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Latinx Geographies Opening Conversations

Latinx Geographies Collective, Madelaine Cristina Cahuas, Guillermo Douglass-Jaimes, Cristina Faiver-Serna, Yolanda González Mendoza, Diego Martinez-Lugo and Margaret Marietta Ramírez

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[See table of contents](#)

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Article abstract

With increased interest in Latinx geographies there is a need for more in-depth exploration of how Latinx geographers are approaching this work in their own words. In this article, we open a discussion on Latinx geographies that is grounded in our multiple, different, embodied experiences as Latinx geographers who have gathered over the last several years to have conversations, create spaces and build relationships of care and accountability with each other. We reflect on how we each arrived to Latinx geographies, what it means to us, how we do Latinx geographies and what is on the horizon. We refuse singular or imposed definitions, and collectively imagine an expansive, nuanced, and relational Latinx geographies that critically engages with difference, conquest, power, and liberation across Turtle Island and Abya Yala.

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Latinx Geographies: Opening Conversations

Latinx Geographies Collective

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Abstract

With increased interest in Latinx geographies there is a need for more in-depth exploration of how Latinx geographers are approaching this work in their own words. In this article, we open a discussion on Latinx geographies that is grounded in our multiple, different, embodied experiences as Latinx geographers who have gathered over the last several years to have conversations, create spaces and build relationships of care and accountability with each other. We reflect on how we each arrived to Latinx geographies, what it means to us, how we do Latinx geographies and what is on the horizon. We refuse singular or imposed definitions, and collectively imagine an expansive, nuanced, and relational Latinx geographies that critically engages with difference, conquest, power, and liberation across Turtle Island and Abya Yala.

Keywords

Latinx geographies, relationality, intersectionality, social justice, Chicanx and Latinx feminisms, decolonial geographies

Introduction

This paper is a gathering and an opening. We write as a collective of early-career Latinx scholars who have been working within Latinx geographies, a growing interdisciplinary subfield that bridges Chicanx and Latinx Studies scholarship and activist traditions, with critical human geography to explore the multiple, intersectional facets of Latinx people's lives (see Muñoz and Ybarra 2019). We use Latinx as a gender inclusive term that refers to people who trace their roots to Latin America, which spans Mexico or the southern part of Turtle Island (the Algonquin and Iroquois name for North America), and Abya Yala (the Kuna people's name for Central and South America and the Caribbean). We also acknowledge that Latinx is an identity constituted by difference that is fraught and contested (Pelaez Lopez 2018; Flores 2021). Our collective is not a monolith. Among us there are differences of gender, sexual orientation, race, class, first language, country of birth, age, ability, and educational background. Some of us were born in Latin America and migrated to the United States (US) as children or young adults and some of us were born in the US and Canada and grew up in immigrant families. Four of us are mothers who have been navigating the challenges of home schooling and caregiving during the pandemic. We are all deeply involved in our communities in different ways, and committed to organizing efforts for housing justice, migrant rights, gender equity, and health and environmental justice. While we represent a relatively "diverse" demographic of geographers, we do not represent all Latinx geographers, academics, or peoples. Indeed, geography, as a discipline, still has "a

long way to go" to increase the representation of Latinx scholars (Faria et al. 2019, 364; see also Pulido 2002), especially Black, Afro-Latinx, Indigenous, queer, transgender, disabled, and undocumented Latinx scholars to foster research and practice that resonates with the expansiveness of Latinx ways of knowing, experiences, politics, and struggles. Attentive to our own varied positionalities, privileges, and onto-epistemological limitations, in this paper we share our understandings of Latinx geographies to open meaningful conversations.

In the following section, we articulate how we arrived to Latinx geographies through a collective practice and methodology and then trace the interdisciplinary scholarly foundations of Latinx geographies. After, we each share our own reflections of Latinx geographies and end by envisioning its future directions. Our intent is not to define but honor the complexity of Latinx geographies and its radical possibilities for social transformation within and beyond the discipline.

Collective Practice and Methodology

It has been twenty years since path-breaking Chicana critical human geographer, Laura Pulido (2002), stated that geography is a predominantly white discipline, a reality that remains true in large part because of the discipline's colonial history (see also Bruno and Faiver-Serna 2021). Many of us came to know each other in the few years preceding the formation of the Latinx Geographies Specialty Group (LxGSG) of the American Association of Geographers (AAG) in 2018. We were searching for ways to connect with other Latinx geographers, share ideas, and not only navigate, but disrupt the whiteness of geography. Many of us subsequently worked together with colleagues, friends, allies, and co-conspirators who are not authors on this paper, but whom we have learned a great deal from. Our goal was to create an academic, intellectual, creative, and political space by, for and about Latinx people that is rooted in an intersectional feminist, anti-colonial, and social justice politics, which came to be known as the LxGSG (Faiver-Serna 2019). We have been and continue to be deeply inspired by the scholarly and activist work of Black geographers, especially Dr. LaToya Eaves who founded the Black Geographies Specialty Group (BGSF) of the AAG and generously supported the creation of the LxGSG. Since its inception, the LxGSG has facilitated opportunities for Latinx geographers to build community and join in dialogue and solidarity efforts with other marginalized geographers, through numerous AAG Specialty Groups: the BGSF, the Indigenous Peoples' Specialty Group (IPSG), the Queer and Trans Geographies Specialty Group (QTGSG) and the Disability Specialty Group (DSG), to create what Oswin (2019, 9) calls "an other geography." Together these collective efforts are making space in the discipline for many "other" emerging geographies through the creation of special sessions and social gatherings at conferences, having conversations online and offline, thinking and writing together and developing relationships of care and mutual support across differences (see Cheng et al. 2022).

