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Settler colonialism and tourism routes in Southern Brazil

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ABSTRACT

Debates regarding the silencing of minorities and the marginalisation of those colonised is not new. The process of perpetuating colonialism is seen in the narratives regarding immigration of those from the global North who occupied places and spaces in the global South. To critically analyse the discursive reality of tourist routes in the three states forming the Southern region of Brazil, we conducted documentary research on the 50 tourism routes in Southern Brazil. The Critical Discourse Analysis reveals that colonial narratives used in the promotion of tourism routes are contributing to silencing non-European voices and perpetuating a systemic marginalisation of Indigenous and Quilombola groups.

1. Introduction

In web pages promoting destinations in the southern region of Brazil, one commonly comes across sentences such as "Visit the most Italian city in Brazil", "Have you visited the 'Brazilian' Switzerland?", "Tiny Austria in the State of Santa Catarina", "The Brazilian Tuscany", and "Discover the European Valley". These expressions highlight the strong presence of European images in Brazilian tourism promotion. They also entrench the longstanding ethnic power relationships that have been established in the territories of Southern Brazil through the processes of colonisation starting in 1500, which accelerated by the end of the 19th century through mass migration from many European countries.

Scholars have debated some of the processes of cultural denial, erasure, and hybridisation in colonial and settler colonial processes (Everingham et al., 2021; Ginzburg, 1993; Stanley, 2021). In Brazil, various socio-historical and political contexts were decisive for the colonial structure's progressive manifestation in different scenarios, including tourism. For example, the promotion of the southern region of Brazil as the "European" part of the country manifests itself in both public and private organisations that are engaged in place branding (Lohman & Dredge, 2012). The region's economic development based on agriculture and industries, its topographical similarities with Europe, and the European immigration heritage are some of the characteristics promoted by the tourism industry. However, the region is also the home of Indigenous and Quilombola[1] communities. For example, according to the National Indigenous Foundation (FUNAI), at the 2022 National Census, over 36,000 Indigenous people were living in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, with almost 20,000 of them living in 140 protected conservation units. The Guarani tribe is still the main group living in the region (IBGE, 2022). Nonetheless, this paper demonstrates how their voices, their culture, and their presence have been erased from tourism narratives in Southern Brazil.

Drawing from the concept of *spiral of silence* (Noelle-Neumann, 1974), this research examines the influence of settler colonialism on the development and promotion of tourism routes in Southern Brazil. We aim to demonstrate that tourist discourses used to promote the region are driven by colonial ideologies that tend to reassert power structures and inequalities through silencing Indigenous and Quilombola minorities. The starting point in our research is the premise that colonial narratives used to promote tourist routes contribute to the erasure of what is "non-European". For this research, we formulated two key questions: (1) What are the narratives used to present the tourism routes in Southern Brazil? and (2) Are Indigenous and Quilombola communities acknowledged and included in the tourism routes in Southern Brazil? This paper critically analyses the discursive reality of tourist routes in the three states forming the southern region of Brazil: Paraná, Santa Catarina, and Rio Grande do Sul.

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[1] Quilombo, by definition, was the place with a concentration of escaped slaves who rebelled against the colonial regime in Brazil that lasted for more than 300 years. Even after the abolition of slavery these areas continued to exist. The Federal Constitution of 1988 changed the term, which then came to be defined as the area occupied by communities remaining from these former quilombos. In addition, it also assured these communities the right to own their lands.

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1.1. Brazil: colonisation, immigration, and historical oppression

Brazilian history books claim that the colonisation of the country started with the arrival of the Portuguese explorer Pedro Alvares Cabral. Other explorers navigated Brazilian coastal waters before Cabral, but his expedition in April 1500 is regarded as the starting point of European colonisation in Brazil (Couto, 2011). We claim that this was starting point of historical oppression and attempt of cultural erasure that Brazil experienced. Here, we follow Burnette (2015, p. 531) in understanding historical oppression as the "chronic, pervasive, and intergenerational experiences of oppression that, over time, may be normalized, imposed, and internalized" into the lives of people. Brazil experienced the following four phases of historical oppression and attempt for cultural erasure: (1) the occupation of Indigenous lands by the Portuguese; (2) European mass migration; (3) military dictatorship (1964–1985); and (4) Neoliberal development and political-economic alignment with countries of the global North.

The first phase – the occupation of Indigenous lands by the Portuguese – began with a "civilizing" process of extermination, exploitation, conquest, and domination. Denevan (1976) estimated that there were over 4 million Indigenous people in Brazil before the Portuguese arrived. According to Storto (2019), between 600 and 1000 native languages were spoken in the country in 1500, but only 154 Indigenous languages are believed to still be alive in Brazil. This historical backdrop highlights the systematic erasure of Indigenous identities and cultures that began with the Portuguese colonisation, is still happening nowadays and shapes how Brazil's history and heritage are represented, particularly in the tourism narratives that dominate the southern region of the country.

