

## Reconstruction of archive buildings: the case of Brazil

Ana Cristina de Souza\*

Eliana Maria dos Santos Bahia Jacintho\*

*Artículo recibido:*

*4 de julio de 2023*

*Artículo aceptado:*

*30 de octubre de 2023*

*Artículo de investigación*

### ABSTRACT

Discussing the decolonial perspective as an element for the reconstruction of Brazilian public archive buildings is the objective of this article. The guide comes from the assumption of a parameter: architectural constructions of power, encompassed by European colonialism and eclecticism, which influenced perception and building in society, impact the formation of archival science and the construction of archive buildings, especially in the logic that privileges the preservation of State collections and the silence of voices in community archives. The characteristics of basic, bibliographical, and documentary research were studied through an exploratory approach. In doing searches in the Library,

\* Departamento de Ciencias de la Información, Universidad Federal de Santa Catarina (UFSC), Brasil

souza.ana3028@gmail.com elianambahia@gmail.com

**INVESTIGACIÓN** BIBLIOTECOLÓGICA, vol. 37, núm. 97, octubre/diciembre, 2023, México, ISSN: 2448-8321 pp. 195-215

Information Science & Technology Abstracts databases (LISTA and Scopus of Elsevier), a total of 123 retrieved publications were observed and analyzed by titles, abstracts, and keywords. After applying exclusion criteria, it was possible to select four relevant works for this research. The results identified a local culture as a built environment of representation. In conclusion, decoloniality is a promising starting point for rethinking ways of designing from the connection with local roots.

**Keywords:** Archival science; Archive buildings; Decoloniality.

### **Reconstrucción de edificios de archivos: el caso de Brasil**

*Ana Cristina de Souza y Eliana Maria dos Santos Bahia Jacintho*

#### **RESUMEN**

Discutir la perspectiva decolonial como elemento para la reconstrucción de los edificios de archivos públicos brasileños es el propósito de este artículo. El camino se construye a partir de un supuesto considerado como parámetro: las construcciones arquitectónicas de poder, englobadas por el colonialismo y eclecticismo europeo, que influyeron en la forma de ver y construir en la sociedad, repercuten en la formación de la archivística y construcción de edificios de archivo, especialmente en la lógica que privilegia la preservación de las colecciones del Estado y el silencio de las voces en las comunidades archivísticas locales. El estudio utilizó el carácter de investigación básica, bibliográfica y documental por medio de un enfoque exploratorio. Se recurrió a búsquedas en las bases de datos Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts (LISTA y Scopus de Elsevier), donde se recuperó un total de 123 publicaciones analizadas mediante títulos, resumen y palabras clave. Después de aplicar los criterios de exclusión fue posible seleccionar cuatro trabajos relevantes para la investigación. Los resultados identificaron que reconstruir colecciones y repensar la estructura de las instituciones archivísticas conlleva reconsiderar el papel social de los archivos en la formación de un edificio diseñado con un enfoque en la memoria y la promoción de una cultura local como un entorno construido de representación. Se concluye que la descolonialidad es un punto de partida prometedor para repensar formas de diseñar, desde la conexión con las raíces locales.

**Palabras clave:** Archivología; Edificios de archivos; Descolonialidad.

## INTRODUCTION

Society is marked by the intensification of estrangement and ruptures in relation to colonial thinking and its developments (Moura 2021). The way people were colonized has influenced the creation of relationships with knowledge, perspective, being, communication and building in communities.

Due to the discovery of the American continent by the Portuguese and Spanish, the 19th century was marked by the process of reconfiguring borders, with territorial and economic exploration based on social Darwinism, which preached the survival of the “most capable”, as a result of a sense of superiority imposed upon native people by Europeans during the colonization process (Galeano 1976; Costa 2014).

The end of the colonial period reveals the echoes of the past that reverberate in these territories. The parameters of historic constructions and public buildings converge on the neoclassical, baroque, and European style aspects that were influenced by colonization. Urban policies idealized Brazilian cities as urban settings centered on European molds and appearances (Galeano 1976; Ramos 2020). Given this model, Ramos explains that the tensions of ethnic-racial relations were evident in architecture (2020, 157). Initiatives to build religious temples of African origin, quilombola communities, indigenous nations, gypsy groups, and any architectural expression were prohibited as an aesthetic practice within society (Risério 2012).

That is the context of the social construction of urban space and the role of archives as part of the city’s architectural heritage.

The formation of archives is seen, above all, as a reflection of history. As witnesses of a collective expression settled by the urban presence, the archives preserve multiple documents that cover the colonial and post-colonial periods. That way, the very compositions of their buildings represent those periods (Ibáñez 2008; Araújo 2018).

This perspective enables us to question the small mentions of the black population in documents from the colonial period and the intentions about the preservation of certain private funds. Since the citations emphasize passages taken from reports by outsider travelers from the 18th and 19th centuries, as well as the architectural structures that protected these documents over past centuries, which present signs of the erasure of discourse and memory (Freitas 2011; Risério 2012; Terra *et al.* 2023).

To undertake the reflection intended in this article, there is no way to disregard the matrices of power and knowledge linked to this discipline, as well as in the field of architecture, where hegemonic and European cultures developed narratives that reverberated in Information Science (IS) and the Archive in the midst of perspectives still committed to the colonial discourse (Moura 2021).

IS, as a postmodern science, has sought to establish identifying traits and streamline the information capital from its development as a scientific discipline, building its identity around its theoretical-methodological structure (Silva and Freire 2020). Most of them are North American authors who encouraged the theoretical development of IS: Borko (1968), Buckland (1991), Hjørland (2000), among others.

As soon as they are inserted in the context of any science, not only information science, scientists who are linked to hegemonic institutions, which in turn disseminate discourses in favor of what they consider to be true, have access to the publication of their texts (laden with discourses) through the institutionalization of power by means of distributing information (Silva and Freire 2020, 34).