In Spring 2020, when a new LxGSG board was elected, including the co-authors of this paper, the world had recently descended into a deadly pandemic. At the time, it was unclear how significantly our lives, and the lives of our families, loved ones, and communities would be impacted. The precarity and pain of the pandemic, coupled with heightened white supremacist backlash in the wake of the Trump presidency, and ongoing racist police violence, has been felt heavily by LxGSG members and their broader communities. To support one another as non-tenured faculty and graduate students we began holding weekly

cafecitos (coffee hours) in December 2020 that were open to all LxG members, which continue today. We held cafecitos on Gather.town, a virtual proximity-based video conferencing platform that LxG board member (now Co-Chair) Guillermo Douglass-Jaimes ingeniously crafted. The virtual space is itself a Latinx geography, incorporating culturally significant concepts that resonated with our spatial knowledges (see Figure 1). 'Cafecito' invokes a colloquial term for how people in our communities meet over coffee. The virtual gathering space was named "La Cazuela," a term that translates in English to a deep pot where nourishing foods like beans, stew, or soup, are prepared to feed our kin when we gather. The term emerged organically as we often checked-in with each other before and after our timed writing sessions, and these conversations quite literally felt like a nourishing stew of ideas that gave us sustenance to keep moving forward. And much like flavors of a stew come together in la cazuela, so do our ideas.

The more private corner in the space was called "chisme" (gossip) where people could go to *desahogarse* or vent their feelings, anxieties, hopes and frustrations without judgment. So much of academia is built on hidden and siloed knowledges, thus, *chisme* for us is about sharing survival strategies to navigate our work and personal lives dealing with isolation, caregiving, and health. During the cafecitos, we practiced what it means to build more equitable, caring ways of relating by slowing down, prioritizing listening to each other over the pressure to be productive (read as: solely focusing on research and publishing papers for the white neoliberal colonial academy). This took emotional labor and commitment from everyone involved, but was crucial to creating an enriching, affirming space of belonging, where we could bring our whole selves to speak about our ideas and issues impacting us within and beyond academia. Throughout our cafecitos in 2021, we noticed that we were all grappling with what we meant by "Latinx geographies," and decided that writing out our ideas could be a fruitful way to build understanding with each other and others interested in this work. This article is the outcome of these conversations.

Scholarly Foundations of Latinx Geographies

We recognize and honor that Latinx geographies as an emerging field of study has deep and wide-ranging intellectual and political roots. While the naming and formation of Latinx geographies is recent, Latinx geographers and geographic scholarship about Latinx people have a longer history within the discipline. Yet, what is distinct about the Latinx geographies we are theorizing is its emergence through the scholarship and praxis of a critical mass of interdisciplinary Chicanx and Latinx scholars working between geography and Chicanx and Latinx Studies. Furthermore, the growth of Latinx geographies in close relation to Black geographies, Indigenous geographies, and Queer and Trans geographies, have reinforced its ardent commitment to intersectional feminist and anti-colonial politics. Due to the scope of this paper, we cannot deeply engage with all literature pertaining to Latinx people and geography, but in what follows we do outline key contributions that we consider significant to the intellectual genealogy of Latinx geographies.

The development and naming of the subfield is indebted to foundational scholars like Laura Pulido (1996, 2006) and Mary Pat Brady (2002) who have long been interweaving human geography with Chicanx and Latinx Studies literature to deepen understandings of Chicanx and Latinx spatial insights and struggles for social justice. Geographers Daniel D. Arreola (1996, 2004) and Ines Miyares (1993, 2004) have also made critical contributions to

geographical thought by examining how Mexican Americans and more newly arrived Latin American migrants have reshaped the landscape of border cities in the US Southwest and New York City respectively. These works have challenged what Blaut and Ríos-Bustamante (1984, 161) called “the Traditional Anglo-American Scholar’s View of Latinos in the United States,” which they argued generated geographic analyses that reinforced harmful stereotypes of Mexicans and Latinos. Over the last two decades, geographers studying the impacts of globalization, migration, citizenship and transnationalism have brought to light the unjust legal, social, economic and political barriers different Latin American migrant groups face in receiving countries and how they navigate them through everyday practices and political mobilization (Bailey, Wright, Mountz and Miyares 2002; Cravey 2003; Cravey and Valdivia 2011; Miyares et al. 2019; Nelson and Hiemstra 2008; Nelson, Trautman and Nelson 2015; Price 2010; Veronis 2007; Torres et al. 2022; Winders 2005, 2011).

