

Amado, the Brazilian Writer and his Flora – A Comparative Study of Landscape Geography and Literature Analysis

*By Isabel Maria Madaleno**

The paper presented here is an integral part of the research that we have been developing since 2018, at the University of Lisbon, in the research group ZOE – Urban and Regional Change and Policies. The project compares flora described in novels from the past centuries with landscapes and plant uses from the same environments, both countries and cities. The current study is a comparative analysis of the landscapes described in “Capitães da Areia (1937)”, by the Brazilian writer Jorge Amado and the results of a 2023 University of Lisbon scientific mission to Salvador, when a survey of flora consumption was conducted among residents. It included an exploration of Amado and Gattai’s food and spice garden, in the neighbourhood of Rio Vermelho, capital city of Bahia state, now a museum open to visitors. Amado’s literary descriptions include twenty-four plant species, seventeen of them having been reported in the 2023 survey conducted in Salvador. Based on a theoretical-conceptual analysis about the landscape geography-literature relationship, we will understand how Amado’s literary work, produced in the 1930s, is represented in the contemporary streets of Salvador, concluding that the aforementioned book can be seen as an object of investigation in Geography.

Keywords: Brazil, Salvador, Flora, Literature, Cities.

Introduction

Space identity is built by History. The unique character of a city like Salvador, the first capital of Brazil, under the colonial dominance of Portugal, in the sixteenth century, makes it a cultural heritage sought by tourists and travellers but also recognizable in literature. The research question for this contribution is: Are novels objects of investigation in Geography? The novels are non-geographer descriptions of past landscapes, not reports of expert scientists. We will argue that because they are showcases where the identity of a city can be taken from, giving us valuable information about the urban landscapes and the people that inhabited them in the past, they can be used as a secondary source of information.

Župljanin defended that historical city centres give authenticity to a place by the interaction of race, religion, social stratification and political practices seen at present (Župljanin 2024). Salvador has colonial buildings in its core (see Figure 1), and it is a place where Candomblé, an African slave religion is practiced, particularly among the less-wealthy residents, repressed in the past but in contemporaneously blessed by governance, because slave-inherited religions enhance the charm of an urban

*Retired Researcher, University of Lisbon, Institute of Geography and Spatial Planning, (IGOT), CEG, Urban and Regional Change and Policies (ZOE), Laboratory TERRA, Lisbon

settlement where Africa meets both European architectural heritage and American flora and fauna.

Figure 1. *Tourists at Pelourinho, the Historical Square of Salvador*



Source: Author's photo, 2023.

Jorge Amado's novel under examination is considered modernist (1930-1945), and it describes both the imperfections and the beauty, using the expressions of Agripino Grieco, cited by Wanessa Regina Paiva da Silva and Thiago Gonçalves Souza (2013). "Captains of the Sands" (*Capitães da Areia*, in the Portuguese original) narrates the lives of abandoned children from the streets and beaches of Salvador, less fortunate kids that appreciate almost equally blossomed trees and bushes, such as the Brazilian grape tree or the sapodilla plum tree, roses or violets, as well as rocks and shells found on the sandy water shores. Thus, with the same spirit that the captains of the sands welcomed a girl to their gang of young boys, they also tried to abuse her, seen as a group survival strategy used the same way as the need to steal food to eat, clothes to wear, or even knives to defend themselves from other street kids or adults.

According to Holanda (1948), one of the contemporary critics of Amado's book under examination, the author is quite easy to read and focuses on the 1900's social and economic problems, but despises literary innovation, without much use of literary work, which was part of his known communist ideology. Silva and Souza stress that most of Holanda's criticism stem from ideological prejudice; for a geographer, like the author of this paper, the crude reality described in his sheets are a good source of information about the 1930's and the flora grown in Salvador, as well as the food consumed in the capital of Bahia. Agreeing with Amado, other contemporary authors dignified his ability to mingle with the poor, with the people living and strolling on the streets, enabling him to know those personalities better and understand their needs, and difficulties, probably

not only due to his amicable character but exactly owing to his radical political orientation (Jurandir, 1947).

Antonella Rita Roscilli (2022) emphasized the importance of multicultural relationships in the Brazilian author, as well as religion and race, because the society Amado aimed for his country was one where all religions should meet in good convivality, a multi-ethnic society with full acceptance of the native Indians, the black slave descendants, the criollos or caboclos (mixed races), the European descendants (Portuguese, Italians, Spanish, Polish and Germans) and also the Japanese, Lebanese and Syrian communities. According to Roscilli, Amado tried to take away literature from the elites and give it back to the people, which he obviously achieved not only in Brazil, where his books became popular through several movies and tv series, but also in all forty-nine (49) languages spoken in as many countries as his books were translated into.

