

# Rethinking Heritage: Studying Resilient Pasts and Presents in Times of Conflict

by Zachary Vincent, University of St Andrews, Scotland

Email: [zvw1@st-andrews.ac.uk](mailto:zvw1@st-andrews.ac.uk)

Supervised by Dr Bruno Brulon Soares

## The Institutional Lens

The history of Latin American cultural heritage protection has long been written in a way which neglects the most important policy makers, enforcers, and negotiators: national institutions. This research seeks use a comparative approach to the institutions responsible for protecting Latin American art and cultural heritage. The question at the forefront of the debate is: what does an institutional history enable historians to see which would be otherwise neglected? The answer is that it enables a view over a long span of time, giving the space in which the patterns of political involvement and conflict can reveal themselves and their connections to heritage policy. This is accomplished through analysis of primary source material from the founding of these institutions as well as secondary discussions of their subsequent evolutions alongside conflicts and change.



## Brazil

Brazil's primary national heritage institution has, at times been called SPHAN, DPHAN, and IPHAN (National Institute of Historical and Artistic Heritage). It has changed alongside Brazil's government, going through periods of chaotic transformation as it navigated military dictatorship and the rise of democracy. Its process of increasingly decentralised control, which occurred alongside these other changes, make it an interesting marker of the state of the Brazilian nation. While heritage policy is rarely turned to as an indicator of larger policy shifts, Brazil exemplifies why it should be.

## Mexico

Mexico's national heritage institution, INAH (National Institute of Anthropology and History), has been most interestingly defined by its ties to a strictly centralised programme of education formed in the aftermath of the Mexican Revolution of 1910. Mexico's attempts to equalise opportunity and to protect non-European sources of cultural heritage led to a very inclusive national system, but one with very little space for regional variance. This has impacted Mexico up to the present day and proves an interesting examination of the long term consequences of policy originating with conflict, like revolution.

## Cuba

Cuba's CNPC (National Council of Cultural Heritage) was unique in that its actions were monitored not only by Cuban government, but also by the Soviet administration as part of attempts to control global communism. The decentralised system of heritage management which was adopted by the CNCP, and which placed community action above government control, made it possible for some degree of Cuban-centred, hybrid heritage to be preserved despite its lack of apparent connection to orthodox communism in the eyes of the Soviets. Cuba's history is one in which administrative structure tells a larger story.

I would like to thank Lard Laidlaw and the Laidlaw foundation for making this project possible, and my supervisor Dr Bruno Brulon Soares who has offered so much help and guidance along the way.

## References

### Images

Cover page from *Revista do Serviço do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico Nacional* 1 (1937).

Diego Rivera, *The Night of the Poor*, 1928, Mural, Ministry of Education, Mexico City; image from Rochfort, David. *Mexican Muralists: Orozco, Rivera, Siqueiros*. London: Laurence King Publishing, 1993.

### Other

Craven, David. *Art and Revolution in Latin America: 1910-1990*. Yale: Yale University Press, 2002. <https://doi.org/ezproxy.st-andrews.ac.uk/10.37862/aaeportal.00020.005>.

IPHAN. "Linha do Tempo – Iphan 80 Anos." Accessed 12 August 2023. <https://web.archive.org/web/20170503163712/http://portal.iphan.gov.br/pagina/detalhes/1211>.

López Varela, Sandra L. "Mexico's Heritage and Management." Springer. Published Online 09 July 2018. [https://link.springer.com/referenceworkentry/10.1007/978-3-319-51726-1\\_1951-2#citeas](https://link.springer.com/referenceworkentry/10.1007/978-3-319-51726-1_1951-2#citeas).