Although efforts have been made in the scientific field through the development of epistemologies in favor of cultural heritage, the operations formalized in IS still lead to categorization that tends to perpetuate a colonial fantasy and introduce mistakes in the attribution of original knowledge and path knowledge (Moura 2021).

The emergence of archival science amid the process of the constitution of national states in the 19th century, and highlights the approach of the literature about the area as knowledge of and for the State:

Conceptions of memory are designed, and traditions are invented for a nation that reserves an ordinary past for its members. The notion of historical cultural heritage is part of this process since the State is organized through the creation of a common heritage and its own identity (Jardim 1995, 3).

Barros states that the development and theoretical framework of Brazilian archival science walk between the North American and European traditions (2015, 189). The plurality of contents and concepts is repeated, but it is no more than an erasure of the area's own discourse, which, in fact, lacks work focused on its history and epistemology (Barros 2015, 192).

The organization of Brazilian public archives expresses the trajectory of its administrations, institutionalized as a result of the State formation process (Jardim 1995). As an example, there is the National Archive (AN), located in Republic Square in Rio de Janeiro, which has occupied since 1985 the building that served as the former Coin House of Brazil [Casa da Moeda do Brasil] (1868-1983), built in 1860 (Heynemann 2009). The neoclassical building worked as the official residence of governors and royal warehouses, and was occupied by the Portuguese Court in the 19th century (Instituto do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico Nacional 2021).

Coloniality, as constitutive of the modernity, names the logic of the colonial relationship with the same knowledge and ways of life between states and different human groups, since it represents a constitutive and obscure side, with the formation of the Americas and the Caribbean by European invasions, and the enslaved Africans trafficking (Mignolo and Oliveira 2016).

The tangle of colonial relations and coloniality explains the search for the process of constitution of the archives in Brazil (Ballestrin 2013). The anchoring of the disciplinary process of archival science was maintained in the logic that privileges the preservation of State archives and in the translation of Eurocentric architectural constructions as a casing of the document protection, based on hierarchical power relations (Jardim 1986; Ballestrin 2013; Ramos 2020).

Society is complex, and because of this, it is required to declassify thinking by breaking with the imaginary framework to which we are bound. The decolonial perspective is an alternative to deconstructing patterns, aiming to give voice and visibility to local knowledge and culture.

Decoloniality focuses on decoupling from the colonial matrix in response to the possibility of actions in the midst of the European ideals projected in a non-European society (Mignolo and Oliveira 2016).

According to Monteiro (2021), the decolonial perspective proposes to break with the thoughts engraved in minds and bodies for generations, represented by the globalized traditions of modern colonialism. The rupture of the imaginary reveals incorporating the knowledge and experiences of the native people (Indians and blacks) as epistemologies for developing new decolonial institutions and new construction standards for archive building (Mignolo and Oliveira 2016).

Visual narratives communicated through the architecture of the buildings that shelter archives in Brazil transpose the historic neoclassical and baroque architectural styles, focusing on the robust aesthetics and the Greco-Roman style, translated by the marks of colonialism (Araújo 2018; Ramos 2020). Therefore, it has to be redefined and reconstructed based on local knowledge, cultures, materials and handmade elements.

Depending on the proposed scenario, the objective of this study is to discuss the decolonial perspective as an element for the reconstruction of Brazilian public archive buildings. The guiding question is: how does decoloniality reveal itself in the urban Brazilian archival and architectural scenario regarding the construction of buildings for archives?

Due to the need to rethink and redesign the archival environment, when thinking of the archive building as a construction connected with its local roots, through a collaborative panel with the different agents who will use the space, an attempt is made to reflect on the promotion of the reconstruction of archive buildings inspired by dialogue and knowledge sharing.

Recognizing these reflections within the scope of IS and Archival Science requires aggregating and suggesting epistemological paths and studies that exchange knowledge through the decolonial framework, contemplating the realities and experiences of groups hitherto silenced in the midst of the process.

The discussions given in this article are structured in four sections, including the introduction to the researched topic. Section two presents the methodological procedures, characterization of the research, structuring of researched databases, quantitative search and retrieved documents. Section three exposes the results obtained in the database search; brief reflections are highlighted about archival institutions as spaces for valuing social identities; and it features a critical review on decoloniality and archive buildings based on the content analysis carried out on the retrieved studies. Finally, Section four outlines the final considerations of the study.

### METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

The research whose proposal is to discuss the decolonial perspective as an element for the reconstruction of Brazilian archival buildings is based on a qualitative approach. This approach involves results under the characterization of the themes studied without the inference of numerical data. Therefore, in this type of approach, the exploratory and descriptive means provide the action to obtain data and verify the results (Kerlinger 2013).

Research is classified according to its basic nature, with a view to expanding scientific knowledge regarding the development of studies versed from a decolonial perspective in the field of archival science.

Methodologically, when exposing the formulation of the objectives and problematics pertinent to the investigation, the sources of online reference databases and databases of sources that index articles from journals in the field of Information Science were delimited as selection criteria. Searches in the Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts (LISTA) and Scopus (Elsevier) databases were done based on strategies elaborated from previous readings on the subject applied to articles that had the following terms: «archives; decoloniality; architectural buildings; archive buildings; coloniality» in their titles, abstracts, and keywords.

The Boolean operators AND (for related keyword searches) and OR (for synonyms) were used as a method through the search strings determined according to the purpose of the study: “decoloniality OR decolonial AND archives OR archival OR archive AND architecture OR archive construction”. We opted for the absence of temporal cutout limitations, allowing us to expand the scope of the research.

A total of 123 publications were found in the two sources selected for the search, limited to works reviewed by specialists, depending on the scope of the investigation. It should be noted that the search engine of each source behaves in a specific way, justifying the adequacy of the combination of strings according to each database.