The aesthetics of Jorge Amado coincide with the beauty and the imperfections that modern critics found in his novels, based on criticism of his political engagement by peers, discussed by Silva and Souza, in 2013. In fact, Jorge Amado and wife Zelia Gattai were expatriated during Brazilian dictatorships (1941-1945, to Argentina and in 1948-1952, to Europe), because of their known political positions' vis a vis people's poverty and social problems. Amado was born in 1912, in a cocoa production farm, where his father was injured when he was only one year old. In 1914 the family moved to the city of Ilhéus (Southern Bahia state), a cocoa exporter city, where he studied. However, when he was only twelve, Jorge escaped from the boarding school and moved to the state of Sergipe, to his grandfather's house. His life continued with several adventures, and he even emigrated to Europe.

The museum house where the couple Jorge Amado (1912-2001) and Zelia Gattai (1916-2008) lived possesses a flourishing food and spice garden, maintained to today by their foundation and the descendants, a place visited over times by such known figures as Federico Fellini, Alberto Moravia, Yves Montand, Pablo Picasso, Oscar Niemeyer, Vinícius de Moraes, Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir, as well as the Portuguese doctor and writer Miguel Torga (FCJA, 2024). It is located in the neighbourhood of Rio Vermelho (Fig. 2), where the main office functions in the historic building of *Pelourinho* right in the centre of the city of Salvador (see Figure 1). The first Portuguese capital in Brazil (1549 e 1763), as said, this city is a tourist attraction chosen both by Brazilians and foreigners, especially due to Amado's literary achievements.

Nature and nurture are key to understanding anyone's literary production. The way a person grew as a person, the places where he/she grew up, and his/her ancestors contribute to character development, as much as the school curriculum, the political and the religious convictions, the wife/husband or the solitary life of a writer, together with the problems he/she had to face throughout his/her life. Therefore, the paper started with the biography and criticism of Amado's books, so as to expose the location of the "Captains of the Sands" novel, under examination here (see Figure 2); Then the research question will be answered, using literary review; Next will be the showing of the material and methods used; Finally, the results and the discussion of this comparative study will be shown, leading to the conclusions. It must be stressed that this book – *Capitães da Areia* – was burned in front of the school of the Brazilian marines, in

Salvador, after being edited, in 1937 and Jorge Amado was imprisoned under the order of the President Getúlio Vargas (1934-45).

Figure 2. Map of Salvador, Bahia State, Brazil



Source: Dicas da Bahia, 2025.

Geographical Location

Existing literature suggests there is a relationship between aggression and global crises (Charlesworth et al. 2024). Even though this study refers to the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns, it is applicable to any time or location, as the city of Salvador in the 1930's, meaning, after the 1929 Great Depression that started in the United States, but affected the whole world. In fact, there was a rise in dictatorships and in repression elsewhere in Latin America and in Europe, in Germany and in Italy, in the 1930's. Brazil is the biggest country in South America and Getúlio Vargas' regime was the outcome of this global economic crisis that also had consequences on the abandonment of young children on the streets of urban agglomerations all over Brazil. The authors argue that: "Economic decline and uncertainty lead to demonstrations of frustrations and rebellion against conformity", seen as disrespect for rules, laws and authorities (Charlesworth et al. 2024).

The capital of Bahia state is in the Northeast of Brazil, it has a tropical humid climate with average 25.6°C and annual rainfall of 1,235 mm. It has several beaches frequented by tourists and residents all year-round, and some historic lighthouses used in navigation and as visiting sites, accessible by using a touristic bus. Barra lighthouse is one of such places that give identity to the urban shores (South-West in Figure 2), together with beautiful waterfronts where today coconuts are offered as a drink (Figure 3). Street vendors are abundant in touristic locations because they were welcomed from the 2013 municipal governance onwards, as they gave authenticity to the streets of Salvador (Madaleno 2024a). The beaches as well as the

streets were the places mentioned in the novel “Captains of the Sands”, are used as a tool to compare 1937 Salvador with the 2023 survey of Lisbon University.

Figure 3. Barra Lighthouse, a 17th Century Building used for Navigation



Source: Authors' 2023 photo.

