

THEMATIC ARTICLE

From the (re)production of knowledge to the management practice of marketing in Brazil: is it possible to decolonize marketing?

KAREN BATISTA ¹

¹ UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DE PERNAMBUCO / PROGRAMA DE PÓS-GRADUAÇÃO EM ADMINISTRAÇÃO (PROPAD), RECIFE – PE, BRAZIL

Abstract

This article discusses, from a decolonial perspective, how marketing knowledge is produced and reproduced in Brazil. It sought to demonstrate the historical aspects that influenced the export of marketing from the United States to Brazil as a product whose function was to disseminate neoliberal ideology in a historical period marked by the dispute for world hegemony: the Cold War. Based on the reflections made, it was possible to conclude that, even after so many decades, marketing has still not detached itself from the ideologies that formed it, and, to this day, the mainstream ignores the political and social issues that influence both its management practice and academia. Some directions for future research are presented, with the aim of decolonizing marketing knowledge. It is hoped that this study can contribute to the emancipation of the field so that knowledge can free itself from the ideological ties produced by the process of epistemic colonization.

Keywords: Coloniality of knowledge. Coloniality of power. Marketing knowledge. Decoloniality. Eurocentrism.

Da (re)produção do conhecimento à prática gerencial de marketing no Brasil: é possível decolonizar o marketing?

Resumo

Este artigo tem como objetivo discutir, sob uma perspectiva decolonial, como é produzido e reproduzido o conhecimento em marketing no Brasil. Buscou-se demonstrar os aspectos históricos que influenciaram a exportação do marketing dos Estados Unidos para o Brasil como um produto cuja função era disseminar a ideologia neoliberal, num período histórico marcado pela disputa por hegemonia mundial: a Guerra Fria. Com base nas reflexões realizadas, foi possível concluir que, mesmo após tantas décadas, o marketing ainda não se desvinculou das ideologias que o formaram e que, até os dias de hoje, o *mainstream* ignora as questões políticas e sociais que influenciam tanto sua prática gerencial quanto a academia. São apresentadas algumas direções para futuras pesquisas, no intuito de decolonizar o conhecimento de marketing. Espera-se que este estudo possa contribuir para a emancipação da área, de modo que o conhecimento possa se livrar das amarras ideológicas produzidas pelo processo de colonização epistêmica.

Palavras-chave: Colonialidade do saber. Colonialidade do poder. Conhecimento de marketing. Decolonialidade. Eurocentrismo.

De la (re)producción de conocimiento a la práctica de gestión del marketing en Brasil: ¿es posible descolonizar el marketing?

Resumen

El objetivo de este artículo es discutir, desde una perspectiva decolonial, cómo se produce y reproduce el conocimiento del marketing en Brasil. Se buscó demostrar los aspectos históricos que influyeron en la exportación del marketing de Estados Unidos a Brasil como un producto cuya función era diseminar la ideología neoliberal, en un período histórico marcado por la disputa por la hegemonía mundial: la Guerra Fría. A partir de las reflexiones realizadas, fue posible concluir que, incluso después de tantas décadas, el marketing aún no se desvinculó de las ideologías que lo formaron y que, hasta hoy, el *mainstream* ignora las cuestiones políticas y sociales que influyen tanto en su práctica de gestión como en la academia. Se presentan algunas orientaciones para futuras investigaciones, con el objetivo de descolonizar el conocimiento del marketing. Se espera que este estudio pueda contribuir a la emancipación del campo, de modo que el conocimiento pueda liberarse de las ataduras ideológicas producidas por el proceso de colonización epistémica.

Palabras clave: Colonialidad del saber. Colonialidad del poder. Conocimientos de marketing. Decolonialidad. Eurocentrismo.

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INTRODUCTION

Marketing literature overlooks issues that seek to elucidate how Eurocentric knowledge expands globally as a universal truth (Hemais et al., 2021). Much of the knowledge produced in this field is subordinate to that developed in the Global North, particularly in the United States (Firat & Tadajewski, 2010), thereby ignoring and marginalizing other forms of culture produced by researchers from diverse locales. As an alternative to this hegemony, the decolonial perspective emerges as a critique of traditional theories and the way knowledge is produced and imposed upon the colonized (Varman, 2019), a process referred to as epistemic colonization (Ibarra-Colado, 2006).

Some marketing researchers have adopted a decolonial perspective, such as Askegaard and Eckhard (2012), Costa (1998), Jack (2008), Kjeldgaard and Askegaard (2006), Patterson and Brown (2007), and Varman (2016). Several studies have focused on demonstrating the hegemony of the Global North and how colonialism influenced the formation of marketing discourses (Varman, 2019). In Brazil, researchers in the field are making efforts to develop and contribute to the dissemination of decolonial thought. Faria and Hemais (2018) rehistoricized the consumerist movement in the United States, also adopting a decolonial standpoint. Cardoso et al. (2021) discuss how Brazilian consumers reproduce colonialist discourses based on advertisements about Africa. Ferreira and Hemais (2023) propose incorporating the thoughts of authors such as Lélia Gonzalez and Ailton Krenak to analyze issues related to capitalism and the market, aiming to decolonize marketing in Brazil.

