

# Afro-Diasporic Heritages in the City of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil



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## Abstract

### Summer Experience:

- Rio de Janeiro State University (UERJ), Rio de Janeiro Brazil.
- Research internship on project “The Other Face of Colonial Heritage: The Spatial Reconstruction of the Brazilian Little Africa through Black Narratives” under Dr. Ivan Pimentel.

### CapStone Interest:

- The diverse cultural heritages present in Brazil throughout its history.
- The Afro-diasporic heritage present in the city of Rio de Janeiro, as a reflection of Brazil’s history of slavery and cultural syncretism.
- Diaspora: people who have been dispersed from their homeland.

### Personal Connections:

- I am originally from Brazil, and am interested in understanding how my country’s complex history contributes to its social, political, and geographical dynamics today.

## Introduction

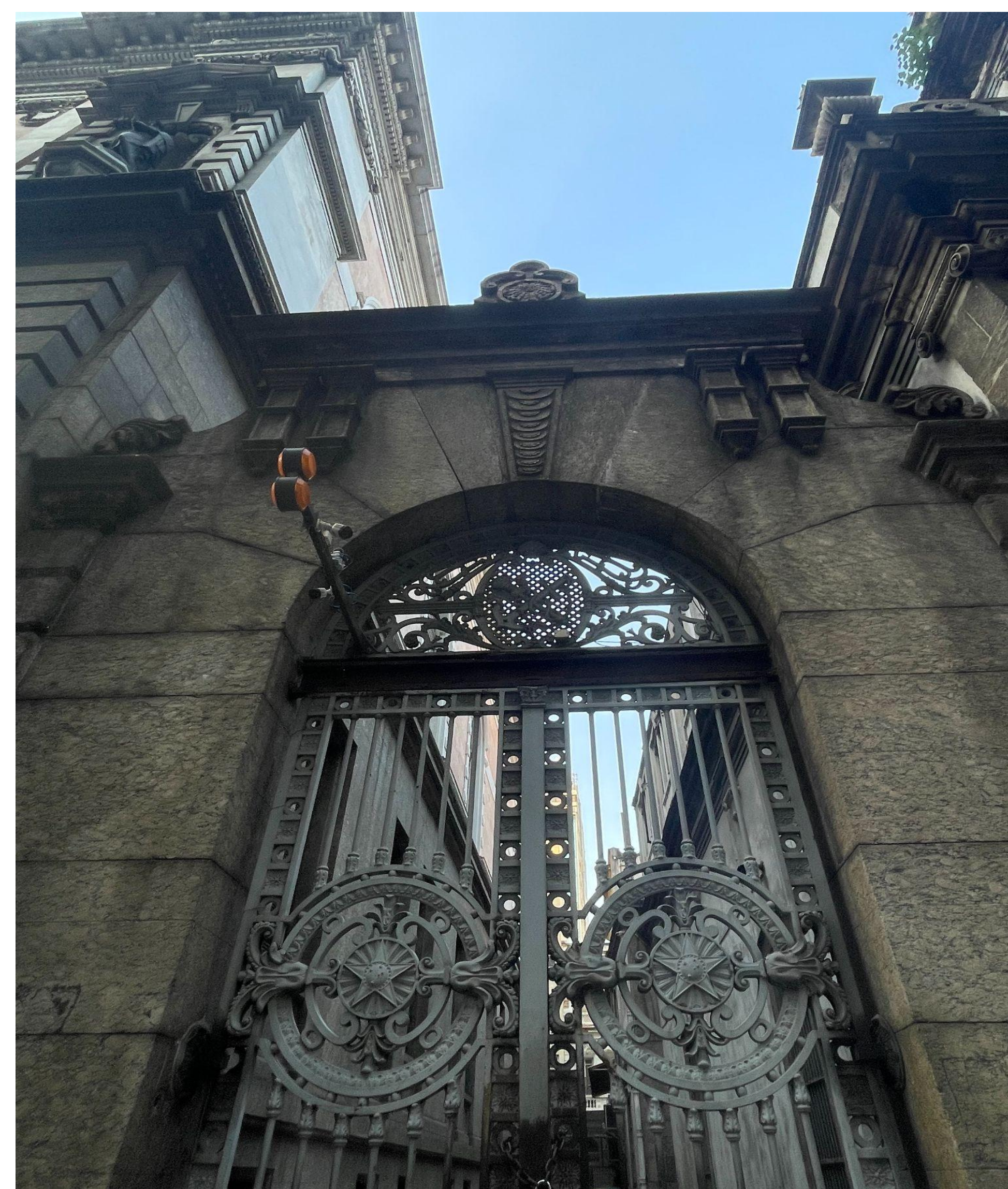
- Brazil has a very complex history of cultural interactions within it, which creates a rich, diverse heritage that draws from practices, traditions, and structures originating in many different areas of the world.
- Brazil’s history of slavery throughout about 350 years has contributed to a rich and complex combination of cultural heritages originating from African diasporas in the country’s early history.

## Methodology

### • Fieldwork:



- Exploration of **Little Africa**, a center of African heritage in the Port Region of Rio de Janeiro.
- Exploration of **Adinkra** West African symbols in Rio de Janeiro’s early colonial architecture.



### • Literature Review:

- **Zungus:** areas of living, religious practice, social connection, *capoeira*, and hiding during the times of slavery in Rio de Janeiro.
- **Cais do Valongo:** area of Rio de Janeiro where enslaved Africans were brought to Brazil, discovered through later archeological research. This area received an estimated 500,000 to 700,000 enslaved African people after their forced journey across the Atlantic.

## Results and Discussion

- Afro-diasporic heritage has a long and complex history in the city of Rio de Janeiro.
- Despite the city’s various cycles of urbanization and modernization and its Portuguese colonial structures, Rio’s **geographical features** show the long-lasting impact of African diasporas from its 350 years of slavery.
- This evidence demonstrates the importance of these groups in the city’s history, and their relevance in **Brazilian culture, society, identities, and daily dynamics.**
- I developed a more complete understanding of **Brazilian identity**, also contributing to my perception of my own ethnic and cultural connection to my home country.

## References and Acknowledgements

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