The insertion of Brazil as a Portuguese colony into the international market began in the 16th century with the sugarcane culture. Sugarcane plantations employed the enslaved labour of both native Indigenous people and those trafficked from African countries. This system of labour exploitation was extended to other crops, such as coffee and cotton and persisted even after Brazil's independence from Portugal in 1822. Brazil was the last country in the Americas to abolish slavery in 1888, after over 300 years, with the approval of the Lei Aurea – the Golden Law (Pinsky, 2010). The approval of the Golden Law marked the beginning of the second phase of the historical oppression and attempt for cultural erasure. Brazil – especially the southern states of Paraná, Santa Catarina, and Rio Grande do Sul – received a significant number of European immigrants. This whitening process was a consequence of the prevailing racism against Indigenous and Black people (Skidmore, 1993). It was aimed at replacing slave labour with Europeans while expanding exports towards colonial markets (Hobsbawm, 1954). Germans and Italians were a significant ethnic group in this "civilizational whitening" process (Skidmore, 1993). Between 1824 and 1914, Brazil received 93,000 German immigrants, who settled mainly in Rio Grande do Sul, Paraná, and Santa Catarina, after two failed attempts to form German communities in Bahia and Rio de Janeiro. In Rio Grande do Sul alone, 140 German colonial settlements were established, housing approximately 48,000 immigrants (Fausto, 1999; Khoudour-Castéras, 2008). Between 1870 and 1970, Brazil also received more than 1.5 million Italians, of which 145,000 settled in the southern states (IBGE, 2000). Germans and Italians formed small landholdings with few industrial initiatives until the 1920s. This land structure configured a model of small farms in European colonisation zones with polyculture. In the case of Italian immigration zones, wine production stood out, strongly promoted by the state (De Azevedo, 1961).

In 1850, Brazil witnessed a transition to the capitalist land system with the Land Law, which abolished the granting of land leases – a system that has prevailed and is at the bottom of Brazilian latifundium problems (Silva, 1996). The Brazilian government aimed at building nationalism through strengthening regionalism, promoting regional products, and developing small-scale primary industries. This regional approach was used for the touristification of Brazilian states, and tourism initially had a strong national and regional discursive appeal (Valduga, 2014). These colonial systems and processes not only shaped Brazil's socio-economic structures, but also contributed to the development of the exclusionary narratives that dominate tourism routes today, often neglecting the stories and contributions of Indigenous and Quilombola communities.

One of the landmarks of Brazilian touristification associated with European colonisation was the Festa da Uva [the Grape Festival], held in the city of Caxias do Sul for the first time in 1931. For the European immigrants, wine, always present in Christian liturgy, was a fundamental link to their homeland while they developed fresh bonds with their new settlement (Trento, 2005). The Festa da Uva was central to the resumption of the ethnic discourse after World War II. The 1950 event marked the 75th anniversary of Italian immigration in the southern region with exhibitions of crafts and a celebration of immigrants' lifestyle and their achievements (Valduga, 2014). The Festa da Uva was the model for regional festivals in Southern Brazil, which anchored their regionalism discourses; it was focused on the exaltation of the work of immigrant farmers – especially those from Europe – while excluding other ethnic groups that inhabited the region. Regional tourism developed from this context in the late 1950s.

The third phase of historical oppression and attempt for cultural erasure in Brazil relates to the 1964 military coup and the dictatorship that lasted until 1985. During this time, a broader perspective emerged whereupon hundreds of Brazilian intellectuals and artists were politically exiled or persecuted, including Paulo Freire, Caetano Veloso, and former president Fernando Henrique Cardoso. These intellectuals were censored in Brazil and began to produce knowledge abroad (Rollemberg, 2007). For many of them, exile allowed for the internationalisation of their work, leading to critical academic productions with a global perspective on Brazil. The violence of the dictatorship period featured physical and psychological torture of those opposed to the regime. It also included the development of architectonical references in the cities, through the construction of roads and public buildings, and the naming of places and monuments for ideological perpetuation. Thus, one could consider that the territory was instrumentalized through the suffocation of memories, historically buried through attempts at cultural erasure (Traverso, 2007).

The fourth and final phase refers to the neoliberal development and political–economic alignment with countries of the Global North which started during the military regime in Brazil. The dictatorship period was followed by a commercial opening based on the political–economic project of the Washington Consensus, which accompanied the return of democracy in Latin America from the late 1970s onwards (Panizza, 2009). A set of reforms focused on the market were implemented, promising economic development and improvements in people's living conditions. However, what occurred in the 1990s and 2000s in most Latin American countries was the opposite: worsening social indicators and increased inequality, leading to disenchantment with democracy and neoliberalism (Souza, 2013). The late commercial opening and the attempt at global integration based on a weak Latin American institutional framework created an environment of instability and strengthened Brazil's dependence on the Global North. The "centre of the global economy has high proprietary technological content in its products; therefore, it has considerable monopoly power, and the periphery does not" (Carvalho & Gala, 2020, p. 125). Brazil thus became a highly unequal country, exporting commodities and having few industrial chains.

