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Human geography has been late to embrace Latinx geographies, partly due to historical masculinist Anglophone traditions that took Westphalian nation-states as a basis for inquiry even as they sought to question them, and later due to the historical and continued whiteness of geographers themselves (Pulido, 2002; Bruno & Faiver-Serna, 2022). In the United States, what came to be known as Chicano/a studies stemmed from collaborative activist efforts of the 1960s that established ethnic studies departments in universities. Based on the politics of experience, the merging of theory and practice (praxis), and the concept of Aztlán, Chicana/o studies gave voice to the struggles of farm-workers, immigration/border rights activists, the Brown power movement, and Chicana feminisms that were excluded from normative disciplines (e.g., sociology, geography, anthropology, and history). Rooted in struggle, knowledge production from below, and testimonios, the work of queer Chicanx feminists like Gloria Anzaldúa and Cherrié Moraga (1983) is at the heart of the canon of what became Latinx studies. While geographers have long studied immigration, violence, and labor inequalities, Latinx studies offered intellectual nourishment to those scholars hungering for attention to the agency of Latinx communities alongside recognition of the violence they face.

Following an activist-rooted tradition, since the 2000s a small number of Latinx human geographers have contributed to the growing research on Latinidades, or a plurality of Latinx identities, in a broad array of issues including environmental justice struggles and the relationship between political economy and identities in race, immigration, gender, and labor. Notably, Laura Pulido has engaged in pathbreaking work, from highlighting the activism of both rural and urban Latinx communities for environmental justice (Pulido, 1996, 2000, 2015), to naming the structures and traditions in geography as a discipline that have limited scholarship (Pulido, 2002, 2018). Her work in the field is notable not only because it is brilliant, but also because she is one of the few Latinx human geographers to attain recognition as a full professor whose research encompasses—but is not limited to—Latinx identities. In particular, her work exemplifies that Latinx geographies have much to offer to the literature on transnational migrations but are not limited to this area of inquiry. Latinx human geographers' contributions become significant as geography as a discipline has failed to engage with Latinx scholarship, and geographers continue to tell our stories while burying our role in knowledge production. This is not to say that non-Latinx scholars cannot represent Latinx geographies.

We find that other normative disciplines, whether the scholars themselves are Latinx, have embraced Latinx perspectives at the heart of their work (see also Wright et al., 2024). Even today, however, cutting-edge scholarship can survey the field while explicitly excluding scholarship written in Spanish (e.g., Radcliffe, 2017). This erases the key contributions of Latinx scholars (often from Mexico and Central America) in calling out the ways that illegality maps onto certain subjects. Indeed, the Latinx migration literature offers a rich examination of work on “liminal legality” (Menjívar, 2006) and the role of racialization in political geographies to create Temporary Protected Status for people fleeing (un)natural disasters or receiving Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals for exceptional youth who align with respectability politics—these in the United States alone (Chávez, 2013). Central American works like those of *A History of Violence* (Martínez, 2017) go beyond simplistic stories of US imperialism in tracing the dynamics of racialized violence in migration and trafficking. These perspectives are crucial in offering nuanced understandings of Latinx geographies that do more than simply offer a platform to witness the spectacle of migrants as victims. Still, most of the time, non-Latinx geographers—as the majority of those writing about Latinx communities in a predominantly white field—decide when and how our voices are represented in the field.

Across Latin America, it may be that similar phenomena are at work, such that a few key voices from South America (such as Enrique Dussel, Walter Mignolo, and Anibal Quijano) stand in for the voices of Mexicans and Central Americans with whom they have little in common, sometimes not even the language of Spanish. In some of the most famous cases, such as that of the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional, the Zapatista autonomous movement that came to the stage in 1994 against neoliberal racism in Mexico's participation in the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), geographers still tend to draw on the most familiar voices to explain difference. Despite a plethora of writings and speeches by Indigenous people who are the heart of the Zapatista movement, Anglophone geographers regularly draw on the writings of a single person—known as Subcomandante Marcos—to engage with Indigenous ontologies. It is widely believed that Subcomandante Marcos was the nom de guerre of Rafael Sebastián Guillén Vicente, a non-Indigenous middle-class college professor who went to the mountains with the goal of organizing Maya communities for a Marxist revolution. Still others will lift up the work of wealthy immigrants who can afford visas as though their history and perspectives are similar to first-generation students of color in the US. If we are to write Latinx geographies that do not colonize Blackness and Indigeneity, geographers must broaden their horizons. Likewise, geographic engagements with Latinx identities, or Latinidades, still have much to do to

engage with Latinx geographies on their own terms.

