

Intervention – “LatinX and Latin American Geographies: A Dialogue”

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Introduction

How are LatinX geographies and critical Latin American geographies linked? What connections can we make between two similar but distinct forms of geographical praxis and thought? As LatinX and Latin American feminist geographers, we strive to collectively respond to these central questions; *where* (and how) we are located has everything to do with our answers. Our locations are multiple and not fixed as we each move between different sites and relations across Abya Yala (the Americas). LatinX geographies have emerged in recent years amongst persons who live in North America that possess embodied and generational ties to Latin America, while Latin American critical geographies are developed and discussed mainly within Latin America. This Intervention begins a conversation between LatinX and Latin American geographies, in an effort to address and perhaps bridge impasses between these distinct and yet overlapping geographies and analytics.

What follows is a dialogue, in which we have shared virtual space with one another across the continents to grapple with the in/congruencies of LatinX and Latin American geographies. Our conversation is exploratory, seeking to develop relationships between us to build the trust necessary for honest conversation and deep reflection, the beginning of what we hope might grow into more substantial and prolonged dialogue over time. Initially meeting in fall 2020, we focused on getting to know one another by sharing our migratory experiences between Latin America and the US. We shared stories of struggles, mobility, discomfort, and the confusing nature of belonging along the Americas. Over the course of the year that followed, we met several times to discuss the following three questions first laid out in an article written for *Gender, Place and Culture* by Sofia Zaragocin (2021) as part of a collection on discomfort feminisms. [1] Should LatinX geographies consider travelling and engaging with Latin American critical geography and vice versa? [2] Who is a legitimate subject for engaging with LatinX

geographies in Latin America? [3] Under what conditions can this dialogue and subsequent actions take place? Before delving into our dialogue, we would like to situate ourselves in relation to one another, our respective positionings across Abya Yala, and our engagements with LatinX and Latin American critical geographies. While we each bring different embodied connections with Latin America as well as our distinct experiences of migration and Latinidad to the table, we recognise the limitations of our representations as four cis “mestiza” women engaging in this dialogue. We are also highly aware of not wanting to impose any praxis or theoretical framework from one part of the world onto the other.

In what follows we engage these questions in dialogue with each other as LatinX *and* Latin American feminist geographers, who embody different lived and generational mobilities.

“Why did you return?” is what a taxi driver asked Sofia Zaragocin, upon her return to Ecuador after living in the US for 18 years. Sofia Zaragocin was born in Ecuador and migrated to the United States at the age of five, where she lived until the age of 23. Since then, she has lived primarily in Ecuador, with a couple years in the UK for her doctoral work. Her theoretical work lies primarily in decolonising the Northern Anglocentric focus within feminist geography and further developing decolonial feminist geography discussions in Abya Yala. Her praxis as decolonial feminist geographer based in Ecuador has been with the Critical Geography Collective of Ecuador and Reexistencias Cimurranas, an autonomous group that deals with anti-racist praxis and knowledge construction across the Americas.

“Your Spanish is good, it’s just that your slang is so dated, you sound like you’ve been away from Mexico for a long time.” My chilanga cousin wasn’t wrong. I’ve been away from Mexico my whole life, and yet I somehow feel full when I return. Magie Ramírez is a Chicana born on Ramaytush Ohlone territories in the San Francisco Bay Area to a Mexican father and white American mother in an assimilationist middle-class household. Her work explores the intersections of race, resistance, and the urban, and what the creative practices of people experiencing dispossession can tell us of the underlying racial, colonial, and capitalist structures

of cities. Since 2015 she has co-authored and co-facilitated dialogues with Mushkegowuk geographer Michelle Daigle on decolonial geographies and how to build accountable relations across difference and across space. Through these conversations, she has explored the meanings and space that Chicanx and LatinX identities inhabit.

“Ah Ecuador! The Galapagos Islands! My friend went there for a summer programme, or to the Peace Corps or to volunteer with Indigenous people communities and learn Spanish, or teach English” is what Maria García often hears when she introduces herself. Maria is an Andina queer lesbian was born and raised in Quito, Ecuador. She migrated to the United States in her early 20s to reunite with her mother who had migrated because of the crisis of the dollarisation of Ecuador’s economy in 2000. She returned to live in Ecuador for a period of time, and in 2007 she moved to New York City where she lives. She has maintained ties in Ecuador that trace back to her work during the 1990s with political and cultural arts *colectivas* linked to anticapitalist feminist social movements. She has worked on publications and transnational research with movement-minded academia in Ecuador. Her research is dedicated to critical migration studies and the ways that transnational migrations change landscapes and geographies, and speculates about openings for solidarity economics, autonomy, and anti-imperialist internationalist solidarity. In Queens, New York in community with Ecuadorian and other groups from Abya Yala her work is rooted in feminist transnational solidarity and anticolonial pedagogy, theory, and practices to build community of care, learning, and autonomous organisations.

