IJPP

ISSN: 2239-267X

Colonial Legacies in Urban Landscapes: A Comparative Analysis of Santo Domingo and Oaxaca

Luis Barraza Cardenas
Assistant Professor, Faculty of Engineering, Panamerican University
labarraza@up.edu.mx

KEYWORDS: heritage, segregation, urban structure, spatial justice, urban studies.

ABSTRACT

This study explores how colonial planning paradigms continue to shape the built environment and spatial hierarchies in Latin American heritage cities and examines what spatial strategies have emerged to disrupt or resignify these inherited forms. Through a comparative analysis of Santo Domingo and Oaxaca—two cities marked by distinct yet interconnected colonial trajectories—the research explores how urban planning, religious architecture, and spatial governance functioned historically as instruments of control. Drawing on visual ethnography, spatial analysis, and critical urban theory, the study reveals how colonial urban logics persist in contemporary issues such as heritage-led gentrification, infrastructural inequality, and symbolic dispossession. While Santo Domingo exemplifies a fortified, centralized model of imperial power, Oaxaca demonstrates a more permeable and negotiated urban form shaped by mestizaje and indigenous resilience. Yet both cities remain structured by exclusionary spatial regimes. The findings underscore the need for a decolonial urban approach—one that interrogates colonial continuities, reclaims urban memory, and prioritizes spatial justice and community agency in the reshaping of Latin American cities.

1. INTRODUCTION

Across different latitudes, the colonial cities of Latin America stand as spectral testaments to an intricate legacy of cultural syncretism and accelerated urban transformation—one that extends far beyond the temporal confines of what is conventionally demarcated as the 'colonial era' (Horvath, 1972). Santo Domingo, the earliest formal Spanish settlement in the Americas, epitomizes this intricate heritage, offering a confluence of urban influences situated at the very heart of *Hispaniola* (Núñez Collado, 2019). Oaxaca, located in the highlands of southern Mexico, mirrors this complexity, characterized by its structured grid of vibrant streets and distinctive Mexican baroque architecture (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2024), embodying the persistent tensions of *mestizaje*[1] and indigenous identity within enduring colonial structures.

Architectural landmarks, particularly religious edifices, frequently celebrated for their aesthetic value, served historically as powerful instruments of ideological subjugation, systematically silencing indigenous spatial practices and epistemologies (De Burca, 2023). Urban environments in Latin America were intentionally designed as mechanisms of colonial power, with planning and architecture strategically wielded with precision to entrench colonial hegemony through social and spatial control—an instrumentalization that demands rigorous and sustained scrutiny (Korody, 2017).

Furthermore, the picturesque façades and heritage attractions that render both cities' objects of cultural fetishization for global tourism often obscure the underlying narratives of spatial segregation, as seen in Figs. 1 and 2. The built environment remains a contested terrain, where access to quality of life, mobility, and socio-economic prosperity is still insidiously tethered to colonial spatial hierarchies—engrained within architectural typologies, construction methodologies, and urban configurations. Thus, these cities constitute enduring battlegrounds, where the negotiation between colonizer and colonized continues to manifest in the form of entrenched social inequalities, more than two centuries after their nominal independence (Ryan, 1999).

Despite the abundance of literature on colonial heritage and architectural preservation, there remains a significant gap in understanding how these spatial legacies continue to produce socio-spatial inequalities in contemporary urban life—particularly in cities that lie outside the traditional focal points of urban colonial scholarship. By placing

[1] Mestizaje refers to the process of racial, cultural, and social mixing—primarily between Indigenous peoples and Europeans—initiated during the colonial period in Latin America. While often framed as a narrative of national identity and cultural fusion, it also masks underlying histories of violence, assimilation, and structural inequality (Segato, 2007).

Santo Domingo and Oaxaca in comparative dialogue, this study seeks to challenge the idea of heritage as neutral, asking: How do colonial planning paradigms continue to shape the built environment and spatial hierarchies in Latin American heritage cities, and what spatial strategies have emerged to disrupt or resignify these inherited forms? As UNESCO World Heritage Sites, both Santo Domingo and Oaxaca offer fertile terrain for interrogating the lingering presence of colonial power within contemporary urban dilemmas—revealed not only in built form, but in spatial practices and governance structures. Framed through the lens of counter-discursive politics (Branche, 2008), this study explores the relationship between space and power, seeking to illuminate how resilience and resistance continue to echo through the architectural and spatial scars of postcolonial Latin American cities (Stern, 1996).

Preliminary findings from this comparative analysis suggest that colonial planning paradigms remain materially and ideologically embedded in the urban fabric of both cities—manifested in rigid civic-religious axes, fortified spatial layouts, and exclusionary zoning logics. In Santo Domingo, these paradigms persist through the *monumentalization* of colonial architecture and the socio-spatial fragmentation between the historic core and peripheral neighborhoods. In Oaxaca, despite a more permeable and hybridized grid, colonial legacies endure in the form of heritage-led gentrification and spatial inequalities shaped by centuries of *mestizaje* and extractive economies. However, both cities also reveal layered forms of spatial reappropriation: from the integration of indigenous materialities and artisanal techniques in Oaxaca to the recent pedestrianization and adaptive reuse of historical streetscapes in Santo Domingo. These strategies, while uneven, demonstrate the potential of decolonial urban practices to reinterpret inherited spatial forms and challenge the epistemologies embedded in the colonial city.

To unpack these dynamics, the article is structured in seven sections. Section 2 outlines the methodological approach, emphasizing comparative urban analysis and spatial ethnography. Section 3 traces the colonial planning paradigms that shaped both cities, while Section 4 examines how these legacies materialize in the contemporary built environment. Section 5 explores recent pedestrianization and public space interventions, identifying both convergences and tensions. Section 6 interrogates governance, participation, and the politics of heritage-led urban renewal. Finally, Section 7 offers concluding reflections on the implications of this research for decolonial urbanism and future interventions in historic cities.

Figure 1. Typical *Centro Histórico* Façade, Oaxaca

Source: Authors' Elaboration with field data (2024).

Figure 2. Typical *Zona Colonial* Façade, Santo Domingo

Source: Authors' Elaboration with field data (2024).

2. TERRITORIALIZING POWER: COLONIAL SPATIAL LOGICS AND THE MATERIALITY OF URBAN INEQUALITY

Before undertaking a comparative analysis of Santo Domingo and Oaxaca, it is necessary to construct a robust territorial framework that situates both cities within broader imperial strategies and spatial ideologies. The emergence of colonial cities in Latin America was not incidental, but rather a meticulously planned outcome of Spanish imperial expansion. Cities were established as territorial anchors of conquest—nodes in a transatlantic network of extraction, conversion, and control. This section analyzes the geopolitical, ecological, and social foundations of each city's colonial formation, identifying key patterns of spatial control, economic extraction, and infrastructural design. To complement this narrative, a series of historical and contemporary maps will illustrate the urban grids, civic-religious axes, and power dynamics embedded in each city's morphology. These visual materials are intended to trace how colonial ideologies were territorialized across different landscapes and to prepare the analytical groundwork for the comparative case studies that follow.

As urban laboratories of empire, these cities emerged from distinct geopolitical agendas and territorial logics that informed their development. Santo Domingo, founded in 1498, was conceived as a fortified administrative capital for the Caribbean, strategically positioned on the Ozama River and guided by the Laws of the Indies. Oaxaca, incorporated into the Viceroyalty of New Spain in the early 16th century, evolved within a more complex terrain of indigenous civilizations, including the Zapotec and Mixtec, and its urban form reflects both imposition and negotiation.

These divergent urban forms and territorial strategies, however, share a common thread: the materiality of colonization as a structuring force within the Latin American city. Latin America bears the indelible imprint of colonization—etched into its landscapes, institutions, and collective memory. This legacy is visibly inscribed in the spatial order of our cities, where colonial power shaped not just architecture, but the very logic of urban life (Duer & Vegliò, 2019). Even the act of walking through their streets—following the rigid colonial grid or navigating spaces where indigenous settlements were erased—reveals the depth of this imprint (Lopez-Cantero & Robb, 2023). Urban landscapes function as silent witnesses to these histories, where inequalities remain woven into the fabric of daily life through segregation, displacement, and spatial hierarchies that persist long after independence.