In the last decade, we have witnessed a rise in the visibility of Latinidades within geography, as scholars are rethinking the relationship between place-making and Latinx identities. Many key works are published in interdisciplinary journals (Herrera, 2016; Muñoz, 2016, 2018, 2019), and even more have published books (Carpio, 2019; De Lara, 2018; Guerrero, 2017; Herrera, 2022; LeBrón, 2019; Pulido, 1996, 2006; Ybarra, 2017). We celebrate full-length books that engage with Latinx geographies. At the same time, we posit that the peer-review process of geography journals may be limiting the scope of what is visible as Latinx geographies. The latter is particularly crucial, as many geography departments in research universities advise pre-tenure professors to focus on publishing in top geography journals, even as those journals seem less likely to accept our work for publication.

Beyond a nurturing intellectual community, Latinx geographers have claimed space to author research about their own communities. In addition to increased inclusivity, Latinx geographers offer nuanced understandings of the multitude of experiences, identities, and mobilities that encompass the everyday experiences of Latinx immigrants in the United States and beyond. This is reflected in ontological work that brings to geography well-established “ways of knowing” of Latina/o-Chicana/o studies such as testimonio, auto-ethnography, queer of color critique, and relational methodologies (Cahuas, 2021; García-Peña, 2022b; Muñoz, 2010, 2015; Sandoval, 2018; Valencia, 2017; Ybarra, 2019, 2023). This is particularly important as this nuanced research highlights the silenced, marginalized, and undervalued knowledge production of Latinx communities that centers and prioritizes our own ways of knowing and being. In other words, Latinx geographies are about more than Latinx place-making—they are about how Latinx world-making reveals dominant ways of world-making, world-seeing, and world-knowing. In reference to Indigenous geographies, Sarah Hunt refers to this as “the politics of embodying a concept” (Hunt, 2014). While Latinx positionalities are different from those which Hunt outlines, her work offers a key lesson—in asking *how we can be Latinx and geographers*, we are fundamentally rethinking what human geography can be.

The emergent cohort of Latinx geographers is vigorously asserting their rights to intellectual space within the discipline of geography. Latinx geographies are characterized by a rich tapestry of influences stemming from historical, cultural, and social dynamics. Works by Muñoz (2018, 2019, 2023), Cahuas (2019, 2020), Ramírez (2020), García-Peña (2022a, 2022b), and Rivera (2023) offer a spatial framework for analyzing these geographies, particularly concerning Black and Indigenous identities. García-Peña (2022a) draws from her experiences of “hegemonic blackness” and *latinidad*, encapsulating the constant

oscillation between belonging and un-belonging. Similarly, Muñoz's scholarship, rooted in her migration experiences, employs a queer Chicana perspective to explore the socio-spatial challenges faced by street vendors and domestic workers across the Americas, juxtaposed with migrant labor realities in South Africa and Zimbabwe. Her work builds on García-Peña's discourse on Blackness and Afro-Latinidad within a global context. Through a transnational lens, Muñoz illuminates how imperial legacies persist in shaping the experiences of Black, Brown, and Indigenous street vendors and domestic workers, underscoring their struggles for public space and urban sustainability. These challenges, as articulated by Cahuas, Ramírez, Rivera, and others, invite Latinx geographers to delve deeper into engagement with intersectional identities that reveal the workings of settler colonialism and racial capitalism.

As members of the new Latinx Geographies Specialty Group, we were fortunate to walk in the path blazed by Black Geographies. While McKittrick and Wood's (2007) pathbreaking volume was published over a decade ago, it was the dedication of new scholars, particularly LaToya Eaves, that pushed the American Association of Geographers to acknowledge their importance in the past, present, and future of the discipline (Eaves, 2020). In particular, when the Latinx Geographies working group sought recognition as a disciplinary specialty group in 2017, we were invited to classify ourselves as an affinity group—in other words, one that offered community support but did not contribute knowledge to geography. The Latinx Geographies Specialty Group's recognition in 2018 was in large part due to the support of the Black Geographies Specialty Group, which built on a longer history of community and institutional recognition (Wright et al., 2024).