Inspired by these studies, the present theoretical article aims to discuss how knowledge in marketing is produced and reproduced in Brazil. Specifically, it sought to reflect on how marketing knowledge exported from the United States to Brazil contributes to shaping a field that reproduces the ideology of the colonizer. To achieve this goal, the article revisited the historical conditions of marketing's arrival in Brazil, aiming to clarify how the discipline was constructed and evolved into an ideological and political tool (Maranhão & De Paula, 2012). Throughout the text, concepts originating from marketing that perpetuate coloniality are presented. In constructing this article, decolonial theorists from Latin America were employed (e.g., Dussel, 1995; Ibarra-Colado, 2006; Mignolo, 2011; Quijano, 1992), with a preference for Brazilian authors engaged in decolonial struggles (e.g., Abdalla & Faria, 2015; Alcadipani et al., 2012; Faria & Wanderley, 2013; Irigaray et al., 2021).

This text is divided into six parts. The first part serves as this introduction. The second part provides an introductory discussion of the main concepts and debates within the decolonial movement, aiming to provide an understanding of this perspective. It introduces concepts such as decoloniality; coloniality of power, being, and knowledge; and the concept of Eurocentrism, crucial for comprehending how science and knowledge are structured in the social sciences overall and specifically within marketing. Following this, a brief historical overview of the arrival of marketing in Brazil, coinciding with the Cold War era, is presented. The fourth part engages in a discussion about the (re)production of marketing knowledge from a decolonial standpoint. The fifth part suggests some directions for future research aimed at advancing decolonized approaches to marketing. Finally, the conclusions are presented.

THE DECOLONIAL PERSPECTIVE AND THE COLONIALITY OF KNOWLEDGE

Before defining what decolonial thought entails, it is important to take a step back and explain what is meant by colonialism and coloniality. The first is defined by Quijano (1992) as a system of formal domination of the political, social, and cultural order of one society over another. The second, in turn, can be understood as "long-standing patterns of power that emerged as a result of colonialism, but that define culture, labor, intersubjective relations, and knowledge production well beyond the strict limits of colonial administrations" (Maldonado-Torres, 2007, p. 243). The author emphasizes that coloniality persists even though traditional forms of colonialism have been extinguished, "in books, in the criteria for academic performance, in cultural patterns, in common sense, in the self-image of peoples, in aspirations of self, and so many other aspects of our modern experience" (Maldonado-Torres, 2007, p. 243).

Since 1492, with the colonization of the Americas, Europeans expanded modernity with the justification of developing other continents of the world, bringing them up to the standards of the Global North (Mignolo, 2011). Europeans positioned themselves as superior and colonized other peoples to bring modernity to “barbaric” or “backward” societies (Boahen, 1987; Grosfoguel, 2002; Said, 1978). Thus, the structure of colonial power was responsible for generating social discrimination that later came to be accepted as a natural phenomenon and not as a product of colonialism, thereby erasing its historical significance (Quijano, 1992).

The process of colonization led to the division of society into races based on phenotypic traits, creating a hierarchy between peoples of the North and South, where the colonized were deemed inferior to the colonizers, a division crucial for the propagation of colonial discourse and practices (Quijano, 2005). The colonization of the Americas became a model of power, laying the foundation for what would become a modern identity forged in a system of domination structured around the idea of race. Modernity, as both discourse and practice, often considered a European product of the Renaissance or Enlightenment, would not have been possible without coloniality (Maldonado-Torres, 2007).

Decolonial thought emerged to overcome “the relations of colonization, colonialism, and coloniality” (Ballestrin, 2013, p. 91). To achieve decoloniality of power (Mignolo, 2007), it is essential to undertake “epistemological decolonization, to take a significant step towards a new intercultural communication, an exchange of experiences and meanings” (Quijano, 1992, p. 447), transcending Eurocentric modernity. This perspective does not propose “replacing it with another modernity, but rather constructing a world where diverse worlds and knowledges can coexist” (Faria & Wanderley, 2013, p. 572). Therefore, the decolonial perspective seeks what Dussel (1995) calls transmodernity, which suggests confronting the singular Eurocentric modernity imposed globally with decolonial critical responses originating from colonized peoples worldwide (Grosfoguel, 2008).

According to Mignolo (2014, p. 44), the decolonial perspective is not just “an option in knowledge and academia, a field of study; it is a way of life, of thinking, and of acting”. Abdalla and Faria (2015, p. 8) add that the decolonial option is not conceived solely through “a concept or definition, but primarily through action and engagement, which require disobedience to challenge the coloniality of knowledge imposed for over five centuries by Eurocentric universal modernity”.

The concept developed by Quijano in 1989, the coloniality of power, warns that colonial relations did not end with the overcoming of colonialism; on the contrary, there still exist “colonial forms of domination after the end of colonial administrations, produced by colonial cultures and structures of the modern/colonial capitalist world-system” (Grosfoguel, 2008, p. 126). This concept is expanded and encompasses three dimensions: that of power, of knowledge, and of being (Ballestrin, 2013).