The inclusion and exclusion criteria set out in *Chart 1* were established.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria	
1. Peer-reviewed journal articles	(X) Include ( ) Exclude
2. Articles in Portuguese, English or Spanish	(X) Include ( ) Exclude
3. Type of study: scientific journal articles, "JournalArticle", journals, case study	(X) Include ( ) Exclude
4. Duplicate articles	( ) Include (X) Exclude
5. Events Annals	( ) Include (X) Exclude
6. Publications that do not address the researched topic	( ) Include (X) Exclude

*Chart 1:* Inclusion and exclusion criteria for the literature review  
Source: Prepared by the authors, 2023.

The content of the recovered articles was analyzed to identify the decolonial and architectural concepts by proposing a combination of them in the field of study of archival science, regarding the restructuring of archives using the decolonial perspective as an element for the reconstruction of archival buildings.

Conducting the literature review followed the steps of: excluding duplicate and divergent works from the pre-established criteria; reading the title, abstract and keywords, considering the relationship with the theme presented; reading of selected complete works; analysis, interpretation and extraction of data, aiming to reflect on the topic addressed in the article. The steps arising from the selection process are shown in *Chart 2*.

Search results in databases	
Databases	Number of studies retrieved
LISTA	120
Scopus	03
Analysis of research results	
Conducting the literature review	Number of studies

Duplicate publications, with language or type of documents divergent from the established inclusion criteria	75
Titles, abstracts and keywords evaluated	48
Studies excluded for not meeting criterion number six	37
Studies selected for full-text evaluation	11
Studies excluded for not meeting criterion number six after reading the full text	07
Studies included in review	04

Chart 2: Search results in databases  
Source: Prepared by the authors, 2023.

## RESULTS

Through the selection process of the publications retrieved from the selected databases according to the application of the exclusion criteria, it was possible to identify four works relevant to the research axis. The results obtained from analysis and discussion are shown in *Chart 3*.

Author	Publication title	Place of publication	Year
Morris	Building an archive: a case study in South Carolina	Journal of the Midwest Archives Conference	2005
Russel, Faulhead, and McKemish	Distrust in the archive: reconciling records	Arc Sci	2011
Karabinos, and Jeurgens	Paradoxes of curating colonial memory	Archival Science	2020
Sela	Ghosts in the archive: the Palestinian village and the decolonial archives	Geo Journal	2022

Chart 3: Publications selected for full-text evaluation  
Source: Prepared by the authors based on this research data, 2023.

It was observed that the selected studies presented the terms archival, architecture and decoloniality with a focus on the preservation of memory, enabling the



dialogue and combination of these in the search for the discussion of possibilities of building decolonial archives from the intersection of knowledge and experiences shared in collective with the community and its local roots.

During the research process in the bibliographic review, there was a shortage of decolonial studies in the field of archival science and archive building, the final consideration in this article proposes a path to follow with future studies. The retrieved bibliography and literary works complementary to the discussion were used as a basis for reflection on the results of the study, given in the sections that follow.

### ***Archival institutions as spaces for valuing Brazilian cultural identities***

Amid informational demands, society needs testimonies that support the veracity of facts and phenomena, providing evidence that can incite social reconstruction, the expansion of knowledge, and the promotion of memory and culture.

Among the many testimonies that can contribute to the re-elaboration of knowledge and representation of memory, archival institutions play a relevant role in the social, cultural, historical and administrative course (Simson 2003). Archives relate to a conceptual political range that regulates and legitimizes the constitution of identity and memory, as reflected in their theoretical development (Miranda 2019).

Throughout the public records, there is a trajectory of experiences and expressions in the community, however, it has maintained the practices of collecting, organizing and valuing archival collections, considering the recording of information, official documents and the representation of architectural models from Europe as legitimate historical evidence in the scope of safeguarding collections (Rufer 2016).

The European influence on Brazilian culture conditioned the construction of cities centered on models and symbolic architectural configurations of State and Catholic Church power amid the colonization process (Ramos 2020). Before Brazilian indigenous societies lacked political-administrative functions and corresponding buildings intended for them, from the moment that the Colonial Brazil gained its contours, the expressions, techniques and materials used in the constructions of these original peoples were not enough to build a refined, expressive, and architectural culture that existed in Europe and was sustained in Brazil during the colonial period (Bicca and Bicca 2006; Ramos 2020).

This setting introduces the conceptualization of the archive buildings in the midst of the construction of State cities. The first spaces built to safeguard documents consisted of institutions for the custody of laws and documents of the clergy and the church, buildings with the appearance of castles, and reflections of a province (Ibáñez 2008; Araújo 2018).

The process of constitutionalizing archive buildings and archival science focused on its theoretical development, centered on a positivist vision and marked by the logic that privileges the preservation of State collections and by the silence of the voices of local communities; however, more than institutions dedicated to the preservation of government documents, archives constitute entities that form knowledge and legitimize peoples (Simson 2003; Costa 2014; Araújo 2018).

If archival institutions are capable of identifying the power relations reflected in documents in certain contexts, we get to the heart of what concerns the need for a decolonial reconstruction of collections and, consequently, of archival buildings.

The possibilities of developing archival infrastructures that contribute to the decolonization of colonial archival legacies permeate the sense of offering cultural relevance, worldview and ethnographic perspectives, above all, spatial and material aspects of Brazilian cultures encapsulated by European influence (Karabinos and Jeurgens 2020; Aliaga 2022).

The application of the decolonial approach to archival science consists of a proposal for a broader understanding of the notions of «archive» and «document», as a way of depositing the silencing imposed on the processes of the constitution of archival collections. In addition, the archive must be thought of not only for its content but also for its context, function, and performance in the community in which it is inserted (Gak *et al.* 2021, 108).

Under a decolonial perspective, archives as institutions of memory acquire the responsibility to represent the knowledge and narratives of the trajectory of society marked by Colonial Brazil influences, conserving and materializing cultures that show the identity and belonging of indigenous and afro-Brazilian peoples.