Although the colonial experience across Latin America is neither uniform nor monolithic, certain power structures and spatial injustices remain consistent—both in

the psyche of its people (Gruzinski, 2002) and in the socio-spatial configurations of its cities (Kossok, 1973). Urban planning across the region has historically upheld exclusionary systems, reinforcing racist, classist, sexist, and ableist biases (Belkhir & Adeola, 1997). These imbalances are not incidental, but structural, rooted in a colonial logic that persists through zoning laws, gentrification, and the erasure of indigenous spatial practices (Alderton et al., 2020; Manne, 2019).

To fully grasp these dynamics, we must view the city as more than a collection of buildings and streets—rather, as an active repository of power relations (Kern, 2021). Urban grids, religious monuments, and governmental plazas are not merely architectural choices but ideological assertions, reinforcing hierarchies that were originally designed to control and exclude (Fig. 3 and 4). From the strategic placement of administrative centers to the disproportionate allocation of green spaces and public infrastructure, colonization is embedded in the very organization of space (Scott et al., 2020). Its influence extends beyond history books, shaping movement, accessibility, and ownership in contemporary urban life.

Figure 3. Frontal belltower *Cathedral of Santa María la Menor*, Santo Domingo.

Source: Authors' Elaboration with field data (2024).

Figure 4. North belltower and portal of *Catedral Metropolitana de Oaxaca*, Oaxaca

Source: Authors' Elaboration with field data (2024).

The territorial logics are clearly visualized in the historical cartography of Oaxaca from the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The 1790, 1795, and 1803 maps of the city all depict a tightly regulated orthogonal grid, centered around the Plaza Mayor and systematically aligned with the prescriptive norms of the Laws of the Indies. Yet within this imposed regularity, one observes subtle negotiations of indigenous spatiality—orchards, communal lands, and non-hierarchical pathways at the city's periphery hint at contested borders between Spanish urbanism and native territorial practices. Moreover, the maps reveal the centrality of ecclesiastical structures in organizing civic life, with convents, cathedrals, and missions evenly distributed across the urban grid to reinforce Catholic presence and oversight. The 1795 map, with its color-coded sectional divisions, illustrates the bureaucratic rationalization of space, suggesting emerging patterns of segregation tied to race, class, and religious function. Together, these visual documents not only confirm the intentional spatialization of colonial control but also reveal zones of fluidity, resistance, and appropriation, especially in Oaxaca's agricultural and indigenous margins.

Figure 5. Map of the City of Oaxaca 1803

Source: Mapoteca Manuel Orozco y Berra (2024).

The maps of Santo Domingo from the 18th through 20th centuries provide a striking contrast to Oaxaca's negotiated colonialism. The early cartographic plans—particularly the *Plan Général de l'Enceinte* and the urban plans of 1805—depict a city constructed as a fortified outpost of empire. Encased by thick walls and bastions, Santo Domingo's urban form was explicitly designed to repel external threats and discipline internal populations. The rigid orthogonal grid, confined within these defensive structures, reflects the imposition of a spatial logic centered on visibility, surveillance, and exclusion. The city's orientation toward the Ozama River and the Caribbean Sea reinforces its maritime function within the transatlantic colonial economy, with the port, customs house, and battery occupying prime urban nodes. In contrast to Oaxaca's permeable edge conditions, Santo Domingo was built as a spatial citadel—its boundaries demarcating the limits of colonial order. Even the mid-20th-century expansion maps show a persistent spatial stratification, where the historic core remains symbolically and economically dominant, while peripheral zones emerge with irregular layouts and diminished access to services. These cartographic layers reveal how colonial spatial ideologies were both materially inscribed and institutionally prolonged, shaping contemporary Santo Domingo as a city where colonial power is not only remembered, but operationalized.

Figure 6. Map of the fortified city of Santo Domingo 1805.

Source: Diario Libre (2011).

Thus, architecture and urban planning do not exist in a vacuum—they continue to structure inequality. The colonial city, rather than being a passive relic of the past, remains an active mechanism of control, reinforcing socio-spatial disparities through exclusionary policies and aesthetic hierarchies (Shah & Kesan, 2007; Valentine, 1989). Recognizing these historical imbalances is a necessary step toward reimagining how we inhabit, reclaim, and transform these urban spaces. Latin American cities must confront the structures that perpetuate colonialism in the present, asking what a truly decolonized urban future could look like—and whose voices must shape it.

3. A MULTIFACETED METHODOLOGY FOR EXPLORING THE URBAN FABRIC

This study employs a rigorously structured, multidisciplinary methodology to investigate the enduring colonial legacies embedded within the urban landscapes of Oaxaca, Mexico, and Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. A comparative case study approach serves as the foundation of this research, enabling a nuanced, cross-contextual analysis of urban forms, architectural narratives, and spatial hierarchies shaped by Spanish colonization (Yin, 2018; Stake, 1995). The selection of these cities arises from their exceptional historical significance as UNESCO Sites, as well as their distinct yet interconnected colonial trajectories, which provide a rich comparative lens to examine both the material and ideological dimensions of colonial urbanism (Palmer, 2020; Robinson, 2006). By juxtaposing these two urban contexts, the study reveals both commonalities and divergences in colonial spatial practices, offering critical

insights into how colonial power structures remain inscribed in contemporary Latin American cities.

A visual ethnographic and spatial analysis of the built environment constitutes the core methodological strategy, foregrounding embodied fieldwork and direct engagement with urban space. The researcher conducts systematic city walks through Oaxaca and Santo Domingo, engaging with the urban fabric at multiple scales—from monumental architecture to quotidian spatial practices (Pink, 2013; Rose, 2016). Photographic documentation, cartographic mapping, and spatial observations capture the material manifestations of colonial legacies, emphasizing architectural forms, spatial organization, and infrastructural hierarchies that continue to shape urban life. This immersive approach aligns with phenomenological methodologies, which prioritize first-hand experience of space as a means to uncover power dynamics embedded in the built environment (Ingold, 2000; Tilley, 2004). By integrating visual and spatial data with qualitative insights, the study enriches its critical analysis of how colonialism continues to structure access, visibility, and exclusion within these urban landscapes.

The study also explicitly acknowledges the researcher's positionality, recognizing that all knowledge production is inherently situated within specific social, cultural, and historical contexts (Harding, 1992; Collins, 1986). This reflexive approach aligns with standpoint theory, which emphasizes how the researcher's positionality—shaped by geopolitical, ethnic, and disciplinary backgrounds—affects the interpretation of colonial urban legacies (Haraway, 1988). By critically interrogating the power relations inherent in both the cities being studied and the act of studying them, this research resists epistemic colonialism and contributes to a decolonial research praxis (Mignolo, 2011).

Ultimately, this holistic and deeply contextualized methodology positions the research within the intersections of spatial justice, colonial critique, and contemporary urban struggles. Through comparative analysis, immersive ethnographic fieldwork, and critical self-reflection, the study illuminates the ways colonialism remains materially and ideologically entrenched in Latin American cities—while also interrogating the possibilities for spatial decolonization and reclaiming urban futures.

4. TRACING COLONIAL LEGACIES IN SANTO DOMINGO AND OAXACA

Spatial Memory and Colonial Imprints

Santo Domingo, as the first Spanish colony in the Americas, stands as the prototype of colonial urbanism in the Caribbean. The city's grid, established under the Laws of the Indies, was not merely a spatial arrangement but an instrument of imperial control—imposing order, hierarchy, and visibility upon the newly conquered territory

(UNESCO, 2023). Its cobbled streets, fortified walls, and ecclesiastical structures bear the layered scars of conquest, indigenous resistance, and centuries of power negotiation. This UNESCO World Heritage Site embodies both the tangible and intangible dimensions of colonial domination, where urban morphology reinforces the enduring legacy of spatial segregation (Lowenthal, 1967).

Beyond its geographic significance, Santo Domingo functioned as a spatial model for Spanish colonial expansion throughout the West Indies. It established the template for urban control in the Americas, serving as both an administrative and ideological stronghold (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2019). The regularized street grid and centralized plazas reflect the Spanish intent to imprint their authority onto the landscape, converting the built environment into a mechanism of surveillance and social stratification (Low, 1995). Today, these quaint pedestrian corridors, which now invite tourists, once dictated the movement and containment of colonized bodies—rigid urban geometries reinforcing societal hierarchies that persist in more contemporary forms of spatial inequality.