The first of these dimensions is a highly complex structure that involves control over the economy, authority, natural resources, gender and sexuality, subjectivity, and knowledge. Control over the economy pertains to how economic relationships are developed; authority concerns political issues and how governments act; control over natural resources involves how they are exploited and managed, benefiting the colonizer. Control over gender and sexuality is linked to the domination of bodies and their meanings, as well as social roles. Finally, control over subjectivity and knowledge refers to how reality is perceived and knowledge is constructed. Thus, all these forms of control are interconnected and intertwined within the coloniality of power (Mignolo, 2010).

The coloniality of power expresses the process through which the modern/colonial world system is structured, linking peripheral positions in the international division of labor with global ethnic-racial hierarchy and the inscription of Third World migrants into the ethnic-racial hierarchy of global metropolitan cities. Peripheral countries and non-European peoples experience what Grosfoguel (2008) terms global coloniality, imposed by the United States through institutions like the World Bank, the Pentagon, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which perpetuates colonial-like conditions in these zones despite no longer being under direct colonial rule. This power of the colonizer over the colonized is enforced through ideological dichotomies, racially distinguishing them: the colonizer as civilized and advanced and the colonized as savage and backward. This idea of racial superiority structures relations of domination (Quijano, 2005).

Based on this notion of superiority, the coloniality of being is established, which relates to the impact on the language of experiences lived during colonization and involves how the colonized recognize themselves: their self-image. As aptly defined by Maldonado-Torres (2007, 2008), the coloniality of being refers to the process through which common sense and tradition are marked by power dynamics of a preferential nature – discriminating against people and targeting specific communities. Thus, colonizers established the idea of natural differentiation and superiority, placing them in a hierarchy where the colonized are marginalized (Quijano, 1992). The image of being, in this case, is directly linked to the white, European, and civilized man (Oliveira, 2021).

From the coloniality of power also derives the coloniality of knowledge, which, in the words of Maldonado-Torres (2007, p. 130), “refers to the role of epistemology and the general tasks of knowledge production in the reproduction of colonial regimes of thought”. Quijano (2005, p. 126), in turn, defines it as “a perspective of knowledge that becomes globally hegemonic by colonizing and superseding all other prior or different forms of knowledge and their respective concrete knowledges”. Therefore, stemming from the coloniality of knowledge, the colonizer imposes their knowledge as universal, neutral, and superior at the expense of local knowledge. The culture developed by the colonizer is seen as the only valid, objective, and universal one. The categories created by this knowledge – for example, State, market, and classes – are not only universal and used to analyze any reality but also define what should be for all peoples (Lander, 2005).

Knowledge is situated within the geopolitics of knowledge (Mignolo, 2004), where knowledge produced based on conceptions from the Global South is considered inferior, leading to what is termed “epistemic apartheid” (Grosfoguel, 2016). Any thought that does not conform to Eurocentric standards is rejected, resulting in erasure. Thus, Eurocentrism is a fundamental logic for the reproduction of the coloniality of knowledge. As Quijano (2005, p. 9) puts it:

The intellectual elaboration of the process of modernity produced a perspective of knowledge and a way of producing knowledge that demonstrates the character of the global pattern of power: colonial/modern, capitalist, and Eurocentric. This perspective and concrete way of producing knowledge are recognized as Eurocentrism. Eurocentrism is the name of a perspective of knowledge whose systematic elaboration began in Western Europe before the middle of the 17th century [...] that in the following centuries became hegemonic worldwide, following the same flow as the dominance of bourgeois Europe.

The Eurocentric conception of knowledge construction, produced from the experiences of European peoples and imposed as universal for all humanity, positions their historical and cultural standards as markers of superiority and universality. This societal organization becomes, through the coloniality of knowledge, the perceived norm for human existence and society: “Other forms of being, other forms of societal organization, other forms of knowledge, are transformed not only into different but into lacking, archaic, primitive, traditional, pre-modern” (Lander, 2005, p. 13).

The coloniality of knowledge is considered by Ibarra-Colado the root of the coloniality of power. According to the author, there is a dimension of coloniality related to the colonization of identities through knowledge: epistemic coloniality, which corresponds to “processes by which the institutionalization of knowledge as scientific knowledge allows the integration of native elites into the dominant Anglo-Eurocentric ideology in modernity” (Ibarra-Colado, 2006, p. 464). Mignolo (2008) suggests an epistemic delinking, replacing the geopolitics of knowledge based on the imperial history of the West with the geopolitics of peoples, languages, and subjectivities that have been racialized and had their humanity denied.

Social sciences have been imbued since their inception with a Eurocentric imaginary, projecting the idea of a Europe historically formed in isolation from other cultures, self-generated. The ideological knowledge created by spaces of modern/colonial power constitutes the social sciences, which have never undergone an epistemological rupture, remaining saturated with colonial imagery throughout their conceptual framework. Binary concepts permeating the analytical models of social sciences, such as barbarism and civilization, myth and science, poverty and development, tradition and modernity, are part of this conceptual apparatus sustained by an ideological colonial imaginary. Thus, the social sciences function as an ideological apparatus (Castro-Gómez, 2005), perpetuating the coloniality of knowledge. Within the administration, organizational knowledge is an example of epistemic coloniality (Ibarra-Colado, 2006). Similarly, the marketing field establishes a connection with this Eurocentric knowledge, purporting to be superior and universal while denying non-Eurocentric knowledge association within the field (Varman, 2019).

