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Postcolonial optics of global community formation

Abstract. This article explored complex processes that arose from colonial rule and their long-term effects on modern societies. The study aimed to analyse the impact of colonial history on contemporary societies and the global community. To achieve this, historical documents, legal acts, theoretical studies, and statistical data were analysed. The analysis covered various aspects of colonial influence, including legal, economic, cultural, and social changes. Special attention was given to the consequences of colonisation in Africa and Brazil, as well as labour migration to Europe after the Second World War. The study found that colonialism contributed to the artificial formation of national borders, leading to the emergence of multinational states with complex ethnic and cultural structures. The economic exploitation of colonised countries has left deep scars on their development, further exacerbating global economic inequality. Cultural transformations, driven by the introduction of colonial languages, religions, and cultural practices, resulted in the loss of many traditional elements and the creation of hybrid cultures. The research findings demonstrated that colonialism significantly influenced the formation of national identities and often contributed to the emergence of ethnic conflicts, as seen in South America. The economic exploitation of colonies led to long-lasting consequences, such as economic dependency and unequal relations, which continue to impact the development of post-colonial nations, as exemplified by Brazil. Cultural transformations involved the imposition of colonial languages, religions, and cultural practices, resulting in the loss of traditional elements and the creation of hybrid cultural forms. Social changes included the development of social hierarchies and discrimination, which remain relevant today. Labour migration to Europe after the Second World War also caused significant demographic and social shifts. The findings from this research on colonialism can be utilised by governments, international organisations, and educational institutions to develop decolonisation policies, implement programs of historical redress, and enhance curricula to increase awareness of colonial legacies

Keywords: postcolonial societies; economic dependency; social hierarchy; national revival; ethnic conflicts; geopolitics

Introduction

Colonialism, a significant concept in contemporary social and political thought, has undergone substantial conceptual transformations. Initially, colonialism was associated with specific European territorial expansions and administrative practices, but over time, its meaning has broadened due to historical events and theoretical discussions. The relevance of studying colonialism is heightened by the growing interest in decolonisation, which encompasses efforts to restore and re-evaluate identities, cultures, and traditions that were marginalised or displaced as a result of colonial domination.

During the Cold War, the legal and political use of the term “colonialism” evolved, which diminished its historical impact. However, in the postcolonial period, colonialism regained significance as an important concept for analysing the paradoxes of global modernity (Barbosa &

Pimentel, 2024). The research confirms the view that fully understanding colonialism requires combining its historical context with analytical frameworks. The term “colonialism” is commonly understood to refer to the system of European imperial rule and related historical phenomena, encompassing neocolonialism and internal colonialism. Studies highlight the importance of a detailed approach that integrates the historical roots of colonialism with its role as a conceptual framework for analysing global power dynamics and historical injustices.

The study of the main issues of colonialism is the focus of M. Sultan’s (2024) article, in which the author examines key 20th-century scholarly theories related to the political categories of colonisation. The research of V. Cohn (2021) explores the history of British colonisation in India, with a primary focus on the development of governance in state

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institutions, the complex system of interaction and communication between the imperial administration and local elites, and the assessment of the colonial system's impact on social and cultural life in India. Numerous studies have been dedicated to the issue of identity among populations under colonial oppression. J. Holley (2024) examines the development of self-consciousness and solidarity among the populations of European colonial empires in the 19th century within the context of their own historical ethno-genesis, particularly emphasising the role of the deteriorating geopolitical situation at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, the First World War, and its influence on the formation of a new system of relations between colonies and metropolises in the 1920s and 1930s. M. Jeronimo (2023) addresses the transformation of colonial administration using the example of Portuguese imperial policy in Africa. G. Koehler-Derrick & M.M. Lee (2023) investigate the experience of French colonial policy in the context of the Algerian struggle for independence and the changing relationship between Paris and Algiers. E. Manela (2023) explores the impact of the colonial past on the spread of nationalist movements both in former colonies and in metropolises. J-P. Kouega (2022) investigates the cultural issues of countries that were former colonies of European empires, focusing on the interaction between former metropolises and peripheries throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. The author highlights the key role of European states and colonists in reshaping political and socio-economic ties in former colonies, which also became an important factor in the cultural life of these countries and, consequently, in the self-awareness of their populations.

This research aimed to investigate the cultural development and social transformation that occurred during the formation and deconstruction of colonial empires, as well as the interactions between European states and colonists with the colonies and their local populations.

Materials and Methods

To investigate the cultural and social transformations resulting from colonial history and their impact on the global community, a range of research methods were employed. These included the analysis of historical documents, legal acts, theoretical studies, and statistical data. A wide spectrum of documents was analysed, including treaties, agreements, colonial administrative reports, and contemporary accounts. Specifically, the protocols and agreements of the Berlin Conference (1884-1885), which regulated the partition of Africa among European powers, and the Government of India Act 1858, which transferred the administration of India from the British East India Company to the British Crown, were examined. Particular attention was paid to documents illuminating the relationships between colonial authorities and Indigenous populations, such as acts relating to slavery and its abolition, as well as documents demonstrating the consequences of colonial policies on cultural identity and social structures.

