct contact with the ways of life and identity of ethnic groups. It seeks to establish close contact with the host community, participate in their traditional activities, observe and learn about their unique cultural expressions, lifestyles and customs. Often, such activities can be articulated as a search for the tourists' own origins, in a return to the traditions of their ancestors. Ethnic tourism involves communities that are representative of European and Asian migratory processes, indigenous communities, quilombola communities, and other social groups that preserve their ethnic legacies as guiding values in their way of life, knowledge, and practices (BRASIL, 2006).

As it is a topic still on the rise in the academic and scientific world, it is appropriate to emphasize the lack of authors who defend a concrete definition of what Afro Ethnic Tourism actually is. For the sake of this article, we love the idea that:

tourism, in general, is responsible for promoting the integration of cultures, peoples and groups "outside the conventional standards", specifically through Cultural Tourism and/or Ethnic Tourism. However, these tourist segments are inherent and intertwined. The former provides the appreciation of material and immaterial goods, while the latter is the appreciation and promotion of a group's customs, habits, or way of life. Therefore, the Ethnic-Afro Tourism segment will involve activities, experiences and experiences of Afro-Brazilian culture (SILVA, 2016).

The people of Pernambuco learned, from an early age, to fight for freedom, generating a warrior spirit and love for the land. It was this determination that made the people of Pernambuco unite to fight the Dutch occupation in the Northeast region of Brazil, in the middle of the seventeenth century. This resistance was an important milestone for Brazil, both militarily and sociopolitically, with the increase in miscegenation between the three races (black African, white European, and native Indian) and the beginning of a feeling of nationality (OLIVEIRA *et al*, 2016). From very early on, the struggle and participation of the population of Pernambuco in the process of formation of the state as a territorial population can be perceived.

According to Oliveira *et al*. (2016), the culture of Pernambuco is strongly marked by cultural and historical diversity, constituting a multiethnic space, due to the presence of the roots of blacks, Indians and Europeans. This multiculturalism can be identified in literary, musical, theatrical, visual arts, architecture, dances, popular festivals and religiosity. Cultural exchanges have contributed to the formation of a diverse and rich culture. However, it is appropriate to highlight how much the influence of African culture resulted in the formation of Pernambuco and national identity.

According to Porta (2012), the diversity of Pernambuco's intangible heritage began to be documented only by IPHAN, but actions in this field have already been established with visibility

and interest from the population. The author understands the intangible heritage of the state of Pernambuco as a wide range of manifestations and traditions linked to Carnival (troças, clubs and associations, caboclinhos, maracatus nação and rural) to São João, Christmas, to religiosity (popular Catholicism, praying women, religions of African origin, umbandas, juremas and catimbós), capoeira and indigenous and quilombola communities.

Maracatu has its Afro origin and emerged in Pernambuco in the eighteenth century. It was a way to keep alive the tradition of the coronation of the King of Congo after the end of slavery. The figure emerged to manage the black slaves who were brought to Brazil. The rhythm is based on traditional African dances, with movements and steps that represent strength. The different thuds are linked to religiosity and the characters are included in honor of black and indigenous peoples (DIÁRIO DE PERNAMBUCO, 2018).

Maracatu Rural.



Source: Marcos Michael/Reuters/VEJA, 2011.

Maracatu Nation.



Source: Reproduction/TV Globo, 2014.

In 2014, maracatu in its two variations, Nation and Rural, received the title of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Brazil as a genuinely Pernambuco cultural expression, granted by the National



Institute of Historical and Artistic Heritage (IPHAN). In addition to preserving popular culture, the recognition of maracatu as a cultural heritage creates the necessary conditions for it to develop and continue interacting with future generations. The certification gives visibility to the tradition and enables its presence in the cultural scene of the state, Brazil and the world. According to IPHAN (2018), the patrimonial value of Maracatu Nação resides in:

Its ability to communicate elements of Brazilian culture and carry essential elements for the memory, identity and formation of the Afro-Brazilian population. Understood as a form of expression that brings together community relations, Maracatu Nação allows the sharing of practices, memories and strong bonds with the sacred, evidenced through the relationship of these groups with the xangôs (denomination of the religion of the orixás in Pernambuco) and the Jurema Sagrada (denomination of the religion of Afro-Amerindian characteristics that worships masters and masters, caboclos, among other entities) and can even date back to the ancient coronations of Congolese kings and queens (IPHAN, 2018).