From a cultural perspective, the Brazilian regions with higher levels of European colonisation saw an expansion of the soft power exerted by these countries, especially Italy and Germany (Bertonha, 2015). Their influence in the country during this period was expanded through various cultural promotion actions. For example, in 1995, the European Union played a role by funding, in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, the creation of projects such as the School of Agritourism and the Rural Tourism Observatory (Secretaria, 2007). Further, Italian immigrants' presence has been strengthened through "Circolos Italianos", which promoted language, gastronomy, and culture, offering scholarships and

fostering ties between cities via twinning agreements also know in Brazil by the Italian word "Gemellaggio" (Bertonha, 2015). Germany followed similar principles; specifically, the Goethe Institute aimed to "update Germany's image in Brazil, present contemporary German culture, and integrate the German language and culture into the Brazilian educational system" (Goethe-Institut, 2023, n/p). The activities of these institutions have resulted in significant cultural influences over Southern Brazil's tourist locations.

In this research we aim to extend these discussions and demonstrate how tourism has contributed to the silencing of Indigenous and Quilombolas groups in Brazil. In aligning politically, socially, and economically with the Global North, Brazil developed narratives that valued European views, cultural traits, and behaviours. This work further discusses how tourism narratives in Southern Brazil are aligned with symbols and dominant discourses of settling colonisers.

1.2. Settler colonialism and the spiral of silence

Among the different forms of colonial domination such as settler, planter, extractive, trade, and legal (Horvath, 1972; Veracini, 2013), settler colonialism is the focus of this research. Settler colonialism is a structural form of domination focusing on genocide and dehumanisation under the logic of elimination of the natives. Settler colonisation is not one single historic moment of invasion (e.g. Portuguese colonisers arriving in Brazil), but an ongoing process of transformation of the social, political, cultural, and economic structures of the invaded colony. Such transformation seeks to dismantle previous forms of Indigenous social organisation. In Brazil, the initial Portuguese occupation started in 1500 with the colonisation, occupation of lands, and introduction of Indigenous and African slavery. However, it was not until the early 19th century that immigrants from other parts of Europe started to arrive as part of the settler colonialism process. This process differs from that in other colonised countries such as Canada, where the process of settler colonialism has been explained by Grimwood, Muldoon, and Stevens (2019). However, some of the roots are similar. As pointed out by Korstanje (2012, p. 181),

> Between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, European superpowers set out to colonise different parts of the globe in an effort to improve trade, acquire territory and build wealth. Part of these efforts was the establishment of a European military presence in overseas colonies. The encounter between the colonisers and the exotic 'other' generated considerable academic curiosity among some ethnologists who were recruited by European metropoles to study indigenous peoples and assist the Europeans in improving their administrative successes. This established an inextricable link between anthropologists and colonialism. One primary concern of these anthropologists-for-hire was the conceptual differences between civilized and primitive societies.

Settler colonialism is a territorial project of appropriation through the logic of eliminating and replacing those who originally occupied the territory (Fortin et al., 2021; Harris, 2020). It differs from other forms of colonialism precisely by the logic of elimination rather than exploitation (Wolfe, 2008). Further, memory and narration are critical to settler colonialism (Pulido & Lloyd, 2010), since narratives reinforce the existence of dominant social structures. According to Lowman and Barker (2015), the aim of settler societies is to assert their sovereignty by eliminating Indigenous peoples and their relationship with the land. Such erasure of Indigenous peoples contributes to the settlers' claim of land ownership. Thus, as stated by Fortin et al. (2021, p. 2), "land is the core concern of settler colonialism". To legitimise their ownership of land, settlers would not only physically eliminate original people, but also ignore their history and culture, hiding them from the colonial narratives promoted. Indeed, the claim that the Americas were "discovered" by Europeans ignores the fact that Indigenous people were there before them. In establishing themselves as landowners, settlers saw themselves able to dehumanise others to assert their domination. In the case of Brazil, such dehumanisation was suffered by both the Indigenous people and the trafficked slaves from Africa.

The theoretical lens of settler colonialism suits this study's focus on Brazilian society, which has historically posited racial mixing as a "civilisation" project. Part of this project was the choice to recruit Europeans as a new labour force instead of re-incorporating formerly enslaved people (Brasher, 2020, 2021). In Brazil, European immigrants have been historically presented as privileged, more capable, and knowledgeable in comparison to African slaves or Indigenous people. The immigrants and their abilities are glorified in the history books, and their stories are told in museums (Brasher, 2021). Settler colonialism ensured that the dominant perspective belonged to white people (Brasher, 2020; Stastny, 2019). The choices of what and how history and stories are narrated can be a highlight for remembering or can help forgetting narratives. On the one hand, one still sees the lasting effects of settler colonialism, which has been a major force in shaping the world as it is today (Hunt & de Leeuw, 2020). On the other hand, the process of decolonisation aims to undo the damage caused to marginalised communities. This process includes restoring land and resources to Indigenous peoples, recognising the rights and sovereignty of Indigenous nations, protecting the space of Quilombolas, and dismantling systems of oppression that were created to maintain the dominance of colonisers (Hunt & de Leeuw, 2020). It also entails uplifting these marginalised voices and creating space for them to be heard and acknowledged.

The silencing of Indigenous and Quilombola narratives in Brazil can be seen through the lens of the spiral of silence theory. Noelle-Neumann (1974) explains that those who are oppressed and marginalised are more likely to stay silent about their beliefs because they are perceived as a minority. However, such silencing may lead minority opinions to be extinguished from public debate, thus creating and perpetuating a spiral of silence (Hayes, 2007). Here, it is important to remember a statement made by former Brazilian president Jair Bolsonaro during the electoral campaign of 2018: "The minorities will have to bend down to the majority" (*As Minorias vão ter que se curvar*). Such an approach demonstrates that even in the 21st century, the silencing of minorities in Brazil is still a significant issue pushing them into the shadows of society.