Importantly, the city's early prosperity, rooted in gold extraction and transatlantic trade, directly informed the material and symbolic production of space. Its rise as the administrative capital of Spanish America was soon followed by economic decline, as imperial attention shifted to Mexico and Peru (Ponce Vázquez, 2020). In response, Santo Domingo transitioned toward plantation-based agriculture centered on sugar and tobacco—an economy predicated on enslaved labor and racialized segregation (Betances, 1983). These economic shifts left an enduring imprint on urban form: spatial inequality was reinforced as wealth concentrated in the historic core, while marginalized communities were relegated to peripheral urban fringes.

Across the Caribbean Sea, Oaxaca's colonial trajectory unfolds with striking similarities yet fundamental distinctions. As a key city within the Viceroyalty of Nueva España, Oaxaca developed within a framework of imposed urban order, yet its built environment also reflects the profound resilience of indigenous spatial practices (UNESCO, 2024). Unlike Santo Domingo, which emerged as an early colonial capital, Oaxaca evolved within a more complex landscape of negotiated *mestizaje*, where Spanish urban planning fused—often forcefully—with pre-Hispanic territorial logics (Cervantes, 1995). The city's 100-yard block grid, designed around a central plaza, followed the orthogonal prescriptions of the Spanish Crown, yet within this imposed framework, indigenous cultural and architectural expressions persisted, modifying the city's colonial rigidity in ways unseen in its Caribbean counterpart (Ettinger-McEnulty, 2005).

Economic geography played a decisive role in shaping Oaxaca's distinct spatial form. Unlike Santo Domingo's imperial dependency, Oaxaca prospered through regional economic networks and artisanal production. In particular, the cultivation of grana

cochinilla—a vibrant natural dye highly prized in European markets—fueled urban growth and material refinement during the 18th century (Murphy & Stepick, 1991). Similarly, the extraction and use of cantera verde, a local volcanic stone, enabled the construction of ornate religious and civic structures, embedding indigenous labor and aesthetics into the very materiality of the city. This local economic resilience fostered a more permeable and adaptive urban fabric, though one still marked by inequality. Colonial elites accumulated wealth and spatial privilege, while Indigenous laborers remained embedded within extractive hierarchies that spatialized their marginalization.

Both cities, while conceived under the same imperial doctrine, represent distinct modes of colonial spatial inscription: Santo Domingo as a fortress-port asserting imperial control over the Caribbean, and Oaxaca as a highland city embedded in a matrix of indigenous *mestizaje*. This contrast reveals two trajectories of colonialism—one defined by military assertion over coastal frontiers, the other by cultural hegemony negotiated through land, labor, and religious conversion.

Urban Form as a Marker of Power

Santo Domingo's fortified urbanism speaks to its role as a military and administrative outpost, where the built environment was explicitly engineered to uphold colonial dominance. Thick-walled stone structures, bastions, and the rigid organization of the *Ciudad Colonial* were designed not only for defense but for enforcing segregation—separating Spanish elites from indigenous, African, and mixed-race populations (Lowenthal, 1967). This urban form spatialized colonial anxieties—territorializing power through a built environment that physically embodied racial, social, and economic divisions. Even in the post-colonial era, these spatial imbalances persist, as the preservation of the historic core for tourism often masks the socio-economic inequalities entrenched within the city's urban landscape.

Oaxaca, by contrast, reveals a more hybridized colonial urbanism, where the indigenous presence never fully receded beneath Spanish imposition. While its centralized plaza and Spanish civic-religious axis adhere to colonial planning doctrine, the city's material culture—its use of *cantera* stone (Fig. 7), the persistence of indigenous artisanal techniques, and the spatial organization of domestic courtyards—reflect a layered negotiation of power. Unlike Santo Domingo's fortifications, Oaxaca's openness and permeability suggest a more fluid colonial encounter, where indigenous spatialities coexisted within imposed Spanish urban templates. However, this syncretism was not an egalitarian fusion but a forced reconciliation of systems, in which indigenous agency operated within strict colonial constraints (Hidalgo & López, 2012).

Figure 7. Building corner and balconies, C. Macedonio Alcalá, Oaxaca

Source: Authors' Elaboration with field data (2024).

Towards a Decolonial Spatial Reading

Unpacking these urban landscapes through a decolonial lens demands more than historical recognition—it requires an active interrogation of how colonialism continues to structure the present. The legacy of colonial spatial organization—segregated neighborhoods, uneven infrastructure distribution, and the commodification of heritage—manifests in contemporary urban struggles (see Fig. 8). As cities like Oaxaca and Santo Domingo navigate the 21st century, questions arise about who gets to occupy and benefit from these historic spaces. Is heritage preservation a mode of cultural memory or an instrument of gentrification? Do these urban forms serve the descendants of the colonized, or are they repackaged for global consumption?

By analyzing the built environment not as a static relic but as an active site of contested memory, this comparative study seeks to move beyond mere architectural appreciation towards a critical spatial discourse—one that foregrounds colonialism's enduring grip on Latin American cities. Ultimately, whether acknowledged or not, Latin American identities remain entangled with these colonial pasts—bearing the scars of conquest, yet inscribed with the unyielding persistence of resistance (Thornton, 1990). The urban fabric, therefore, does not merely reflect history—it actively mediates the ongoing negotiation between colonial heritage and decolonial futures (Lawrence & Low, 1990; Duer & Vegliò, 2019).

Figure 8. View towards *Palacio Consistorial*, Arzobispo Meriño, Santo Domingo

Source: Authors' Elaboration with field data (2024).

5. UNRAVELING COLONIAL URBAN PARADIGMS

A comparative study of Santo Domingo and Oaxaca's urban landscapes demands an examination of how colonial governance, spatial planning, and cultural negotiations materialized differently in their built environments. While both cities were shaped by Spanish rule, their distinct historical roles, geographic contexts, and interactions with indigenous populations led to contrasting urban expressions. This section explores how governance structures and spatial arrangements influenced their architectural and urban development, setting the stage for a deeper analysis of specific elements of the built environment in later sections (Cañizares-Esguerra, 2005; Baffoe & Roy, 2022).

Spatial Control in Santo Domingo and Cultural Negotiation in Oaxaca

Santo Domingo and Oaxaca exemplify two distinct colonial urban paradigms shaped by governance models, spatial intent, and cultural interactions. Santo Domingo, established as Spain's first colonial stronghold, adhered strictly to European urbanism,

enforcing rigid spatial hierarchies through fortified structures, gridded streets, and monumental civic-religious buildings (Niell, 2023). This highly controlled spatial order minimized indigenous influence, reinforcing a model of surveillance and social stratification (Rodríguez Demorizi, 1966). Even today, its historical core remains a preserved emblem of Spanish authority, while its periphery continues to reflect entrenched socio-economic disparities.

Conversely, Oaxaca's colonial urban fabric emerged through a more decentralized and negotiated process, where Spanish-imposed grids coexisted with indigenous spatial knowledge, materials, and artistic expressions (Kulstad-González, 2020). Unlike Santo Domingo's defensive, inward-facing urbanism, Oaxaca's plazas, courtyards, and richly ornamented Baroque churches reveal a *mestizaje* process that, while structured by colonial power, allowed for greater indigenous agency (Greer, 2019). The contrast between Santo Domingo's rigid, militarized spatial control and Oaxaca's adaptive, permeable urbanism highlights how colonial governance shaped Latin American cities in fundamentally different ways, leaving enduring imprints on their built environments and social structures.

The differences in governance, economic function, and colonial intent laid the foundation for how Santo Domingo and Oaxaca's built environments evolved. While both cities reflect the impact of Spanish colonialism, their spatial expressions diverge sharply, shaped by geography, administrative priorities, and cultural interplay. Santo Domingo exemplifies a fortified, European-dominated urbanism, rigid in its structure and limited in indigenous contributions, while Oaxaca reveals a more negotiated colonial presence, where local traditions subtly influenced Spanish architectural forms. To fully unpack these differences, the following sections will examine four critical elements of the built environment—open space, religious architecture, ornamental design, and contemporary pedestrian interventions—to reveal how colonial urbanism was inscribed into both cities and continues to shape their spatial realities today.