With information as a source of re-elaboration of knowledge, which is treated as the raw material for building the future through records of the past, taking advantage of a social perspective of interaction with the means: historical and cultural, above all, in the institutionalization of local roots, these environments constitute a key activity to safeguard the history and identity of Brazilian cultures (Araújo 2018).

The notions of identity, conceived as the use of language, history and cultural resources in the becoming process, allow us to show how we represent ourselves, are represented or could represent ourselves. This implies a direct relationship between identity and representativeness (Navarrete 2016, 8).

The social dimension of archives as spaces for valuing cultural identities fosters the recognition of these institutions as cultural heritage open to society and

consequent concern for the search for a space that becomes representative of the community in which it is inserted. Above all, the design of the building needs to fulfill these and other functions assigned to it (Collado López 2015).

In order to recognize these efforts, an approximation between decoloniality and the process of reconstruction of Brazilian archive buildings tends to be productive in the field of IS.

Decoloniality refers to the declassification of external structural interventions, of ways of seeing, being, communicating and building, which emerged from the influence of colonization with the creation of standards concomitant to the way of life in Europe (Mignolo and Oliveira 2016).

The dominant, and often unconscious, Eurocentric epistemology and perspective are expressed in colonial archival institutions and materialized in their infrastructures. The discussion of decoloniality manifests itself in the contestation of the logic of beliefs and cultural practices implicit in the archive, whose representation becomes necessary in its built material infrastructure (Karabinos and Jeurgens 2020).

Considering the European cultural dependence to which Brazil was subjected, architecture centered on external references was exalted as an ideology (Waisman 2013; Reis 2021). The discussion demands that the reflection about the archival institutions as spaces for valuing cultural identities, history and Brazilian memory extends to the field of archival architecture.

Thus, the application of the decolonial concept as an element for the reconstruction of archive buildings involves the aesthetic inclusion of the roots and identities of Brazilian culture that existed before the colonial expansion, worthy of belonging to a territory that was taken over by European habits, customs and dominance.

The process of reconstructing archive buildings reveals a reconsideration of the role of archives in society. Rethinking the design of Brazilian archive buildings, centralizing communities and using collaborative practices in this process will demonstrate the value of Brazil's cultural identity.

### ***New ways of designing: decoloniality and archive building***

The evolution of archival science has transformed the ways of organizing, preserving and disseminating its contents; simultaneously, the structures that hold archives have expressed progressive changes as readable reflections in their material and built configuration over the centuries (Araújo 2018).

The first spaces organized as archives were discovered in Syria, in the cities of Ebla and Ugarit (Silva *et al.* 1999). The archive of the palace of Ebla was distributed over a set of spaces that had a central deposit, it has walls lined with

three levels of wooden shelves, supported by small brick pilasters and wooden plumbs, without openings to the outside, and an adjoining room with stone benches, bone wedges and smooth plates, indicating the workrooms. In the city of Ugarit, the royal archive was located in two palaces, with an area for deposits and adjoining facilities to house the clay tablets (Araújo 2018, 43).

In ancient Rome, the construction of the building called Tabularium symbolized the expression of an organized state, as a provincial reflection (Ibáñez 2008). The Tabularium on Capitol Hill was built with a building typology aimed at the security of the collection, whose sole purpose was to guard the archive of state laws (Ibáñez 2008, 15).

Collado López explains (2015, 4) that, in the case of Spain, in reference to the first building risen in the Modern Age to house archives, there is the General Archive of Simancas. With the appearance of a castle made of stone in the mid-16th century, the idea of security centered on the reserved nature of documents (Araújo 2018).

In 1731, the project for the construction of the archive palace of the Kingdom of Sardinia in Turin was considered the first project with a design based on a functional archive program and it paid attention to specific installation conditions, from location to the adoption of constructive solutions, use of fire walls, attention to the thickness of the walls, stone-masonry and floors dimensioned according to the expected overload and concerns about the risk of fire (Araújo 2018).

Between 1960 and 1970, the Directorate of Archives in France developed a standard program for building archives, observing homogeneity of architectural typology (Collado López 2015). In the 21st century, representations of city architecture continue with the same predominantly European model and typology, operating with the colonial and colonizing rationality of modernity, based on hegemonic criteria of knowledge and development (Moassab 2020, 210).

It has been observed throughout history that buildings destined to hold archives of representative organizations at an institutional, religious, and governmental level coincide with robust constructions, such as palaces, castles, and churches. They show a Eurocentric design with power structures whose privilege is explicit in the preservation of ecclesiastical and State archives.

Under the same perspective, the archive buildings in Brazil are set up. The country's cultural diversity remains with traces and roots of Portuguese and Spanish colonization. There are few buildings specifically designed to safeguard and make accessible the social memory, as well as to contemplate its ancestry and cultural diversity.

From the point of view of colonization, an attempt was made to underpin progress in infrastructure by nurturing a technical and referential vision of ways of building. The rampant and indiscriminate consumption produces idealized

images of fashion, aesthetics and a fetish architecture that provokes the repetition of ideologies regardless of the context in which they were created and their functions (Reis 2021, 95).

The rapid renewal and technological evolution tend to reproduce systematized images of central countries instead of producing their own images due to the cultural dependence to which peripheral countries were submitted, stimulating the acceptance of ideologies centered on external references (Waisman 2013). Architectures that do not present an attractive and photogenic image are ignored (Reis 2021, 95).

