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Decolonialism in Brazil

Decolonial Strategies

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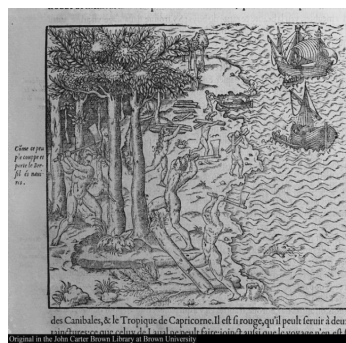
Colonialism history in Brazil

In 1500, Pedro Alvares Cabral arrived in Brazil with 1,200 Portuguese adventurers after missing his destination in Southern Africa. Immediately, the colony became a Portuguese claim and quickly earned a unique identity.

From a commercial standpoint, the Portuguese colonizers realized their lucrative find, introducing the industrial production of Brazilwood and establishing feitorias and engenhos for sugar production.

When we talk about Brazilwood, we have to know that it was prized at this time in Europe for the distinctive color of its wood and a red tint it could produce. Its discovery by European merchants sparked a fever of harvesting. While Portugal theoretically had a trading monopoly on the region, pirates and foreign nationals consistently tried to bypass Portuguese merchants. Key in the harvest of brazilwood were the Tupí people, the natives of Brazil's southern coast, with whom Europeans traded for their labor or, more commonly as demand grew, whom they coerced or enslaved.

And slavery became the vital part which held this colonial economic system together. After, when they discovered Minas Gerais and the richness around the gemstones and gold found in there, slavery lavery became even significant and also played a role in later political uprisings against the Portuguese.



In this illustration, native Brazilians chop down trees and tote them to nearby European ships. The artist, that wass French, made this imagine and put together with his book that made possible the theory that the French were interested also in Brazil and in the Wood, so they tried to trade in the brazilian coast. When the picture was published in 1575, its caption acknowledged the contentiousness of the French presence, noting that Portugal had claimed a significant stretch of untapped Brazilian coastline as its own.

Decolonization of imagination

In his text, Quijano explains that Latin America was one of the most "extreme case of cultural colonization by Europe" (p.24). This can be explained by some facts. The first is that in the beginning of the colonization the symbols, beliefs and knowledge that were not aligned with the ones from the colonizers, were completely destroyed. After that, they turned European culture into a way to access power, which made it even more seductive and desired.

The second fact is that not only the culture from the native was destroyed, but the natives themselves were slaughtered. According to Quijano, p. 24, "The cultural repression and the massive genocide together turned the previous high cultures of America into illiterate, peasant subcultures condemned to orality; that is, deprived of their own patterns of formalized, objectivised, intellectual, and plastic or visual expression. Henceforth, the survivors would have no other modes of intellectual and plastic or visual formalized and objectivised expressions, but through the cultural patterns of the rulers, even if subverting them in certain cases to transmit other needs of expression. Latin America is, without doubt, the most extreme case of cultural colonization by Europe."

This topic is also mentioned by Ramón Grosfoguel, he says that when Latin America was colonized by European countries, they also enforced a whole new system and economic power-structure. Which changed completely the organization of the societies that were already in that land.

According to Grosfoguel, the relation of power is linked to knowledge. The author explains that the knowledge is located in the dominant side of power, and to the colonial system reach success, the subjects from the oppressed side must think epistemically like their dominants.

The understanding of both the sides "dominant" and "dominated" changed during time. It started in the 16th century with "people without writing", later, in the 18th and 19th century changed to "people without history", in the next century it was "people without development", and in the contemporary times, it is "people without democracy". And Brazil, the topic of our study, can be connected to all of the concepts used until the 20th century.

Grosfoguel claims that the two terms "coloniality" and "colonialism" are different. For him, "colonialism" "refer to 'colonial situations' enforced by the presence of a colonial administration such as the period of classical colonialism" (p.73), while "coloniality" "allow us to understand the continuity of colonial forms of domination after the end of colonial administrations" (p.74).

Study of cases

Campos do Jordão

The city was established in 1874. Due to its climatic and landscape characteristics similar to that of several regions in Europe, Campos do Jordão started to receive buildings with typical architecture of the Swiss Alps, spread over practically all of its territory. It is now known as the "Brazilian Switzerland". And not only the buildings follow this inspiration, but also the gastronomy (like fondue, raclette, rosti, and also chocolat factories). Today, it is one of the most famous winter destinations in Brazil.

Holambra

After the Second World War, the Dutch government it stimulated the immigration of part of the population to Brazil. About 500 immigrants settled on the area and in 1948, founded the Estância Holambra. Dutch immigrants and their descendants help to maintain, even today,

customs and traditions of their homeland, observed in gastronomy, architecture, symbols drawn on sidewalks (clogs, windmills, tulips), in the habit of riding a bicycle, and in the Dutch language (still used). KingsDay is celebrated in the city, one of the most traditional holidays in the Netherlands, that is when the Dutch celebrate the birthday of their king, King Willem Alexander, born on 27 April.

Nova Veneza

The city of Nova Veneza (New Venice) was colonized in 1891, when the first Italian immigrants, coming from the Veneto region, arrived. The city was established with the name: Nuova Venezia. Now, the city has built an artificial lake to recreate the Venice Canals.