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ARRIVAL OF MARKETING IN BRAZIL

Considering the purpose of this article, it is necessary to present, in historical terms, how marketing knowledge was introduced in Brazil. Understanding its origins is essential for contemplating decolonization within the field. Knowledge of the historical conditions under which this knowledge developed in Brazil is crucial for analyzing local processes more effectively, which may have been overshadowed by the replication and reproduction of knowledge from other locations. Through understanding this history, it becomes possible to envision new practices and knowledge grounded in an understanding of local realities. To achieve self-aware knowledge, reflection on the structures of knowledge production and reproduction, as well as the influences of foreign models in shaping the field, is necessary (Barros & Carrieri, 2013).

The history of marketing in Brazil is closely intertwined with that of administration (Falcão, 2014), so it is important to understand the context in which it emerged. The development of higher education courses in administration in Brazil around the 1950s occurred through agreements transferring knowledge, techniques, and administrative models from the United States to Brazil, in a historical context marked by the Cold War period (Barros & Carrieri, 2013). During this period of history, when the two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union, vied for global hegemony through ideological battles, the Cold War profoundly influenced how people perceived the world (Alcadipani & Bertero, 2012) and, consequently, how science was conducted.

During the Cold War era, the construction and dissemination of management thought were significantly influenced. As the United States and the Soviet Union competed for supremacy, science and technological development became crucial battlegrounds. In the United States specifically, research was seen as a means to advance national interests. Thus, the Cold War and the national military apparatus directly shaped university research agendas and influenced corporate development, catalyzing the formation of a military-industrial-academic complex. In the administration field, the Cold War influenced the construction of a pragmatic area, guided by empiricist and technocratic logic, purportedly politically neutral. This influence is evident in publications like the “Harvard Business Review”, which promoted Cold War ideology – a grand narrative that spread to other countries, including Brazil, aiming to safeguard the world from the communist threat (Alcadipani & Bertero, 2012). During this period, the administration field strengthened significantly. The era saw the importation of theories from other disciplines and the emergence of two enduring theories still widely disseminated today: systemic theory and contingency theory (Barros & Carrieri, 2013).

Within this ideological framework, administration evolved as a science and began to be exported as a product of the United States to other countries, reinforcing ethnocentrism and advocating the “American way of life” while demonizing anything anti-American. In this grand narrative, the Cold War played a pivotal role in defining the boundaries within which administration could operate and the forms of management that should be advocated. Thus, it was expected that academics in the field would defend the interests of the United States and capitalism, countering communism from the bloc led by the Soviet Union (Alcadipani & Bertero, 2012).

In this context, and under the guise of supporting Brazilian development, the United States supported the creation of the first management schools in Brazil through technical cooperation agreements. In the 1950s, agreements, such as the Basic Agreement on Technical Cooperation and the Agreement on Programs of Special Technical Services, were signed, bringing management consultants and professors to Brazil. These support programs were part of the so-called Point IV initiative, established during Harry Truman’s presidency in 1951. In the president’s words, “the Point IV program is part of the defense of the free world” (Barros & Carrieri, 2013, p. 261). Thus, it becomes clear that U.S. interests were not only aimed at promoting the development of countries that supported knowledge transfer but also at combating communism and maintaining their colonial power.

In light of this, it is noticed that administration courses created at the time were influenced by such ideological battles (Barros & Carrieri, 2013). Aligning with the U.S. foreign policy through Point IV and the interests of the Brazilian government in the national development project, Fundação Getulio Vargas (FGV) established the first Business Administration School in Brazil in 1953: the *Escola de Administração de Empresas de São Paulo* (EAESP) (Alcadipani & Bertero, 2012). This marked the beginning of knowledge transfer from the United States to Brazil, solidified by a partnership with Michigan State University

(MSU), which sent American professors and technicians on a mission to the country (Boschi et al., 2016). Among these faculty members were Karl Boedecker, who led the mission; Donald Taylor; Tom Staudt; Leo Erickson; Dole Anderson; and Ole Jonhson, who was responsible for teaching marketing for the first time in Brazil. They remained in Brazil until the 1960s when marketing thought had become established (Costa & Vieira, 2007).

Thus, the foundation of FGV EAESP fulfilled the objective of training management professionals through the transfer of knowledge produced in the United States, in English, and brought by American professors. In addition to importing American management knowledge, the establishment of FGV's first class brought new professionals to the market aimed at modernizing the management of both national and multinational companies in Brazil. Regarding the curriculum, most courses were taught by MSU professors, and the teaching materials were imported. Assistant professors were responsible for translating texts and providing simultaneous translation for classes taught in English (Boschi et al., 2016). During this period, other administration schools were also founded in different regions of Brazil, such as the *Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul* and *Universidade Federal da Bahia*.

With the consolidation of the discipline, marketing gained prominence in other educational institutions, such as the *Faculdade de Economia e Administração da Universidade de São Paulo* (FEA/USP). Professor Meyer Stilman played a crucial role in expanding marketing in Brazil. By the late 1960s, he had interacted with academics Sidney Levy and Philip Kotler at a time when the scope of marketing was broadening. Stilman was instrumental in translating Kotler's "Marketing Management" into Portuguese, which later became the most widely used textbook in the field in Brazil. It is important to highlight the role of the School of Advertising at the *Escola de Propaganda do Museu de Arte de São Paulo*, which, from 1973 onwards, became the *Escola Superior de Propaganda e Marketing* (ESPM), in consolidating and expanding marketing (Boschi et al., 2016).