Building on these works, a new generation of Latinx geographies research has flourished across interdisciplinary and disciplinary journals and published books. These works seriously take up Chicanx, Latinx and Ethnic Studies theories and methods in conjunction with geographical thought, to examine a wide range of topics, including, but not only, transnational processes and experiences of migration, illegality and deportation (Herrera 2016; Valencia 2017; Sandoval 2018; Osuna 2020; Ybarra 2019), race, labor and political economy (De Lara 2018; Guerrero 2017), policing (LeBrón 2019), gentrification (Ramírez 2020; Huante and Miranda 2019), relational racialization and place-making (Cheng 2013), access to health care and food (Guhlincozzi 2021; Jones 2019), Latinx feminist urban place-making and activism (Cahuas 2020, 2021; Faiver-Serna 2021; Muñoz 2016a, 2016b), colonial histories and presents (Carpio 2019; de Hinojosa 2021; Barraclough 2019; Ruiz 2020; Villanueva, Cobián and Rodríguez 2018) and social movements (Ybarra 2021; Sandoval 2019; Herrera 2022). Alongside these innovations, Latinx, Chicanx, Central American, Indigenous, Black and Caribbean Studies scholars have also been thinking spatially and geographically to theorize the complexities of people’s lives for decades (for some examples see Anzaldúa 1987, 2015; Dinzey-Flores 2013; García-Peña 2019; Menjívar and Abrego 2012; López Oro 2021; Figueroa 2020; Torres 2015).

It is crucial to acknowledge that Chicanx and Latinx Studies emerged in the United States from the organizing efforts of Chicanx, Puerto Rican, Black, Indigenous, Asian, and other students of color in the 1960s and 1970s demanding equity in education. These student-led movements were part of broader civil rights and liberation movements and made possible the various Ethnic Studies departments we see today. As such, Chicanx and Latinx Studies is grounded in an activist social justice politics and has also been greatly influenced by queer Chicana feminists like Gloria Anzaldúa and Cherrie Moraga who were in dialogue with Black, Indigenous, and women of color feminists forming the U.S Third World Feminist Left (Sandoval 2000; Moraga and Anzaldúa 1981). This movement understood that the struggles of women of color across the United States and the Global South are interconnected and created spaces of transnational solidarity to dismantle intersecting global systems of imperialism, colonization, capitalism, white supremacy, and heteropatriarchy. Contemporary Latinx feminists continue this legacy by deeply engaging with decolonial theories, methods and movements stemming from Latin America, while also grappling with the distinct experiences of Latinx peoples in the north, as can be seen in anthologies like *This Bridge Called Home* (2002), *Telling to Live* (2001), *Women Warriors of the Afro-Latina*

Diaspora (2012), *Chicana M(other)work* (2018), *Decolonial Feminism in Abya Yala* (2022) and from countless contributions in key journals like, but not only *Chicana/Latina Studies* and *Latino Studies*.

Following these rich activist-intellectual traditions of Chicanx and Latinx Studies, our understandings of Latinx geographies make a distinct break from the colonial gaze and imperialist investments that have founded and dominated not only geography, but also Latin American geography and political thought (see Muñoz and Ybarra 2019; Cusicanqui 2012; Lander 2000). In this way, Latinx geographies allows for a trenchant critique of ongoing settler colonialism, and white supremacy across the hemisphere, in a way that is politically aligned with Latin American-based decolonial feminist scholarship and movements. We agree with Zaragocin (2021) that sustained engagement between Latinx and Latin American decolonial feminist geographers, scholars, activists, and collectives enriches dialogues north and south, as seen in Zaragocin et al.'s (2022) article. Lorena Muñoz's (2010, 2016, 2018a, 2018b) scholarship is also notable in this regard because she employs a queer Chicana consciousness informed by her own experiences of migration, to study the socio-spatial struggles of street vendors who are racialized and criminalized in different ways across Los Angeles, Bogotá and Cancún. Through this transnational and hemispheric approach, Muñoz reveals and challenges how legacies of conquest shape the interconnected present-day realities of Black, Brown, and Indigenous street vendors, while also foregrounding their struggles for public space and more livable urban futures.

Our understanding of Latinx geographies is also deeply inspired by the ground-breaking scholarship of Katherine McKittrick and Clyde Woods (2007) and their theorizing of Black geographies. This conceptual, spatial, theoretical and methodological framework profoundly shifted the way that race and space are understood in the discipline of geography by underscoring how Black populations are central to the production of space and foregrounding a Black politics of place that is oriented towards liberation. McKittrick and Woods (2007) opened possibilities for our collective thinking about the distinct ways that Latinx peoples produce space, and how Blackness and Latinidad are inextricably connected. As we stated earlier, Latinx peoples do not operate from a single shared racial or ethnic identity, but rather a diverse array of positionings that carry vastly different embodied experiences of what Lethabo-King (2019) theorizes as conquest. Latinx geographies are emergent and divergent spatio-temporal formations constituted from geographies of domination and violence of colonial-era racial hierarchies, as well as geographies of enduring resistance and survival, overlapping with and in close relation to Indigenous, Black, and Asian geographies, among others. This plurality of histories and experiences means that Latinx geographies cannot be succinctly theorized; our geographies are messy, unstable, and contradictory. In our writings we do not intend to neatly encapsulate Latinx geographies, rather we make space for our vast and entangled histories. We seek to call attention to how Latinx peoples produce, experience, and negotiate space and place in relation to their varied positionalities and ongoing struggles across colonial borders, while also interrogating anti-Blackness, anti-Indigeneity, and systems of domination (Cahuas 2019; Dinzey-Flores et al. 2019; Blackwell, Boj and Urrieta 2017; Flores and Roman 2009).