Theoretical works such as "Orientalism" by E. Said (2001) and "Black Skin, White Masks" by F. Fanon (1952) were also utilised to analyse the impact of colonialism on cultural and social processes. Statistical data played a crucial role in the research. In particular, demographic reports from colonial administrations, such as

censuses, were analysed. These provided data on population numbers, ethnic composition, and the socioeconomic status of colonial populations. Economic reports included information on production and trade volumes, financial inflows from colonies to the metropolises, and reports on infrastructure projects like railway and road construction. For instance, economic reports from British India contained data on mineral extraction, agricultural cultivation, and the export of tea and cotton (Statistical Abstract Relating to British India, n.d.). This data helped to assess the impact of colonial economic policies on local populations and their living conditions. To analyse the impact of colonial policies on contemporary legal systems, legal acts about both the colonial and post-colonial periods were utilised. Constitutions, laws, decrees, and other legal documents regulating relations within colonial and postcolonial societies were analysed. Particular attention was paid to legislative acts governing cultural heritage, education, language policy, and human rights, such as decisions of the Council of the EU (2002) and data from Eurostat (2023).

A comparative historical method enabled a comparative analysis of various regions of the world that experienced colonial influence, revealing both commonalities and unique features of cultural and social transformations. This helped to identify the factors influencing the varying degrees of adaptation to and resistance against colonial policies, as well as how these factors were reflected in the contemporary state of societies. The method of historical periodisation was employed to systematise the historical development of colonial and postcolonial societies into specific periods. This allowed for a sequential analysis of cultural shifts during different periods of colonial history and postcolonial development. In particular, periods of active colonial conquest, administrative rule, national liberation movements, and contemporary postcolonial transformations were examined.

Results and Discussion

European colonialism: From the Modern era to the World Wars. European colonialism significantly expanded in the 19th century, fuelled by the Industrial Revolution. Following the end of Napoleon's Continental System in 1813, merchants from Hamburg and Bremen established direct contacts with Latin America, the Middle East, Southeast and East Asia, West Africa, Australia, and the South Sea Islands. This expansion of trade was facilitated by the principle of free trade, influenced by England. Navigation Acts of 1822-24 allowed British colonies to access international waters, leading to the abolishment of the British East India Company's monopoly on trade with China in 1833 (Holley, 2024).

Factors contributing to colonialism included the abundant resources of African lands. Colonialism was intertwined with slavery, labour exploitation, and land seizure. The slave trade, initiated by the Portuguese in the 1440s, received religious and moral justification from the papacy in 1442. European industrialisation fuelled the search for new resources worldwide. By the 19th century, the demand for new territories and spheres of influence spurred the exploitation of agricultural economies and valuable resources in Africa, India, the Middle East, East Asia, and Latin America (Schmitt, 2023).

The slave trade led to high mortality rates among Africans transported to the Americas between the 16th and 19th centuries. Overcrowded ships, which facilitated the spread of diseases, led to the death of up to 20% of slaves during the Atlantic crossing. European goods were exchanged for African slaves, who were then traded for valuable resources in the Americas (Roudaire, 2022). Following the independence of most colonies in the 20th century, immigration to Britain occurred from former colonial territories. The Commonwealth, established in the 20th century, comprised self-governing dependencies. After 1945, there was a surge in labour migration from Commonwealth countries, peaking in the 1950s. Until the passage of the Commonwealth Immigrants Act in 1962, all Commonwealth citizens were entitled to unrestricted entry into the United Kingdom (Panayi & Manz, 2020). Colonialism played a crucial role in shaping multiculturalism, particularly in Britain, as the UK encouraged migration for economic gain. Migration from former colonies to Europe and the Americas is a legacy of the colonial era. The British Empire, which spanned from the 17th to the late 19th century, accrued wealth and prestige through its colonies and control of the world's oceans (Government of India Act, 1858). Policies of granting land to immigrants to encourage migration led to the dispossession of Indigenous populations. The United States, founded on American colonies, continued this policy, contributing to the creation of a multi-ethnic nation (Condos, 2024).

British and French colonial policies governed millions of people across numerous regions for centuries through a variety of different policies. While British rule is typically characterised as indirect, preserving cultural and social differences, and French rule as direct, focused on assimilation through the French language and culture, these generalisations possess their nuances (Panayi & Manz, 2020). In the early 20th century, sociologists employed the concept of assimilation to describe the relationships between migrants and citizens in the host country. Assimilation was perceived as a one-sided process, wherein migrants were expected to adapt to the new culture. According to E. Mulle & M. Bieling (2020), assimilation is deemed a duty of migrants and their descendants, with the extent of adopting local customs serving as a marker of this process. S. Novakov-Ritchey (2022) described assimilation as the gradual merging of smaller social groups into larger organisations through the adoption of the customs and values of the host society.

Assimilation often involves a full or partial abandonment of migrants' cultural heritage. Objective assimilation encompasses adaptation to a new culture, measured by indicators such as employment status, education, language proficiency, and rates of intermarriage. Subjective assimilation reflects the identification of migrants with a particular group based on ethnic, linguistic, or cultural characteristics. The history of colonialism in Global North countries, including Britain, France, Germany, Spain, Italy, Portugal, and Belgium, is deeply rooted in the exploitation of labour, resources, culture, and identity. The postcolonial approach indicates that colonial practices continue to exist within the new world order. Postcolonial theory examines how migration regulations, such as migration control, guest worker programs, and migrant rights,

remain a legacy of the colonial era. Post-colonial migration reflects the patterns of colonial migrations, including the slave trade and economic migration from non-European territories. Postcolonial theory offers a new perspective on development, challenging Western approaches to analysing political, economic, and social issues (Six, 2021). It allows for a critical evaluation and deconstruction of facts imposed by Western perspectives. Colonialism was not merely an economic process of exploitation, but also a cultural hierarchy that has influenced contemporary migration processes (Bhambra & Ornelas, 2023).