Professors Donald Taylor, Leo Erickson, and Dole Anderson, along with some Brazilian professors, were pioneers in national publications on marketing, which began with the first edition of the *Revista de Administração de Empresas* (RAE), published by FGV in 1961. The following year saw the publication of the Glossary of Marketing, and in 1972, the first marketing book in Brazil was published: *Administração Mercadológica: Princípios e Métodos*, written by Affonso Cavalcanti de Albuquerque Arantes, Alberto de O. Lima Filho, Bruno A. de Miranda Guerreiro, Gustavo de Sá e Silva, Haroldo Bariani, Orlando Figueiredo, Polia Lerner Hamburger, and Raimar Richers (Costa & Vieira, 2007). In 1973, in an attempt to localize the concepts of marketing originating from the United States, Raimar Richers, Orlando Figueiredo, and Polia Lerner Hamburger wrote the book *Administração de Vendas*, based on research conducted with small businesses in Brazil (Falcão, 2014).

Throughout this process of introducing and expanding marketing in Brazil, initially led by American professors, it became clear that their intention was not to aid in the creation of marketing thought adapted to Brazilian reality but rather to teach the discipline in the mold of what was done in the United States. This model was heavily influenced by Wroe Alderson and his functionalist view of marketing, which was thus transferred from MSU to EAESP. Even after marketing expanded to other universities, American influence persisted. The functionalist perspective gave way to the Managerial School, dominant in the United States since the 1960s, by the 1980s. Consequently, the teaching of marketing shifted its focus from functions to concepts such as the marketing mix, market segmentation, and product lifecycle. From the 1990s onward, following the American trend, consumer behavior schools began to gain prominence in marketing education in Brazil (Boschi et al., 2016).

From the historical analysis presented about the arrival of marketing in Brazil, it can be concluded that American influences played a significant ideological role (Hackley, 2009), transforming it into an export product to peripheral countries (Bradshaw & Tadjewski, 2011), such as Brazil. Alongside the United States' interest in disseminating its ideology, there was a desire among the Brazilian elite to participate in a development project through industrialization, aiming to break away from a past of European domination through colonization while maintaining control over the racialized and marginalized population of the country. Therefore, the introduction of marketing to Brazil represents not only the expansion of U.S. geopolitical influence but can also be seen as a project of ideological domination based on education, which encountered little resistance to its implementation and proved successful (Boschi et al., 2016).

Similarly, to the process of evangelization of indigenous peoples in the Americas, marketing was introduced to Brazil by American professors as a form of ideological domination, exporting narratives constructed during the Cold War that advocated for a "free market, free enterprise, and free consumers" (Faria, 2006a, p. 20). Thus, the marketing concepts exported were crucial not only for businesses but also for the government, aiming to weaken the ideals of a state-regulated political economy that could potentially benefit workers and citizens more (Faria, 2006a).

The ideological role played by marketing is undeniable. However, this field direction has implications that persist to this day and influence how knowledge is produced and reproduced within the discipline. The construction of a field centered on extreme positivism, which often ignores political issues and the realm of macromarketing in its research, can be cited as an example. It is important to highlight the influence of the United States government and institutions such as the American Marketing Academy and the Marketing Science Institute on marketing practices as well as in defining research agendas for the field, which are often subordinated to imperialist interests (Faria, 2006b).

The marketing field has disregarded movements initiated in the 1970s in the United Kingdom that aimed for plurality and fragmentation within organizational studies. Marketing researchers also thwarted efforts by European scholars advocating for paradigm plurality and incommensurability (Kuhn, 1970), while the hegemony of statistical positivism in the field grew and solidified (Faria, 2006b). Additionally, marketing is predominantly influenced by a Euro-American bias. Research published in major marketing journals mostly originates from American and Western European scholars. Moreover, they prioritize issues from the Global North, often claiming scientific rigor and research quality as justification (Varman, 2019). These examples illustrate how marketing perpetuates the coloniality of knowledge.

ABOUT THE (RE)PRODUCTION OF MARKETING KNOWLEDGE

Similarly, to other social sciences, research in the marketing field often reduces itself to reproducing theories and concepts developed from experiences and issues of the Global North – regions with their specific spatial and temporal characteristics – and applying them elsewhere. However, the experiences and issues of these other locations may be vastly different from those where the theories originated (Grosfoguel, 2016). This phenomenon is part of what Mohanty (2008) calls epistemic privilege, where Western men dominate the knowledge production and define what is considered true. This monopoly serves the interests of imperial and colonial projects by disqualifying other forms of knowledge production and critical voices against such power structures (Grosfoguel, 2016).