“It is so great to finally have a professor that looks like me!” is one of the most rewarding (and yet saddening) phrases I often hear from some of my Latinx students. Yolanda González Mendoza was born and raised in a small rural community in Michoacán, Mexico. At the age of 17, she migrated to the United States along with her mother to join her father and extended migrant community in Washington (state). Before then, ever since she remembers, her father migrated to the United States as an undocumented worker for the farming industry where most of her expansive migrant community continues to work. In Mexico, she continues to have

an extensive community who she visits often and is in constant relation with. In context of displacement, bordering, and racism, her work focuses on analysing how wisdoms from the South—ways of being and knowing that value solidarity, respect, and reciprocity; passed from generation to generation; adapted and re-adapted to confront old and new barriers—have been brought into the North; adapted and re-adapted to create meaningful and humane life amid state-sponsored violence.

It is from our respective positionings and lived experiences across the Americas that we enter this dialogue, weaving a conversation with the theoretical frameworks of LatinX and Latin American geographies. For the most part, LatinX geographies and Latin American critical geography have yet to theoretically engage one another in substantive ways. Due in part to the whiteness and colonial tradition of geography as a discipline (Bruno and Faiver-Serna 2022; Gilmore 2002; Pulido 2002), LatinX geographies is a relatively new subfield in geography (Faiver-Serna 2019; Ybarra and Muñoz 2019). As such, the contours of the subfield have not yet been explicitly defined by LatinX geographers, but these conversations are in formation (LatinX Geographies Collective forthcoming). While LatinX geographies is undeniably informed by the long genealogies of LatinX, Indigenous, and ethnic studies more broadly (Faiver-Serna 2019; Ybarra and Muñoz 2019), what makes LatinX geographies distinct is its attention to how power functions *spatially* and how colonialism and racial capitalism shape diasporic LatinX life and identity across space. The emphasis on space and how differently racialised peoples experience and produce place in distinct ways, demonstrates how LatinX geographies is deeply informed by Black geographic theory (Cahuas 2019b; McKittrick and Woods 2007). More broadly, scholars of LatinX geographies draw on interdisciplinary and feminist critical theories and methods from an array of academic fields, including from Latinx/Chicanx (Cahuas 2019a, 2021; Herrera 2015; Muñoz 2016a; Pulido 2002; Ramírez 2020), Black (Cahuas 2019b; Pulido and Lara 2018; Ramírez 2020), Indigenous (Cahuas 2020; Daigle and Ramírez 2019; Pulido 2018; Valencia 2019), queer of colour (Muñoz 2016b; Sandoval 2018), and migration/mobility (Guhlincozzi

2020; Herrera 2016; Valencia 2017; Valencia et al. 2020; Ybarra 2019, 2021; Ybarra and Peña 2017) scholarship, among others.

Regarding our lived subjectivities as LatinX and Latin American scholars operating in varied academic contexts, we feel that an analysis of the economies of knowledge production in geography and in academia more broadly is important (Cusicanqui 2010; Segato 2016). LatinX geographies contribute analytical lenses to unsettle tropes about migrants and the places where migrants and LatinX people live in the US. This work is necessary precisely because we as LatinX and Latin American scholars are constantly confronted with the longstanding question of who are the objects and subjects of research and study? Who is able to produce theory, and what counts as data? Beyond the importance of celebrations of cultural pride and diversity, these works unearth the complexity of the socio-political conditions and relational vulnerabilities of people of colour in North America and are attentive to the everyday lives of LatinX people and migrants. We see these works as offering a major contribution to troubling these economies of knowledge production in North America. Some questions are relevant to both LatinX and Latin American scholars. For example: what topics of research about either Latin America or LatinX geographies become professional currency, and who benefits? How could we destabilise a LatinX identity to make it more difficult to box within systems of racial categorisation that ultimately serve to uphold white supremacy? How do we ensure that LatinX and Latin American identities do not become reduced to marketable performances under multiculturalism, and how do we unsettle these renderings within the neoliberal university?