Manaus

Established in 1850, had its great development in the 19th century during the rubber latex exploration cycle in Brazil. The city built a grand opera house, with vast domes and gilded balconies, and using marble, glass, and crystal, from around Europe, and other important buildings that follow the European architecture. For this reason, in that time, until now, the city was known by "The Paris of the Tropics"

Slides

**Decolonialism
in Brazil**

Isadora Carniel Gomes
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Traditions

Architecture

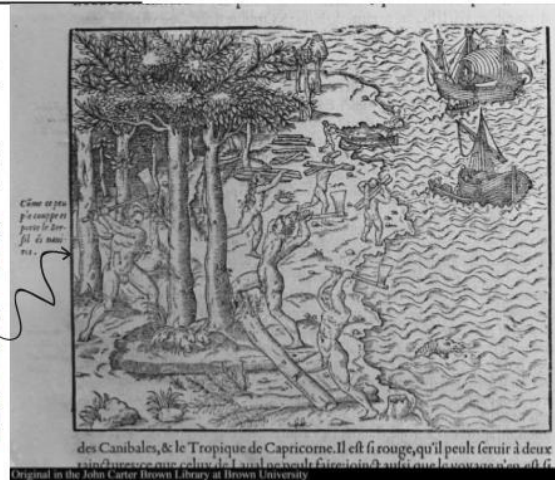
The slide features a central title 'Decolonialism in Brazil' with 'Brazil' highlighted in yellow. Below the title are the authors' names. To the right, there is a collage of four images: a canal boat in Nova Veneza, a Dutch windmill in a field, a row of colorful tulips, and a traditional Dutch building. A pink arrow points from the title to the 'Traditions' label, and a yellow arrow points from the title to the 'Architecture' label.

Colonialism history in Brazil

The colonialism in Brazil has started in 1500 when Pedro Alvares Cabral disembarked in the country with more than a thousand Portuguese Adventurers after badly missing his path to Southern Africa.

They have found a very lucrative country and started to introduce the industrial production of Brazilwood and establish feitorias and engenhos for sugar production.

- It was around this time that slavery became the lynchpin which held this colonial economic system together.
- The Brazilwood was a important object of exportation in that time. The color present inside the tree was a really strong red that could turn into a kind of ink back in Europe to dye fabric, turning the wood very expensive and lucrative business for Portugal. Turning all the eyes towards Brazil.



Brazilwood and the European interest

It was only in the mid-1500s that the old system of erecting trading posts (*feitorias*) and exchanging goods with local populations fell out of favor.

Imposing political control had been a goal far subordinate to that of building a vibrant trade network, but declining returns from trade posts in the Indian Ocean, combined with competition from the French and Spanish, forced the crown's hand toward settled colonization as a means of ensuring future revenue.



Decolonization of imagination

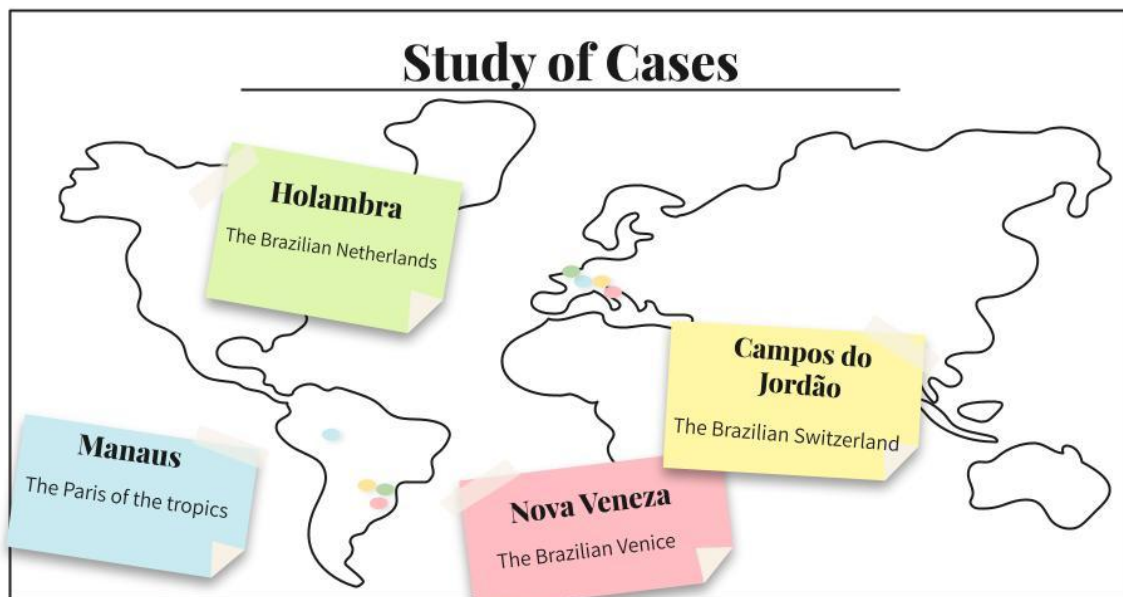
Latin America was one of the most "extreme case of cultural colonization by Europe":

- In the beginning of the colonization the symbols, beliefs and knowledge from the natives were completely destroyed
- European culture was turned into a way to access power, which made it even more seductive and desired
- Natives themselves were slaughtered.
- they also enforced a whole new system and economic power-structure

To the colonial system reach success, the subjects from the oppressed side must think epistemically like their dominants. The relation of power is linked to knowledge.

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Gondola



Artificial lake

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Climate



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King's Day

Thank you!

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