Literature Review

Literature review and documental analysis are similar procedures. The differences are the sources, because scientific knowledge about a certain issue involves papers and book chapter analysis, usually available online, whereas documental analysis deals with manuscripts and less studied and uncatalogued material, not always available outside archives and libraries. Previous research has been done in such places as the Vatican's Jesuit archive (Madaleno 2015), Torre do Tombo (Madaleno 2006) or the Portuguese National Library (Madaleno, 2018), in search for ancient Catholic Church manuscripts, historical documentation about farming companies or for Portuguese 16th century Chronicles, documenting the discovery of the maritime route from Lisbon to Calicut, in India (Diogo de Couto 2017). Finally, archive documentation was researched to report on Far-East explorations; and also, the occidental but not accidental discovery of Brazil (Caminha 1500, Filgueiras and Peixoto 2022, Madaleno 2024a).

Flora research uses online resources frequently, as taxonomical knowledge about plant species, gender and family are evolving continuously (Filgueiras and Peixoto 2022). Expertise provided by online herbariums, botanical gardens and universities is essential to identify the plants gardenized, both ornamental or useful vegetables, meaning, the ones we eat, consume as spices and applied for healing purposes (Madaleno 2015, 2018, 2024). The Missouri Botanical Garden, located in St. Louis, in the United States is usually the preferred site to check the most recent classification from botanists, for tropical environments (MBG 2025).

Text content analysis is a method used in Literature review. It is obviously a procedure taken in the study of a novel. Text content study made to the book “Captains of the Sands” permits us to interpret it better, because the time the novel was written is known, meaning, the history of the city of Salvador, and of Brazil, in the 1930's. Adding to that, the author's experiences were summarized in the

introduction, and the geography of the action that took place in the novel can be observed, in our time, in the previous section. Advancing methodology used in this research, that comes next, comparisons between Amado's geographical settings and actual records from a 2023 mission to Salvador, make it possible to understand landscape evolution and flora consumption in the cities' neighbourhoods. To finalise, contemporary Brazilian geographers' analysis permitted to evaluate Salvador's urban expansion through times (Andrade and Brandão 2009).

The exploration of the places and the urban landscape is of utmost importance for text content analysis. Samara Pacheco Silva Barbosa and Giseli Gomes Dalla Nora (2024) have researched autistic children's geographical experiences and their learning process, in Brazil. According to them, the reflexive character of this science makes it possible to understand the individual comprehension of the world, when one knows people's nature. Geography permits us to build our own identity *vis à vis* the place we live, the places we've visited, and the relationships with other people, giving importance to alterity, to other cultures and ways of life. Thus, Amado's novel can be understood whereas the author's experiences are known (Roscelli 2022). Amado was not a geographer, as stated, and the aim of the research is to compare both landscapes: the ones described in literary novels; and the walking promenades from the 2023 survey, conducted by the author of this paper (Madaleno 2024a).

Luciana da Costa Feitosa and Pablo Ruyz Aranha (2020) have studied public policies in Brazil, particularly the ones related to regional funding of projects, the "Policies of Regional Development" (PNDR). The aim of these national rules is to reduce inequalities among regions in Brazil, a country with near continental proportions (Decree nº 6.047, published the 22nd of February 2007). Feitosa and Aranha (2020) defend that there is "geographic blindness" in planning, producing scarce results in implementation of economic policies, and gaps of development within Brazil. Bahia is a highly resourceful State though, possessing rich farming areas that produce cocoa (425.818 Hectares, in 2023) ranking second (38.7%) in the country, after Para state, located in the Brazilian Amazon (IBGE 2024). The first world cocoa producer is the Ivory Coast, with 43% and the 6th is Brazil, with 296,145 Tons in 2023 (IBGE 2024). That production was the target of several of Amado's novels ("Cocoa" 1933) and is present in the "Captains of the Sands", published four years later.

The price of cocoa has varied enormously through times, and in a period of almost 90 years it became imperative to look for alternative ways to mitigate poverty and, most particularly, diminish inequalities in the urban environment. That's where tourism and touristic investment were introduced in the regional economy, namely, during the last recession (2008/15), so as to create employment and improve income, in Salvador. There are as many ideas about geography and space as there are geographers, in the words of geographer Milton Santos (1992). Bertha Becker argued that territory is a space of practice that integrates the intention of power, even though it should be a way to improve social cohesion (2005). Other contemporary Brazilian geographers stated that: "far from tourist appeal, Salvador presents considerable poverty rates, concentration of income and socioeconomic inequality" (Castro and Ribeiro, 2015). In this paper the urban space of Salvador has the stage, both in Amado's 1937 book and modern day.