To Noelle-Neumann (1974), people assess their opinions by comparing them with what their community seems to believe. If a person feels they hold a minority viewpoint, they are more likely to fear social isolation upon sharing their beliefs, because public opinion is a form of social control (Noelle-Neumann, 1974). If we extend this idea to the development of communication and marketing theories (Neuwirth & Frederick, 2004), it is most likely that the promotion of products is focused on the conservative (and colonial) viewpoints (Francis, 2022). To Noelle-Neumann (1973, p. 88), "social conventions, customs and norms have always been included in the domain of public opinion. Public opinion imposes sanctions on individuals who offend against conventions." Consequently, conventions which dictate that positive tourist experiences are colonial may explain the exclusion of minorities from tourism promotion. This was evidenced in Congo, where colonial tourism marketing was used as propaganda for justifying Belgian presence in Africa (Wigley, 2015).

The tourism literature debates the silencing of minorities, the oppression of those excluded, and the marginalisation of the colonised (Everingham et al., 2021). Three decades ago, Palmer (1994) discussed how in Nassau (Bahamas) the tourist was presented with white British heritage and values, while African heritage was marginalised and silenced in the process of colonisation. Tourism perpetuates colonialism through the images shared and the narratives within travel brochures (Palmer, 1994). In the context of tourism promotion in Southern Brazil, the spiral of silence can help explain how Indigenous and Quilombola peoples' histories and cultural contributions may be silenced or erased, as settler colonial narratives are reinforced. By applying this theory, one can better understand how tourism marketing maintains hegemonic narratives that marginalise these communities, while also drawing on

similar uses of the theory in other contexts, especially in communication, as is the case in the promotion of tourism routes. Other researchers have applied the spiral of silence to analyse silencing in participatory decision-making spheres (Brear, 2020), the silencing of discontent during political crises (Bakhash et al., 2024), and the democratisation of digital communication (Hakobyan, 2020), where systemic oppression is perpetuated through silence and exclusion. This framework, therefore, is rooted in its broader application to understanding social marginalisation and narrative control. By using the spiral of silence as a theoretical framework for this paper, we attempt to show that the promotion of tourism routes in Southern Brazil still contributes to enhancing settler colonial narratives and hiding (or erasing) the presence of Indigenous and Quilombola communities.

1.3. Methodological approach

This research focuses on the discourses used to promote the 50 official tourist routes recognised and promoted by the regional governments of the three southern states of Brazil (Table 1 and Table 2). The choice of examining the entirety of official routes was made to provide a complete overview of what is promoted by the tourism industry. Bibliographic and documentary research provides a wide perspective on the historical context of Brazil's colonisation and place identity development. The historical context has contributed to the critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 2003) of the promotional material available on the websites associated with the routes. The data were collected in September 2023 and pertained to 14 routes in the state of Paraná, 13 routes in Santa Catarina, and 23 routes in Rio Grande do Sul.

This research uses transdisciplinary critical discourse analysis (CDA), wherein the focus is on language, order, and the dimensions of discourse. To Fairclough (2003), discourse embodies power hierarchies and context-specific meanings and coding the narrative helps only to identify the key elements and expressions. CDA goes further by focusing on the social problems, ideologies, and power relations represented by the narratives. This methodology helped us discover the colonial narratives present in the marketing and promotion material of tourism routes in Southern Brazil.

The coding process was based on both an **objective** and **subjective** analysis, aimed at identifying segments of the written discourse on the routes which **materially** or **behaviourally** represented colonialist narratives (Table 3). For the coding using CDA, we followed the analytic technique suggested by Yin (2018) and the CDA coding steps presented by Mullet (2018). Our coding process started with each author reviewing the official web pages related to the 50 tourist routes. We searched for patterns and commonalities within the material which directed us to aspects related to settler colonialism. According to Yin (2018, p. 175), "pattern-matching is one of the most desirable techniques" for qualitative research, as it allows for interpretative discretions by researchers. Moreover, as pointed out by Silverman (2020), CDA focuses on ideological effects of texts and is particularly centred on issues of power, gender, class and race. The following initial themes were found individually by the authors: dance, arts, architecture/building/construction, food/gastronomy, religiosity, language/dialect, traditional costume/clothing. Through the coding process, each author matched their themes with the reviewed literature to make sure they aligned with settler colonialism and tourism knowledge.

Table 1
Profile of the Brazilian Southern States (IBGE, 2022).

Rio Grande do Sul	Santa Catarina	Paraná
Population - 10.88 million	Population - 7.61 million	Population - 11.44 million
Quilombolas - 17.496	Quilombolas - 4.447	Quilombolas- 7.113
Indigenous population - 36.096	Indigenous population - 21.541	Indigenous population - 30.460

Table 2
Tourist Routes in the Southern States of Brazil (2023).