Overall, numerous factors have contributed to our thinking on Latinx geographies. We are indebted to the scholarship reviewed above and the lesser acknowledged mentoring spaces created by those who have come before us that have nurtured the conditions for the

emergence of a critical mass of Latinx geographers who are engaging in critical scholarship and building community with other marginalized geographers. We are acutely aware of the fact that our presence and perspectives within the discipline, and in the academy more broadly, remain minoritized. We are still few and far between. Often, we are the only faculty of color and/or the only Latinx faculty in our respective geography departments. Yet, we are growing in numbers, and our presence is very much needed.

Theorizing Latinx Geographies

In the following sections, we each share our personal reflections on Latinx geographies using these questions we created to guide us:

- 1) How did you come to Latinx geographies, and why?
- 2) How do you understand Latinx geographies?
- 3) How do you do Latinx geographies?
- 4) What Latinx geographies futures are on the horizon?

We do not offer absolute answers to these questions, and instead use them as a point of departure to open conversations. In this way, these entries reflect our initial attempts at theorizing Latinx geographies from our embodied histories and experiences as Latinx geographers who have strived to form relationships of care and accountability with each other and communities outside of the academy. While each entry is unique, there are similar threads sewn throughout. First, our reflections gesture to a Latinx geographies that is expansive, fluid and extending beyond oppressive, colonial social-spatial borders across Turtle Island and Abya Yala. Second, place- and space- making is understood as an important lens through which to understand, create, and experience Latinx geographies. Third, the entries demonstrate a concern with the dialectics of oppression/conquest and resistance/struggle that shape Latinx subjectivities and experiences. Fourth, there is a call for dialogue and solidarity across racial, gender, sexual, class, citizenship, and geographic differences within and outside Latinx communities. Fifth, there is a strong emphasis on understanding Latinx geographies as interconnected with, and in relation to Black and Indigenous geographies, which refuses the erasure of Black and Indigenous subjectivities, experiences, histories and struggles in Latin America and the diaspora. Lastly, each entry demonstrates how Latinx geographies are deeply personal (and political), comprising embodied, experiential, intimate and affective dimensions with and across our diverse-positioned Latin American and Latinx communities. As such, our writings are in dialogue, situated in our multiple relations and ever-evolving conversations.

Our individual essays are as follows: Diego Martinez-Lugo examines the genealogies of Latinx geographies, tracing some of its roots to Chicanx and student of color movements during the late 1960s and 1970s. To honor this rich activist history, Martinez-Lugo argues that Latinx geographies must be a site of struggle for social justice. Guillermo Douglass-Jaimes uses poetry and autoethnography to share his journey into Latinx geographies as a Queer AfroMexicano and powerfully demonstrates its complexities and possibilities. Cristina Faiver-Serna writes of the urgency of Latinx geographies in her research on environmental racism and injustice in Southern California and makes a case for Latinx geographies as a liberatory scholarly praxis. Yolanda González Mendoza explores how Latinx geographies are produced and experienced by people from her displaced rural community upon migrating to the US or

northern Turtle Island from Purépecha lands currently known as Michoacán, Mexico. She demonstrates how places of belonging, peace, and tranquility are created by Latinx (Mexican) communities living under state-sponsored violence. Magie Marietta Ramírez explores how Latinx geographies are given meaning through relation, what Chicana feminism can offer theorizations of Latinx geographies, and how a plurality of embodied experiences builds expansive notions of how Latinx peoples experience and produce space. In the last entry, Madelaine Cristina Cahuas refuses to simply define Latinx geographies and instead, articulates how her understanding of Latinx geographies is deeply connected to where she knows from. We offer these reflections as an opening for how Latinx geographies might be theorized and call for our fellow Latinx geographers and allies to weave these threads with us.

Genealogies of Latinx Geographies

Diego Martinez-Lugo, Department of Geography, University of Washington

Latinx geographies can be understood in a myriad of ways; with no singular way of defining nor practicing it. Just as there are many Latinx histories, nationalities, and communities throughout Latin America and the diaspora, it tries to account for the heterogeneity of Latinx being by remaining expansive rather than narrow. In this way, Latinx geographies is a type of hermeneutic theorizing (Barnes 2001): it is capacious, in motion, is being molded, shaped by past and future scholars alike. Its meaning is being actively produced, its boundaries negotiated and contested by diverse scholars operating along and across disparate epistemologies and ontologies. Latinx geographies, then, can be understood pluralistically, aspiring to the Zapatista construction of “Un Mundo Donde Quepan Muchos Mundos” (‘A World Where Many Worlds Fit’).

A useful anchoring point is the theorizing of space through a Latinx lens (Faiver-Serna 2019) which provides linkages between space in relation to political, economic, social, and environmental struggles. Latinx geographies advance a critical engagement with questions of space and place making in what the 2018 AAG’s Latinx geographies panel discussion defined as Latinx critical spatial thinking (Faiver-Serna 2019). These forms of thinking provide a blueprint for looking forward and reckoning with the past.