The work of artist Alan Pelaez Lopez is illuminating to think critically about LatinX geographies, and the relationship between Latinidades and LatinX identities. This work proposes that the X is a four-pronged wound: the wound of settlement, anti-Blackness, femicide, and inarticulation. Citing the work of scholar Juana María Rodríguez (2014), Pelaez (2018) presents the first notion of wounding through settlement: “the emergence of a Latinx identity is facilitated through settler-colonialism”. For Rodríguez (2014), Latinidad is a specific geographical identity

located in the United States in the experiences of people of Latin American descent; in her words it is an intervention that “immediately invokes cartographic debates about the precise borders of Latin America”. For Pelaez the wound of settlement in Latinidad is born from the genocide and dispossession of Indigenous and Black peoples. In the case of the wound of in-articulation, Pelaez (2018) speaks about the X as the incompleteness and imprecision of the attempt to speak about the violence of colonialism, pointing at the depth of dispossession and “the fact that many of us experience such an intense displacement and silence that we have no language in which to articulate who we are”. This notion of the wound evokes the gesture that Malcolm X used to describe the impossibility of home for Black diasporic peoples: “For me, my ‘X’ replaced the white slavemaster name of ‘Little’ which some blue-eyed devil named Little had imposed upon my paternal forebears” (in Haley 1973: 203). Following Pelaez’ theorisations, the X insists that our conversations grapple with the violent crux of colonialism from which Latinidad emerges. With these notions at hand to reflect about the possibility of dialogue between LatinX geographies and Latin American critical geographies, this foundation gives us tools to continue to disassemble colonial borders, geographies, and embodiments of the imprecise; the possibility of dialogue feels like a promising task.

Latin American critical geography has been primarily influenced by Marxist geography, with a recent turn towards decolonial, feminist, and migration geographies, as well as political ecology (Vela-Almeida et al. 2020; Zaragocin et al. 2018). Liberation theology, participatory action research, and popular education frameworks have largely determined the praxis of Latin American critical geography. Tensions with US-based or European geographies are present, given the desire of the field to distinguish itself from its Northern counterparts (Ramírez Velázquez 2012). Hence, making connections between Latin American and LatinX geographies *within* Latin American critical geography can be challenging because of the need to call attention to the implicit power imbalance in geographical knowledge construction between North and South. Yet how Latin American geography is institutionalised is changing, led by the collective

efforts of autonomous groups that facilitate social cartography and geographic knowledge construction with social movements and political agendas in mind (Bayón and Torres 2019; Fenner et al. forthcoming). The link between Latin American critical geography and social-territorial movements has long been present (Porto-Gonçalves 2009), however a hemispheric and decolonial approach is now possible because of the *collective* nature of contemporary Latin American critical geography. Collective critical Latin American geography is in direct dialogue with anti-racist, decolonial, and feminist geographies across the Americas, building relational anti-racist decolonial feminist praxis (Berman-Arévalo 2021; Colectivo de Geografía Crítica del Ecuador 2018; Geobrujas-Comunidad de Geógrafas 2021).

Despite the theoretical limitations and possible tensions between LatinX geographies and Latin American critical geography, multiple links can be drawn between decolonial feminist geography in Latin America and LatinX decolonial feminist geography. North American LatinX scholars such as Madelaine Cahuas (2021: 1214-1215) understand LatinX decolonial feminist geographies as LatinX peoples' "intricate weaving of politics, knowledges, identities, stories, creative practices, and relationships, in and through spaces and places to incite social transformation rooted in a shared desire and commitment to social justice and decolonization". Along similar lines, Valencia's (2019) work looks at how LatinX immigrants produce meaningful (social) life and spaces of belonging in the midst of state sponsored violence in the US, demonstrating how the enactment of decolonial ways of being and knowing in everyday life and in celebration, result in the production of kinship, interconnection, and joy. Daigle and Ramírez (2019: 80) weave Black, Indigenous, and LatinX feminisms to theorise decolonial geographies, framing the decolonial as "an affirmative refusal of white supremacy, anti-blackness, the settler colonial state, and a racialised political economy of containment, displacement and violence", an analytic that extends beyond colonial borders and is particular to the geographies of any given place. In Latin America, decolonial feminist geographies are defined as centring knowledge production from the diverse experiences of the "others" of

