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**From the Danube to the Amazon:  
Austria-Hungary and Brazil in Global Trade and Migration (1870s–1914)**

The late 19th and early 20th centuries were marked by accelerating globalization, intensified international trade, and large-scale migration. As global powers, such as Great Britain, the United States, Germany, and France, expanded their influence through colonial ventures, Austria-Hungary faced the challenge of securing its own position in the world. Without overseas colonies, the Dual Monarchy had to rely on trade, investments, and migration networks to compete in global markets.

Brazil, often referred to as the land of economic opportunities, became a key destination for international migration and a promising arena for foreign economic actors. Central European businesses sought access to Brazilian markets, driven by growing demand for goods and labour. Shipping companies, trading firms, and financial institutions in the Habsburg Monarchy recognized Brazil as an emerging field of economic competition, where they had to navigate a complex environment dominated by stronger, more established players.

This presentation explores the economic and social ties between Austria-Hungary and Brazil, focusing on the strategies used by Central European enterprises to integrate into the Brazilian market. How did Austria-Hungary position itself in this competitive landscape? What challenges and opportunities did its businesses face in Brazil? To what extent did migration networks contribute to commercial activities? Through an analysis of trade agreements, business ventures, and migration flows, this study sheds light on an often-overlooked aspect of the Monarchy's global economic engagement.

While Austria-Hungary ultimately lacked the colonial reach of its European rivals, its involvement in Brazilian trade and migration exemplifies how even non-colonial empires could seek influence through economic diplomacy and entrepreneurial adaptability. This case study not only broadens our understanding of Central Europe's global connections but also raises new questions about the nature of imperial competition beyond territorial expansion.

**Paper proposal:**

**‘Aiding a downtrodden people to liberty’: European Filibusters and Forty-Eighter imperialism (1848-1851)**

During the 1850s, hundreds of European armed volunteers joined the so-called Filibuster expeditions that were organized in the United States, expeditions whose aim was to occupy adjacent territories and promote their annexation to the US republic in the name of Manifest Destiny. Enlistment in the paramilitary groups that formed the core of these expeditions seemed an attractive possibility to these recently arrived European migrants, including German and Hungarian political exiles from the 1848-1849 revolutions. These “Forty-Eighter” volunteers have traditionally been presented in historiography as idealist fighters willing to continue their struggles on the other side of the Atlantic through the armed expansion of republicanism. However, a close examination of their backgrounds, professions and careers in the Americas evidence their role as imperial agents of US territorial and economic expansionism, contributing to the establishment of settler colonies, taking part in the extermination of Native American peoples, and embarking on careers as colonial entrepreneurs. In the case of the expeditions launched against Cuba, they participated in plots that rejected an eventual abolition of slavery in the Spanish colony.

This paper approaches the phenomenon of European 1848 filibusterism using as an observatory Narciso López’s 1851 failed expedition against Cuba. Focusing on a selection of case studies of Hungarian and German volunteers that joined this expedition, this paper underlines their role as agents of what can be called “Forty-Eighter imperialism”. Drawing on their trajectories and building up on recent scholarship on transnational revolutionary exiles in the Americas, I argue that beyond its democratic outlook, Forty-Eighter filibustering in the US and Cuba went hand-in-hand with ideas of white European settler colonialism, republican martial masculinity, and economic imperialism, all of them connected with previous experiences of the European 1848. Moreover, focusing on transnational filibuster volunteers invites to reconsider the 1848 revolutions in Central Europe from a global perspective.

## **A New Galicia in Brazil: The Impact of Habsburg Federalism on Polish Colonial Thought**

Around 1890, a handful of Galicia-based Polish nationalists began promoting the organized colonization of Brazil. By encouraging migrants to expand the Polish-speaking community in the state of Paraná, they proposed creating a “New Poland” in South America. However, around the turn of the century, Lviv’s expansionists gave their “*Nova Polska*” program a significant makeover. They jettisoned the aim to forge an independent settler polity, recasting their political designs as an effort to gain Polish cultural autonomy within Brazil’s federal state system. This paper argues that the parallel rise of demands for national autonomy and federative reforms in late imperial Austria conditioned this federalist turn in Polish colonial thought. The pursuit of Galicia-style national autonomy both distinguished Polish colonial ambitions from contemporaneous German, Italian, and Japanese imperial projects in South America and remained a key current of Polish expansionist thinking into the interwar years. The history of Polish colonial thought thus reflects the Habsburg Empire’s lasting imprint on the Polish political imaginary, both at home and abroad.

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