	States			
	Paraná	Santa Catarina	Rio Grande do Sul	
	Campos Gerais do Paraná (Grasslands of Paraná)	Geoparque Caminho dos Cânions do Sul (Geopark Path of the Southern Canyons)	Rota Caminho das Origens (Path of Origins Route)	Rota Campos de Cima da Serra (Campos de Cima da Serra Route)
	Caminho do Iguaçu (Iguaçu Path)	Rota da Baleia Franca (Southern Right Whale Route)	Rota Sabores e Saberes do Vale do Caí (Flavors and Knowledge Route of Caí Valley)	Rota Litoral Norte Gaúcho (North Gaucho Coastal Route)
	Rota Entre Matas, Morros e Rios (Route Among Forests, Hills, and Rivers)	Rota Encantos do Sul (Enchantments of the South Route)	Caminho dos Moinhos do Vale do Taquari (Path of the Mills of the Taquari Valley)	Rota Gemas e Jóias (Gems and Jewels Route)
	Lagos e Colinas (Lakes and Hills)	Rota do Vale Europeu (European Valley Route)	Roteiros Integrados da Quarta Colônia (Integrated Routes of the Fourth Colony)	Rota Vale dos Túneis e Viadutos (Valley of Tunnels and Viaducts Route)
Tourism Routes	Rota do Café (Coffee Route)	Acolhida na Colônia (Welcome in the Countryside)	Roteiro Internacional de Ecoturismo: Bichos e Cânions do Brasil (International Ecotourism Itinerary: Wildlife and Canyons of Brazil)	Caminho das Cascatas (Waterfall Path)
	Caminhos da Uva - Marialva (Grape Paths - Marialva)	Vales da Uva Goethe (Goethe Grape Valleys)	Roteiro Alemães do Sul (Southern Germans Routes)	Rota das Terras Encantada (Enchanted Lands Route)
	Rota das Lavandas (Lavender Route)	Caminho dos Príncipes (Path of the Princes)	Rota Uva e Vinho (Grape and Wine Route)	Rota do Yucumã (Yucumã Route)
	Rota do Queijo Paranaense (Paraná Cheese Route)	Caminhos do Alto Vale (High Valley Paths)	Roteiro Turístico Termas e Longevidade (Tourist Itinerary of Thermal Springs and Longevity)	Rota Romântica (Romantic Route)
	Roteiros Diversos do Turismo Rural no Paraná (Various Rural Tourism Routes in Paraná)	Caminhos do Contestado (Contestado Paths)	Vale dos Vinhedos (Vineyards Valley)	Caminho das Dunas e Lagoas (Dunes and Lagoons Path)
	Riquezas do Oeste (Riches of the West)	Vale dos Imigrantes (Immigrants Valley)	Roteiro Caminhos de Pedra (Stone Paths Route)	Caminhos de Caravaggio (Caravaggio's Paths)

(continued on next page)

Table 2 (*continued*)

	Rota do Pinhão (Brazilian pinion route) Terra dos Pinheirais (Land of Pine Groves) Vale do Ivaí (Ivaí Valley) Vales do Iguaçu (Iguaçu Valley)	Rota do Grande Oeste (Route of the Great West) Caminhos da Fronteira (Border Paths) Costa Verde Mar (Green Sea Coast)	Rota do Rio Uruguai (Uruguay River Route) Rota das Missões (Route of the Missions)	Rota dos Trigais (Wheat Route)

Table 3
List of categories and codes.

Categories	Codes		
Analyses	Objective	Subjective	
Nature Colonial narratives	Material European Culture and Traditions	Behavioural European Heritage and Architecture	Presence of Indigenous Peoples and Quilombolas (or lack of it)

After individually coding the pages, the four authors collectively agreed that the individual themes should be grouped into key areas of significant colonial narratives: (1) **European Culture and Traditions** and 2) **European Heritage and Architecture** (Fig. 1). Finally, we noticed the (lack of) narratives referring to (3) **Presence of Indigenous Peoples and Quilombola**. We observed that their voices, presence, culture, and traditions were not present on official tourism channels. Considering that the focus of this research is specifically on the silencing of these marginalised groups, we felt that the limited references about them were also important data we could reflect upon.

2. Results

2.1. European culture and traditions

The influence of immigration in Southern Brazil is evident in multiple forms – from the names of cities such as Garibaldi to the development of flagship events like the Oktoberfest of Blumenau. However, we observed a significant focus of settler colonial traditions and culture in the promotion of tourism routes. The use of positive adjectives to qualify the narrative is evident, for example, when the "Rota Sabores e Saberes do Vale do Caí" refer to the "picturesque use of German and Italian as the mother language of the communities". The customs of European settlers were also observed in many other promotional materials, such as the narrative from the Costa Verde Mar. On their web page, they explain how Porto Belo town "brings together the beauty of the beach, the preservation of Atlantic Forest, allied with the customs inherited from the Azorean colonisers and preserved over the years". Similarly, the Caminhos do Alto Vale claim that the "cities preserve the values and customs of European ancestors in terms of gastronomy, traditional celebrations, architecture and religious traditions".