Latinx geographies holds some of its roots in radical movements of the 1960s and 1970s that were explicitly anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist, and anti-racist from which Ethnic and Chicanx Studies, among others, emerged. To this effect, I situate some key sinews of Latinx geographies in the struggles of Chicanx student movement organizers and the fight for Ethnic Studies in the 1960s. The 1968 East Los Angeles Walkouts, also known as the Chicano Blowouts, were militant protests by Chicanx high school and university students, teachers, community members, and faculty against racist and unjust learning conditions for Chicanx youth. Chicanx high school students were tracked for vocational training and denied the option to prepare for higher education. This was significant because attending higher education would prevent one from being drafted into the Vietnam War and Chicanxs accounted for 20% of the casualties even though they only made up 10% of the US population (see Parra 2020).

In March 1968, over a thousand Mexican youth walked out of Abraham Lincoln High School shouting “blow out!” demanding classes on Mexican American history and culture and an end to educational racism. Culminating into a student strike lasting a week and a half, over ten thousand Mexican students from four other high schools joined the walkout (Galán 1996).

The state responded with mass, indiscriminate arrests of Chicane youth along with police violence that brutalized students and protestors. The L.A. County sheriffs in coordination with the FBI's COINTELPRO stormed into the homes of 13 Chicane walkout organizers and arrested them on conspiracy charges. Publicly known as "the East L.A. 13," they faced 66 years in prison, but were found not guilty two years later (Muñoz 2007). The Walkouts led to the creation of the first Mexican American Studies program at California State University, Los Angeles in 1968 (Acuña 2011). They were also foundational for the genesis of the broader Chicane Movement that engaged in revolutionary politics beyond improving education and inclusion into liberal democracy (Muñoz 2007). If not for the struggles of Chicane youth to address educational racism less than 60 years ago, Latinx geographies itself today would not be possible.

It is also important to note that Chicane student organizing occurred in tandem with other momentous demonstrations led by university students. For example, across the US in the late 1960s and 1970s university students of color united in various ways to demand the creation of Ethnic Studies departments and programs under the control of students, faculty and community representatives, which can be seen in the 1968 and 1969 Third World Liberation Front protests at San Francisco State College and UC Berkeley, respectively, as well as mobilizations by Puerto Rican and African American students at various CUNY campuses (Muñoz 2007; American Social History Project 2023). These students were also demanding an end to US imperialism, occupation, and war in solidarity with global struggles for liberation from Central America, the Caribbean to Asia (Cruz Amaya 2020). Self-determination as one of the guiding principles of these student movements, enables Latinx geographies to now espouse epistemological and ontological self-determination.

Ethnic Studies was borne out of and continues to be a site of struggle. Latinx geographies follow that tradition of resistance. Employing Latinx geographies in the present day requires paying tribute to the fights and sacrifices made by our political and epistemological ancestors. In shifting the gaze away from Latinx peoples, communities, and issues to be researched as the Other we situate the enunciation from a distinct Latinx positionality and perspective. Latinx stories are now being told by Latinx scholars. Muñoz and Ybarra (2019) describe this shift for Latinx scholars whereby "Latinx geographies provide an intellectual 'home' within the discipline for Latinx scholars to write from their experiences." I am lucky that I have found an academic community that I can call home. A home where, despite differences in experiences and perspectives, we can support and uplift Latinx scholarship and scholars. The rise of Latinx Geographies, along with and at times intertwined with Black Geographies and Indigenous Geographies, has been a long-fought battle which persists today.

Cruzando caminos on the crossroads of Latinx

Guillermo Douglass-Jaimes, Environmental Analysis Program, Pomona College

*Latinx is a crossroads
a confluence of paths in constant flux
as those who move through
whether by choice or force
leave their mark on this ephemeral land
called as such for now.*

*The colonizers' footprints that had been most prominent
attempted to cover the traces of the Africans they enslaved
while erasing or claiming as their own the Indigenous paths
that existed long before.*

*But these are not the only traces.
The crossroads connected the Easts, Far and Middle
And the casta paintings reveal the plethora of "intermixed" identities
that have so often been collapsed into mestizo, pardo, mulato,
and words I dare not repeat lest they carry
the insidious earworm song of oppression
that wriggles its way into your soul and refuses to leave.*

*Is it pain that brings us together?
The violence inflicted on us, by us, toward our queer and trans selves?
Must we seek out a mythical origin story?
One that emerges from the murky lake, perched on an eagle
only to inflict a new pain on those who are us?*

*Can we (re)member the cuentos of pain and suffering
del pasado y del presente
inscribed on the land and on our souls?*

*Can we (re)claim the cuentos of hope and joy?
Celebrate more than survival and persistence
and honor those who gave us the space to breathe,
the space to dream?*

*Can we (re)imagine our future?
Quiénes somos nos/otrxs¹?*

How did I come to Latinx geographies? What is my understanding of Latinx geographies, and how do I do Latinx geographies? How can I respond to any of these questions when I arrive with much to learn? I humbly work my way into these questions, responding with an auto ethnographic reflection on my journey.

Embracing my identity means drawing myself within the boundaries of Latinx

I was Hispanic on the census, Chicano at school, Mexicano at home and American at the border. I was *pocho* and *beaner*, *oreo* and *coconut*, *faggot* and *maricón*. I couldn't be Mexican because I was too dark. I couldn't be Black because that was too despised in my family. Yet over the years, the words used to describe me shifted under my feet. Today I am a cisgendered, mostly able-bodied² Queer AfroMexicano. How could this heightened granularity let me feel connected to the abstraction that is Latinx?

