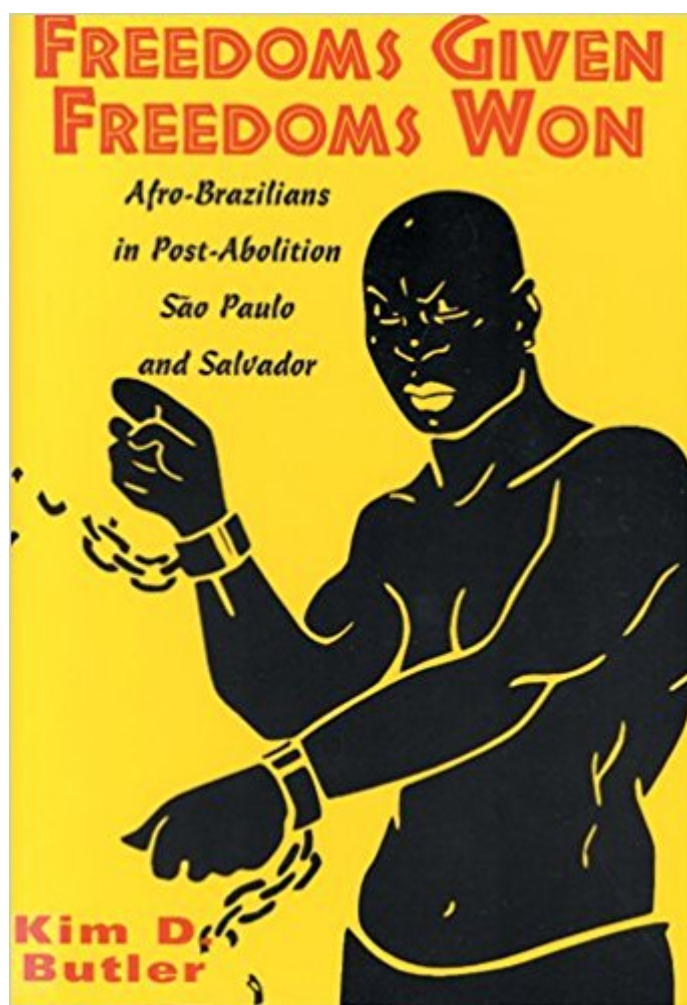




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# Freedoms Given, Freedoms Won: Afro-Brazilians In Post-Abolition São Paulo And Salvador



## Synopsis

*Freedoms Given, Freedoms Won* explores the ways Afro-Brazilians in two major cities adapted to the new conditions of life after the abolition of slavery and how they confronted limitations placed on their new freedom. The book sets forth new ways of understanding why the abolition of slavery did not yield equitable fruits of citizenship, not only in Brazil, but throughout the Americas and the Caribbean. Afro-Brazilians in Sao Paulo and Salvador lived out their new freedom in ways that raise issues common to the entire Afro-Atlantic diaspora. In Sao Paulo, they initiated a vocal struggle for inclusion in the creation of the nation's first black civil rights organization and political party, and they appropriated a discriminatory identity that isolated blacks. In contrast, African identity prevailed over black identity in Salvador, where social protest was oriented toward protecting the right of cultural pluralism. Of all the eras and issues studied in Afro-Brazilian history, post-abolition social and political action has been the most neglected. Butler provides many details of this period for the first time in English and supplements published sources with original oral histories, Afro-Brazilian newspapers, and new state archival documents currently being catalogued in Bahia. *Freedoms Given, Freedoms Won* sets the Afro-Brazilian experience in a national context as well as situating it within the Afro-Atlantic diaspora through a series of explicit parallels, particularly with Cuba and Jamaica.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"*Freedoms Given, Freedoms Won* . . . is essential reading for an understanding of Brazilian race relations and the black movement today. A particular virtue of the book, besides the enlightening

comparative perspective itself, and the author's carefully and modestly argued analysis, is that the latter is firmly rooted in a combination of extensive first-hand interviews with survivors of the period examined, and consultation of contemporary public archives and the black press." (Journal of Latin American Studies)"Butler does an excellent job establishing the patterns of political behavior of people of colour in two of the most important politics of late 19th and early 20th century Brazil. Juxtaposing the two cities proves to be both illuminating and instructive." (British Bulletin of Publications)"This book offers a clear comparative analysis of the post-abolition Afro-Brazilian community in two cities. Furthermore, among the book's many strengths is that it moves beyond a simple comparison of two populations. Butler successfully analyses her subjects within the much more broader context of the African diaspora throughout the Americas. . . . The book offers rare insight into the struggle for self-determination among a population that has traditionally lacked a historic voice." (Law and History Review)"Kim Butler . . . proposes a theoretical framework to explain why African descendants in [Sao Paulo and Salvador] adopted different strategies of self-representations and suggests how this framework might contribute to the comparative study of the politics of freedpeople in the Afro-Atlantic diaspora. The result is an important contribution to the historiography of race and politics in Brazil that raises intriguing questions for scholars of postemancipation societies." (H-Net Reviews)

KIM D. BUTLER is assistant professor of Africana Studies at Rutgers University.

Purchased it for my bf and he couldn't stop reading it. Fast shipping. A great read for anyone interested in Afro-Latin culture.