6. OPEN SPACE AS AN INSTRUMENT OF POWER

As stated before, colonial urban planning was not merely an exercise in spatial organization; it was a deliberate mechanism for reinforcing hierarchical power structures, social control, and cultural imposition. The main squares of Santo Domingo and Oaxaca—*Parque Colón* and *El Zócalo*, respectively—serve as key urban nodes that reveal how colonial governance materialized in public space (Lange et al., 2006). A comparative analysis of their design, function, and evolution provides critical insights into the differing colonial strategies employed in the West Indies and *Nueva España*, shaping how power was projected and negotiated within the urban fabric.

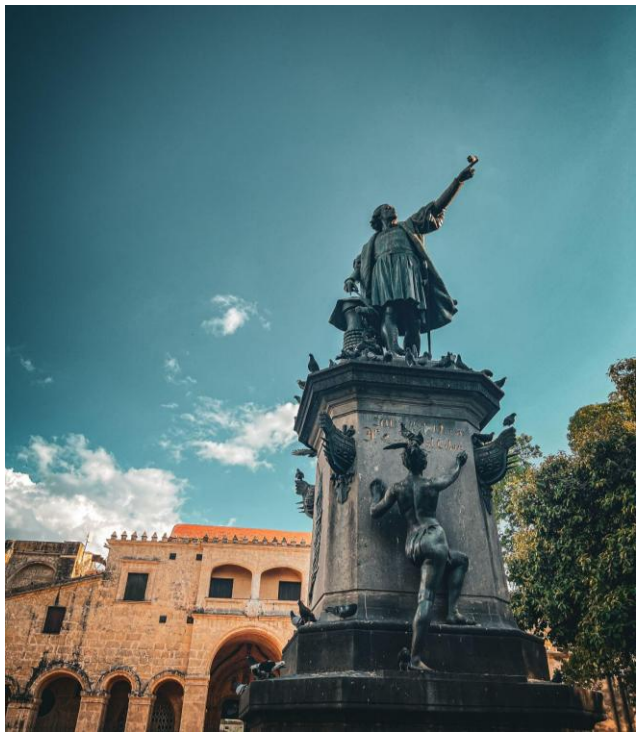
Parque Colón: Symbolic Authority

Parque Colón in Santo Domingo, established in the 15th century, exemplifies the rigid, top-down planning characteristic of early Spanish colonialism. Initially named *Plaza Mayor*, it functioned as the city's political, religious, and economic nucleus, reinforcing the Spanish Crown's centralized governance model. Its rectilinear street connections and surrounding colonial architecture materialize the imposition of European planning ideals, which sought to standardize and regulate urban life in the Americas (Martre, 2023). Today, the square remains a hub of social activity, yet its spatial composition continues to reflect its origins as a tool of imperial dominance.

The architectural ensemble surrounding *Parque Colón*—consisting of governmental, religious, and commercial structures—was deliberately designed to impose Spanish authority over both the physical and social dimensions of the city. The placement of the *Catedral Primada de América* and the Governor's Palace reinforced hierarchical visibility, with colonial elites occupying privileged positions around the square while indigenous and African populations were relegated to peripheral spaces (Arvizu, 2008). Despite its present-day role as a gathering place, the spatial rigidity of *Parque Colón* continues to reflect the colonial stratifications upon which Santo Domingo was built.

A particularly contested element of the square's symbolic power is the statue of Christopher Columbus (Fig. 9), positioned atop an indigenous *Taíno* figure—an explicit visual representation of colonial dominance (Fanon, 2001). The monument, though historically significant, embodies the violent erasure of pre-Hispanic identities, reinforcing how colonial spatial interventions sought not only to reorganize urban environments but also to impose cultural narratives that justified subjugation.

Figure 9. Statue of Colón at *Parque Colón*, Santo Domingo.



Source: Authors' Elaboration with field data (2024).

El Zócalo: *Negotiated Space and Urban Fluidity*

By contrast, *El Zócalo* in Oaxaca represents a different form of colonial urbanism—one characterized by adaptation and hybridization. Established in the 16th century, this plaza was instrumental in shaping Oaxaca's orthogonal grid layout, following Spanish planning norms yet evolving in a more integrated and organic manner (Casa de la Ciudad, 2021). Unlike *Parque Colón*'s rigidly defined space, El *Zócalo*'s configuration fosters greater urban permeability, allowing for more fluid interactions between civic, religious, and commercial functions.

A defining feature of *El Zócalo*'s spatial articulation is its direct connection to *Alameda de León* and the concavities of the Oaxaca Cathedral, which dissolves rigid boundaries and enhances spatial accessibility (Martre, 2023). This interrelation creates a more dynamic, inclusive public realm, accommodating both formal and informal uses. Whereas Santo Domingo's square functioned as a controlled site of Spanish authority, *El Zócalo*—through its expansive layout and interwoven public spaces—facilitated a more participatory urban experience, shaped by both colonial dictates and local agency.

The square's architectural permeability contrasts with the fortified monumentality of *Parque Colón*. The arcades surrounding *El Zócalo* provide transitional spaces between

private and public realms, fostering an open-ended dialogue between built form and social practice. This greater spatial flexibility underscores the distinction between Santo Domingo's imperial imposition and Oaxaca's negotiated urbanism. Despite their functional similarities, *Parque Colón* and *El Zócalo* embody distinct spatial logics that reflect broader colonial strategies. *Parque Colón* materializes the top-down control characteristic of Caribbean colonial urbanism, where fortifications, monumental religious structures, and rigid spatial organization reinforced the hegemony of Spanish rule. *El Zócalo*, (Fig. 10) while still colonial in origin, exemplifies a more adaptable urban model, where indigenous and mestizo agency subtly shaped the evolving built environment.

7. RELIGIOUS ARCHITECTURE AS IDEOLOGICAL IMPOSITION

Religious architecture in colonial Latin America was never merely about faith; it was a spatial and symbolic instrument of domination, acculturation, and socio-political control. In both Santo Domingo and Oaxaca, churches and monasteries functioned as contested spaces, where the imposition of Catholicism materialized through architectural grandeur, spatial positioning, and decorative programs explicitly designed to reshape indigenous belief systems and social hierarchies (Shah & Kesan, 2007). The Cathedral of *Santa María la Menor* in Santo Domingo and the *Templo de Santo Domingo de Guzmán* in Oaxaca stand as compelling case studies in how ecclesiastical structures not only regulated religious behavior but also acted as territorial markers of colonial power.

The Cathedral of Santo Domingo

As the first cathedral in the Americas, the Cathedral of *Santa María la Menor* epitomizes the architectural embodiment of Spain's religious and political hegemony. Built in the early 16th century, it exemplifies an unyielding European aesthetic, with its coral limestone façade, ribbed vaults, and Gothic-Plateresque ornamentation asserting a direct transplant of Spanish architectural tradition (Bury, 1976). Its imposing massing, solid buttresses, and elevated positioning within the *Ciudad Colonial* transformed it into a spatial instrument of surveillance and ideological assertion—a structure not just meant for worship, but for control.

Unlike Oaxaca's later syncretic ecclesiastical developments, the Cathedral of Santo Domingo (Fig. 11) lacked significant indigenous stylistic incorporations, reflecting the rigidity of early Spanish religious colonization. Beyond aesthetics, its very construction functioned as a tool of labor exploitation, with indigenous and enslaved African workers forced to build a monument to their own spiritual erasure (Moshman,

2007; Mulder, 2016). This unnegotiated imposition of Gothic forms onto the Caribbean landscape underscores the severity of early Spanish religious orthodoxy, where architecture played a direct role in the systematic dismantling of pre-Columbian spiritual practices.

Figure 11. Cathedral of *Santa María la Menor*, Northeast view, Santo Domingo

Source: Authors' Elaboration with field data (2024).

Templo de Santo Domingo

In contrast, the *Templo de Santo Domingo de Guzmán* in Oaxaca presents a more intricate narrative of religious architecture as both imposition and adaptation. Constructed in the late 16th and early 17th centuries, the church exemplifies Mexican Baroque aesthetics, where European architectural traditions fused with indigenous artistic and spatial sensibilities (Bondi, 2011). Unlike the fortress-like presence of the Cathedral of Santo Domingo, *Templo de Santo Domingo* is characterized by an expressive, decorative dynamism, its facade of *cantera verde* intricately carved with biblical iconography, local motifs, and mestizo artistic expressions.