¹ Gloria Anzaldúa (2015) postulated the idea of *nos/otras* which I alter to the gender inclusive *nos/otrxs*

² I write this as I continue to recover from a cheilectomy, a bone spur removal from my big toe, that has limited my stride and added a bit of a limp at times.

Moving forward along the crossroads, juntos

I entered my doctoral studies at UC Berkeley in the Environmental Science, Policy, and Management Program with a cohort of queer, women, Chicana, Nuyorican, Pilipino/a³, Latino/a, mixed race folks of color, folks of other. I thought this was a magical coincidence as our ranks swelled and were joined by African American and Caribbean women in my second year. This was no magic, only the fruits of the labors of all those who came before us.

The magic vanished when the only tenure track African American woman in our department was denied tenure (Corbin et al. 2015). And the only Indigenous woman faculty member left shortly before that decision was made. It was in that collective pain that we sought refuge in solidarity as graduate students. We forged coalitions across our identities, recognizing that we deserved a place to see ourselves, and while we had different struggles, united we could make it through our difficult time.

While I had not envisaged Latinx Geographies or even Geography or Ethnic Studies as a driver for my work, my embodied identity with Latinx stoked my curiosity and left me primed to soak in Gloria Anzaldúa, Laura Pulido, Manuel Pastor, and Rachel Morell-Frosh. Chicano and Latino scholars whose work helped me understand the multifaceted and interconnected forces that produce health and environmental disparities.

Positioning myself within Latinx geographies from the side

Much like my journey into a Latinx identity, my academic journey has paralleled the binding together of lineages to allow myself to exist. Latinx geographies has given me new possibilities to engage with a specificity, and its entanglements to a collective. This framing allows me to assert my academic identity as an interdisciplinary scholar, who employs a mixed methods approaches, mapping out the spatial and rhetorical complexities and contradictions of people and places, to reveal the disparities hidden in plain sight, and the infinite possibilities of hope and resistance offered by collective struggle and action.

Choosing Latinx Geographies

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I choose to invest my scholarly work in the formation and expansion of Latinx geographies because through my work I have come to see how the decolonial commitments of Ethnic Studies, the social justice politics of Chicanx and Latinx Studies, and the spatio-temporal possibilities of critical geographic inquiry interwoven together can help to critically and creatively analyze, challenge, and address the relational social, racial, and environmental concerns of our times. The possibilities of what Latinx geographies could be, not only for my individual work, but for a much larger community-grounded intellectual project were made clear to me early on in my academic career (see Faiver-Serna 2019). Since then, I choose Latinx geographies as part of my path and story, foundational to the development and expansion of my individual research agenda and scholarly praxis. My sustained attention to Latinx geographies has enabled me to grow in community with scholars who also envision

³ I use the term Pilipina my colleague used as a nod to her Tagalog roots, where her familial tongue does not include the 'F' sound.

and practice the possibilities for radical and liberatory scholarly praxis at this interdisciplinary juncture.

My scholarship is forged from lived, embodied, first-hand accounts of community health in practice, environmental racism, Latinx immigrant and first-generation place-making, and community-grounded responses to institutional and structural injustices. Presently, my research is focused on Latinx *promotoras de salud* (community health workers) on the frontlines of environmental injustice in Long Beach, California. I worked with *promotoras* for three years before returning to an Ethnic Studies doctoral program, before transferring to a geography doctoral program. And in-between, found Latinx geographies (or rather, it found me in the liminal BIPOC space of an AAG meeting, see Bruno and Faiver-Serna 2021) as a transformative compromise and opening for the scholarly path I am on today.

While working in Southern California in the early 2010s I found that the socio-economic and racialized health disparities I encountered in my daily work-life demanded complex questions about history, migration, place, environment, racism, gender disparities, labor, mothering, and much more that I simply did not have the time or energy to deeply attend to while working at a nonprofit community health center. I was called to academic research and teaching, in a similar way as the *promotoras* I worked with described their work as a “calling.” I viewed research, scholarship, and teaching as a generative way I could contribute toward the uplift of my community, given my interests and talents.

My present research broadly asks: How are *promotoras de salud* called upon to mitigate and remediate environmental injustice in their own communities? This question produces many smaller questions about Latinx cultural values, the devalued social reproductive labor of Latina community workers, racial capitalism, state environmental (non)regulation, the disjointed U.S. public health system, and more. In my scholarship I utilize a Chicana and Latina feminist methodology rooted in testimonio, or first-person public testimony, and oral history to attend to questions about human-environment relations in the state-endorsed racial capitalist global goods movement in Long Beach, California. Such a system relies on the geographies of racialized, gendered, and environmental excess of the logistics economy in the Los Angeles Harbor region. I could not holistically attend to any of these questions and curiosities without the rigor and depth of the respective fields of Ethnic Studies, Chicanx and Latinx Studies, and critical human geography.

Chicanx and Latinx Studies is situated within a broader Ethnic Studies tradition of studying the histories and cultures of colonized, racialized, and minoritized peoples in the U.S. as a critical intervention in Western academe and a liberatory scholarly praxis (Maldonado-Torres 2020). Chicanx and Latinx Studies has illuminated my understanding of myself and my family as part of the Mexican diaspora, within a much larger historical-societal context that has shaped my worldview since I was an undergraduate student at 19 years old. Chicanx and Latinx Studies influenced my interest in public health, leading me to focus and specialize in studying social determinants of health and racialized health disparities when I was 21, and is also the reason I left public health practice when I was 27 to return to academia as a first-generation doctoral student.