Especially after the Second World War, migration and refugees began to be seen as a crisis, further underlining the postcolonial perspective on the issue. From the moment migration became a question of non-Europeans or non-white people, rather than an invitation for Europeans to fill vacancies in dangerous and difficult jobs, it has been perceived as a problem. Former colonising countries still bear the legacy of colonial migrations, shaping the collective memory of postcolonial migrants (Barbosa & Pimentel, 2024). The British often employed indirect rule in Africa, preserving traditional systems and local rulers to manage affairs, while the French practised direct rule and active assimilation in their colonies, such as Algeria, Senegal, and India (Berriedale, 1919). The French also tended to centralise control over education and local matters more than the British (Barbosa & Pimentel, 2024; Ongo Nkoa, 2024).

Colonial practices were not always distinctly separated. In British India, there were elements of direct rule similar to those of the French, while in French colonies, local autonomy was sometimes permitted (Statistical Abstract Relating to British India, n.d.). The First World War significantly impacted the colonies both militarily and economically. Initially starting in Europe, the conflict rapidly spread across the globe due to the ambitions of the great powers. Allied forces attacked German colonies in Africa, Asia, and the Pacific. Territories in Micronesia were seized, and Samoa, New Guinea, and the surrounding archipelagos came under the control of other Allied forces. German colonies in Africa were defended by the Schutztruppen, composed of German officers and local soldiers. Conflict in these regions persisted until early 1916, with substantial territories falling under Allied control (Mitchell, 2024). The most significant theatre of operations was German East Africa, where fighting continued until the end of the war. Commander Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck and his 7,500 soldiers, predominantly Africans, employed guerrilla tactics and successfully avoided defeat for more than four years. It was not until November 1918, following significant British losses, that Lettow-Vorbeck surrendered (Rubner, 2024). The war in East Africa had catastrophic economic and ecological consequences for the region. Colonies were not only battlegrounds but were also integrated into the economies of European countries. For instance, India contributed £146 million to Britain's war effort, supplying commodities such as cotton, jute, and wool. French possessions in North Africa also became part of France's war economy, leading to both administrative and economic reforms but also resulting in famine and economic hardship in 1917-1918 (Koller, 2008).

The war also facilitated mass migration from colonies to Europe. For example, around 215,000 civilian workers

and soldiers from South Africa, the West Indies, Mauritius, Fiji, China, and Egypt came to the British front, while France recruited approximately 220,000 workers from Algeria, Indochina, Morocco, Tunisia, Madagascar, and China. Colonial troops also participated in the war: approximately 650,000 soldiers from colonies were sent to the European fronts. Britain mobilised around 1.5 million Indian soldiers, of whom approximately 90,000 died (Koller, 2008). France, in contrast, used a large number of African troops in Europe, leading to controversy over whether these soldiers were used as “cannon fodder”. The deployment of over half a million African and Asian soldiers to Europe during the First World War had a significant cultural impact on both Europeans and the soldiers themselves. It was the first time so many Europeans had come into simultaneous contact with colonial soldiers, whether as allies, enemies, or prisoners of war. This led to the emergence of discourses that included exoticism, racism, and paternalism (Koller, 2008). European images of African and Asian soldiers varied on both sides of the front. In Germany, racist stereotypes prevalent before the war became even more pronounced. Colonial soldiers were often depicted as beasts, and German propaganda spread gruesome rumours of their atrocities, such as gouging out the eyes and cutting off the ears and noses of wounded German soldiers. Such terms as “melancholy mob” or “black shame” became part of popular discourse in Germany (Said, 2001).

At the same time, French propaganda sought to present colonial soldiers in a less negative light, emphasising their dedication and heroism. At the outset of the war, portrayals of African soldiers in the French press were often unfavourable; however, this later shifted to a softer depiction, highlighting their perceived childlike qualities and obedience. An important aspect of this narrative was the justification of the French practice of recruiting Muslim prisoners for the Ottoman army, which contributed to a favourable image of the allies from the Ottoman Empire. On one hand, the French attempted to undermine German accusations of “betrayal of the white race”, while simultaneously grappling with the challenge of recognising colonial soldiers as part of their nation. Prevailing stereotypes among the French often characterised the soldiers as wild and dangerous, which in turn exacerbated their apprehension and fear (Koller, 2008).

The soldiers themselves had a variety of reactions to Europe. Indian soldiers displayed varying degrees of fascination or alienation from European culture. Some were proud of their service and admired European civilisation, while others critically compared European customs to Indian ones, often expressing negative attitudes towards their own traditions. West Africans also underwent significant cultural changes, and their memoirs reveal a shift in their perception of the French, influencing their post-war self-identification (Fanon, 1952). Overall, both German and French propaganda displayed deep-rooted European racist biases, portraying colonial soldiers as different and inferior. These perceptions had a lasting impact on relations between colonisers and colonised peoples (Frazer, 2023). In conclusion, while British and French colonial policies had their specific approaches, both countries engaged in direct and indirect rule and had civilising missions, making their policies more complex than often assumed.