With the arrival of Dom João VI to Brazil (1808-1889), there was a configuration in the construction of the country with European influence, which transformed the tropic into a small “European Metropolis” through the building of some edifices: the Coin House of Brazil [Casa da Moeda do Brasil] hosted the National Archives in Rio de Janeiro (RJ), the Royal Portuguese Cabinet of Reading (Real Gabinete Português de Leitura), the Imperial Museum of Brazil [The Museu Imperial de Petrópolis], the Municipal Theater, the Royal Press [Imprensa Nacional], the Botanical Garden [Jardim Botânico], the Royal School of Sciences, Arts and Crafts [Escola Real de Ciências, Artes e Ofícios], predecessor of the Imperial Academy of Fine Arts, later called National School of Fine Arts, among other monuments of the patrimony (Instituto do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico Nacional 2015).

The National Archive, located in the City Center of RJ, the capital of Brazil until 1960, when the capital was transferred to Brasília/Federal District (DF), has occupied since 1985 the building built in 1860 for the operation of the Coin House of Brazil [Casa da Moeda do Brasil] (1868-1983). With the protection proposal based on the historical value of the property, it hosted numerous institutions of national importance (Heynemann 2009).

The building that hosts the National Archives has a neoclassical characteristic, with double columns overlapping and robust orders, and is decorated with marble vases in an extensive courtyard. The building’s original facades are associated with the transition period that marked the shift from colonial to neoclassical architecture, inspired by Greek and Roman constructions, at the end of the 18th century and beginning of the 19th century (Instituto do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico Nacional 2015). On the sides, the building extends with a parameter of blocks made of rock constituting geometric solids on the first floor, with a sequence of full-arch windows and a fountain in the center, contemplating design characteristics of a colonized country (Instituto do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico Nacional 2021).

The General Archive of the City of Rio de Janeiro (AGCRJ) is another example of colonial traces in its architecture. Inaugurated in 1979, it was considered

by Michel Duchein, Inspector General of the Archives of France, as a model architectural construction in terms of physical structure and projection of the spaces based on the principles of the French architecture and international requirements (AGCRJ s.f.).

The redefinition of Brazilian architecture, indeed, had consolidated in RJ from the 1940s onwards, marked by local definitions (Souza, Brüske and Souza 2019).

The process of patrimonialization of the architecture within the scope of Brazilian public archives, therefore, was reflected in 1986 with the construction of the head office building of the Historical Archive of Joinville (AHJ [Arquivo Historico de Joinville]), which had contemplated the neocolonial style replacing the neoclassical and eclectic styles of architecture arising from European influence. A change of mentality towards incorporating the genuine Brazilian identity in the architectural context (Souza, Brüske and Souza 2019).

Based on research into the various elements of Portuguese art and architecture, the appropriation and reinterpretation of these elements, the search means to create an artistic and architectural language that referred to Brazilian history and culture. Neocolonialism was, therefore, a movement that emerged as a nativist reaction to the eclecticism then in vogue. It was opposed to the eclectic language, which combined elements of architectural styles from a so-called universal past (classical, medieval, Renaissance, Baroque and neoclassical) (Kessel 2008).

The AHJ building, designed according to neocolonial precepts (Souza, Brüske and Souza 2019), is compounded by two blocks in a rectangular plan with straight lines, focusing on functionality and plastic expression ensured by the apparent modular reinforced concrete structure, and not by ornamental elements. Marked by the imposing access portico, it has exposed brick cladding on the external masonry, construction techniques from the Joinville region, works and sculptures by plastic artists, active in the city, inside the building and garden, seeking dialogue with local references and breaking with the European models (Souza, Brüske and Souza 2019).

The precepts of the neocolonial architecture have reverberated over the years in Brazil (Souza, Brüske and Souza 2019), due to the repercussions of the work of the architect Oscar Niemeyer, with the Museum of the Future, as well as the construction of the AHJ, in seeking to value the local identity.

In 2012, the building projected to store the collection of the Public Archives of the State of São Paulo (APESP) changed from keeping documents in buildings and government palaces in the 19th century into a building based on constructive requirements to safeguard the Paulista memory. It disposes of a total of seventy thousand linear meters of documents and five floors covered with thermal plaques, considering the need for security against internal and external risk factors.

Brazil is a continental country with five regions that differ. The cultural diversity of this country—in its peculiarities in each state—denotes, in its patrimony, its evolution. Cutting ties with colonialism through connections of time and space and discovering its traditions, it exposes considering decoloniality as a fundamental element in the Brazilian urban archival and architectural scenario.

The History of Latin America proposes stringency in the elucidating of its memory, requiring a look at the ancestral cultures and the knowledge those historical archive constructions adapted and centered on European models do not correspond to reality. The reconstruction of Brazilian archives, under a decolonial perspective, makes up the collective sharing and reconsiders cultural identity and Brazilianness.

Architects, engineers and other professionals involved in the construction of archive buildings need to have archival knowledge in line with the knowledge coming from the community in which the archive is inserted, recommending the recording of group experiences in the search for the insertion of characteristic aspects into the construction (Morris 2005). Karabinos and Jeurgens (2020) expose the possibilities of developing infrastructures that contribute to the decoloniality of colonial archival legacies.

The birth of a new contemporary architectural identity under decolonial parameters is revealed in the work of Freddy Mamani in Bolivia, the promoter of a “new Andean architecture” designed in 2005 (Navarrete 2016).

The architectural expression present in the work outlined by Mamani, according to Navarrete (2016), demonstrates a way of claiming and rescuing Andean identity. From the use of traditional techniques of aesthetics and construction, the building exposes shapes and colors in its facades and interiors, as well as the incorporation of cultural elements typical of the native peoples of Bolivia (Navarrete 2016).

The need to rethink the structure of archives is portrayed in the study by Sela (2022) based on the construction of a decolonial archive, which portrays the history of Israeli colonial archives, the Palestinian villages that remained under military rule, and the erasure and attempt to control the culture of these peoples. The gathering of elements, testimonies, and narratives, kept on shared records, allows the collective construction of identity associated with the history of these communities, knowledge of their architectural, agricultural and geographic characteristics, building relationships, and types of construction and materials transcending the service of needs in the project (Sela 2022).