A defining feature of the *Templo* is its interior ornamentation, which, in stark contrast to the Cathedral of Santo Domingo's austere Gothic interior, embraces a lavish gilded aesthetic, with intricate gold leaf detailing covering its altars, domes, and vaulted

ceilings. This excess was not merely a demonstration of Catholic supremacy but a deliberate visual strategy to captivate indigenous converts through sensory overload (Greer, 2019). The ornate altarpiece, carved from a single piece of cedar and coated in gold, stands as one of the most opulent expressions of ecclesiastical power in *Nueva España*, reinforcing the colonial church's dominance over both the spiritual and economic realms.

However, despite its European stylistic roots, *Templo de Santo Domingo* exhibits clear indigenous agency in its iconographic program and spatial experience, as seen in the façade elements in Fig. 12. The incorporation of pre-Hispanic floral motifs, geometric carvings, and artisanal techniques reflects a *mestizaje* process wherein indigenous laborers, often working under forced conditions, embedded elements of their cultural heritage into the church's materiality (Zamora, 2009). Unlike the rigid imposition of Santo Domingo's Gothic cathedral, the *Templo de Santo Domingo de Guzmán* subtly integrates indigenous perspectives, resulting in a more complex spatial narrative of power, negotiation, and adaptation.

Figure 12. *Templo de Santo Domingo de Guzmán* Façade, Oaxaca.

Source: Authors' Elaboration with field data (2024).

Religious Spaces as Colonial Archives

Beyond their architectural grandeur, the Cathedral of Santo Domingo and the *Templo de Santo Domingo de Guzmán* functioned as spatial instruments of colonial order, anchoring urban grids and reinforcing socio-political hierarchies. As primary religious and administrative centers, these structures dictated spatial organization, shaping religious practice as well as economic exchanges, governance, and social control. As seen in Fig. 13, the Cathedral of Santo Domingo, strategically positioned within the

Ciudad Colonial and adjacent to governmental buildings, cemented the alliance between church and state, ensuring that imperial authority was both physically and symbolically inseparable from religious power. Meanwhile, the *Templo de Santo Domingo* in Oaxaca, though equally dominant, was more integrated into the city's evolving civic landscape, allowing for a more fluid relationship between religious, political, and communal spaces.

Figure 13. West Façade *Santa María la Menor*, Santo Domingo.

Source: Authors' Elaboration with field data (2024).

While both structures enforced Catholic hegemony, they did so through distinct colonial mechanisms. This contrast reflects an evolution in colonial religious strategies—from an uncompromising European imposition to a more hybridized, yet still coercive, form of ecclesiastical and spatial control. These buildings are not only heritage pieces but enduring colonial archives, preserving the architectural and ideological imprints of conquest, conversion, and resistance. The Cathedral of Santo Domingo stands as a monument to the early, unadapted enforcement of Spanish Catholicism, while the *Templo de Santo Domingo* reveals the complexities of later colonial periods, where indigenous aesthetics were co-opted into Catholic visual culture. It has been argued that colonial architecture not only imposed spatial discipline but also operated as a psychological tool, normalizing subjugation and altering

indigenous perceptions of power (Fanon, 1970). In this light, both churches functioned as instruments of epistemic violence, materializing religious indoctrination through their built form (Makdisi, 2010).

8. PEDESTRIAN PUBLIC REALM AS COLONIAL RENAISSANCE

The pedestrianization of historic streets in Oaxaca and Santo Domingo—*Macedonio Alcalá* and *Calle El Conde*, respectively—offers a critical perspective on the complexities of urban revival within deeply colonial settings (Alsayyad, 1992). While these transformations aim to enhance walkability, foster community interaction, and revitalize neglected urban cores, they also reveal the paradox of contemporary placemaking efforts that repurpose colonial urban frameworks in pursuit of an inclusive, human-centered city. This process underscores the enduring influence of colonial spatial legacies, as cities reimagine these historic corridors for modern urban life.

Urban Revitalization in Latin America

Throughout much of the 20th century, many colonial city centers in Latin America experienced economic decline, depopulation, and increasing neglect, as rapid urban expansion and automobile-centric planning shifted growth away from historic cores (Martinez & Portes, 2021). Streets once central to civic and economic life—like *Macedonio Alcalá* in Oaxaca (Fig. 14) and *Calle El Conde* in Santo Domingo—devolved into deteriorated spaces, marked by declining investment and rising crime (Gilbert, 1998). Their reappropriation for pedestrian use represents a shift in urban priorities, reclaiming these spaces as cultural and economic hubs, while repositioning them within contemporary narratives of urban sustainability (Klaufus & Jaffe, 2015). Pedestrianization has profoundly altered the perception and function of these spaces. The removal of vehicular traffic has fostered greater public interaction, strengthened local economies through increased foot traffic, and reinforced heritage tourism as a driving force behind their revitalization. This process has transformed *Macedonio Alcalá* and *Calle El Conde* from neglected streetscapes into thriving commercial and social environments, supporting retail, gastronomy, nightlife, and public cultural programming (World Health Organization, 2021).

The Gentrification Dilemma: Preservation or Displacement?

However, this revitalization is not without socio-economic consequences. While the activation of pedestrian streets has contributed to a renewed sense of place, it has also

exacerbated urban inequalities, particularly through gentrification and the displacement of long-standing residents (Özdemir & Selçuk, 2017). In Oaxaca, the transformation of *Macedonio Alcalá* has accelerated a process of 'symbolic dispossession,' where increasing tourism and foreign investment have driven up property values and altered the demographic fabric of the area (Mexico News Daily, 2022). Spaces that once housed artisanal workshops and residential communities have been converted into boutique hotels, high-end cafes, and short-term rental properties, gradually excluding local populations from the very spaces they once defined.

Figure 14. Pedestrian intervention at *Macedonio Alacalá*, Oaxaca.

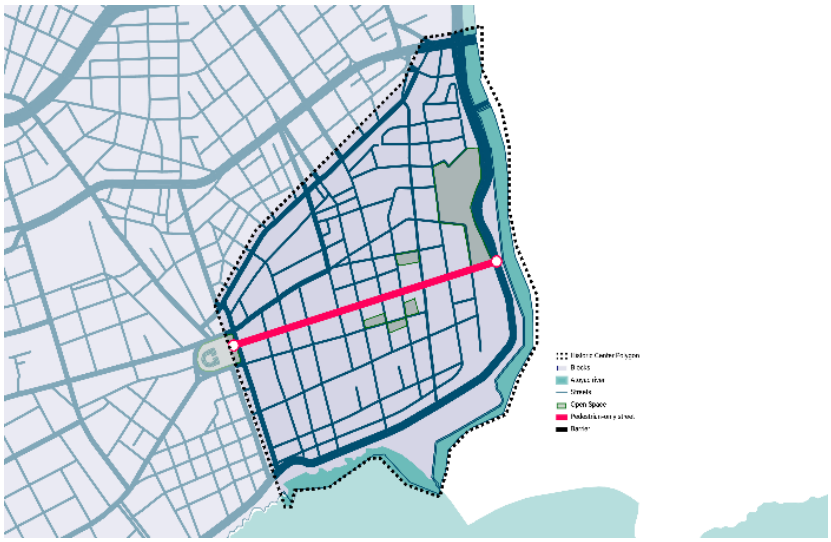
Source: Authors' Elaboration with field data (2024).

A similar pattern is emerging in Santo Domingo, where ambitious efforts to restore the Zona Colonial—including pedestrian-friendly interventions along *Calle El Conde*—aim to attract a portion of the millions of tourists visiting the country's beach resorts each year. While these investments have enhanced the physical landscape, improved waste management, and incentivized business growth, they have also fueled concerns among local residents about being priced out by high-end commercial developments (Lopez Blanco, 2017). The replacement of local shops with upscale establishments catering to international visitors' risks erasing the social and economic diversity that historically characterized these spaces.