The social justice imperative of Ethnic Studies influences how I interrogate issues of environmental injustice. Environmental racism and injustice require critical interrogation of the human and more-than-human relationship to place, place-making, and the scales of

temporal and spatial relations. My sustained attention on the environment itself as a key actor demands a critical geography perspective, in order to *write of the earth* (and desperately for it). I cannot attend to issues of environmental degradation, injustice, and racism without so much of what the study of geography has to offer, and everything the study of geography *rooted in a social justice ethic* can and could be.

Chicanx and Latinx Studies is derived from the social and intellectual movements of Chicanx and Latinx students' desires to know their own stories (see Acuña 2011 and Espinoza, Cotera, and Blackwell 2018). The decolonizing roots of Chicanx and Latinx Studies has forged space in Western academia for Chicanx and Latinx peoples to learn their history, theorize knowledge from their own lived experiences, and produce knowledge that lives and travels beyond them, as part of much larger conversations across generations (see García Peña 2022). With this perspective, Ruth Wilson Gilmore's (2002) observation and argument for social justice to be understood inherent to the study of geography becomes ever more urgent: "A geographical imperative lies at the heart of every struggle for social justice; if justice is embodied, it is then therefore always spatial, which is to say, part of a process of making a place" (16). Chicanx and Latinx Studies and critical human geography are inextricable to my research, study, and theorization of place, environment, and justice, and a part of who I am *and want to be* as a scholar.

Latinx Geographies: Relational embodied knowledge across space and generations

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Latinx geographies are multiple, complex, fluid, and mean different things for different people. This offering is my granito de arena (my small contribution). These are some of my initial (evolving and fluid) reflections on what Latinx Geographies means to me. Drawing on Indigenous theories of relationality and communality (see Luna 2015; Wilson 2008), I make sense of Latinx geographies from my multiple relations, communities, and embodied experiences across Mexico and the US, including as a first-generation Mexican immigrant scholar (Valencia 2019). Overall, I understand Latinx geographies as existing at various scales: 1) embodied by people who connect/relate with Latin America and the Caribbean – that is, at the scale of our body, our first territory (See Cabnal 2010) – and 2) in the multi-scalar places where we create and relate across space and generations.

For me, it is relations/connections with land(s), lives, and diverse ways of being and knowing in Latin America, and how these embodied knowledges contribute to methods of making and experiencing place by Latinx communities in diaspora that gives Latinx geographies its meaning. Such fluid/evolving communal spaces are often constructed amidst (and sometimes because of) structural violence, both inside and outside academia. As described in other sections of this piece, in academia, Latinx geographies is a community of belonging in geography made possible because of the brilliant work by Latinx, Chicanx, Black, Indigenous, Caribbean, and scholars of color more broadly – past and present.

When we (Latinx people) move across space including across colonizing national borders and into the space of academia, we might not only carry the landscape of Latin America in our bodies a per Cusicanqui (2022), but we often bring our communities – that is our multiple relations, knowledges, and diverse struggles – with us. In this essay, I will focus on describing a specific version of Latinx geographies produced outside of academia, in the

northwestern region of what is known as the US. Such is a space where tranquil and peaceful places are created and experienced by a Mexican immigrant community in Pasco, Washington, largely targeted by immigration law. I do so because their (our) struggles and creativity influence the way in which I do scholarly work, my teaching approaches and philosophy, and the ways in which I (as a Mexican immigrant woman) attempt to build community spaces in academia.

At the age of 17, along with my mother and one sibling, I joined our transborder community in Pasco. In this city there is a vibrant and growing community of people who have been displaced mostly from Mexican rural communities such as my own. This movement converted us into immigrants of color in the US, often classified as "Hispanic," a term used by the US Census Bureau and other federal agencies as the only (and required) option of identity for people from Abya Yala. This label amalgamates people from all Spanish speaking countries, excluding non-Spanish speaking people in Latin America (Brazil, Guyana, Suriname and French Guiana), while including people from Spain and privileging Spanish ancestry, which further perpetuates settler colonial violence of incorporation through amalgamation and thus elimination of Indigenous and Black life (see Morgenson 2011; Wolfe 2006). Besides having our genealogy further erased through such amalgamation, many in my community have been illegalized through US immigration law. Their mere presence in Turtle Island is criminalized – they are not supposed to be here. For Lisa Marie Cacho (2013), this represents denial of personhood and humanity because they are permanently denied the right to have rights. They are not protected by the law, but they can't escape the law's punishment. Yet, amidst such organized abandonment and violence as per Gilmore (2006), my community produces spaces of tranquility, peace, and familial relations. As part of this community, I have witnessed and experienced communal ways of organizing both in Mexico and in the US. I further analyzed such methods of life making during my fieldwork between 2013 and 2017 when I conducted over 50 interviews with residents of Pasco, where about 60% of its 80,000 residents identify as "Hispanic" (US Census 2021).