hegemonic feminism—queer and trans, Indigenous, Afrodesendants, campesinas, migrants, working-class peoples (Berman-Arevalo 2021; Ulloa 2021). These scholars work towards geographic disobedience from Abya Yala as a way to move Latin American decolonial feminisms forward. In particular, *cuerpo-territorio* has been a key framework within these debates both as a method and a concept in which the ontological unity between bodies and territories is stressed (Zaragocin and Caretta 2021; Ulloa 2021). *Cuerpo-territorio* responds to other ontological and epistemological ways of understanding the human and non-human relations from Indigenous feminisms (Ulloa 2021). In this way, decolonial feminist geographies in the South are highly influenced by communitarian, decolonial, and Indigenous feminisms in Latin America, and in the North, decolonial scholarship is largely influenced by Black, Indigenous, and Third World feminisms.

In the dialogue that follows, we each bring a distinct set of theoretical viewpoints that result in important intersections between LatinX geographies and Latin American critical geography. We emphasise a hemispheric dialogue that unsettles colonial nation-state formations that divide North America and Latin America and consider decolonial spatial imaginaries such as Abya Yala as a *lugar* (place) that inspires this dialogue. This piece follows scholars and activists that are looking to find historical and political commonalities across the Americas, and we find it necessary to centre Black, Indigenous, and LatinX scholarship in developing hemispheric conceptions of identity and relation (Figueroa-Vásquez 2020; Hooker 2017; King 2019). Our embodied geographical trajectories are many, contradictory, and messy; what we bring forward here is an effort to foster dialogue and action.

Should LatinX geographies consider travelling and engaging with Latin American critical geographies, and vice versa?

Sofia Zaragocin Carvajal (SZC): Many would ask why this is even a question. If we are all Latin American, if we have a common origin, then this question seems redundant. However, our entangled histories are complex, and it should not be taken for granted that LatinX geographies and Latin American critical geographies are one and the same. Perhaps, our biggest mistake would be to make any assumptions about the relationship between these two geographic representations in critical geography. From a decolonial lens, honouring the colonial formations of Latin American is problematic. As Juliet Hooker has written in her book *Theorizing Race in the Americas* (2017), the historical and colonial links between racist ideologies such as mestizaje and white supremacy become apparent from a hemispheric scale. The hemispheric approach and dialogue we are developing is a way beyond methodological nationalisms implicit in transnational analysis. We are not entering a dialogue from different nations, but rather from different colonial territorial formations. I continue to think about how the flow of transnational North-South dialogue within feminist geography, and the possibilities when decolonial perspectives in geography emerge not only from the South but also from migrant peoples in the North. I consider our dialogue to be a step forward in creating hemispheric dialogue.

Margaret Marietta Ramírez (MMR): Following Sofia, I wonder about how LatinX geographies might trouble the different geopolitical framings of Latin America / North America if we instead centre our framing of the Western Hemisphere as consisting of shared geographies of conquest and colonisation. After reading Tiffany Lethabo King's book *The Black Shoals* (2019), I have been thinking a lot about what the analytic of conquest opens up for transnational conversations on LatinX geographies. By grounding conversations of dispossession in histories

and geographies of conquest, LatinX geographies might better engage in dialogue with Black and Indigenous studies and scholars from across the Americas and Caribbean. Afro-LatinX scholars such as Yomaira Figueroa-Vásquez are already bridging these geographies, whose book *Decolonizing Diasporas* (2020) centres Afro-LatinX and Afro-Atlantic theorists to push decolonial thought in the Americas. Figueroa-Vásquez (2020: 6) also echoes necessary calls from LatinX Caribbean scholars rejecting “notions of a Latinidad based on social and political racial hierarchies founded on mestizaje and anti-Black discourses on the islands and in the diaspora”. So, when I think of LatinX and Latin American geographies travelling and engaging with one another, I think it is imperative that we not only further these dialogues, but ensure that Afro and Indigenous LatinX scholars and scholarship, situated from geographies across the hemisphere, are centred.

Maria Alexandra García (MAG): I echo Sofia’s and Magie’s reflections about the complex relationship of these two geographies. I agree that their correlation should not be assumed but bridged. This engagement should be intentional and rooted in concrete efforts in favour of decolonisation of knowledge production, pluriverses, and to undiscipline the field of geography. As an Andean person from urban Ecuador, I’ve experienced extractivist knowledge production from scholars parachuting from the North over the subjects of the South. I wonder how a dialogue can remain as a site of contestation within the discipline of geography in the United States neoliberal university. We should work to disrupt tropes and representations of Latin America and ourselves as objects and subjects of study through colonial geographies and hierarchical representations of nation states. Imperial and colonial representations often regurgitate tropes about Latin America and the Caribbean as underutilised resources awaiting capitalist exploitation.