Based on a theoretical-conceptual analysis of geographers that think about the landscape geography-literature relationship (Gaspar 1980, Machado 2023), and an examination of literature books, including research about the Portuguese poet Camões (Paiva 2015), the “Captains of the Sands” of Brazilian Amado, produced in the 1930s, represents an object of investigation in Geography. In fact, Aquilino Machado, grandson of the Portuguese writer Aquilino Ribeiro, is a geographer involved in literature analysis of some of his ancestor’s books, like “Terras do Demo” (2012), and a disciple of Jorge Gaspar, former professor of Human Geography in the University of Lisbon (Machado 2023). Both contemporary geographers use the geography-literature connection in their scientific production. Other experts contend that such a relationship can also be established between Literature and History, which is valid for the novel under examination (Silva e Santos 2021).

Materials and Methods

The interpretation of an urban landscape can be done by walking, while observing and recording the surroundings, using images and notes, being a tool and a method used both by landscape architects and geographers to develop a case study (Mansouri and Stefano 2024). Walking gives priority to the sensorial dimension of city discovery, enabling us to decode the spaces, the human as well as the physical and the ecological layers. The human level are the people that live and experience the city; the physical are the buildings and their functions to those who work and inhabit the city; the ecological layer are the gardens, so often unseen by researchers and visitors, despite of their powerful role for humanity since Ancient Greek History, as food and health spaces (Karayanni 2024). The focus in this contribution will mainly be the third layer, as flora described in Amado’s book was researched during the survey, together with the food, medicine and spices quest, whose purchase made comparisons easier. Methodology used in this contribution was twofold: 1) Literature analysis and flora identification in the 1937 book “*Os Capitães da Areia*” was the secondary source of information; 2) Urban landscape interpretation through the techniques of walking, scientific literature comparison and online flora taxonomical links consultation was the primary source of data. During this second phase we’ve conducted a survey to fifty (50) flora growers and traders, to identify the plant species used in modern day. Materials were simple sheets of paper, cameras, pens and pencils, laptops computers, tools and software used to design tables with common designations of flora and scientific names of native or exotic species.

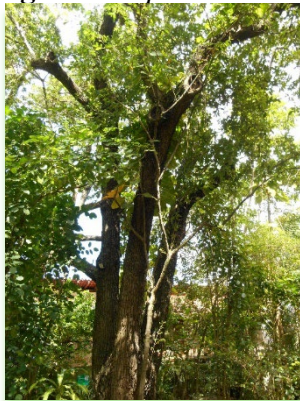
Simple tables were used to compare twentieth century plants with contemporary ones, for those gardened, as the ones sold on the streets and markets, and those consumed in delicacies and restaurants. They included the vernaculars for species in Portuguese and in English and the botanical identification of gender, species and family, using Missouri Botanical Garden’s (MBG 2025) site taxonomy as norms. Previous research has focused on Portuguese landscapes (Madaleno, 2021, 2024b), with similar methodology; both studies used the same theoretical conceptual analysis, based on the geography-literature connection. They compared such non-geographer

authors as 20th century Portuguese Agustina Bessa-Luis (1922-2019) and nineteenth century Almeida Garrett's (1799-1854) literary descriptions with today's reality (Madaleno 2024a).

Results

Amado's novel is realistic but not pessimistic (Roscelli 2022). The street kids will become adults that fight against injustice and class differences, so present in Brazil in the 1930's, but mitigated recently by subsidies that pay for the school fees of the less-wealthy, in the legislatures of President Lula da Silva (2003-2011 and 2023-present). Table 1 compares data gathered during the University of Lisbon scientific mission with Amado's book flora identified. There one can observe that seventeen of the twenty-four plant species the author mentioned in his book were recorded during the scientific mission, conducted at the service of the Portuguese University, in 2023. A sample of 50 interviews recorded 151 vegetable plants: 51,7% were food species, mostly native, (such as Sapodilla plum tree, in Figure 4), but also from Africa and Europe; 19,2% were healing plants; 14,6% of the flora registered in Salvador, Brazil, were cosmetics or perfumes; and 10,6% were spices, also grown in the Amado and Gattai home garden (Madaleno 2024a).