In the marketing field, researchers often hold the notion that “anything not produced in English is unlikely to have significant theoretical or practical relevance to the broader community”, thereby not being relevant to the advancement of the subject as an academic discipline (Holden, 1998, p. 86). Brazil stands out as the only Portuguese-speaking country in Latin America, which isolates us linguistically and complicates the dissemination of our research, requiring translations to gain visibility internationally. The Eurocentric superiority of the English language in marketing is evident, considering that in many countries, such as Brazil, the term “marketing” is not translated into the local language, and some terms and concepts like “target market” and “market players” are written and spoken in English, despite the existence of local terms to replace them. While in Spanish-speaking Latin America there is widespread use of the term *mercadología*, in Brazil, there has not been a similar adoption of such translation (Hemais et al., 2021).

The translation and distribution of books by major American and Anglophone publishers only reinforce the process of epistemic colonization, ensuring the reproduction of this ideology. In Latin American universities, there is a widespread presence of American authors who are highly promoted and well-known. There are also Latin American authors who have learned to think like Americans and deny their own identity. The best-selling books by management gurus occupy spaces in the classrooms of Latin American universities. What is observed in these writings is a stereotyped version of the American entrepreneur: a man white, cisgender, heterosexual, from a wealthy and liberal background. This excludes different ethnicities, races, religions, genders, classes, and sexualities, leaving no room for diversity (Ibarra-Colado, 2006).

Research in Latin American universities often develops through the imitation of knowledge from the Global North, turning them into extensions of coloniality. However, theories originating from this region have proven difficult to validate in other countries. To ensure the integrity of this Northern-produced knowledge, researchers introduce cultural arguments. In other words, the problem of theories not being validated is attributed to the “anomalies” of underdeveloped societies rather than to the limitations of theories that are Eurocentric rather than universal (Ibarra-Colado, 2006).

Varman (2019) highlights examples of subordination in the marketing field to knowledge produced in the Global North. One instance is the uncritical adoption of the Servqual scale, developed in the United States, in other locations. Another example cited by the author is the Eurocentrism in post-structuralist Consumer Culture Theory (CCT), where research inspired by Foucault overlooks issues of race, violence, and dependency as socio-cultural conditions brought by colonialism to the Global South (Varman, 2019). It is paradoxical that Latin American researchers use these theories because they do not explain local phenomena but allow for international recognition, as specified by Ibarra-Colado (2006, p. 471): “To belong to the ‘international community’, you must speak the language of the center, use their concepts, discuss their agendas, and conform to the stereotype of the ‘imperfect South’, maintaining ‘a polite silence’ about the true causes of your problems”.

The reproduction of coloniality can be observed in how marketing knowledge is disseminated based on the way narratives are spread. Sreekumar and Varman (2016) argue that Indian markets were highly sophisticated even during medieval times. Indian bazaars were distinct from Northern markets and thus were labeled as disorganized. There is an attempt to erase this history – often overlooked in marketing disciplines – and fit Southern markets and marketing practices into Northern-developed forms. Anything deviating from this standard is deemed illegitimate. Consequently, Western ideas are used as benchmarks, while non-Western ones require a period of adaptation to be considered modern (Varman, 2019).

Specifically addressing concepts produced by the marketing field, particularly by researchers from the United States, and disseminated globally, we chose to present examples of colonial reproduction, such as the market orientation concept, deemed one of the most significant in the field (Faria, 2015), and advertising – one of the 4 Ps of marketing – given its prominence, as the 4 Ps are nearly synonymous with marketing (Merabet et al., 2020). Despite these concepts being created in the last century, they continue to be taught and reproduced (Ferrell et al., 2015), often in their original form and uncritically, as if they were universal and ahistorical (Merabet et al., 2020).

The concept of market orientation considered a consequence of neoliberal globalization, reproduces assumptions that reinforce colonialism. Since the 1990s, it has been reiterated that companies adhering to market orientation achieve higher profitability (Faria, 2015). Originating from a Euro-American perspective and transforming into a global concept, it marginalizes other epistemologies. Market orientation is grounded in the neoliberal discourse of free markets and free enterprise. This perspective views the market as an abstract, impersonal, autonomous entity capable of rationally meeting the needs of consumers and producers, with them seen as the primary agents (Merabet et al., 2020). It is disseminated worldwide by marketing researchers and educators. Neoliberalism brought the promise that free trade and global market integration would be beneficial and necessary for all. This neoliberal representation of the market (the free market) was imposed by the West on the rest of the world, commodifying the economies of other countries (Faria, 2015; Faria & Hemais, 2017).

Market orientation can also be interpreted as a form of coloniality of being. By focusing on consumers’ needs and desires as the organization’s central concern (Oplatka & Hemsley-Brown, 2007), there’s a Euro-American conception of who this consumer is. Since marketing concepts, strategies, and techniques are developed based on this Euro-American reference point, they converge to meet the needs of this consumer, often disregarding local desires, needs, and cultural differences that influence them. A global market where the homogenization of tastes and preferences erases local traditions and ancestries (Ferreira & Hemais, 2023) is exemplified, for instance, in Coca-Cola’s Christmas campaigns. These campaigns propagate the American concept of Christmas (consumerism and gift-giving), featuring imagery like Santa Claus in snowy settings and polar bears, even in countries where Christmas occurs in non-winter seasons, such as Brazil.