The Rota Uva e Vinho explains to visitors that "culture is embedded in the life of the people [from the region], in the old [heritage] houses, in the Venetian dialect, in the religiosity, in the handicrafts and gastronomy". Furthermore, some of the routes celebrating the European settlers also focus on specific ethnic groups. This is the case of the Roteiro Alemães do Sul celebrating the "Sudetendeutsche": those from Sudetenland in Germany. The web page promotes the Germans from Sudeten and "their well-developed culture" and "aims to remember the challenges faced by Bohemians and the Sudeten Germans who came [to Brazil] from the Kingdom of Bohemia, and from the north of Czechia".

The celebration of European immigration in Brazil has been well documented in academic research (Waibel, 1950). The richness of publications spans from studies regarding the impact of colonisation on languages (Lee, 2014) to an analysis of the mtDNA of the indigenous population (Tavares et al., 2019). However, there are limited debates about the influence of settler colonialism in tourism and how the current narratives reinforce the erasure of Indigenous and their ownership of the land. The Roteiro Turístico Termas e Longevidade, for example, refers to the "cultural inheritance of the Italian and Polish immigration", while the Rota Vale Europeu points out the "glorious life of our ancestors" in a place where [you] could still find "the population communicating in German and Italian, giving the impression that you are in a different country". Further, Caminhos do Contestado refers to the fact Polish and Ukrainians "sowed their magnificent culture" in this land but makes no reference to the Indigenous people living in the area. As mentioned by Rota do Pinhão, when the question "How about travelling around the world within Paraná?" is posed, the aim seems to be to celebrate the European connections. Moreover, values, traditions, and customs are not the only elements used to attract the attention of tourists; other tangible elements, such as European festivals, gastronomy, and heritage, were also identified in our analysis.

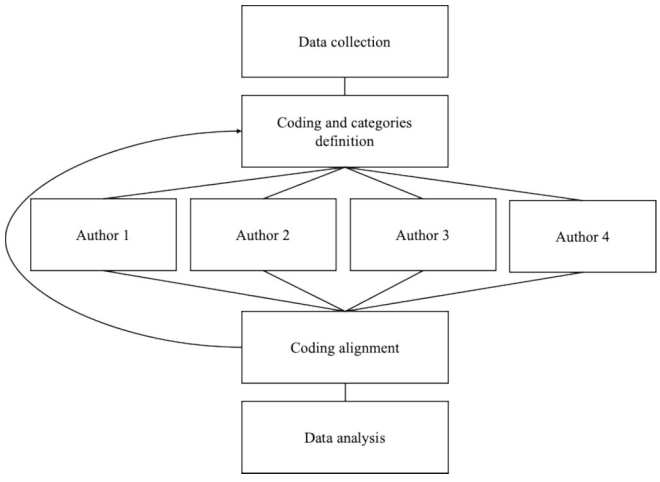

Fig. 1. Analysis and coding process (2023).

2.2. European heritage and architecture

Settlers arrived in the south of Brazil with their own traditional values and cultural traits and constructed their own heritage, implementing their own architectural styles and shaping food production systems based on their prior knowledge. Our analysis of the narratives used in the promotion of the tourism routes showed that these tangible elements are key in the construction of the image of the destination. The first of these tangible elements observed relates to food and drinks. The gastronomic influence has been evident in many routes such as the Rota do Yucumã, where, despite strong links to the Indigenous ancestry, the promotional material mentions the possibility to enjoy the "typical food of Italian immigrants" and "the heritage of the European colonisation". In routes such as the Vale dos Vinhedos and in the Rota Caminhos de Pedra, one can notice the use of Italian words to refer to restaurants, such as "trattoria" and "ristorante".

The Rota dos Queijos Paranaenses refers to the colonial cheese, a terminology also used by the Rota da Uva e do Vinho. The city of Antonio Prado, self-claimed as the most Italian city in Brazil (with a welcoming sign written in Italian), for example, produces a cheese labelled Colonial-Matured (Fig. 2). This municipality still preserves one

Fig. 2. Images from the Rota da Uva e Vinho.

of the largest collections of wooden houses in Brazil, which were abundant in the region during the immigration period, and its town centre is a protected heritage site (IPHAN, 2023). This relates to the second element observed: architectural designs.

Many are the routes with buildings and architectural designs related to settler colonisers. Our data revealed that the Caminhos de Pedra route, for example, portrays the stone-built houses as representing the lives of Italian immigrants. In the Caminho dos Moinhos do Vale do Taquari, a special mention is made to buildings representing the "Italianness" of the route. Moreover, the narrative on the website supports the positive colonial image describing it as "the admirable […] Italian immigration of the last century". Another example is the Rota Romantica that refers to "the flourished gardens and Germanic culture" in the towns along its route. Similar is the case of the Rota do Pinhão, an area settled by Polish and Ukrainians and where two of the key attractions are the Polish Portal in the town of Araucária and the Ukrainian Church in São José dos Pinhais. This route shares a similar colonial background with the Terra dos Pinheirais route, which bases its uniqueness on the fact that "it was here where people from many parts of the world – Ukrainians, Poles, Italians, Germans, Portuguese, Slavs, Russians, and Brazilians – came to build […] a 'state of consciousness'".