With the vast majority of the groups concentrated in the communities of peripheral neighborhoods of the metropolitan region of Recife, Maracatu Nação is also known as Maracatu de Baque Virado. The groups present a show full of symbologies and is marked by aesthetic richness and musicality, thus the presentations of maracatu groups in Pernambuco can be translated (IPHAN, 2018).

However, it is worth emphasizing the importance of Afro-ethnic tourism not being publicized only as an economic activity. As pointed out by Márcia Sant'Anna (2006) *apud* Paula Porta (2012):

The main problems that interfere with the continuity and maintenance of the expressions of traditional culture are predatory tourism, its inappropriate appropriation by the media, the standardization of products resulting from the process of globalization of the economy, the industrial appropriation of traditional knowledge and inadequate commercialization. This is harmful when it occurs through the serial production of copies of traditional objects; the introduction of inappropriate materials or inappropriate shapes with a view to quick profit; the gratuitous appropriation of original standards or traditional technological principles. Given the economic value of these goods, it is necessary for each country to create legal provisions that guarantee them better protection (SANT'ANNA, 2006 *apud* PORTA, 2012).

The Afro ethnic tourism segment also has to be promoted in order to give ethnic visibility to the culture visited, which, consequently, intends the recognition and strengthens the black identity as a fundamental element in the process of historical formation of Brazil.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Afro Ethnic Tourism has the potential to contribute to the recognition of Afro-descendant culture in tourist destinations. This segment can enable the recovery of the cultural identity of blacks and Afro-descendants, appropriating their culture in a beneficial way as an element that fosters visitation and ethnic characteristics of a given location.



Therefore, it can be seen that tourism, specifically, the Afro ethnic niche, in addition to enhancing the local economy, can also contribute to the appreciation and preservation of Afro-Brazilian culture in tourist destinations as long as the activity is planned and Executed with the host community in mind, its customs and traditions. The Maracatu heritage has become a tourist attraction, especially during the carnival period, through its rhythm and due to its historical legacy, imbued with multi-ethnic traditions.

By carrying out the fieldwork that took place during the carnival of 2019, it was found that in addition to the Night of the Silent Drums of Recife, there is also another event of the same name and ethnic-cultural relevance held in the city of Olinda. It was also noticed that tourists looking for the event can even look for other attractions during the carnival program, such as, for example, the famous Galo da Madrugada, Olinda Beer, shows by local artists such as Alceu Valença, but their main motivation is the search for the true essence of what is Maracatu and the traditional Night of the Drums. In a conversation with Mestre Chacon (responsible for the Nucleus of Afro-Brazilian Culture of Recife, which organizes the event together with the city hall), he said that tourists arrive from all over the world to attend the event. Many already go with previous knowledge about Afro-Brazilian culture. Most visitors actually go to Recife in search of Maracatu and its authenticity. They seek to experience the famous Night of the Silent Drums in a place that is extremely important for the Afro culture of Pernambuco.

In view of this, it can be concluded that the presentations of the Nations of Maracatu in the Night of the Silent Drums have a high attractiveness of a specific group. Who are those who seek to know elements of Afro-Brazilian culture in the roots of Maracatu. This demand is configured in the Afro Ethnic Tourism defended by Silva (2016). These tourists, who often leave from different regions and states and even from abroad, stay for a considerable time in the cities of Recife/Olinda and within this period, end up consuming various services, such as: means of accommodation, food and drinks, transportation, among others. In this way, the economic return for the locality becomes clear with the permanence of these visitors in the municipality and region.



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