Advertising in Brazil, from its inception, has been heavily influenced by Northern models, importing Eurocentric knowledge at the same time international brands, particularly from the United States, were entering the country. With foreign advertising agencies establishing themselves in Brazil, there was a valorization of the knowledge brought by professionals from abroad who trained local professionals. During this period, the model of the “American way of life” was disseminated through advertising, which was extensively used during the Cold War to shape opinions about countries in the communist bloc. It was only during the period of civil-military dictatorship that national agencies began to grow, many adopting English names (Rodrigues & Hemais, 2020). Thus, it is observed that the formation of advertising in Brazil emerged from the coloniality of knowledge, where the correct way to advertise was seen as the American way.

Since its inception to the present day, colonialism in Brazilian advertising can be readily identified. Hemais et al. (2022) analyzed, from a decolonial perspective, the colonality of power operating through the linguistic imperialism of English. The authors examined advertisements from a transnational company that provides English language education in Brazil. Based on their analysis, the advertisements reinforce that learning English is the only way to succeed in the business world while also affirming the colonality of power by positioning English language proficiency as a means to overcome the supposed backwardness of local culture and language (Hemais et al., 2022).

These and other marketing concepts are grounded in a capitalist epistemology that reinforces neoliberal capitalism and the colonizer ideology. Consequently, by being considered universal concepts, they erase the epistemic plurality of the colonized, allowing us to perceive marketing conceived within these structures as the only possible framework. The dominance of managerial marketing in research and courses, which neglects social and political issues and focuses solely on the micro dimension (consumer-company), poses the risk of educating future professionals with a reductionist view (Merabet et al., 2020).

In addition to shaping professionals with a reductionist outlook, what kind of individual can be formed through the dissemination of knowledge that prioritizes profit and the transformation of everything into commodities? The neoliberal ideology inherent in marketing knowledge contributes to shaping individuals who inhabit a world where competition is the norm and social relationships mimic market dynamics, leading them to identify and behave like a business entity (Dardot & Laval, 2017).

Thus, it is concluded that knowledge produced in marketing is subordinate to knowledge from the global North, generated by privileged Western men and deemed superior to knowledge produced elsewhere in the world (Grosfoguel, 2016). Thinking about decolonizing marketing involves first understanding its roots and then distancing ourselves from neoliberal ideological threats (Varman, 2019). Ultimately, “what is at stake is our capacity for intellectual autonomy, to see through our own eyes and think in our own languages, even if we are compelled to write in English” (Ibarra-Colado, 2006, p. 466).

PURSuing A DECOLONIZED MARKETING

Ferreira and Hemais (2023) argue that in order to develop marketing in Brazil that reflects the complex local realities and colonial history, it is necessary to move away from the idea that only Eurocentric theorists can provide insights into the subject. Regarding theoretical aspects, the pursuit of decolonizing knowledge involves turning to local references to analyze local realities. In particular, some Brazilian thinkers – such as Lélia González, Theotônio dos Santos, Ruy Mauro Marini, Vania Bambirra, Darcy Ribeiro, Paulo Freire, Milton Santos, Guerreiro Ramos, Gilberto Freyre, among others – can bring significant contributions to marketing research by addressing social and structural issues that emerged with colonization and persist in our society.

The ethics of liberation, developed by Latin American theorists, can also contribute to the decolonization of marketing. This approach suggests that the goal of any organization should not only be profit but also the development of some dimension of human life (Dussel & Ibarra-Colado, 2006; Wanderley & Barros, 2018). Thus, it is possible to rethink marketing by replacing the centrality of the market with a focus on human life (Wanderley & Barros, 2018).

Bringing marketing research into local social and political contexts challenges the dominant perspective of managerial marketing, which often overlooks issues beyond the consumer-business dichotomy (Merabet et al., 2020). Regarding the Brazilian context, researchers should prioritize social problems that are prevalent, such as unemployment, poverty, precarious housing, socio-spatial segregation, urban mobility, and violence. Specifically, violence against transgender individuals in Brazil deserves particular attention from researchers, given that the likelihood of a transgender person being murdered in the country is nine times higher than among the transgender population in the United States (Associação Nacional de Travestis e Transsexuais [Antra], 2018). It is crucial to investigate how colonialism manifests through conservatism advocated by the extreme far-right in the United States, which dehumanizes transgender individuals and has been imported by Brazil's own extreme

far-right. This conservative wave, especially led by neo-Pentecostal religious organizations, has threatened rights and public policies aimed at this population across Latin America (Corrales, 2020). How can organizations and society work to minimize the violence faced by these individuals?

Another aspect to consider is the large number of family-owned businesses and small to medium-sized enterprises in Brazil. Investigating the marketing practices of these institutions is a way to decolonize marketing from its effective and modern Northern practices (Alcadipani et al., 2012; Wanderley & Barros, 2018). Additionally, it is important to observe how Brazilian cultural traits influence the marketing practices used by our companies. Despite the uncritical application of marketing methods and techniques, how do Brazilian companies, especially small ones, use cultural traits like the *jeitinho brasileiro* (Motta & Alcadipani, 1999) to propose creative solutions? It is also essential for our research to address cultural traditions, such as Carnival, June festivals, the Divine Holy Spirit festival, folklore festivals, traditions of indigenous peoples, Afro-Brazilian cultures, and other cultural expressions, as a way to preserve local culture. How do indigenous peoples use their traditions as strategies of resistance in colonized contexts? (Irigaray et al., 2021).