Figure 4. *Sapodilla Plum Tree (Sapoti), from Amado and Gattai's Food Garden*



Source: Author's photo, 2023

Previous publications about Salvador were presented in Naples, at the 14th Biennale of European Towns and Town Planners (April 2024), and at the Sustainable Development and Planning Conference of the Wessex Institute of Technology, in Seville, Spain (September 2024). They were comparative studies of flora mentioned in the sixteenth century and consumed today. Current case study focuses on literary work as secondary source of information about the city and flora consumed there in the beginning of the 20th century, based on the theoretical-conceptual approach that landscape geography and contemporary literature are related too, as previously said. Accordingly, reading Table 1 we easily understand how Amado's literary work, produced in the 1930s, is represented in modern day, in the streets of Salvador, concluding that the book can be seen as an object of investigation in Geography.

The table gathers the seventeen species identified in the “Captains of the Sand” that are still gardened or consumed today. The top-ranking species is the coconut tree, present in front- and backyards, as in the waterfront of Salvador. Coconut water is consumed there, and coconut milk is a common ingredient in culinary dishes. Cassava goes next, with 14 occurrences, a staple food native to Brazil. Corn (9 occurrences) is another native American staple, and oranges the top-ranking citrus (9 records), eaten and consumed as juices. Cocoa had 8 occurrences and is used in baking and in ice-cream making. Another basic food from the Americas is beans, usually farmed together with corn. In Brazil, beans are frequently associated with rice (5 records) and consumed together all over the country. It was already like that in Amado’s book. The remaining species were flowers only used for ornamental purposes, tobacco, *Hevea brasiliensis* and *Sambucus australis*, unreported because they aren’t food or medicine in use today.

Table 1. Comparison of 1937 Data with the 2023 Survey

Flora Recorded	Botanical Identification and Records		
	Scientific Name	Botanical Family Name	Nº
1.Beans	<i>Phaseolus vulgaris</i> L.	FABACEAE	5
2.Brazilian grape tree	<i>Eugenia uniflora</i> L.	MYRTACEAE	*
3.Cinnamon	<i>Cinnamomum zeylanicum</i> Blum.	LAURACEAE	3
4.Clove	<i>Syzygium aromaticum</i> (L.) Merr. & L.M. Perry	MYRTACEAE	2
5.Cocoa	<i>Theobroma cacao</i> L.	MALVACEAE	8
6.Coconut	<i>Cocos nucifera</i> L.	ARECACEAE	26
7.Corn	<i>Zea mays</i> L.	POACEAE	9
8.Coffea	<i>Coffea arabica</i> L.	RUBIACEAE	2
9.Cassava	<i>Manihot esculenta</i> Crantz	EUPHORBIACEAE	14
10.Mango Tree	<i>Mangifera indica</i> L.	ANACARDIACEAE	4
11.Oranges	<i>Citrus sinensis</i> L.	RUTACEAE	9
12.Plum	<i>Prunus</i> sp.	ROSACEAE	5
13.Rose	<i>Rosa</i> sp.	ROSACEAE	3
14.Sapodilla Plum tree	<i>Manilkara zapota</i> (L.) P. Royen	SAPOTACEAE	1
15.Sugarcane	<i>Saccharum officinarum</i> L.	POACEAE	3
16.Violet	<i>Viola odorata</i> L.	VIOLACEAE	1
17.Wild Oat	<i>Avena sativa</i> L.	POACEAE	3

*Amado and Gattai Museum House and Garden.

Sources: Amado (1937) and the Author’s Survey (2023)

Let's read an extract from the English translation of Amado's book:

"They go along merrily. They carry switchblades and knives in their pants. But they'll only take them out if the others do. Because abandoned children have a law and a morality too, a sense man dignity. Suddenly Big João shouts: "There they are." With the uproar they make. Ezequiel comes out from boat: "Who goes there?" "The Captains of the Sands, who don't swallow any insults..." Pedro Bala answered." Source: 1988 by Avon Books. Translated by Gregory Rabassa

Discussion

The History of Salvador

According to Andrade and Brandão (2009) the city of Salvador was drawn by the first Portuguese governor - Tomé de Souza, in front of the All-Saints Bay (west in Figure 2). That location permitted to strategically look into the sea waters and observe any ship that could arrive with unfriendly intentions. The walled area also served to defend Europeans from native Indians. During the seventeenth to the eighteenth centuries, sugarcane plantations were established in the surrounding area, and black slaves were brought from African colonies to work there. Agriculture was always the main activity of Bahia, and religious catholic missionaries built several churches in the capital city of Brazil.