Thus, this dialogue must start amongst us decolonial feminist LatinX geographers that have acquired border mobility and developed an analysis of power, in relationship to ethnic

groups, class, and geographic locations. In our relationship, the dialogue should explicitly carve an oppositional space in productive tension with the university and the discipline of geography, to actualise the ways that we geographers engage in our work with the demands of oppressed peoples here (USA) and there (Latin America). For me bridging this dialogue also means reinforcing the autonomy of people in the global South within the US, which is key to stitching alternative geographies, which correlates with Magie’s point of examining interconnected geographies of conquest to undo the nation as the only container of linked histories in the hemisphere. The sisterhood between Black and LatinX geographers has already been pivotal for this exercise. What are the other interspaces that emerge with our dedication to decolonise LatinX geographies?

Yolanda González Mendoza (YGM): Entering our conversation from a decolonial perspective, I too will refer to the entire continent as Abya Yala—with all its diverse geo-histories, experiences, and peoples.

I agree, Magie: a lens of “shared geographies of conquest and colonisation” uncovers correlations of such geographies and experiences of dispossession across Abya Yala, past and present. After “independence”, racial power structures (and ideologies) continued. While settler colonialism is clear in the North, a version of settler colonialism south of the northern border is flourishing (Zaragocin 2019). Indigenous, Indigenous-descent mestizos, and Black peoples continue to experience land and labour dispossession across Abya Yala as displacement and land-grabbing by US-based corporations increase. Critical LatinX Indigeneities scholarship (see Blackwell et al. 2017) connects displacement, settler colonialism via racial capitalism, and mass incarceration of the same displaced peoples—framed as illegal immigrants—in the US.

Thus, if our goal is liberation from such neocolonial/imperial violence, then our dialogue must travel across Abya Yala because such violence travels too; and people also move. As Maria mentions, our dialogue must come from our (geographical) context(s). Such context can include

multiple geographical spaces, as in the case of LatinX scholars who work (and identify) with immigrant communities in the US. My own work on migration couldn't be possible without analysing processes and experiences across the migration journey to include origin, national borders, and destination. As such, my work engages feminist Indigenous and critical scholarship from Latin America (Bonfil Batalla 1996; Cusicanqui 2010; Maldonado Aranda 2012; Segato 2016). Often how LatinX immigrants perceive their life in the United States is in relation to their ongoing experiences and connections with places of origin in Latin America (see Valencia 2017). As such, sharing and connecting knowledge, experiences, and relations from the different parts of the continent would be a powerful approach to our *batalla*.

As Opaskwayak Cree scholar Shawn Wilson (2012) says, doing work by and for our own communities is more ethical as we have deeper commitment (respect and accountability) to our communities. Then, we should share our struggles and contradictions across Abya Yala to create strategies to confront them.

Who is a legitimate subject for engaging with LatinX geographies in Latin America?

SZC: Who is Latin, LatinX, Latin American? Does this need to be defined? These questions are profoundly uncomfortable because they denote processes of recognition and categorisation. It also implies that we need legitimacy to speak even amongst ourselves. As Yolanda has brought up in our dialogue: what is the difference in positionality between a Latinx and a Latin American scholar? Can Latinx scholars exist in Latin America? And can Latin American scholars exist in the US? Can someone be both a Latinx and a Latin American scholar? In this dialogue we all have different answers and positionalities to these questions.

In Latin America the term LatinX needs to be explained. It is not a term that is familiar to critical geographers in Latin America. For many Latin American geographers, the geographic privileges implicit in creating theory from the North is cause for suspicion. Any common

historical or geographical similarities are not so easily apparent because of structural inequalities in knowledge construction processes.

Studies stemming both from the North and South look to migrants and their experience as research objects not as epistemic agents. An immigrant is not supposed to come back to Latin America and create theory. Nor is an immigrant supposed to create theory in the US. While both LatinX geographies and Latin American critical geographies are critical of methodological nationalisms (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2003), there are still aspects determined by where we come from and with whom we are in dialogue with that shapes our scholarship. As Yolanda Valencia (2021: 20) writes, “[b]eing in between the margins and academia is a site of grief” for immigrants in the United States. And bridging Latinx and Latin American geographies brings up extreme discomfort because mobility between the North and South (as well as other trajectories) is often an acutely painful experience.