The pedestrianization of historic colonial streets presents a dual narrative—one of cultural preservation and economic opportunity, but also of exclusion and displacement (see analysis on Fig. 15 and 16). While *Macedonio Alcalá* and *Calle El Conde* exemplify the potential of heritage-led urban renewal, their transformation underscores the challenges of balancing modernization with spatial justice

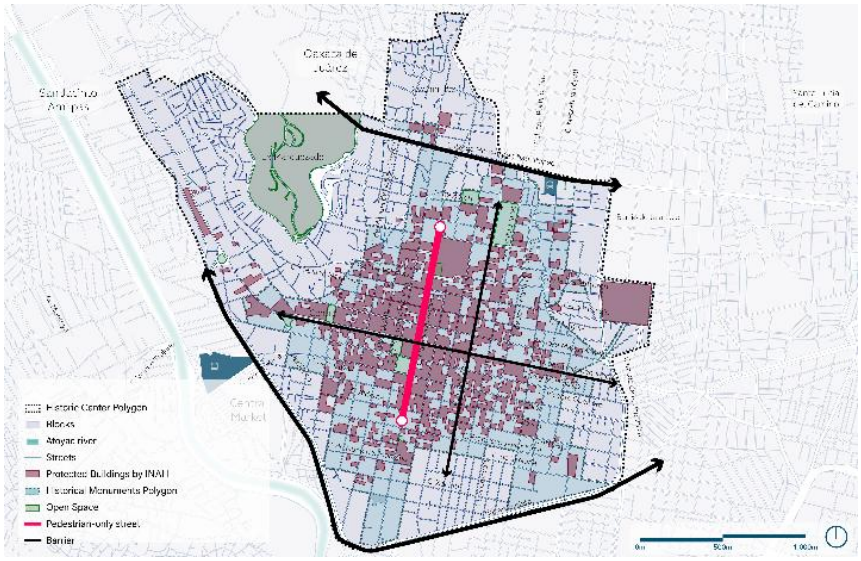
(Thompson, 2023). As cities reinterpret their colonial-era infrastructure to align with contemporary urban ideals, they must grapple with the ethical responsibility of ensuring these spaces remain accessible and beneficial to their original communities.

Figure 15. Spatial Analysis of Ciudad Colonial, Santo Domingo



Source: Authors' Elaboration with field data (2024).

Figure 16. Spatial Analysis of Oaxaca Historic Center



Source: Authors' Elaboration on data from INE database (2024).

Rather than merely celebrating these streets as symbols of urban regeneration, it is essential to recognize them as sites of ongoing negotiation, where the tensions between preservation, economic development, and social equity must be actively managed. Their revival demonstrates the power of public space in shaping collective memory

and urban identity but also serves as a cautionary case of how historic urban cores can be rebranded for external consumption at the expense of local agency. The challenge lies in ensuring that these pedestrianized spaces serve not just as aesthetic relics of the past, but as equitable, living urban environments that reflect the needs and aspirations of the communities that inhabit them today.

9. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The comparative analysis of Santo Domingo and Oaxaca reveals how colonial urban legacies remain deeply inscribed in the built environment, shaping contemporary spatial dynamics, social hierarchies, and governance structures. Through the examination of ecclesiastical architecture, public squares, ornamental expressions, and the pedestrianization of historic streets, this study has demonstrated how these cities embody distinct yet interconnected manifestations of colonial power—one rooted in rigid spatial control, the other in negotiated hybridity. Their urban forms, while celebrated as heritage, are not merely static remnants of the past but active participants in the ongoing negotiation of power, identity, and access.

The Illusion of Spatial Justice in Colonial Cities

As the discourse on urban equity and sustainable development gains prominence in Latin America, the concept of spatial justice remains fraught with contradictions. Heritage preservation, often framed as an effort to protect cultural memory, frequently operates as a mechanism of selective remembrance—freezing the past for admiration while disregarding the systemic inequalities these spaces continue to reproduce. This tension is especially visible in cities with colonial cores, where the symbolic value of architectural heritage is leveraged to attract tourism and investment, often to the detriment of long-standing communities.

While gentrification is a global phenomenon not exclusive to postcolonial or formerly colonized cities, in Latin America it acquires a particularly bitter socio-spatial character. In contrast to European contexts—where urban renewal and exclusionary redevelopment frequently displace postcolonial migrant communities from territories tied to overseas imperial relationships (such as North African populations in France or Caribbean and West African diasporas in the United Kingdom)—gentrification in Latin American cities often results in the displacement of racialized and historically marginalized populations from within their own ancestral and colonially-contested urban territories (Quijano, 2000). In this sense, gentrification in the region does not merely reflect neoliberal market dynamics; rather, it acts as a contemporary extension of colonial spatial ordering—a rearticulation of centuries-old hierarchies of race, class, and territorial control under the guise of urban revitalization (Rolnik, 2019; Janoschka & Sequera, 2016).

In cities like Santo Domingo and Oaxaca, these dynamics are especially acute. Heritage-led redevelopment and pedestrianization projects are frequently celebrated as catalysts for urban sustainability and economic growth, yet they often exclude or displace the very populations that have historically inhabited and given meaning to these spaces. Long-term residents, artisans, and informal vendors are increasingly priced out or regulated out of the revitalized historic cores, as global investors, boutique tourism, and heritage branding strategies reconfigure the built environment. These interventions, when insufficiently interrogated, risk transforming historically vibrant and diverse neighborhoods into curated landscapes of consumption—urban museums that aestheticize colonial memory while erasing the socio-political struggles embedded in their fabric.

Decolonizing the Urban Fabric: Beyond Physical Transformation

The challenge ahead is not merely one of architectural intervention, but of epistemological and structural reconfiguration. The legacy of colonialism in Santo Domingo and Oaxaca is not confined to monuments, plazas, or religious edifices—it is woven into socio-political institutions, economic dependencies, and cultural narratives that define who belongs in these spaces and under what conditions. A decolonial urban future cannot be achieved through superficial interventions alone; it requires an interrogation of the frameworks that sustain spatial injustice.

The true pursuit of spatial justice demands more than repurposing colonial structures—it necessitates an active reimagining of urban life that centers historically marginalized voices. This means shifting heritage management from an extractive, tourist-driven model toward one that prioritizes community agency, ensuring that revitalization efforts do not replicate colonial patterns of exclusion. It calls for an urbanism that is not only inclusive in rhetoric but in practice—one that dismantles the economic and social barriers that continue to stratify these cities.

The fundamental question remains: Can colonial cities ever fully disentangle from their past, or will their histories perpetually define their futures? The answer may not be absolute, but the task is clear: Urbanists, policymakers, and communities must critically engage with the built environment not as a relic to be preserved, but as a contested space to be transformed. The aspiration for a decolonial urbanism in Latin America requires not just a reckoning with the past, but a commitment to rewriting the future—one where the colonial imprint no longer dictates the possibilities of urban life.

Until then, the dream of a just city in places like Santo Domingo and Oaxaca remains both urgent and elusive—a vision that must be fought for, dismantled, and rebuilt in ways that challenge, rather than perpetuate, the colonial logics upon which these spaces were first designed.

SHORT AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY:

Luis Barraza Cardenas is an assistant professor at the Panamerican University, Faculty of Engineering and an Associate Urban Planner at Arcadis. His research interests include social sustainability, spatial justice, inclusion in planning, and gender studies.

REFERENCES:

Acosta Maldonado, M.E. (2022). *The cities of Latin America and the Caribbean: spaces of contrasts.* Ciudades Sostenibles. https://blogs.iadb.org/ciudades-sostenibles/en/the-cities-of-latin-america-and-the-caribbean-spaces-of-contrasts/ (Accessed 3 March 2024)

Affolderbach, J. and Schulz, C. (2015) '*Mobile transitions: Exploring synergies for urban sustainability research'*, Urban Studies, 53(9), pp.1942–1957. [online] Available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098015583784 (Accessed 7 January 2023)

Alderton, A., Henry, N., Foster, S. and Badland, H. (2020). Examining the relationship between urban liveability and gender-based violence: A systematic review. Health & Place, 64, p.102365.

Alsayyad., N. (1992). *Forms of dominance on the architecture and urbanism of the colonial enterprise*. Avebury.