Colonialism in Brazil at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. In 1896, Brazilian Indigenous People, such as the Botocudos, attacked the “linha Moema” settlement in the state of Paraná, killing 19 recently arrived Austro-Ukrainian immigrants (Fanon, 1952). The victims included three men, nine women, and seven children. The Indigenous People had warned the European colonists that their ancestors were buried at this site, but the colony’s leader ignored the threat. Two years later, in 1898, three colonists were killed in Iracema, and in 1899, ten more Ukrainians were killed in Lucena while working in the forest. Some press reports described the Botocudos as cannibals, while others attempted to understand the Indigenous People’s motivations (Daly, 2023). These events were discussed by Austro-Hungarian diplomats and led to conflicts between the federal government and the state government of Paraná. Documents preserved in Vienna reveal the political debates of the time: the formation of the Brazilian nation, the integration of Indigenous Peoples, and rapid international migration. There were rumours of a “German threat” due to the large number of German immigrants. After the attack in Lucena, the Austro-Hungarian Vice-Consul in Curitiba sent a representative to inspect the area. He proposed arming the colonists, but the governor of Paraná refused, claiming that the Indigenous People were not dangerous. The press supported the Austro-Hungarian diplomats, criticising the governor’s policy.

The German-language press supported the colonists, even if they were Ukrainian, as this was seen as a conflict between the “new” and “old” worlds. They advocated for an armed resolution to the conflict. In 1895, the Botocudos themselves were attacked, with 40 Indigenous People killed. The governor of Paraná attempted to address the “Indian problem” differently by relocating peaceful Indigenous People, the Coroados, but this did not resolve the issue. The colonists turned to the Austro-Hungarian consulate for help, which collected funds for the families of the deceased (Kouega, 2022). This microhistory serves to analyse many aspects of globalisation in Brazil during the Belle Époque. The process of internationalisation was deeply intertwined with migration flows and integration mechanisms based on asymmetrical power relations. The description of this border incident highlights previously overlooked aspects by historians: firstly, the contribution of immigrants from the Austro-Hungarian Empire to migration flows to Brazil. Tracking the fate of these subjects and their integration into the host country is a complex task due to the multinational structure of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. Quantitative data and secondary sources are fragmented and often erroneous, as they conflate state/territorial categories with ethnic/linguistic ones (Prutsch, 2014). Identifying migrants is complicated by the fluid nature of their identities. For instance, a migrant from Prachatice (now in the Czech Republic, but part of Austria-Hungary until 1918) might identify as “Bohemian”, “German”, “Czech”, “Austrian”, or “Austro-Hungarian” depending on the context. Books often refer to “emigrants from Poland”, even though Poland only gained independence in 1918. Ukrainians/Ruthenians rarely appear in the migration literature, despite Austria-Hungary being one of Europe’s largest emigration countries. Between 1876 and 1910, around 3.5 million subjects of Austria-Hungary

migrated to the Americas, of whom approximately 70-80 thousand moved to Brazil. In contemporary Austria, there is little research on migration to Brazil, and no monograph has yet been published on Austro-Hungarian emigration to Brazil or Latin America (Prutsch, 2014).

This topic requires research by a group of historians from the countries of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire in cooperation with Brazilian colleagues. While it is unlikely that migration statistics can be corrected, the digitalisation of passenger lists opens up new possibilities. The focus should be on reconstructing cultural symbols, inter-ethnic conflicts, the empire's policy towards its emigrants, and the socio-cultural reorganisation of colonists in rural and urban areas. The conflict between Ukrainian migrants and Indigenous People shows that even empires without overseas colonies, like Austria-Hungary, could act in a colonial manner. The recovery of the history of different ethnic groups is important for the study of national history. However, Europe was not composed solely of nation-states, so it is worth analysing inter-ethnic interactions in a global and transnational context (Smith, 2020). Emigration agents, particularly in Austrian Galicia, skilfully exploited ethnic tensions. For instance, rumours circulated that Brazil was under the control of Prince Rudolf and that the emperor recommended emigration there, which the Poles concealed from the Ukrainians. Other rumours claimed that Empress Leopoldine had bequeathed lands to Brazilian Polish peasants after her death. Many Polish and Ukrainian emigrants settled in the state of Paraná, where the Austro-Hungarian Empire opened a consulate in Curitiba.

Conflicts between Indigenous Peoples and colonists occurred in border regions. Unlike anthropological studies, Indigenous Peoples have long been overlooked in migration studies to Latin America in German-speaking countries. The conflicts between Austro-Ukrainian colonists and Indigenous People, as well as the mass migration of Europeans and Japanese to the state of Paraná, are examples of "glocalisation" – the interplay of global and local processes. In the 19th century, European immigrants regularly encountered Indigenous groups in southern Brazil, such as the Guarani, Xokleng, and Kaingang, who belonged to the Jê language family. These groups experienced dispersal and significant population decline due to the actions of immigrants, immigration societies, and provincial governments. Colonists, indifferent to Indigenous cultures, used terms like "savages" or "Botocudos" to refer to any Indigenous person they deemed "merciless savages". Some politicians and colonists believed that the extermination of Indigenous Peoples, as in the United States of America, should be applied in Brazil. Others proposed the creation of reservations as a solution (Smith, 2020).

At the beginning of the 20th century, these conflicts were discussed not only in Brazil but also on the international stage, notably at the 16th International Congress of Americanists in Vienna in 1908. At this event, which reflected the scientific cosmopolitanism and tensions between nationalism and internationalism, the young anthropologist Alberto Vojtěch Frič presented a paper on the brutal treatment of the Kaingang and Xokleng Indigenous Peoples by European colonists. Frič claimed that colonisation was occurring at the cost of hundreds of Indigenous

lives and through the secret enslavement of children and women. His presentation provoked outrage among the attendees, who were more critical of him personally than of the facts presented (Muojama, 2023).