MMR: Sofia is pointing to important sites of foreclosure in these dialogues, where the frame of the conversation itself is not expansive enough. I wonder if hang-ups on language and identification is limiting our imagination and the possibilities of where our dialogue can go.

I identify as Chicana, and yet this identity has evolved for me over time. As Michelle Habell-Pallán (2005) taught me, to be Chicanx is a political identity as much as an ethnic one, and despite the blind-spots and oversights of Chicanx scholarship and activism over the years, I continue to identify as Chicana. I believe that to be a Chicana feminist is to embody and practice a particular politic, and that this politic can continue to evolve and to push previous iterations. I am committed to embodying a Chicana identity and political praxis that confronts white supremacy and anti-Blackness and does not appropriate Indigenous cosmologies. I feel strongly that mestizx peoples should actively undermine, destabilise, and refuse white supremacist structures and ideologies that are dominant in LatinX and Latin American cultures. Only upon doing so can we work in accountable relation to our Black and Indigenous kin.

As time goes on I have less and less interest in making claims of Latinidad, although Mexico and my familial ties there will always inform my identity. Rather, I am invested in how to dismantle white supremacist patriarchal logics that uphold racial capitalist and colonial states across national borders. I am invested in finding language to build dialogue and organise toward liberation alongside differently dispossessed peoples. To me, a big part of this organising across the Américas requires that ideologies of anti-Blackness and anti-Indigeneity are not infused into the futures we are envisioning, no matter the colonial state context.

MAG: Sofia's and Magie's points about the complexity of identity categorisation and recognition are important given that one's journeys of migration and mobility are not linear or permanent. My journeys in both places shape my own oppositional knowing-feeling as part of my migration experience to the US because of the 2000 economic crisis; however, I did not cross the multiple borders by foot as the majority of people from Ecuador do. As an immigrant I have been taught to identify the cult to ethnicity for the sake of cultural nationalistic unity here and there. In the US, culturally homogenising exclusive-inclusive Latinidad is a cultural force to reckon with when it is about exclusion or assimilation and proximity to the benefits of white supremacy. In the complex landscapes of differences, identity, and race relations in the US and in Abya Yala the question of authenticity could limit the possibilities of the valuable interventions that LatinX geographies could create. At the same time, we must be aware of how vulnerable the LatinX identification could be and is already to neoliberal multiculturalist appropriation. For this reason, when I look in depth at the ways we can practice transnational-transborder solidarity and reflect about the structures power, I find that LatinX geographies have an important role to problematise the position that Latin America and the Caribbean have in the discipline of geography as a subject-object of knowledge. Rather these geographies are sites of theory and knowledge-feeling production that have to confront epistemic and structural violences. Epistemic violence is sustained by state violence, economic and extractivist

interventions that seek to exterminate the *sentir-pensar* (knowledge-feeling) that conform the plurality of worlds of *Abya Yala*. How can we practice and form communities of learning and solidarity that are explicit in not exporting forms of knowledge that reproduce the relationship of the colonial academia and the epistemic advantage of the North in relationship with Latin America and the Caribbean? For LatinX geographies in Latin America to dialogue the explanation that Sofia refers to as from different colonial territorial formations, is key to bridge the lack of knowledge Latin America and Caribbean scholars have about the realities of LatinX people in the United States.

The importance of questioning the structures of knowledge and feeling that enable epistemic violence can start by recognising how the geographies of Latin American are learned and propagated. An example is the tendency of the basic geography undergraduate textbooks in the US that portray Latin America as a menu of natural resources and touristic destinations or research topics that foster cataloguing and classification of regions by their natural resources. This approach leads to reproducing extractive forms of knowledge and feeling. The paradox that I observe is that the feelings over unexploited resources and exuberance tropes of Latin Americas cultural heritage can be one of the elements that glue the pride of LatinX identities. This occurs more visibly in its pop culture and market oriented dominant version. To propose this dialogue is to engage with these imagined geographies and examine the ways that LatinX geographies can contribute to problematising colonial geographies especially in transnational migration scholarship and issues of extractivism and environmental racism and justice. Since the geographies of colonialism and conquest have functioned like a barbed wire that links LatinX geographies in the US, the ultimate task is to produce and create scholarship in which we dialogue with the projects and struggles for liberation of the people and territories in *Abya Yala*. If we consider this moment as a gesture or a turning point that un-disciplines the field of geography, the emerging research in both LatinX geographies and Latin American and Caribbean critical geographies in relationship with the United States, function as a compass for

the growth of anti-racist international, intercommunal solidarity movements, and I believe both are successful projects in progress.