By sharing experiences and knowledge, communities expand their records, making them usable and contextualized in archival projects as a means of self-representation and identity construction (Sela 2022).

It is observed that through the search for ancestral and cultural elements, new forms of design become possible from a decolonial perspective.

Understanding the structural incorporation of Eurocentrism in architecture and archival science allows us to write new stories about those who were systematically excluded from architectural discourse, redesigning new spaces (Rozas-Krause 2022) and rebuilding the urban imaginary to which we are linked when thinking about historical repairs from a decolonial perspective in archival science.

Russel, Faulhead and McKemmish (2011) highlight the need for archival science to recognize the priorities of indigenous communities in adopting knowledge, oral history and evidence as essential for building models and strategies for archival services within a framework that reveals traditions and memories in a process of interrelation between them.

Decoloniality can subsidize the improvement of several aspects in the field of IS and archival science, above all, safeguarding the physical and immaterial dimension of cultural heritage in Brazil, especially in the selection of sources, approach cuts and its form of final representation through built experiences and reconstructed buildings (Ballestrin 2013; Araújo 2018).

From the understanding that there are different epistemological studies versed in the search for decoloniality, archive building can be thought of using the decolonial perspective. Within the perspective and the decolonial look, focused on the archival redesign, the representation of the community is inserted.

The rescue of characteristic elements of a local culture is reflected in an archive building that allows for the representation of one's own identity through the promotion of an environment of reception and integration.

Reflecting on a reconstruction of archive buildings that involves the community echoes the idea of appropriation and the symbolic flow of a population able to integrate its own history and memory, manifested in its design.

By weaving reflections on the centralization of previously silenced voices, the need for their participation amid the constructive process of an archive is reiterated when working to share the knowledge of those who will be the users, reconnecting with the land and traditional practices. It moves on towards a project inspired by the dialogue between different professionals and reinforces the need for collaborative work that will consider the history of peoples and ancestral cultures, which is fruitful in bringing unique contributions to the topic.

#### FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The vast majority of Brazilian public archives are stored in historical and governmental buildings. We have not yet surpassed the brands promoted by Brazil Colony. However, there are archive reconstruction initiatives that safeguard memory and create buildings with their own identity, such as the AHJ, which



sought to dialogue with local references, and the APESP that searched to establish traces of São Paulo's memory.

Archival buildings as environments of representation have repercussions on breaking colonial patterns and, consecutively, make structural changes in relation to interaction with the community, the formation of the collection, the curation of exhibitions, and the construction of cultural identities.

Decoloniality, as an element for the building reconstruction of archives, is revealed in the Brazilian urban archival and architectural scenario as a promising starting point for rethinking ways of designing based on integration with local references, materials, and construction techniques. In the need to redesign the environment, when thinking about archive buildings in the Brazilian context as constructions connected to its roots, in the formation of the collection and curation of exhibitions, in the collaboration of Brazilian cultural knowledge, indigenous and afro-Brazilian practice shared for the construction of identities that can be reflected in archive buildings, becoming constructive spaces of knowledge and representative of history and memory.

The manifestation of the architecture patrimonialization in the context of the construction of buildings for archives emerges as mentality changing, following the creation of the AHJ in the search for incorporation and promotion of local identity in its reconstruction process.

The reflection in this article highlights two concerns: what would these constructions and the urban scenario look like if indigenous and Afro-Brazilian communities had influenced the formation of city architecture? And what would buildings look like if these voices had not been silenced?

The study urges reconsidering the social role of archives in relation to the community in the formation of a building designed with a focus on memory, representation, and promotion of local culture.

Decoloniality as an element for reconstruction of archive buildings proves to be a promising starting point for rethinking ways of designing based on integration with their Indian peoples, afro-Brazilians and their local roots. It implies reflection on how this building would be produced with local materials and connected with ancestral roots, refraining from predominantly European design, and appealing to hegemonic countries. Would this building be constructed with specific elements to safeguard the records and documents that contemplate the history of its own population?

The answer to the question consists of evaluating the constructive parameters and guidelines, as well as adapting them to the specificities that the archive requires through risk management associated with the building in combination with the historical and cultural elements and characteristics that represent the memory of the people in its process of construction. The need

for protection and safeguarding of threatened trajectory knowledge, epistemological changes, and paths to follow is evident.

In conclusion, decolonizing permeates the construction of realities and the recognition of identities at the intersection of knowledge and epistemologies. Based on the proposed scenario, it is hoped that the paths traced so far can contribute to the expansion of new studies that encourage the debate on the adoption of a decolonial perspective in the archival context in relation to the archival environment built with the participation of local communities, as well as its implications for the process of reconstructing archive buildings.