Another participant in the congress, Dr. Hugo Gensch, proposed integrating Indigenous children into European families instead of reservations or Catholic boarding schools. Frič, hailing from a family of naturalists and politicians, began collecting Indigenous artefacts for German anthropologists after his trip to Brazil. Having witnessed the horrific crimes against Indigenous Peoples, he returned to Europe and used the opportunity of the Congress to call for protest against these acts of barbarity. However, he was accused of lacking scientific objectivity and of mixing politics with science (Sohret & Eryilmaz, 2023). In Brazil, his arguments quickly spread in the regional press and became a national topic. This issue, along with Cândido Rondon's lectures on Indigenous Peoples during the expansion of telegraph lines in the Amazon, turned into a major discussion about the integration of Indigenous People into the Republic's nationalist project. In 1910, two years after Frič's speech, the Serviço de Proteção ao Índio, SPI (Brazil's Indian Protection Service) was created under the initiative of Cândido Rondon. This federal agency reduced the persecution of Indigenous Peoples and saved many Indigenous groups from extinction.

For a time, the SPI promoted coexistence between Indigenous Peoples and Europeans. The governor of Paraná, Francisco Xavier da Silva, employed Christianised Indigenous People to work during land clearing. However, such models of integration did not consider the psychological impact on Indigenous People after being expelled from their lands. The governor of Paraná, a lawyer and sociologist, respected the Kaingang's land claims and in 1902-1903 signed decrees granting them approximately 50,000 hectares in the state. This decision reflected the self-awareness of the young states towards the federal government during the complex transition from empire to federal republic. Despite this, the fate of the Indigenous People did not change. In the late 1920s, the SPI forced the Indigenous population to settle in reservations as northwestern Paraná began to urbanise with the support of British capital.

Until the 19th century, Paraná had limited experience with European immigrants. The establishment of Jesuit missions in the 17th century failed due to invasions by bandeirantes from São Paulo. In this region, lacking significant mineral resources, the main economic activities were mate production, timber processing, and cattle ranching. In 1808, Crown Prince João VI ordered the opening of Brazilian ports to international trade. The first European colonies were established in Bahia and Novo Friburgo, near Rio de Janeiro, and from 1824 onwards, in Rio Grande do Sul (Fanon, 1952).

The first decades of Brazil's migration policy were dictated by the king and, from 1822 onwards, by the emperor. European immigrants were expected to urbanise vast areas of the country, creating a counterbalance to the Afro-Brazilian population and securing the southern borders with Uruguay. Following the abolition of the slave trade in 1850, forward-thinking coffee plantation owners, such as Nicolau Vergueiro, began recruiting European labour, financing their transatlantic journeys in advance (Muojama, 2023).

In 1854, Paraná became the first province to pass a law on free lands. However, it wasn't until half a century later that military-geographic expeditions forged paths through the jungle to reach lands that could be sold to foreign colonisation agencies. The sale of land led to serious conflicts between the authorities and caboclos, who had occupied the land without legal rights (Fanon, 1952). Contrary to the promises of coffee planters and migration agents that Brazil would be a "paradise on Earth", many colonists faced a harsh reality. Most immigrant families were poor, working for meagre wages on coffee plantations, where they were forced to buy overpriced food from local stores. Reports by the Swiss maestro Thomas Davatz, the Swiss ambassador Jakob Tschudi, and numerous letters from colonists to Europe tell of exploitation, yellow fever, and other diseases.

In response to disturbing news, Prussia banned the promotion of emigration to Brazil between 1859 and 1896 and also issued warnings against emigration to Brazil. However, the Austro-Hungarian Empire did not prohibit the promotion of emigration; on the contrary, it encouraged it. The empire's political elites viewed emigration as a way to reduce the surplus of labour and the number of poor, particularly from Galicia and Bukovyna (Prutsch, 2014). In the late 19th century, the state of Paraná invested in attracting Europeans, offering free land and capitalising on the poor reputation of coffee plantations in São Paulo. Peasants from Galicia and Bukovyna, fleeing poverty, political marginalization, and military service, migrated to Paraná. By 1900, approximately fifty thousand Austro-Poles and Austro-Ukrainians had relocated to Paraná, receiving land plots, loans, seeds, and tools from the state (Fanon, 1952).

According to reports from the Austro-Hungarian consulate in Curitiba, subjects of the empire resided in Prudentópolis (approximately 12,000), Rio Claro (seven thousand), Lucena (five thousand), Tomás Coelho (four thousand), Águas Amarelas (four thousand), São João de Capanema, linha Cândido de Abreu, Nova Galícia, and Cruz Machado. The Austrian authorities sent textbooks to the colonies to maintain Austro-Hungarian patriotism and prevent the formation of nationalist identities. Apart from Austrians, Paraná also received immigrants from Italy, the German Empire, and Spain. In 1908, Paraná received the first groups of Japanese immigrants. By the end of the century, a third of Paraná's population consisted of immigrants, predominantly farmers, landowners, artisans, traders, and coffee plantation workers (Prutsch, 2014).