With the slaves came the habit of cooking with palm oil, also imported from Western Africa, together with the ancestor African religion later named *Candomblé*. Tobacco was planted also in the farms, and Amado's abandoned children smoked cigars as written in the book. Tobacco is quoted 23 times in Amado's novel and sugarcane 11 times. Those were the most mentioned flora names from the referenced novel. In 1763 the capital of Brazil was transferred to Rio de Janeiro (located Southwards of Salvador), due to the decline in sugarcane production, because of Caribbean Sea Islands competition, as well as the growth of coffee plantations in S. Paulo and Paraná States (Southeast of Brazil). Finally, the African slave traffic ended (1850) and abolition of slavery was dictated, after the independence from Portugal, due to Princess Isabel decree (1888).

Salvador was only modernized in the second half of the twentieth century, after the beginning of oil exploration and refinement in Brazil (1953), and in the meantime cocoa became the main farming production in Ilhéus (located South, in the State of Bahia). Manufacturing was implanted near the capital city (1967-76), producing intense migration from other states to Bahia, and conurbation with the original historical nucleus of Salvador, from the end of twentieth century to the beginning of the 21st one. Tourism was responsible for this last expansion (Andrade and Brandão 2009), because Governor Magalhães (1991-1994) initiated the process during his mandate (Silva and Reis 2023).

Andrade and Brandão (2009) stressed this demographic evolution: "in 1960, there were 630,878 inhabitants in Salvador and 5,900,000 in the State of Bahia; in 1970, 1,001,200 and 7,500,000 respectively, Salvador having about 1/7 of Bahia's residents. In 2000, Salvador already had 2,439,823 inhabitants, and Bahia 13,070,250 inhabitants"

(Andrade and Brandão 2009). The National Statistics Organization says that in 2024 there were 2,568,928 people in the city (IBGE, 2024). In our times, the city is consolidated and suffers demographic stagnation.

The Three Landscape Analysis Layers: Ecology, Buildings and People

Nowadays, urban sustainability is the norm in urban planning (Madaleno 2024a) and can be promoted with tree and bush plantations in home gardens. Environmental sustainability corresponds to the ecological layer on landscape analysis, as enumerated in the section material and methods. Overall, the increase in green areas, parks and public spaces is recommended in urban planning, because they are infiltration spaces that mitigate floods and droughts, they produce oxygen, reducing air pollution and improving air quality. The role of food and spice gardens is crucial to preserve native flora and increase biodiversity, the so-called useful plant species as well as ornamental plants (roses and violets) used to make perfumes. The paper also reports good examples of urban agriculture practices in front-yards, including the Amado and Gattai Museum house. Several species mentioned in *Captains of the Sands* were exotic, usually used in cooked food, such as clove and cinnamon. Beans, native corn and cassava, the Asian oranges and sugarcane are all cited as food by the author, as said. These continue to be the staples grown and consumed today.

As to the physical (buildings) and human layers of landscape analysis, recent actions were devised by the municipal government in Salvador to preserve the cultural heritage for the old centre of the city, where coloured colonial buildings dominate (1500-1822). Program Revitalize, designed during Governor Magalhães (1991-1994) mandate was created to enhance the unique Bahia slave heritage (tasted in food, heard in music, and practiced by their African religion), and to regenerate the historical Portuguese architecture of the first capital of Brazil. Most of the buildings targeted by rehabilitation have been using international developers' funds, such as five-star hotel entrepreneurs, because Salvador is a highly touristic Northeastern urban site in Brazil, as noticed before (Silva and Reis 2023).

Therefore, from 1991 to 2006 all the city centre less-wealthy tenants suffered gentrification and were replaced by restaurants and souvenir shops, bars, cafes, museums, and luxurious hotels. According to Silva and Reis (2023), 95% of those poor residents have been given meagre compensation to live elsewhere in Salvador. However, because hotels and fast-food outlets all look the same around the world, the historical area became unauthentic, as Guimarães registered in Old Lisbon neighbourhoods (2022). So, in 2013, due to the lack of authenticity in Salvador city centre, the municipality established the Revitalize Program targeting old residents and giving them incentives to occupy open public spaces to trade their crops (in markets and fairs), or even to practice the Candomblé blessings with native herbs, without being taxed (Madaleno 2024a).