## REFERENCES

- Aliaga, Lía. 2022. ¿Diseño decolonizador? Arquitectura y pertinencia cultural: visiones de decolonización. *ARQ (Santiago)* 110, abril: 150-2.  
<https://dx.doi.org/10.4067/S0717-69962022000100150>
- Araújo, Vítor Carvalho. 2018. *Edifícios de Arquivo: Futuros para o passado*. Portugal: Caleidoscópio. Arquivo Geral da Cidade do Rio de Janeiro (AGCRJ). s.f. Oriente-se. *Secretaria Municipal da Casa Civil*.  
<http://www0.rio.rj.gov.br/arquivo/oriente-se.html>
- Ballestrin, Luciana. “América Latina e o Giro Decolonial?”. 2013. *Revista Brasileira de Ciência Política*, (11), 89-117.1  
<https://www.scielo.br/j/rbcpol/a/DxkN3kQ3XdYYPbwwXH55jhw/abstract/?lang=pt>
- Barros, Thiago Henrique Bragato. 2015. Arquivística espanhola, canadense e brasileira: elementos históricos e conceituais. In *Uma trajetória da Arquivística a partir da Análise do Discurso: inflexões histórico-conceituais*, 97-204. São Paulo: Editora tUNESP.
- Bicca, Briane Elisabeth Panitz, and Paulo Renato Silveira Bicca. 2006. *Arquitetura na formação do Brasil*. Brasília: UNESCO.  
[http://portal.iphan.gov.br/uploads/publicacao/arq\\_formacao\\_do\\_brasil.pdf](http://portal.iphan.gov.br/uploads/publicacao/arq_formacao_do_brasil.pdf)
- Borko, H. 1968. Information Science: what is it? *American Documentation* 19 (1): 3-5.  
<https://www.marilia.unesp.br/Home/Instituicao/Docentes/EdbertoFereda/k---artigo-01.pdf>
- Buckland, Michael. 1991 Information as Thing. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science* 42(5): 351-36.  
<https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/b3d4/d7980d6a628b503003ef4e7763a93544508e.pdf>
- Collado López, Maria Luisa. 2015. La Construcción de edificios para archivos. Análisis y evaluación de La edificación de Archivos Históricos. Tesis de grado académico, Universitat Politècnica de València.
- Costa, Lucas Esperança da. 2014. Reféns da Memória: a tentativa de construção da identidade através do apagamento da memória. PhD dissertation, Universidade Federal de Juiz de Fora.  
<https://repositorio.ufjf.br/jspui/bitstream/ufjf/482/1/lucasesperancadacosta.pdf>
- Freitas, Patrícia de. 2011. Algumas pistas sobre o negro no período colonial através da documentação do Arquivo Público do Estado de Santa Catarina. *Agora: Arquivologia em Debate* 16(33-34): 58-72.  
<https://agora.emnuvens.com.br/ra/article/view/221>

- Gak, Igor, Nycole Toseli, Andressa Sousa da Costa, and Anna Carolina Araújo Chipoco. 2021. Arquivos e decolonialidade: breves considerações acerca de uma abordagem necessária em pesquisa e extensão. *Revista Raízes e Rumos* 9(2): 104-13. <http://seer.unirio.br/raizeserumos/article/view/11312/10718>
- Galeano, Eduardo. 1976. *Aveias Abertas para a América Latina*. Translated by Galeano de Freitas. Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra.
- Heynemann, Claudia. 2009. Arquivo Nacional: 170 anos. *Revista Acervo* 22(1): 209-16. <https://revista.an.gov.br/index.php/revistaacervo/article/view/110/110>
- Hjorland, Birger and H. Albrechtsen. 2000. Toward a New Horizon in Information Science: Domain-analysis. *Journal of Documentation* 56: 27-41.
- Ibáñez, Joaquín. 2008. *Los archivos: cómo construirlos*. Colección Archivos Siglo XXI. España: Trea.
- Instituto do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico Nacional (Iphan). 2015. Antiga sede do Arquivo Nacional (RJ) pode se tornar Patrimônio Cultural. *Iphan* 17, september. <http://portal.iphan.gov.br/pagina/detalhes/1059>
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2021. Rio de Janeiro: Casa da Moeda. *iPatrimônio*. <https://www.ipatrimonio.org/rio-de-janeiro-casa-da-moeda/#1/map=38329&loc=-22.906489999999987,-43.190782000000006,17>
- Jardim, José Maria. 1986. Instituições arquivísticas: estrutura e organização. A situação dos arquivos estaduais. *Revista do serviço do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico Nacional* 21: 39-42. <http://docvirt.com/docreader.net/DocReader.aspx?bib=reviphan&pagfis=7761>
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1995. A invenção da memória nos arquivos públicos. *Ciência da Informação* 25(2): 1-13 <https://revista.ibict.br/ciinf/article/view/659/663>
- Karabinos, Michael, and Charles Jeurgens. 2020. Paradoxes of curating colonial memory. *Archival Science* 20: 199-220 <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10502-020-09334-z>
- Kerlinger, Fred Nichols. 2013. *Metodologia da pesquisa em ciências sociais: um tratamento conceitual*. São Paulo: E.P.U.
- Kessel, Carlos. 2008. *Arquitetura neocolonial no Brasil: entre o pastiche e a modernidade*. Rio de Janeiro: Jauá Editora.
- Mignolo, Walter, and Marco Duke Oliveira. 2016. Colonialidade: o lado mais escuro da modernidade. *Revista Brasileira de Ciência da Informação* 32(94). <https://doi.org/10.17666/329402/2017>
- Miranda, Lucas Mascarenhas de. 2019. Memória individual e coletiva. *Jornal de Unicamp* 27, May. <https://www.unicamp.br/unicamp/ju/noticias/2019/05/27/memoria-individual-e-coletiva>
- Moassab, Andréia. 2020. *Por um ensino insurgente em arquitetura e urbanismo*. Foz do Iguaçu: Edunila. <https://portal.unila.edu.br/editora/livros/e-books/porumensinosite.pdf>
- Monteiro, Alef. 2021. O pensamento negro e suas relações com outras perspectivas decoloniais. In *Redes intelectuais: epistemologias e metodologias negras, descoloniais e antirracistas*, 23-41. Porto Alegre: Rede Unida. [http://repositorio.ufpel.edu.br:8080/bitstream/prefix/7914/1/Redes\\_Intelectuais\\_epistemologias\\_e\\_metodologias\\_negras\\_descoloniais\\_e\\_antirracistas.pdf](http://repositorio.ufpel.edu.br:8080/bitstream/prefix/7914/1/Redes_Intelectuais_epistemologias_e_metodologias_negras_descoloniais_e_antirracistas.pdf)
- Morris, Patricia Dopor. 2005. Building an Archives: A Case Study in South Carolina. *Journal of the Midwest Archives Conference* 29(1): 45-64. [https://minds.wisconsin.edu/bitstream/handle/1793/45924/MA29\\_1\\_4.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y](https://minds.wisconsin.edu/bitstream/handle/1793/45924/MA29_1_4.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y)