Arvizu, C. (2008). Cuadernos de Arquitectura y Nuevo Urbanismo. *Patrones espaciales. Querétaro, México.* Cátedra de Nuevo Urbanismo. 41–44. [online] Available at: https://www.academia.edu/20331003/CUADERNOS_DE_ARQUITECTURA_Y_NUEVO_URBANISMO (Accessed 14 January 2024)

Baffoe, G., & Roy, S. (2022). Colonial legacies and contemporary urban planning practices in Dhaka, Bangladesh. *Planning Perspectives*, 38(1), 1–24. https://doi.org/10.1080/02665433.2022.2041468

Barbosa, R., Vicente, R., & Santos, R. (2015). Climate change and thermal comfort in Southern Europe housing: A case study from Lisbon. Building and Environment, 92, 440–451. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.buildenv.2015.05.019 (Accessed 3 March 2024)

Belkhir, J. A. A., & Adeola, F. O. (1997). Environmentalism, Race, Gender, & Class in Global Perspective. *Race, Gender & Class*, 5(1), 4–15. https://www.jstor.org/stable/41674847 (Accessed 3 March 2024)

Betances, E. R. (1983). Agrarian Transformation and Class Formation in the Dominican Republic, 1844-1930. *Latin American Perspectives, 10*(2/3), 60–75. https://www.jstor.org/stable/2633459

Branche, J. (2008). Race, Colonialism, and Social Transformation in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Bondi, C. M. L. (2011). Shaping an Identity: Cultural Hybridity in Mexican Baroque Architecture. *Design Principles and Practices: An International Journal—Annual Review*, 5(5), 447–470. https://doi.org/10.18848/1833-1874/cgp/v05i05/38213

Bury, J. (1976). The Stylistic Term "Plateresque." *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 39, 199–199. https://doi.org/10.2307/751139

Casa de la Ciudad (2021) *La historia de Oaxaca a través de sus planos.* Retrieved March 15, 2024, from https://casadelaciudad.org/la-historia-de-oaxaca-a-traves-de-sus-planos/

Cañizares-Esguerra, J. (2005). Racial, Religious, and Civic Creole Identity in Colonial Spanish America. *American Literary History*, 17(3), 420–437. https://www.jstor.org/stable/3567901

Cervantes, F. (1995). The Impact of Christianity in Spanish America. *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, 14(2), 201–210. https://www.jstor.org/stable/3339053

Chassen, F. R., Martínez, H. G., & Martinez, H. G. (1986). El desarrollo económico de Oaxaca a finales del porfiriato. *Revista Mexicana de Sociología, 48*(1), 285. https://doi.org/10.2307/3540416

Collins, P. H. (1986). Learning from the Outsider Within: The Sociological Significance of Black Feminist Thought. Social Problems, 33(6), S14–S32. https://doi.org/10.2307/80067

Cubero-Hernández, A., Raony Silva, E., & Arroyo Duarte, S. (2022). Urban Layout of the First Ibero-American Cities on the Continent through Conventual Foundations: The Cases of Santo Domingo (1502) and Panama Viejo (1519). *Land, 11*(12), 2144. https://doi.org/10.3390/land11122144

De Burca, J. (2023). Colonial Impact and Indigenous Architecture: Design. https://constructive-voices.com/colonial-impact-and-indigenous-architecture/

Diario Libre. (2011, May 21). *LOS MAPAS DE LA ISLA*. Diario Libre. https://www.diariolibre.com/opinion/lecturas/los-mapas-de-la-isla-GDDL291326

Duer, M., & Vegliò, S. (2019). Modern-Colonial Geographies in Latin America: The Mirage of the Civilizing City and the Archaic Countryside. Journal of Latin American Geography, 18(3), 11–29. https://www.jstor.org/stable/48618849

Encyclopedia Britannica. (2019). Santo Domingo | History, Culture, & Facts. In Encyclopædia Britannica. https://www.britannica.com/place/Santo-Domingo (Accessed: 10 March 2024)

Ettinger-McEnulty, C. R. (2005). *Spatial Structures in Colonial Latin America, New Perspectives in Urban Historiography : Structures territoriales des colonies d'Amérique latine : nouvelles perspectives historiographiques en architecture et urbanisme* (A. Thomine-Berrada & B. Bergdol, Eds.). OpenEdition Books; Publications de l'Institut national d'histoire de l'art. https://books.openedition.org/inha/240?lang=en

Fanon, F. (1970). *A dying colonialism : Transl. from the French by Haakon Chevalier*. With a forew. by G.M. Carstairs. Penguin Books.

Fanon, F. (2001). *The Wretched of the Earth*. Penguin Books.

Fanon, F. (2008). *Black Skin, White Masks*. Grove Press.

Gabbert, W. (2012). The longue durée of Colonial Violence in Latin America. *Historical Social Research / Historische Sozialforschung*, 37(3 (141)), 254–275. https://www.jstor.org/stable/41636608

Greer, A. (2019). Settler Colonialism and Empire in Early America. *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 76(3), 383–390. https://doi.org/10.5309/willmaryquar.76.3.0383

Gilbert, A. (1998). The Latin American City. Latin America Bureau (Lab).

Gruzinski, S. (1995). Images and Cultural Mestizaje in Colonial Mexico. *Poetics Today*, 16(1), 53. https://doi.org/10.2307/1773223

Gruzinski, S. (2002). The mestizo mind : the intellectual dynamics of colonization and globalization. Routledge.

Harding, S. (1992) After the Neutrality Ideal: Science, Politics, and "Strong Objectivity". Social Research, 59(3), pp. 567. [online] Available at: https://search-proquest-com.libproxy.ucl.ac.uk/scholarly-journals/after-neutrality-ideal-science-politics-strong/docview/1297299163/se-2?accountid=14511 (Accessed: 3 April 2023).

Haraway, D. (1988). Situated knowledges: The science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective. *Feminist Studies, 14*(3), 575–599.

Hidalgo, A., & López, J. F. (2012). Introduction: Imperial Geographies and Spatial Memories in Spanish America. *Journal of Latin American Geography*, 11, 1–4. https://www.jstor.org/stable/24394831

Horvath, R. J. (1972). A Definition of Colonialism. *Current Anthropology*, 13(1), 45–57. https://www.jstor.org/stable/2741072

Janoschka, M., & Sequera, J. (2016). Gentrification in Latin America: Addressing the politics of displacement. Urban Geography, 37(8), 1175–1194. https://doi.org/10.1080/02723638.2015.1103995

Kanbur, R., López-Calva, L. F., & Venables, A. J. (2005). Symposium on Spatial Inequality in Latin America. Cuadernos de Economía, 42(125), 133–136. https://www.jstor.org/stable/41951633

Kennedy, R. (2020). Traditional Construction Techniques in Oaxaca, Mexico: Rural domestic architecture as part of a greater building culture. *Construction History*, 35(1), 135–152. https://www.jstor.org/stable/27135718 (Accessed: 1 March 2024)

Kern, L. (2021). Feminist City : claiming space in a man-made world. S.L.: Verso Books.

Klaufus, C. J., & Jaffe, R. K. (2015). Latin American and Caribbean Urban Development. *European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies / Revista Europea de Estudios Latinoamericanos Y Del Caribe*, *100*, 63–72. https://www.jstor.org/stable/43673538

Korody, N. (2017). Uncovering the Architecture of Colonialism with "The Funambulist.". Archinect. https://archinect.com/features/article/149994523/uncovering-the-architecture-of-colonialism-with-the-funambulist

Kossok, M. (1973). Common Aspects and Distinctive Features in Colonial Latin America. Science & Society, 37(1), 1–30. https://www.jstor.org/stable/40401689

Kulstad-González, P. M. (2020). Hispaniola - Hell Or Home?, Sidestone Press Dissertations.