YGM: In reading this question and your reflections I also wonder: if we are truthfully engaging from a decolonial lens, why are we asking such a question of validation based on a colonial identity anyway? This is further fracturing us apart!

As you do, Sofia and Maria, I identify as an immigrant, along with my Mexican community in the United States. However, I wonder how such identity is also preventing us from approaching a conversation from a decolonial lens. If we do not embrace such a label/identity, then we are just people who moved north and became uninvited guests, or perhaps settlers (Tuck and Yang 2012), but not conquistadores (King 2019); we are people who endure the long-lasting effects of colonialism and current US imperialism across Abya Yala. The white conquistador-settler (as per King 2019) frames us as immigrants here in the North (Walia 2014); but we are just Abya Yalans who moved. If we are to engage from a decolonial lens, then colonising labels should be taken with caution and from a critical perspective to avoid reproducing the colonial violence that these are set to do.

Also, we shouldn't assume that every "LatinX" in the US academia comes from privileged backgrounds; nor can we assume that there are not privileged scholars/faculty in Latin American universities. While there are geographic privileges (across North and South), there is also marginalisation and racialisation at the level of our bodies in the North. All of this doesn't make us less capable of producing theory; quite the opposite, our embodied experiences across space provide us with unique experiential wisdoms (Yosso 2005). Centring such wisdoms is a powerful method of decolonising knowledge and our relations across space.

Under what conditions can this dialogue and subsequent actions take place?

SZC: The encounter between LatinX geographies and Latin American critical geographies must be made with the utmost care and compassion. We are having an uncomfortable conversation, which needs simultaneous reflections. I can't have this conversation on my own, or with like-minded research activists in Latin America. I need this conversation to happen with LatinX geographers in the North. In this way this dialogue is distinct.

Feminist, anti-racist, and decolonial geographies across the Americas are having similar conversations around common political praxis. Critical geography with its emphasis on relational place-making is exactly *where* this conversation can be had. Very much in line with Abya Yala and Aztlan as decolonial imaginations of space where the impossible is given a place, this dialogue is developing another imagined *lugar*.

MMR: Yes, care, compassion, and trust are essential in having honest conversations. I think we need to build relationships to create the conditions for generous dialogue. And we need to be OK with the fact that this takes time and is often contrary to the pace of academia. This conversation is important and has been a long time coming, and it won't occur overnight. It also may get messy. These aren't easy themes to broach.

I also think that some aspects of this dialogue may not be for public consumption, and that we need to be honest with one another and ourselves about that. My collaborator and dear friend Michelle Daigle and I have learnt that the hard way over the years in our conversations. The colonial and extractive gaze remains prevalent in geography, and we as differently marginalised scholars should not feel obligated to perform our struggles nor air our dirty laundry for the sake of the discipline.

MAG: Yes, the conditions for this dialogue should be about building trust, compassion as an explicit commitment to care for those questions and the dissemination of research as key. What questions can we pose to the place that the tradition of Latin American studies, Latino studies, and migration studies occupy in US academia? Again, what place is assigned to Latin America under the colonial gaze of geography? These questions can facilitate our dialogues and identify our interlocutors for these conversations in the US while we prepare ourselves to support the next generations of students and research. Our focus on relationships and the time it takes to build them transnationally is already an action that negates the pace of the neoliberal university. The reasons we build these relationships in the process of creating dialogue here and there is a concrete action. Another action could be to have intentional dialogues about the focus of research in the immediate places where we are located instead of continuing to foster ideas that research abroad is the highest caché for academic career advancement. Participatory and community research in the places we are located can be of utmost importance to initiate students with visions of solidarity with the ways people are suffering and organising within the settler state.

YGM: Under decolonial relations and from the decolonial place of Abya Yala. Engaging from this position is key (and we all agree) because it can enable us to place each other in relation, in context of colonial and empire conditions across Abya Yala. And as such, it can enable us to listen and share in a respectful, reciprocal, and accountable manner towards each other and our communities across Abya Yala. This can enable us to be in relation as a constellation rather than as single stars as per (Simpson 2017); and then be part of the constellation that will guide us towards decolonial futures, as per Daigle and Ramírez (2019).