The above examples refer to some tangible aspects of European heritage, including architecture and gastronomy. However, a final element we observed relates to events and festivals. The Kartoffelfest is "an event with lots of activities and colonial products such as the traditional potato cake", promoted as part of the Rota Romântica and accentuating the region's links to Germanic culture. Further, the town of Progresso, part of the Rota Vale dos Túneis e Viadutos, celebrates the "Notte Italiana" with "typical food, wine, music, and gringaiada" – a word used to refer to foreigners. Wine is a key element in the identity of Italian settlers, and in the Vale dos Vinhedos, they celebrate the Fenavinho [Wine Festival] that according to the website "offers several attractions: concerts, tasting courses, colonial games, lots of fun, and of course, gastronomy, wines and juices".

While such celebrations of colonial heritage are evident in the south of Brazil, the same cannot be said regarding the Indigenous heritage and culture, despite – according to the 2022 Brazilian Census (IBGE, 2022) – there being 88,097 Indigenous people spread across the three states. These people represent 5.20 % of the total Indigenous population of the country, while the region holds around 14 % of the full population of Brazil.

2.3. Presence (or Lack) of Indigenous and Quilombola narratives

The presence of Indigenous groups in Southern Brazil is still significant. However, most of the tourist routes in this geographic area do not emphasise their presence and their cultural activities. In our analysis, we found only two specific cases where indigenous communities are mentioned. The Rota do Yucumã, (a Tupi-Guarani word referring to the noise made by the waterfalls) where one can find the Salto do Yucumã (Yucumã waterfalls), the largest longitudinal waterfall in the world extending for over 1800 m. The web page promoting this route acknowledges the following: "The region stands out for its exuberant nature, marked in a special way by important fragments of the Atlantic Forest Biome, which are preserved, as is the case of the Parque Estadual do Turvo, the largest Conservation Unit in Rio Grande do Sul with 17,500 hectares, of the Guarita Indigenous Land, the largest indigenous reserve in the state with 23,000 hectares, and the Inhacorá Indigenous Land". However, it also refers to foods that have been influenced by immigrants and the 'cafe colonial' (the colonial coffee), while the Indigenous cuisine and heritage are not mentioned.

The second example is the Rota Entre Matas, Morros e Rios. In this route, cultural tourism in partnership with local Indigenous communities is actively promoted: "when it comes to culture, visiting villages and learning about indigenous customs is undoubtedly an incredible experience". The Caminho da Terra Sem Males – Yvy Maraê'y, in the city of Turvo, and the Ivaí indigenous reserve, in the municipality of Manoel Ribas – are two excellent options for cultural tours in the region. It is worth exploring and experiencing the customs of the tribes here. The website is full of images of Indigenous communities; nevertheless, the culinary section refers to the European colonial heritage: "German, Italian, Ukrainian cuisine, ground-fired ribs, grits-based dishes. These are some of the delights that tourists can find during their tour of the region. Tasty dishes to satisfy every palate".

These contradictions in the promotion of destinations where settler colonialism was so significant is not surprising. However, it is surprising that in the Rota Caminho das Origens, where the presence of Jesuit missions and their catechising activities were so significant (Seixas & Marzulo, 2020), there is no reference to the Indigenous groups that resisted. In this area there is still a relevant presence of Indigenous groups such as the Mbya-Guarani. This example is similar to the Rota Encantos do Sul that passes through the Kaigang territory without any appropriate acknowledgment. These are just two examples of tourist routes crossing Indigenous protected areas without providing any significant recognition. This evidence the 'silencing' of non-European culture, presence, and participation in tourism activities.

A key point to consider here is that Indigenous cultures are not the only ones to be significantly neglected by the tourism narratives in Southern Brazil. The presence of descendants of African slaves too was significant in this part of the country, and according to the Brazilian 2010 census (IBGE, 2010), the state of Rio Grande do Sul had the second-largest group of followers of African religions. However, this group is

mostly ignored, and the only example we found of such cultural elements was at the Caminho das Dunas e Lagoas, where one of the key attractions is a religious temple dedicated to Iemanjá (the goddess of seas in the Candomblé religion).

3. Discussion

Through this research, we aimed to demonstrate how tourism has contributed to the fourth phase of historical and cultural erasure in Brazil. In aligning politically, socially, and economically with the Global North, Brazil developed narratives that valued European views while silencing marginalised groups such as Quilombolas and Indigenous people. This work has thus far shown how tourism narratives in Southern Brazil are aligned with symbols and dominant discourses of the settling colonisers.

Our analysis reveals the significance of European narratives in the promotion of tourism in Southern Brazil. These narratives have contributed to ostracising and silencing the culture and presence of non-Europeans, including Indigenous and Quilombola groups. The traditions, the heritage, and even the land ownership of non-European communities were mostly absent in our data, including in tourism routes such as the Rota das Missões and the Rota Caminho das Origens, where Indigenous or Quilombola communities are still present today. Other examples include the unmentioned Quilombo Zambia in the town of Terra da Areia, which is part of the Rota do Litoral Norte Gaúcho, and the Quilombo Flor da Serra that is part of the Rota das Terras Encantadas. This reflects a systematic attempt to silence minorities' spiralling until their significance is erased.