Lacy, A. R.-S., Tejada, R., Weinberger, E., Bustamante, J. I., Fox, L. S., Bayón, D., Tarn, N., Castelli, C., Henestrosa, A., Sarignana, A., Perea, H., Vargaslugo, E., Dufétel, D., Zeller, L., Zeller, B., Moritz, A. F., Marmasse, L., Blanco, A., Cardoza y Aragón, L., & Paz, O. (1998). [oaxaca]. Artes de México, 21, 85–95. https://www.jstor.org/stable/24327026

Lange, M., Mahoney, J., & vom Hau, M. (2006). Colonialism and Development: a Comparative Analysis of Spanish and British Colonies. *American Journal of Sociology*, 111(5), 1412–1462. https://doi.org/10.1086/499510

Lawrence, D. L., & Low, S. M. (1990). The Built Environment and Spatial Form. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 19, 453–505. https://www.jstor.org/stable/2155973

Leopold, A. (2001). The Architecture of Syncretism: A Methodological Illustration of the Dynamics of Syncretism. *Historical Reflections / Réflexions Historiques*, 27(3), 401–423. https://www.jstor.org/stable/41299213

Lopez-Cantero, P., & Robb, C. M. (2023). How to Know a City: The Epistemic Value of City Tours. Philosophy of the City Journal, 1(1), 31–41. https://doi.org/10.21827/potcj.1.1.41021

Low, S. M. (1995). Indigenous Architecture and the Spanish American Plaza in Mesoamerica and the Caribbean. American Anthropologist, 97(4), 748–762. https://www.jstor.org/stable/682595 (Accessed: 11 March 2024)

Lowenthal, D. (1967). Race and Color in the West Indies. *Daedalus*, 96(2), 580–626. https://www.jstor.org/stable/20027054

Mahoney, J. (2003). Long-Run Development and the Legacy of Colonialism in Spanish America. *American Journal of Sociology*, *109*(1), 50–106. https://doi.org/10.1086/378454

Makdisi, S. (2010). The Architecture of Erasure. *Critical Inquiry*, 36(3), 519–559. https://doi.org/10.1086/653411

Marte C., J. A. (2023). Aportes multiculturales a la configuración del espacio público del Parque Colón. *AULA Revista de Humanidades y Ciencias Sociales*, 69 (1), 19-29 https://doi.org/10.33413/aulahcs.2023.69i1.218

Martinez, S. (1999). From Hidden Hand to Heavy Hand: Sugar, the State, and Migrant Labor in Haiti and the Dominican Republic. *Latin American Research Review*, 34(1), 57–84. https://www.jstor.org/stable/2503926

Martinez, B. P., & Portes, A. (2021). Latin American Cities. *Sociology of Development*, *7*(1), 25–51. https://doi.org/10.1525/sod.2021.7.1.25

Martinez-Echazabal, L. (1998). Mestizaje and the Discourse of National/Cultural Identity in Latin America, 1845-1959. *Latin American Perspectives*, 25(3), 21–42. https://www.jstor.org/stable/2634165 (Accessed: 11 March 2024)

Mexico News Daily (2022). *Changes brought by Oaxaca's foreign influx a concern: study*. Mexico News Daily. https://mexiconewsdaily.com/news/changes-in-oaxaca-brought-by-foreigners/

Lopez Blanco, E., (2017). *Santo Domingo residents nervously eye gentrification*. Pueblo Chieftain. Retrieved March 17, 2024, from

https://www.chieftain.com/story/lifestyle/travel/2017/04/23/santo-domingo-residents-nervously-eye/9253224007/

Mignolo, W. D. (2011). *The darker side of Western modernity: Global futures, decolonial options*. Duke University Press.

Montás, E. P. (1998). La ciudad del Ozama: 500 años de historia urbana. In Google Books. Patronato de la Cuidad Colonial de Santo Domingo. https://books.google.com.mx/books/about/La_ciudad_del_Ozama.html?id=2-l_AAAACAAJ&redir_esc=y (Accessed: 10 March 2024)

Moshman, D. (2007). Us and Them: Identity and Genocide. *Identity, 7*(2), 115–135. https://doi.org/10.1080/15283480701326034

Mulder, L., (2016) Frantz Fanon, Internalized Oppression and the Decolonization of Education, *The University of St. Martin. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/308773706_Frantz_Fanon_Internalized_Oppression_and_the_Decolonization_of_Education* (Accessed: 15 March 2024).

Murphy, A. D., & Stepick, A. (1991). Oaxaca's Cycles of Conquest. U*rban Anthropology and Studies of Cultural Systems and World Economic Development, 20*(1), 99–107. https://www.jstor.org/stable/40553203

Nair, S. (2007). Witnessing the In-visibility of Inca Architecture in Colonial Peru. *Buildings & Landscapes: Journal of the Vernacular Architecture Forum*, 14, 50–65. https://www.jstor.org/stable/20355395

Niell, P. (2023, April 27). Colonial Gothic and the Negotiation of Worlds in 16th-Century Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. Brill.com; Brill. https://brill.com/display/book/9789004538467/BP000023.xml (Accessed: 15 March 2024).

Núñez Collado, J. R. (2019). Santo Domingo: City profile of the Caribbean's metropolis. Cities, 94, 235–246. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2019.05.036

Özdemir, D., & Selçuk, İ. (2017). From pedestrianisation to commercial gentrification: The case of Kadıköy in Istanbul. *Cities, 65,* 10–23. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2017.02.008

Palmer, H. (2020). Comparative Urban Research From Theory To Practice. https://www.academia.edu/109028425/Comparative_Urban_Research_From_Theory_To_Practice

Pink, S. (2013). *Doing visual ethnography* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.

Ponce Vázquez, J. J. (2020). Colonial Origins: Hispaniola in the Sixteenth Century. In Islanders and Empire: *Smuggling and Political Defiance in Hispaniola*, 1580–1690 (pp. 22–55). chapter, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Quijano, A. (2000). Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America. Nepantla: Views from South, 1(3), 533–580. https://doi.org/10.1177/0268580900015002005

Robinson, J. (2006). Ordinary Cities: Between Modernity and Development. Routledge.

Rodríguez Demorizi, E. (1966) España y los comienzos del arte y la escultura en América. *Santo Domingo: Gráficas Reunidas*, pp. 95-96.

Rolnik, R. (2019). Urban warfare: Housing under the empire of finance. Verso.

Rose, G. (2016). *Visual methodologies: An introduction to researching with visual materials* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.

Ryan, D. (1999). Colonialism and Hegemony in Latin America: An Introduction. *The International History Review*, 21(2), 287–296. https://www.jstor.org/stable/40109004

Saifudeen, A., & Mani, M. (2024). Adaptation of buildings to climate change: an overview. *Frontiers in Built Environment*, 10. https://doi.org/10.3389/fbuil.2024.1327747 (Accessed: 15 March 2024).

Sartre, J.-P. (2001). Colonialism is a System. *Interventions*, 3(1), 127–140. https://doi.org/10.1080/13698010020027074 (Accesed: 1 March 2024)

Scott, J., Danos, D., Collins, R., Simonsen, N., Leonardi, C., Scribner, R., & Herd, D. (2020). Structural racism in the built environment: Segregation and the overconcentration of alcohol outlets. Health & Place, 64, 102385. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.healthplace.2020.102385

Segato, R. L. (2010). Los cauces profundos de la raza latinoamericana: una relectura del mestizaje. *Crítica y Emancipación*, 3, 11-44

Shah, R. C., & Kesan, J. P. (2007). HOW ARCHITECTURE REGULATES. *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research*, 24(4), 350–359. https://www.jstor.org/stable/43030813

Smith, L. T. (1999). *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and indigenous peoples*. Zed Books.

Stake, R. E. (1995). The Art of Case Study Research. Sage Publications.

Stern, S. J. (1996). The Tricks of Time: Colonial Legacies and Historical Sensibilities in Latin America. *The Princeton University Library Chronicle*, 57(3), 371–392. https://www.jstor.org/stable/26509366

Thompson, C., (2023, November 9). *The Dominican government's Nuevo Domingo Savio project displaces the country's most vulnerable people*. Cronkite News. https://cronkitenews.azpbs.org/2023/11/09/santo-domingo-develops-vulnerable-people-are-left-behind/

Thornton, R. (1990). A*merican Indian holocaust and survival : a population history since 1492*. University Of Oklahoma Press.

UNESCO World Heritage Centre. (2023). *Colonial City of Santo Domingo*. UNESCO World Heritage Centre. https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/526/ (Accessed: 31 December 2023).

UNESCO World Heritage Centre. (2024). *Historic Centre of Oaxaca and Archaeological Site of Monte Albán*.

UNESCO World Heritage Centre. https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/415/ (Accessed: 3 Februrary 2024).

Valentine, G. (1990). Women's Fear and the Design of Public Space. Built Environment (1978-), [online] 16(4), pp.288–303. [online] Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/23286230. (Accessed 10 August 2023).

World Health Organization. (2021). *Safe environments and mobility*. JSTOR. https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep35857.15

Yin, R. K. (2018). Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods (6th ed.). Sage Publications.

Zamora, L. P. (2009). New World Baroque, Neobaroque, Brut Barroco: Latin American Postcolonialisms. *PMLA*, 124(1), 127–142. https://www.jstor.org/stable/25614252