Given that racism and slavery structure organizations and labor relations in Latin America (Wanderley & Barros, 2018), it is important to address the effects of these practices in Brazilian organizations. A recent example is the case of vineyards in Rio Grande do Sul, where 192 workers were rescued from conditions analogous to slavery, as explored by Gama et al. (2023), who discuss slavery in the 21st century. Among other questions, research should investigate how consumers perceive products produced with the use of slave labor. What is the influence of labor relations shaped by slavery on consumption patterns?

Finally, as important as addressing contexts and using local references is decolonization through researcher reflexivity. Brazilian academia is based on a notion of asymmetry, with public investments predominantly concentrated in major centers of political and economic power. This contributes to the creation of elitist spaces, widening the asymmetry between regions in the country and perpetuating inequalities in access to and production of knowledge (Nazareno & Herbetta, 2019). Therefore, it is crucial to consider the asymmetries between researchers and the subjects being studied. The same applies when researchers from the Global North conduct research in the Global South. We must position ourselves critically, not as extractivists who extract knowledge from subjects for profit. Instead, the idea is to use our privileges to represent and amplify the voices of marginalized subjects (Jammulamadaka et al., 2021). In the pursuit of decolonizing our marketing research, it is essential to rethink the current academic model, characterized by a lack of representativeness and salary disparities between researchers from the Global South and North (Bádéjo & Gordon, 2022).

FINAL (OR INITIAL?) REFLECTIONS

This article aimed to reflect from a decolonial perspective on how marketing knowledge is produced and reproduced in Brazil, seeking to contribute to the emancipation of the field by striving for knowledge to break free from the ideological constraints imposed by processes of epistemic colonization. To this end, it chose to explore the historical aspects that influenced the export of marketing by the United States to Brazil as a product aimed at disseminating neoliberal ideology during a historical period marked by the Cold War. Even after many decades, marketing has not completely disentangled itself from the ideologies that shaped it, and to this day, the mainstream ignores the political and social issues that influence both its managerial practice and academia.

Instead of providing conclusive answers, this is a call to reflection. Is it possible to decolonize marketing knowledge and its practices under the capitalist mode of production? Beyond contemplating decolonizing marketing knowledge, it is necessary to question the effects of this knowledge on society and managerial practices. Even as researchers strive to decolonize our research and bring forth alternative perspectives, can we truly decolonize a practice so deeply intertwined with capitalism?

Marketing professionals have sought to reinvent themselves and demonstrate concern for social issues in recent decades. But under what pretext does this occur? There is a clear appropriation of social issues by marketing, as seen in the case of the Arezzo brand, which appropriated the issue of racial diversity by launching products with an aesthetic inspired by

African culture but featuring white models using the products (Estado, 2022). What was the brand's purpose? Generate engagement through people's outrage? How does this contribute to the cause at hand? How does this violence reinforce coloniality?

How can academia influence marketing practices to embrace decolonialism when the market is the predominant voice, if not the only one heard? There are advances in bringing the decolonial perspective into marketing academia. However, can our research break through barriers enough to transcend institutions and their capitalist discourses? If we manage to decolonize marketing knowledge, would we be creating something that should no longer be called marketing, as it would have lost its meaning? Or would we just be refurbishing a field of knowledge that has long ignored social issues but has recently responded to these calls? There are no easy answers to these questions, but it is clear that in the current context, marketing has no alternatives: it must confront and engage with social issues (Love & Hall, 2022), aiming to help solve these problems rather than appropriating them.

The decolonial perspective can contribute to distancing marketing knowledge produced in the Global South from subordination to Northern knowledge. Therefore, the engagement of researchers in the field is necessary to promote epistemological plurality in a field that emerged from the process of colonization. It is essential to develop marketing theories that challenge the universality imposed by Western theories, placing the Global South and its spatial, cultural, and institutional contexts as protagonists. It is understood that this is not an easy change, given the competing interests and the dependency of academia in the Global South on Northern academic trends. However, this change is crucial for marketing to be relevant beyond a privileged class (Varman, 2019).

Academics must recognize the role of marketing and its complicity in the increase of finance capitalism and the resulting deepening of inequalities and poverty (Abdalla & Faria, 2017), especially in countries classified by the North as underdeveloped. The successive crises engendered by neoliberal capitalism cannot be ignored, and marketing academics need to include political and social issues more than ever in their research agendas, as a way to address the damages caused by the reproduction of their ideology. It is hoped that this article can serve as inspiration for researchers in the field, contributing to the formation of a thought emancipated from the ideology for which marketing was created and exported, with the aim of serving the project of colonization of power, knowledge, and being.

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Karen Batista

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4918-6219>

Ph.D. student at the Federal University of Pernambuco (UFPE); Master's in Administration at the Federal University of Sergipe (UFS); Substitute Professor at the Federal University of Sergipe (UFS). E-mail: karen.batista@hotmail.com

AUTHOR' CONTRIBUTION

Karen Batista: Project administration (Lead); Supervision (Lead); Validation (Lead); Visualization (Lead); Writing - original draft (Lead); Writing - review & editing (Lead).

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