- Moura, Maria Aparecida. 2021. Sessão de abertura do XXI ENANCIB. Rio de Janeiro: IBICT. Ivideo (3:45:23).
- Navarrete, Carlos Gustavo Caro. 2016. *La Nueva Arquitectura Andina de Freddy Mamani Silvestre en la construcción de imaginarios urbanos y representación de identidad en la ciudad de El Alto Bolivia*, Chile: Universidade de la Frontera.  
[https://www.academia.edu/11818257/La\\_Nueva\\_Arquitectura\\_Andina\\_De\\_Freddy\\_Mamani\\_Silvestre\\_en\\_la\\_construcci%C3%B3n\\_de\\_imaginarios\\_urbanos\\_y\\_representaci%C3%B3n\\_de\\_identidad\\_en\\_la\\_ciudad\\_de\\_El\\_Alto\\_Bolivia?email\\_work\\_card=title](https://www.academia.edu/11818257/La_Nueva_Arquitectura_Andina_De_Freddy_Mamani_Silvestre_en_la_construcci%C3%B3n_de_imaginarios_urbanos_y_representaci%C3%B3n_de_identidad_en_la_ciudad_de_El_Alto_Bolivia?email_work_card=title)
- Ramos, Maria Estela Rocha. 2020. As lacunas dos estudos afro-brasileiros no ensino de arquitetura e urbanismo, In *Por um ensino insurgente em arquitetura e urbanismo*. Foz do Iguaçu: Edunila,151-161.  
<https://portal.unila.edu.br/editora/livros/por-um-ensino-insurgente-em-arquitetura-e-urbanismo>
- Reis, Larissa Guimarães. 2021. O processo no projeto e no ensino de arquitetura sob um olhar decolonial. In *Outros mundos: novas subjetividades, novos métodos*. Belo Horizonte: Periódicos UFMG, 7(1).  
<https://periodicos.ufmg.br/index.php/indisciplinar/issue/view/1789/303>
- Risério, A. 2012. *A cidade no Brasil*. First edition. São Paulo: Editora 34.
- Rozas-krause, Valentina. 2022. Decolonizing architecture? *Revista: ARQ* (110).  
[https://www.scielo.cl/scielo.php?pid=S0717-69962022000100014&script=sci\\_arttext&tlng=en](https://www.scielo.cl/scielo.php?pid=S0717-69962022000100014&script=sci_arttext&tlng=en)
- Rufer, Mario. 2016. El archivo: de la metáfora extractiva a la ruptura pós-colonial. In *(In)disciplinar la investigación: Archivo, trabajo de campo y escritura*, 160-86. México: Siglo XXI-UAM.  
[https://www.academia.edu/31072685/El\\_archivo\\_De\\_la\\_met%C3%A1fora\\_extractiva\\_a\\_la\\_ruptura\\_poscolonial](https://www.academia.edu/31072685/El_archivo_De_la_met%C3%A1fora_extractiva_a_la_ruptura_poscolonial)
- Russel, Lynette, Shannon Faulkhead, and Sue McKemish. 2011. Distrust in the Archive: Reconciling Records. *Arch Sci* (11): 211-39.  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10502-011-9153-2>
- Sela, Rona. 2022. Ghosts in the Archive: the Palestinian Villages and the Decolonial Archives. *GeoJournal* 4(87): 3423-42.  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10708-020-10364-4>
- Silva, Tiago José da, and Isa Maria Freire. 2020. Tecendo a rede conceitual. In *Epistemologia e historiografia na Ciência da Informação*, 19-62. João Pessoa: Editora UFPB. <http://www.editora.ufpb.br/sistema/press5/index.php/UFPB/catalog/view/740/871/6857-1>
- Silva, Armando Malheiro da, Júlio de Sluza, Luís Campos de Souza, and Fernanda Ribeiro. 1999. *Arquínística: Teoria e prática de uma Ciência da Informação*. Porto: Edições Afrontamento.
- Simson, Olga Rodrigues de Moraes. 2003. Memória, cultura e poder na sociedade do esquecimento. *Augusto Gusgo Revista Acadêmica* (6): 14-8.  
<https://doi.org/10.22287/ag.v0i6.57>
- Souza, Giane Maria de, Dinorah Luisa de Melo Rocha Brúske, and Luiza Morgana Klueger Souza. 2019. Arquivo Histórico de Joinville: o processo de patrimonialização da arquitetura moderna e institucional como monumento e documento. *Revista Confluências Culturais* 9(1).  
<https://doi.org/10.21726/rcc.v9i1.113>

- Terra, Guilhermina de Melo, Eliaquim Ferreira dos Santos, Edivanio Duarte de Souza, and Paulo Ricardo Silva Lima. 2023. Entre o apagamento da memória e a reescrita da história: a desinformação acerca da escravidão no Brasil. *Revista conhecimento em ação* 8(1). <https://revistas.ufrj.br/index.php/rca/article/view/59349/32435>
- Waisman, Marina. 2013. *O interior da história: historiografia arquitetônica para uso de latino-americanos*. São Paulo: Perspectiva.  
[https://edisciplinas.usp.br/pluginfile.php/5591176/mod\\_resource/content/0/waisman-marina-o-interior-da-histoacuteriapdf.pdf](https://edisciplinas.usp.br/pluginfile.php/5591176/mod_resource/content/0/waisman-marina-o-interior-da-histoacuteriapdf.pdf)

*Para citar este texto:*

- Souza, Ana Cristina de e Eliana Maria dos Santos Bahia Jacintho. 2023. “Reconstruction of archive buildings: the case of Brazil”. *Investigación Bibliotecológica: archivonomía, bibliotecología e información* 37 (97): 195-215.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.22201/iibi.24488321xe.2023.97.58822>