Conclusion

This Intervention has sought to open a dialogue between LatinX and Latin American geographies, as well as between LatinX and Latin American feminist scholars. By responding to a series of questions and posing others that intend to trouble the borders between LatinX and Latin American subjectivities, we have attempted to wade into the complexities of these identities, and the colonial, racial, and geopolitical implications of these perceived boundaries. While LatinX and Latin American identities are diverse, and neither the terms *Latinidad* nor LatinX fully encompass their complexities, we have sought to tease out our relations under shared histories and geographies of colonialism and empire. Our intention is not to propose any analytics that could unify the Americas as a geographic site, nor smooth the fraughtness of *Latinidad* as a concept. Rather, we end with further questions and provocations that merit continued exploration.

It is important to not homogenise LatinX and Latin American geographies; we find that despite the desire for a shared geographic focus across the Americas, it would be impossible to generalise places, experiences, or subjectivities across the hemisphere under the guise of *Latinidad*. LatinX geographies require an ongoing and increasing dialogue with Latin American geographies and geographers in order to not lose sight of the US' and Canada's role in ongoing global imperialism. Such a dialogue would ensure that Latinx geographies are not solely preoccupied with the socio-political and neoliberal projects of race in North America, but also thinking expansively about how colonialism and racial capitalism function across the Americas, connecting lived experiences across space. For instance, increased inequality resulting in large part from ongoing US imperial power over Latin America, continues to produce mass displacement, forcing many to move from the South into the North. Such people face another form of imperialism (of legal violence) in the US. The same peoples who become othered and

labelled as Hispanic and/or Latino immigrants in the US experience imperial violence across the Americas North and South, and most continue to have familial ties in their places of origin. Indeed, it is worth mentioning how profoundly interdependent communities across Abya Yala are in their everyday survival; the remittances of Latinx migrant families in the North are necessary lifelines that support relatives who remain in the South, and extended family networks experience similar empire-produced organised abandonment and violence across the hemisphere. As such, organising across space is vital to make sense of ongoing imperial and colonial violence: networks of love, care, communication, and interdependence sustain the reproduction of our existence nurtured by these inter-spatial bonds.

Nevertheless, there are different levels of interest in engagement amongst LatinX geographies and Latin American geographies. Latin American geographies would benefit from further dialogue with LatinX geographies to consider how Black, Indigenous, and LatinX embodied experiences and theories are also worthy of serious engagement, despite being geographically situated in the heart of empire. In fact, precisely for this reason, it is necessary to engage these geographies for they tell another story of experiences of oppression and resistance in the belly of the beast. Creating these dialogues across space is an important part of building international anti-capitalist and decolonial feminist movements. For example, the work of US-situated Black and Afro-Latinx scholars such as Yomaira Figueroa-Vásquez (2020), Juliet Hooker (2017), and Tiffany Lethabo King (2019) offer powerful theoretical lenses that could enrich understandings of colonialism and racial formation across the Americas. As Sharlene Mollett (2021: 812) argues, we need “hemispheric, relational and intersectional understanding[s] of race and coloniality” to bridge our experiences across the continent. Meanwhile LatinX geographies would benefit from further engagement with Latin American critical geographies, and in particular collective feminist geographical praxis that places particular emphasis on decolonial geographical methodologies. Latin American critical geography collectives embody ways of doing decolonial feminist and antiracist work *outside* the neoliberal university,

exchanges that place life at the centre of decolonial forms of geographic knowledge construction. Bridging the histories and methods of these feminist collective movements in Abya Yala helps to build relations of resistance across colonial borders, connecting movements across the hemisphere and de-centring the North American context.

Engaging analytics that think across time and space enable us to explore how shared histories of colonialism and imperialism have shaped the geographies and the colonial racial capitalist order of countries across the Americas. These shared histories present a relation whose burden does not fall evenly upon differently-racialised Latinx and Latin American peoples, and the racisms with origins in Indigenous genocide and the transatlantic slave trade need to be unsettled. We find it necessary to trouble the ways that mestizaje serves to uphold white supremacy; the normalisation of mestizaje in many places across the Americas serves to erase Black and Indigenous presence and subjectivities, and needs to be destabilised. Our shared relations under empire do not smooth out how we experience the world differentially along racial, gendered, economic, and geographic lines, yet a dialogue and shared recognition of these fraught relations begin to build a greater understanding.

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