In the first decades of the 20th century, Paraná faced a severe economic crisis and began selling free lands to concessionaires or directly to colonisation companies. One such company was an English consortium led by the Scottish Lord Lovat, who planned to cultivate cotton. In 1923, he founded the "Paraná Plantations" company and hired Arthur Hugh Miller Thomas to manage the colonisation program in northern Paraná. Over time, a multinational microcosm formed in these lands, reflecting the processes of globalisation. In 1930, Germans from Russia and Germany founded the colony of Heimtal, which became a model colony. Nearby, workers from the port of Danzig, seeking a new life, founded Nova Danzig (later Cambé) (Fanon, 1952). Paraná also received immigrants from Italy, Japan, and Spain. The city of Londrina, founded in 1930,

grew rapidly and within a few years became a multicultural centre. Today, it has a population of around 800,000 and is known for its multicultural history. After the arrival of European and Japanese immigrants, Afro-Brazilian communities also formed in Londrina, but they have not received the recognition they deserve. The coexistence of different ethnic groups does not equate to "racial democracy", as described by Gilberto Freyre during the rule of Getúlio Vargas in the 1930s (Stein, 2021).

The arrival of Japanese immigrants in northern Paraná, which began in 1908 following a decrease in the number of Japanese moving to the USA, added a new international dimension to the region's development. The first immigrants arrived as a result of a bilateral agreement between Japan and Brazil. By 1923, around 32,000 Japanese had disembarked at the port of Santos and continued their journey to Paraná, which became the second-largest Japanese community in Brazil after São Paulo. The Japanese proved to be masters of irrigation, rice cultivation, and the reclamation of swampy lands. Farmers who had experienced failures with European workers on coffee plantations sought new labour. In 1907, Austro-Hungarian diplomats had already reported on the intentions of Brazilian politicians to exploit the rivalry between Asian and European immigrants. Despite cultural and social challenges, the Japanese were able to integrate, creating agricultural colonies and developing their traditions in new circumstances (Stein, 2021).

In 1932, German farmer Oswald Nixdorf, with experience working in Sumatra, moved to the state of Paraná. Together with Erich Koch-Weser, president of the German semi-state association Gesellschaft für wirtschaftliche Studien in Übersee, Nixdorf founded the colony of Rolândia near Londrina. As a result of the economic crisis and the rise to power of the National Socialist German Workers' Party in July 1932, German and German-Brazilian families began to move to Rolândia. From 1936, Rolândia became the terminus of a railway, facilitating the arrival of settlers of various nationalities (Fanon, 1952; Grimmer-Solem, 2024). At the same time, the colony was chosen as one of the centres of the "Aryan race" in Brazil, where Jewish refugees and political exiles from Germany and Austria settled. Rolândia, from its very beginning, became an international microcosm where people of different nationalities and cultures co-existed, sometimes facing conflicts.

The dynamics of migration in post-war Europe and decolonisation (1945 to the present). The end of the Second World War brought about significant changes in global migration patterns. Decolonisation, accompanied by the return of Europeans from the new colonies they had established in various parts of the world, fundamentally altered the nature of migration. In addition to the return of Europeans, migration flows from former colonies and third countries began to actively influence Europe. These new waves of migration transformed the continent into a major migration hub from the second half of the 20th century. Although Europe had long been an arena for various migration processes, the nature of these processes changed significantly after the Second World War. The European continent has a deep history of immigration, which, however, underwent significant transformations as a result of decolonisation and new global trends. Thus,

Europe remained a meeting place of different cultures and continued to be a major hub for international migration movements (Sohret & Eryilmaz, 2023).

After the Second World War, Northwest Europe experienced an economic boom with a 30% increase in industrial production between 1953 and 1958. The local workforce became more educated, shifting towards office work and leaving vacancies in low-wage sectors such as agriculture and mining. This compelled Western European countries to recruit workers from peripheral regions (Van Mol, 2016). Europe embarked on a recovery process accompanied by both integration and new forms of exploitation. The 1960s marked not only European unification but also industrial exploitation under the guise of democratic or socialist progress. During this period, the Customs Union (1948) and the European Coal and Steel Community (1952) were established, forming the basis for the European Union. The diversity of these unions influenced immigration policies (Demmer, 2024).

In Britain, initial post-war integration initiatives for migrants were local, and central bodies like the CO (Colonial Office) and NCSS (National Council of Social Service) were short-lived. From the 1960s, the focus shifted to laws and bodies promoting harmonious inter-group relations. However, British policy also included elements of assimilation, as seen in education during Margaret Thatcher's administration (Schierup *et al.*, 2006). In France, on the other hand, assimilation prevailed for a long time, and state initiatives such as the social fund were centralised. By the 1980s, French integration policy had shifted towards a more flexible approach, recognising cultural diversity and supporting religious and cultural pluralism (Demmer, 2024).

Both countries employed a mix of centralised and decentralised approaches, and while there are differences in their integration approaches, their policies often share commonalities. As a result, defining integration strategies as entirely distinct or identical for Britain and France is an oversimplification. Both countries adapt their integration approaches depending on time, place, and social needs. After the war, forced migration gradually shifted to voluntary migration. For instance, the Nazis had organised the migration of labour from Eastern Europe. Post-war, guest worker programs became popular. In France in 1970, around 600,000 Algerians, 140,000 Moroccans, and 90,000 Tunisians were employed (Asngar *et al.*, 2022; Mülle, 2024).

Guest worker programs varied between countries but generally restricted family reunification and used deportation as a control mechanism. These systems facilitated economic recovery and knowledge transfer, although

many guest workers settled in the new countries with their families. By 1973, these programs had become a "structural necessity" for the economies of the host countries. European countries utilised these systems to exploit the workforce, promising benefits such as remittances and knowledge transfer, but threatening deportation for non-compliance (Demmer, 2024).