With the growing interest in Latinx geographies, there is a demand for deeper exploration from the perspectives of Latinx geographers themselves. This work is inevitably hindered by the lack of support and recognition within academic units—we note that many Latinx geographers have sought geography as a possible academic home, but perhaps not one that guarantees recognition (Ybarra, 2019). In "Latinx Geographies: Opening Conversations," Latinx Geographies Collective (a group of Latinx junior scholars, members of the American Association of Geographers AAG Latinx geographies sub-group) shares analysis grounded in their diverse, embodied experiences as Latinx geographers "doing" Latinx geographies. They reflect on their individual journeys to Latinx geographies, what this field signifies to them, and how they approach their work. Rejecting singular or imposed definitions, they collectively envision an expansive, nuanced, and relational understanding of Latinx geographies. Their approach critically engages with difference, conquest, power, and liberation across Abiyala, acknowledging the intertwined histories and ongoing struggles of their communities. Our writing draws on Abiyala as a hemispheric perspective that rejects the US/Canada-centric viewpoint of Latinx geographies, centering it instead in Central America with Indigenous spelling (Keme', 2018). Rather than gesture to an apolitical "Latin America," Latinx geographies are an invitation to attend to the dynamics of race and class across borders that privilege academics who are first and 1.5 generation South Americans over geographies of Mexican and Central American descent, despite the fact that the latter make up the majority of undergraduate students in the US and Canada.

For those researching and living in the United States, Latinx geographies are particularly well-suited for taking up regional geographies in the wake of a national turn to the political right. Amidst the challenges posed by the upcoming elections in November 2024, marked by anti-immigration ideologies, the criminalization of people of color, and an exacerbated housing crisis, Latinx geographies offer nuanced understandings of claiming rights to livable futures. Instead of simplistic understandings of white suburban soccer moms, Latinx geographies trace a rise in people of color and their attendant political ideologies. Scholars such as Cheng (2013) and De Lara (2018) have documented this shift and predicted its significance, while others offer insight into the "Nuevo South" (Guerrero, 2017) that contextualizes the contradictory political viewpoints that do not simply map onto race and class.

Latinx geographies are also contributing to nuanced theorizations of migration and race. Rather than a singular Latinx identity, new scholarship explores the possibilities—and limits—of solidarity across intersections of gender, Indigeneity, and/or Blackness (Cahuas, 2019; Negrín da Silva, 2018; Reyes, 2015; Ybarra, 2017). Likewise, Latinx geographies afford opportunities to rethink mobility, both in terms of permissions and prohibitions, as a relationship to place-making in migrant communities (Carpio, 2019; Herrera, 2022; Torres & Wicks-Asbun, 2013; Ybarra & Peña, 2017). Latinx geographies have not only built their work from other geography sub-disciplines (like Black Geographies) but also have contributed nuanced ways of understanding to other sub-disciplines in geography. Recent works contribute to abolition geographies by highlighting how people experiencing criminal punishment and incarceration engage in radical place-making (Ybarra, 2021) and queer world-making (Munoz, 2023). Zaragocin (2023), writing from Latin America, makes a case for how Latinx geographies (from the US) can engage with critical geography in Latin America, as there are common shared intellectual and political commitments, particularly in decolonial geographies of the global majority.

Latinx geographies provide an intellectual “home” within the discipline for Latinx scholars to write from their experiences. This affords a key opportunity in human geography, where Latinidades have sometimes been reduced to little more than marginalized bodies to be recognized—or not—by predominantly white Anglophone geographers. In standing against generations of devaluation of the ontological and epistemological work in and about Latinx communities, this emerging field offers insights into the intersections of race, migration, and place-making in the 21st century.

NOTES

- 1) This essay is revised from Lorena Muñoz and Megan Ybarra (2019). See “Introduction to Latinx Geographies,” Society and Space open site, <https://www.societyandspace.org/forums/latinx-geographies>, published January 23, 2019. The authors updated the essay for this collection with permission from the Society and Space open site.
- 2) For Chicana/o activists, claiming Aztlán was a way of naming their homeland as a “third world” identity colonized by the US (Anzaldúa, 2012). This has been critiqued as a colonization of Black and Indigenous Latinidad (Saldaña-Portillo, 2016; Pelaez Lopez, 2019).

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