MUSLIM AFRICAN FOUGHT for their freedom ,before getting on the boat,on the boat, getting off the boat, on the plantation,!! on POINT AND A GREAT RESEARCH SOURCE! TOO MUCH INFORMATION about ISLAMIC/and TRADITION AFRICANS.IS GREAT AND HELPFUL in the revision of AFRICAN UNITY/RESISTANCE TO BONDAGE .THEIR is many PRIMARY SOURCES and the exploration OF JIHAD in LATIN AMERICA. the number of MUSLIM and ISLAMIC UPRISINGS for over two hundred years is a revelation! REPARATIONS NOW!!

Finally a book that goes beyond, the fact that Brazil is not a racial democracy, and examines how the Afro-Brazilian has fought against racism. Dr. Butler shows the various ways that Afro-Brazilians have fought and reacted against racism. However, what makes this study so important is the

primary research that she used, particularly in the case of Salvador, Bahia; very little has been known about how Afro-Brazilians have reacted to racism in the north-east. This is probably the most important book in the field of Afro-Brazilian studies—a must buy for all those who are interested in the Afro-diaspora in the Americas, and how Black folk have reacted to racism after slavery.

Following the dissolution of slavery in nineteenth-century Brazil, large numbers of nonwhites struggled for the fruits of freedom within a finite space. That space, dominated by a decidedly smaller but powerful white elite, dictated the parameters and definitions of the so-called "high brow" culture. Due in large part to mid-century developments in transportation (the railroad in particular), Brazil began to mature rapidly as it linked to the wider transatlantic economy. Accompanied by increasing demands on African slave imports and a newer coffee-based export economy, Brazilian elites loudly rallied around the theme of progress. For Africans and their descendants, abolition initially brought great promise, Kim Butler argues in *'Freedoms Given, Freedoms Won,'* but subsequently struggled for a share of that ill-defined freedom well into the twentieth-century and beyond. For Butler, Associate Professor of History and Chair of the Africana Studies Program at Rutgers University, the rather complicated meaning of freedom itself is at issue. Africans and Afro-Brazilians believed that the end of slavery meant fuller participation in Brazilian society at the social, cultural, economic, and political levels. Psychologically, she argues, the failure of such notions was a devastating and bitter pill to swallow for many. Butler discovered that blacks responded largely within three strategic avenues: integrationism, alternative integrationism, or separatism. Stated briefly, in the first case blacks could culturally assimilate to the dominant strata in hopes of improved social mobility and patronage networks. Alternative integrationists in Sao Paulo, on the other hand, formed somewhat elaborate organizations such as Centro-Civico Palmares and Frente Negra Brasileira in order to gain political rights within the context of patronage ties and generally accepted cultural dictates. Significant ethnic divisions and infighting, the author argues, effectively prevented these groups from collectively organizing around racial lines in order to press for change. In contrast, separatists often withdrew from the "contact zones" of the mainstream Brazilian culture in order to achieve protection and retention of dignity within an otherwise humiliating and potentially unsafe police state. As in the case of earlier Cuban cabildos, Brazil's *candombles* of the late nineteenth and early twentieth-centuries (at least initially, until their popularization) afforded alternative integrationists and separatists alike the structural ability to survive amidst complex socioeconomic and sociopolitical changes. In some cases, Afro-Brazilians consciously embraced their African cultural heritages and inadvertently "encroached" on the cultural

hegemony of the white elites. In Salvador, for instance, the radical redefinition of "carnival" from the 1860s until the turn of the century represented a willingness of Afro-Brazilians to work within the existing political system. Despite efforts to coalesce around a Brazilian cultural identity, Afro-Brazilians met mounting resistance by a (white) elite-controlled police counter response. Only by the growing cross-race and cross-class popularization of previously outlawed capoeira groups did many Afro-Brazilians finally achieve increased protection under Bahian law. At bottom, 'Freedoms Given, Freedoms Won' is concerned primarily with African agency in the Atlantic and African Diaspora worlds. In using the Diasporan Model, Butler explicitly states that Afro-Brazilians, like their Atlantic counterparts generally, were at once defined and redefined by both internal and external forces. Her account, originally a dissertation at Johns Hopkins University (1995) entitled "Identity and Self-Determination in the Post-Abolition African Diaspora," suggests that African responses to identity formation were quite varied. From a variety of peculiar contexts and factors, Sao Paulan society revolved around racial stratifications; black Salvadorans, however, found common ground culturally. In either case, Butler argues that a willingness to press for individual or collective advancement indicated a varied and startlingly active approach to carving out the "fullest" freedom possible. Butler's account is remarkably insightful for its widely applicable framework. Given the use of an early articulation of the Diasporan Model, Butler's conclusions seem generally solid. Now over a decade old, 'Freedoms Given, Freedoms Won' would likely be a much different work if written today. One cannot help but see its dated qualities in the age of its secondary sources and somewhat skeletal conclusions. Given the somewhat disjointed juxtaposition of Sao Paulo and Salvador, recent work would no doubt help to provide a more nuanced comparison. Overall, Butler's abundant use of contemporary newspaper accounts and organizational minutes still provides a surprisingly fresh account for its privileging of Afro-Brazilian sources over their white elite counterparts. Note: Given the option, I'd give it 3.5 stars.

Dr. Bulter's book is undoubtedly for the aspiring "heavyweights" of Brazilian racial politics because it assumes that the reader has a basic to moderate understanding of Brazil's history, since it deals mainly with the political aspects of two of the major slave holding states after abolition (the late 1800's and onwards). This is a great thing for those who want detail--and yes, there are visuals. You can read overviews of Brazil in the encyclopedia; this is a book that can be brought into the classroom--undergraduate and graduate alike.

Nice beginner book if you are just starting to explore the African diaspora

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