The Trevi Group was established in 1976, expanding its role in managing illegal migration. The Dublin Convention of 1990 introduced the first norms of migration management, which sparked criticism. Migration theories such as the "push-pull" and neoclassical theories dominated migration research, explaining how economic conditions in countries of origin and the attractiveness of European countries contribute to migration. Europe exploits these circumstances to attract cheap labour, ignoring the importance of addressing the root causes of local instability (Sohret & Eryilmaz, 2023). Migration theories suggest that workers migrate in search of better working conditions. After the collapse of the Socialist Bloc in Europe, the demand for unskilled labour increased, leading to labour market segmentation between locals and immigrants.

Migration proved economically beneficial for both countries of origin and destination. Mediterranean countries facing high unemployment and low productivity benefited from reduced pressure on the labour market and significant remittances. For instance, the Turkish economy destabilised when migration to Germany ceased in 1974. Additionally, Italy encouraged emigration to reduce unemployment and weaken support for socialist and communist parties (Stein, 2021).

Between 1940 and 1975, approximately 7 million Europeans returned from the colonies. Migration flows included North Africans to France, people from Italy, India, the Caribbean, Malaysia, and Kenya to the United Kingdom, Congolese to Belgium, as well as Indonesians and Surinamese to the Netherlands. In 1972, 20,000 Ugandan Asians immigrated to the United Kingdom due to political persecution. Following the Algerian War, France welcomed many immigrants from North Africa and Albania. Portugal also received numerous individuals fleeing conflicts in its colonies during the 1970s. Europeans integrated rapidly, while non-European immigrants often faced discrimination and economic challenges (Zouache, 2017). Between 1950 and 1970, around 7 to 10 million people emigrated from Italy, Spain, Greece, and Portugal. By the 1970s, immigrant populations in France, the United Kingdom, Germany, and Belgium had increased significantly. Decolonisation also spurred migration, as many former colonial subjects moved to Europe, particularly to Belgium, France, and the United Kingdom (Table 1).

Table 1. Ethnic minorities in the major Western European countries receiving immigration, 1950-1975 (thousands of people)

Country	1950	1960	1970	1975	Percentage of the population in 1975
Belgium	354	444	716	835	8.5
France	2128	2663	3339	4196	7.9
Federal Republic of Germany	548	686	2977	4090	6.6

Table 1. Continued

Country	1950	1960	1970	1975	Percentage of the population in 1975
Netherlands	77	101	236	370	2.6
Sweden	124	191	411	410	5.0
Switzerland	279	585	983	1012	16.0
United Kingdom	1573	2205	3968	4153	7.8

Source: S. Castles *et al.* (2005)

Despite the restrictions imposed by the Iron Curtain, migration between East and West continued. Between 1950 and 1990, 12 million people moved from the East to the West, including 4.45 million ethnic Germans who returned to Germany from Central and Eastern Europe by 2004, the majority of whom did so after the fall of the Iron Curtain. This period of migration and decolonisation significantly transformed the demographic and social landscape of Europe (Schierup *et al.*, 2006). Following the fall of the Berlin Wall, Europe experienced a phase of intense integration, culminating in the establishment of the European Union in 1992. This occurred against a backdrop of harmonised

migration policies and increased international aid, leading to a rising demand for skilled labour and enhanced social protections for migrants. Despite numerous improvements, this period was also marked by new forms of exploitation of migrants (Demmer, 2024). European migration norms became more cohesive; however, disparities in national practices persisted. The end of the Cold War accelerated migration flows from former communist countries to democratic ones, creating a new divide between East and West in migration policy (Table 2). Countries in North-Western Europe, while serving as major immigration centres, adopted varying approaches to migration (Council of the EU, 2002).

Table 2. Top 7 countries by nationality of migrants from outside the EU residing in the EU countries, 2023

No.	Country of origin	Number of EU residents
1.	Turkey	2,654,240
2.	Morocco	2,054,935
3.	Ukraine (excluding refugees)	1,854,428
4.	China (including Hong Kong)	1,460,710
5.	India	1,174,851
6.	Syria	1,129,634
7.	Russia	1,044,149

Source: Eurostat (2023)

In the 1990s, the EU developed a series of significant documents, such as the Maastricht Treaty (1992), Amsterdam Treaty (1997), Tampere Programme (1999), Hague Programme (2005), and Stockholm Programme (2010), which introduced new rights for migrants and strengthened the migration management system. These initiatives also contributed to the creation of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) to protect the rights of vulnerable groups (Bhambra & Ornelas, 2023). However, some researchers argue that these initiatives were primarily aimed at “building Europe for its citizens”, often prioritising the interests of locals over migrants in the labour market. The introduction of the Schengen Information System, the Visa Information System, and FRONTEX in late 2004, as well as increased regulations in some countries, created a situation where, on the one hand, international migration is supported, while on the other, restrictions are placed on such flows (Schierup *et al.*, 2006).