Let's read another page of the scenes in Amado's novel, to get Salvador spirit and uniqueness:

“When Legless and Big João arrived, Pedro Bala got up off the sand and called the leaders together. They went over to the Professor's candle. Dora came too and sat down between Big João and Good-Life. The drifter lighted a cigarette, said to Dora: “I'm

learning how to play a wild samba. And I'm going to get me a guitar, sister." (...) They worked out a plan of battle. And around midnight some thirty went out. Ezequiel's gang slept around the Porto da Lenha, in some overturned boats and on the dock."

Source: 1988 by Avon Books. Translated by Gregory Rabassa

The sandy beaches (Figure 5) are still attractions for tourists in modern times, but they are guarded by policeman in order to prevent such actions as those described in the novel of Jorge Amado. In fact, street kids didn't disappear completely from the waterfronts yet there are illiteracy programs established by the Federal legislation, whose focus are exactly the abandoned infants that wander throughout the Brazilian cities and metropolis. Municipal Law nº 9 215/2017 provided tax benefits to renovate houses and to innovate with cultural activities and landscape protection, in the historical city of Salvador (Silva and Reis 2023). So far, very little has been achieved, because most property was gentrified by foreigners.

Unilateral decision-making in urban and regional planning has been the norm, according to Dias, Pereira and Clemente (2023). However, the Brazilian legislation permits a participative process: "A relevant mechanism to assist in the planning process is through democratic participation, especially with the support of Organized Civil Society (SCO) and its networks" (2023, p. 1). It was in this context that local universities are playing a relevant role, whilst researching mechanisms of improvement through their extension institutions; they frequently prepare technical and scientific results, by means of students and academic research, whose role is to improve regional planning, according to sustainable practises developed in the universities (Dias et al. 2023).

Figure 5. *The Sandy Beaches of Salvador, cited in Amado's Book*



Source: Author's photo, 2023

In the words of Castro and Ribeiro (2015) the Eurocentric approach in planning tries to use the same framework everywhere, within different cultural contexts and socio-economic backgrounds, globalising metrics and practises that do not always produce similar results. These Brazilian critical geographers and economists stress that science is not neutral but always politicised, because people have convictions and there is no universality in development proposals because different people have different cultural backgrounds. The respect for difference is a proposal that Amado stressed in his *Captains of the Sands*, and it suits us geographers as observers of Nature and Human Settlements.

Conclusions

During the 1930's unemployment led to uncertainty in families that sometimes responded with the abandonment of their infants. That was the case in the city of Salvador, located in Northeastern Brazil, and gave way to the object of study in Landscape Geography – “Captains of the Sands” – the Jorge Amado's book about street children and their behaviour. The repressive role of authorities and of several wealthier people against these infants, is in great contrast with recent measures taken by the Federal Government of Brazil, following the pandemic lockdowns. As Charlesworth et. al. (2024) concluded: “protecting vulnerable individuals and rehabilitating perpetrators in the real world” is now seen as advisable, yet that is about a century later than the facts reported in Amado's novel.

What was detachable in this comparative research is that flora consumption in the 1930's was quite similar to the one surveyed today. Beans, corn, cassava are still the most consumed staples, and fruits, such as Brazilian grapes, oranges, sapotas and mangoes are found in home gardens and in local markets. Cocoa is now the biggest production in Bahia state, and the Candomblé practices regarding disease treatment are continuing to survive, in conviviality with the Catholic religion, dominant in Brazil, but not as much these days as it was in the last century. Are novels objects of investigation in landscape geography? The answer to the research question is affirmative.

Geographic blindness (Feitosa and Aranha 2020) is present in contemporary planning, though, because tourism under international developer funding widens the gap among the poor and the very rich. Tourists come from wealthier Brazilian cities and from abroad, from other American countries, Europe and Asia. The authenticity given to the historical centre of Salvador, from 2013 onwards, by the African descendants that sell souvenirs, asperge tourists with their herbs, as well as the city tour that includes fairs and markets exploration, to stimulate purchase, do not end poverty, just mitigate it. It's a way to give people identity and tourists folklore, making them understand there is a festive culture in Salvador, sometimes accompanied by drums. Figure 6 displays the spirit of the capital city of Bahia, without sound, but with much colour.

Figure 6. *Candomblé Blessing versus Tourists, at the Entrance of a 1745 Salvador Church*



Source: Author's photo, 2023.

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