

AFRO-LATINX STUDIES

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Equity and Community Engagement Track

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Guiding Question

During my independent study, I researched whether or not Pan-Africanism could be actualized. Pan-Africanism is a socio-economic movement created by Marcus Garvey in the 1920's. The guiding principle is people of African descent have common interests and should be unified under a common goal.

RESEARCH

I viewed global systemic racism from a white supremacy perspective. During colonization, Europeans embedded their ideologies into colonial governments, creating systems of oppression. While many regions define ethnicity and race differently, it is common to see whiteness privileged and legally protected.

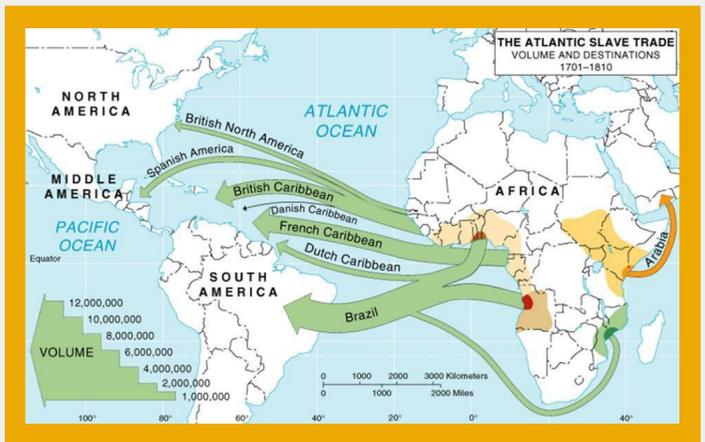


FIGURE 1: Volume Slave in the Transatlantic Slave Trade

With that in mind, I researched three geographically diverse regions in Latin America with large populations of Black citizens. (Brazil, countries in the Caribbean, and Mexico)

I wanted to understand how these regions/countries were racialized by comparing historical primary sources to contemporary issues. To see whether or not there is a common identity between Black people.

PROCEDURE

While I was researching Brazil, I read about the importance of the lore of Chica de Saliva. Then more in-depth research on the relevance of the story to the context of race within that society. In all three cases, the historical context that I was researching took place during slavery or within 25 years of emancipation. Then I considered similarities to current racial problems within the regions. I was interested in how systems of oppression had changed and stayed the same. I applied this methodology to each region.

I used a plethora of different media to evaluate race in the different regions, including the dissertation, [Skin Bleaching In Jamaica: A Colonial Legacy](#), by Petra Alaine Robinson to understand how current beauty standards affect minority psychology. Through engaging with emerging historical research and primary resources it became apparent how insidious and far-stretching racialization had affected the African Diaspora.

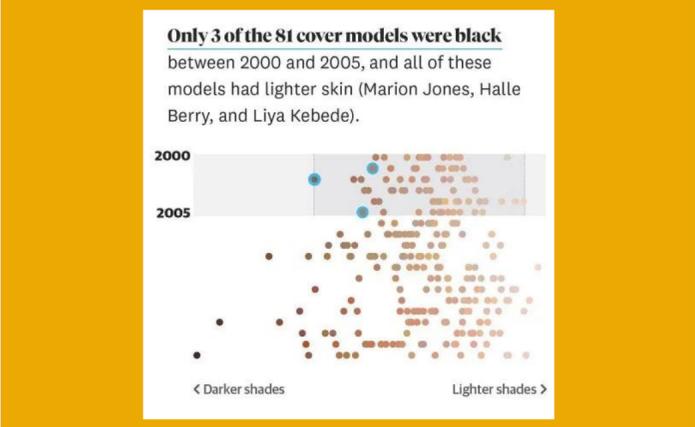


FIGURE 2: How beauty standards are disseminated

ANALYSIS

I found that race and systems of discrimination are much more complicated than I first imagined. Before this independent study I had only conceptualized race from a British colonization model.

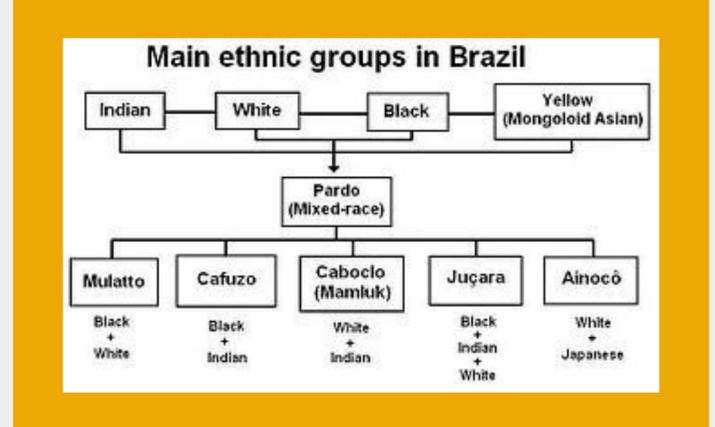


FIGURE 3: Depiction of the meaning of Pardo

In Brazil there was historically a larger emphasis on miscegenation which can be seen in the lore Chica de Saliva. Both the Portuguese and Spanish thought it was acceptable to have interracial marriages and sexual relationships. Historically race was dependant on physical appearance instead of being based ancestral bloodlines. Any citizen not falling fully into one racial category was considered "mixed" or pardo which became its own racial designation. Currently in Brazil hypergamy is used to achieve racial whitening. This has created a [major nationwide identity crisis](#).

In the Caribbean, racialization was dependent on the nationality of the colonizer. If an island was colonized by the British, race was is based ancestral lines like in the USA while the Spanish followed the Brazilian model. Currently many Caribbean countries are struggling with neo-colonization in the form of dangerous skin bleaching habits based on deeply ingrained beauty standards where whiteness is valued and preferred..

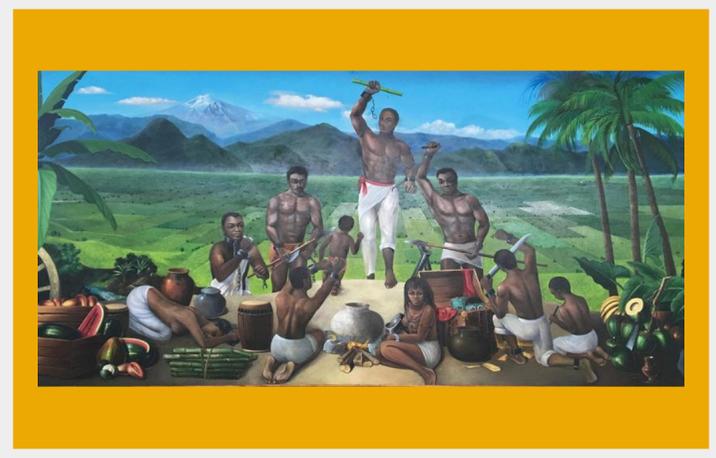


FIGURE 4: Painting of Gaspar Yunga at Museo Regional de Palmillas

In Mexico, I started by looking at the story of San Lorenzo de los Negros which refers to the first free Black city in the Americas based on Spanish recognition of sovereignty. This city today is called Yanga with the historically black population living in poverty and shanty towns. This speaks to the broader problem in Mexico, the government does not recognize or protect different racial groups.

RESULTS/CONCLUSION

Pan-Africanism is likely something that can not be realized. There are a drastic differences in how race is viewed from region to region. Due to colonialism Black people do not have a common identity which group unity more difficult. What is common however are ideas of white supremacy that permeate throughout Latin America. I understand that my research is just the tip of an iceberg that I would like to explore more fully.