Moreover, migration policies focused on the needs of the highly skilled sector often contributed to the loss of experienced professionals by attracting skilled workers rather than less qualified individuals or refugees who require more resources for integration. This created a paradoxical situation in which, on one hand, there were initiatives aimed at development, while on the other hand, there were restrictions imposed on immigrants. Contemporary challenges posed by globalisation,

particularly evident during the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath, have had significant implications for international migration processes and the domestic political situations of countries. The pandemic introduced new realities, among which the use of migrants to destabilise internal politics in host countries has become a notable phenomenon. It has been observed that in some countries, political groups have exploited the presence of migrants as a tool to undermine social stability or to criticise government policies. This has manifested in accusations regarding the ineffectiveness of integration programmes or attempts to create tension between different social groups (Bhambra & Ornelas, 2023).

The mass migration from third-world countries has also significantly transformed the identity of Europeans. The integration of large numbers of migrants who brought with them different cultural practices, languages, and social norms has substantially altered traditional notions of national identity. This has manifested in the blending of cultures and the formation of new social identities in European countries. While migrants have contributed to cultural enrichment, there has also been a growing social tension linked to cultural differences (Demmer, 2024). The COVID-19 pandemic has also underscored the importance of global cooperation in healthcare and social protection. It exposed vulnerabilities in migrant integration systems and global crisis management. This has prompted a review

of strategies for integrating migrants and improving management practices to reduce social and political instability.

The hegemony of former metropolises in the context of higher education. Hegemony in higher education has been a significant topic of discussion in the contemporary globalised world. It refers to the cultural, economic, and political dominance shaped through educational institutions and influencing the knowledge transmitted to students. Hegemony theory provides key tools for analysing these processes. Conversely, counter-hegemony offers alternative approaches and models that can challenge the dominant culture and ideology. This article examines the impact of new hegemony and counter-hegemony on the internationalisation of higher education. Hegemony in this context does not imply direct coercive power but rather cultural and ideological leadership shaped through social institutions such as schools and universities. The internationalisation of higher education can act as a form of neocolonialism where Western countries and their universities set standards and criteria that other countries must meet. This leads to a situation where local epistemologies and knowledge are marginalised in favour of Western models (Bhambra & Ornelas, 2023).

Since the 1990s, the influence of neoliberal policies has led to the commercialisation of higher education and the expansion of the private sector within educational institutions. This has resulted in increased inequality and a dependency of the educational systems in less developed countries on funding and support from developed nations. Such a situation has reinforced the hegemony of Western countries and complicated access to alternative educational models. Counter-hegemony has involved the development of alternative models and approaches that challenge the dominant culture and ideology. In the context of higher education, this includes the implementation of educational programmes that emphasise local knowledge and practices, as well as the cultivation of critical thinking among students. Counter-hegemonic strategies aim to create a space for the diversity of knowledge and experience, helping to avoid the homogeneity imposed by the dominant culture (Demmer, 2024).

The decolonial perspective aims to deconstruct and transform existing systems of knowledge and education so that they better reflect the needs and interests of local communities. This involves revisiting curricula, teaching methods, and university governance structures to ensure greater inclusivity and diversity (Manela, 2023). Decolonising education entails actively involving local communities in shaping educational programs, thus enhancing their relevance and utility. Developing global partnerships between universities on an equal footing promotes a more balanced exchange of knowledge and resources. Such partnerships help to create a more equitable and sustainable system of higher education that considers the interests of all stakeholders. They also contribute to the development of innovative approaches to teaching and research that reflect global challenges and needs.

Research findings confirm that European colonialism had a profound impact on shaping contemporary national identities and demographic structures. From the 19th century onwards, colonial powers actively expanded their territories and influence, leading to transforma-

tions in the social and cultural landscapes of colonised regions. Colonial practices such as resource exploitation and the slave trade had far-reaching consequences for Indigenous Peoples, including the loss of traditional cultural elements and increased social hierarchy and discrimination. The research results also demonstrate how, following the Second World War, labour migration from former colonies significantly altered the demographic landscape of Europe, creating new challenges for integration. The COVID-19 pandemic further highlighted the need to revisit existing integration strategies, which is crucial for ensuring social stability and combating racial and ethnic discrimination.

Conclusions

The study of cultural and social transformations resulting from the history of colonisation provided insight into the complex interplay between colonial legacies and the contemporary global community. One key finding is that colonialism had a significant impact on the formation of national identities in many regions of the world. Colonial policies contributed to the artificial creation of national borders, resulting in the emergence of multinational states with complex ethnic and cultural structures. This has been the root cause of many modern conflicts and political crises. Cultural transformations accompanying processes of colonisation, decolonisation, and migration have also been particularly significant. Colonial powers actively influenced the cultural identity of subjugated peoples, imposing their languages, religions, and cultural practices. This led to the loss of many traditional cultural elements and created hybrid forms of cultural expression. At the same time, postcolonial countries have been able to preserve and revive many aspects of their cultural heritage, which has been a crucial factor in the processes of national revival. The restoration and preservation of cultural heritage contribute to strengthening national identity and cultural autonomy.

Social transformations included the development of systems of social hierarchy and discrimination that remain relevant today, giving rise to human rights movements. After World War II, labour migration to Europe significantly altered the demographic and social landscape of Western European countries, creating new challenges for integration and intercultural understanding. The COVID-19 pandemic underscored the need to revisit migrant integration strategies to ensure social and political stability. A limitation of this research was that it did not consider detailed aspects of regional variations in migration processes and their impact on local socio-political contexts. Future research could focus on the impact of colonial legacies on education, economic development, and social justice, as well as on the mechanisms of migrant integration. The study highlighted the need for a deeper understanding of colonial legacies to achieve a more equitable global community.

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Conflict of Interest

None.

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