The spiral of silence is a theory from communication studies (Noelle-Neumann, 1974) which is based on the premise that individuals fear becoming socially isolated and, therefore, they constantly monitor their opinion environment. Consequently, opinions held by the (perceived) majority are more likely to be expressed publicly. In a spiralling process, over time, the dominant views are perpetuated, while minority views are silenced. Similarly, in the process of tourism promotion and communication of routes in Southern Brazil, dominant colonial narratives are presented, reinforced, and valued, while the minority narratives of marginalised communities are silenced by its lack of representation. In thus silencing these marginalised communities, the tourism narratives align with the idea of an *authorised heritage discourse*, which as a hegemonic discourse "validates a set of practices and performances, which populates both popular and expert constructions of 'heritage' and undermines alternative and subaltern ideas about 'heritage'" (Smith, 2006, p. 11).

Here, we are dealing with the authorised discourse of tourism, a practice that determines the dominant narrative based on a dominant historical perspective. Thus, officially organised tourism routes are perpetuating the cancel culture and continuing the spiral of silence. However, we believe it would also be problematic if the tourism narratives developed were just commodified representations, as debated by Holman (2011) regarding the appropriation of the ayahuasca ceremony and its implications for the local peoples of the Peruvian Amazon. Holman (2011) demonstrated how a spiritual Indigenous practice has been commodified to become a Westernised tourism product, highlighting the damages that could be caused to marginalised communities and their identification with their own cultural and religious activities.

The conundrum is that while we have identified that minorities are not being represented in the promotion of tourism routes in the south of Brazil, other studies in different contexts have pointed out the potential of tourism in developing stereotypical and commodified representations of minorities (Kelly-Holmes & Pietikäinen, 2014; Yang & Wall, 2009). The problem here is aligned with capitalist forces behind the touristification of places, the Westernised tourist gaze, and the associated consumption behaviours (Higgins-Desbiolles et al., 2019). It raises questions regarding the possible ways tourism can structurally include and be representative of minorities without allowing postcolonial power structures to use their images for the oppressive practices of commodification.

Some evidence has positioned the participatory practices of regenerative tourism as an option to fight such oppressive behaviour (Bellato et al., 2023), while others have presented cases focusing on the decolonisation of tourism as a tool for development (Higgins-Desbiolles et al., 2022). These are possibilities that could and should be embedded in the debates regarding the development of tourist routes in Southern Brazil. The practical implications of this research regard both the review and promotion of the current tourist routes as well as the development of new routes and tourist products. Policy makers and tourism sector should recognise the presence of marginalised communities and their importance. We ask for to the voices of Indigenous people and Quilombolas to be present and for breaking the spiral of silence that helps to marginalise them. Thus, research aiming to critically challenge tourism as an agent reinforcing settler colonial narratives can benefit from using the spiral of silence as part of its theoretical framework and critical lenses.

4. Conclusions

Using the Critical Discourse Analysis of Fairclough (2003), we have explored in this paper how the promotion of tourism routes in Southern Brazil is contributing to the perpetuation of colonial narratives. We observed that settler colonialism narratives are used in the promotion of routes valuing European traditions, culture, heritage, gastronomy, and architecture. At the same time, the promotion of these tourism routes excludes and ignores the presence of both Indigenous and Quilombola groups. Contrary to the assertions of McKercher and Prideaux (2014), we observed that tourism in Southern Brazil is indeed perpetuating colonialism and reinforcing the processes of marginalisation of minority groups. We believe this is a major contribution of this work to the tourism literature. Different from other parts of the country, such as the northern region, where Indigenous tourism is a key part of the economic and strategic development, Southern Brazil witnesses a process of cancelation of their culture and a silencing of their voices. Yet, future studies can also investigate the tourism development in the northern region of Brazil to see if the concepts of indigeneity and Indigenous culture have been commodified for the benefit of the Western tourist gaze.

Much is still to be unpacked regarding the relationship between settler colonialism and tourism in Brazil, and future researchers should examine whether the narratives used by the tourism industry and marketeers are related to the traditional, conservative political views of the region. More work could also be done to understand the perceptions and awareness of marginalised groups in routes and destinations in the southern region of Brazil regarding their participation in tourism development. Finally, it is important to reinforce the contributions of this research. First, this paper adds to the limited literature discussing the relationships between settler colonialism and tourism, specifically in Brazil. Second, this paper contributes to debates in tourism using the spiral of silence theory and emphasising the authorised discourse of tourism calling for actions regarding the systemic marginalisation of Indigenous and Quilombola groups in tourism promotion. Lastly, this paper adds to the representation of voices from the Global South, allowing stories, cases, issues, debates, and research generated in South America to be heard by the international community. However, the relationship between tourism and (neo and settler) colonialism is still developing and is mostly focused on countries in the Global North (Everingham et al., 2021; Grimwood, Stinson, & King, 2019; Walter, 2023). We invite researchers to further explore these issues in countries of the Global South and how the Western tourist gaze has been impacting Indigenous and other marginalised communities.

CRediT authorship contribution statement

Sandro Carnicelli: Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Supervision, Investigation, Conceptualization. **Sarah Marroni Minasi:** Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Methodology, Investigation, Conceptualization. **Vander Valduga:** Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Visualization, Investigation, Conceptualization. **Alessandro Manzoni:** Resources, Investigation.

Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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