The majority of my community in Pasco migrated from the same agrarian community in Mexico which I call "El Rancho," a community located in Purépecha land also known as Michoacán, Mexico. There, they have experienced state-led violence by the Mexican state with support (and pressure) from the US. Such violence includes: (1) negative effects from unfair international trade agreements (such as NAFTA) resulting in their inability to compete with artificially low prices from agricultural products like corn from Canada and the US (Clapp 2012); (2) disinvestment in education, health, and road infrastructure as the Mexican state strives to comply with neoliberal policies lead by the US (Sparke 2013; Valencia 2017); (3) high militarization and violence through the war on drugs (Corva 2008; Wright 2011). This is an ongoing war declared by President Calderón in 2006, encouraged and supported by the US through the Merida initiative since 2007 (Mercille 2011). Yet, the community continues to enact, adapt, and re-adapt ways of being and knowing towards a humane and dignified life both in El Rancho and in the US. They practice a *version* of what Zapotec Indigenous scholar, Jaime Martínez Luna describes as communality where the land, work, and fiestas are by and for the community (See also Vasquez Ruiz 2022).

In El Rancho, the *land* is held in community (ejido land), *work* such as public projects are done collaboratively, and *fiestas* are organized by and for the community. As they migrate my community brings with them knowledge, methods, and practices rooted in such relational

communality which they adapt and re-adapt to make meaningful life amidst structural oppression including denial to move across borders. Through praxis, they pass such anti-colonial communal relational methods across generations and across space, including Turtle Island where we are uninvited guests. Thus, Latinx spaces for me exist in the multiple and diverse places Latinx communities create as they enact other ways of being and knowing across time and space. The Latinx geographies beyond academia that I know best are what my own Latinx community ongoingly produces as they employ what I call, *knowledge from El Rancho*. In doing so, Latinx geographies overlap with Indigenous geographies. Indeed, Latinx geographies exist in relation to Indigenous and Black geographies (Cahuas 2019). Next, I draw on celebrations of life as one of many methods of producing Latinx geographies.

Celebrations are one of the many life-making methods that produce Latinx Geographies. By celebrations, I'm referring to not only the actual event where music, singing, dancing, joy, and eating are central, but also (most importantly) the relations that are built and/or strengthened during the organizing process. To make a fiesta possible – like a quinceañera where young girls' lives and futures are celebrated – community members including co-workers, family members, friends, and neighbors contribute all kinds of support in solidarity and, often, in reciprocity. This usually converts them into *madrina/padrino* (godmother/godfather) in relation to the celebrated person, and *comadre/compadre* (co-parent) in relation to the parents of the celebrated person. This way, kinship relations are built and/or strengthened, expanded into broader community relations. Invitations to such celebrations are inclusive of all family and friends. Just like in El Rancho, everyone is welcome to attend the fiesta and no one requires an invitation. Yet, I must recognize that while everyone is welcomed to these big events, my community carries internalized colonial trauma. At the most intimate scale – of the home, the “private” – a subtle level of anti-blackness and homophobia exist. There is much work to be done in building anti-colonial consciousness. Yet, to an extent, celebrations of life in solidarity as described here is one method of making Latinx places of family, peace, tranquility, and belonging, as experienced and expressed by my extensive community both in El Rancho and in Pasco, WA.

I agree with Wilson (2008) in that we are our relations. Acts of solidarity and reciprocity as ongoing embodied struggles for a dignified life, for the making of spaces of belonging by and for racialized communities – including but not limited to Latinx communities – have a lot to teach us about the power of community and kinship relations enacted via knowledge and practices that travel with people across Abya Yala and Turtle Island; knowledge that is passed on across generations in diaspora. For me, this is one of many significant versions of Latinx geographies.

Latinx Geographies as Relation

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Latinx geographies take shape through relation. Lazos that stretch across continents, across and between identities. Many in the Latinx diaspora look for a language that can articulate a sense of belonging that is both geographically expansive and yet uprooted. I won't perform Chicana love languages here but tracing one's *cordón umbilical hasta la matriz* is a meaning-seeking act that satisfies and yet keeps us wanting.

I learned what it meant to be Chicana/Mexicana in the US context from las amigas I met in college. I was struck by how differently we each identified, depending on our family's

stories of migration, our ties to ancestral lands, class positionings, how we were racialized in the US and Mexican context, sexualities, citizenship, status, and the language(s) we retained or lost. I remember vividly a reoccurring disagreement between two friends who debated the difference between being Chicana or Mexicana, and the politics that were implied in each. While one friend saw the radical origins of the Chicana/o movement as central to their identity, the other saw being Chicano/a as an Americanized, *pocha* identity that she refused. *We are Mexicanas*, she insisted, and to identify otherwise was to align with US empire. Years later, when I immersed myself in Chicana feminist texts, I began to understand how Chicana is a political identity that stems from genealogies that are explicitly feminist and anti-colonial. While I reject the nationalism that was prevalent in the Chicano movement and its inherent erasures, Chicanas have always queered these conceptions (Blackwell 2011), and our thinking is always evolving. Thus, it is the anti-colonial and feminist politics of a Chicana subjectivity that has led me to claim it.

When I entered geography as a grad student, these conversations of Chicanx/Latinx positionings were not at the forefront of my 'work'. There was no one in my department to explore these questions with (I wasn't yet blessed by the presence of Yolanda González Mendoza and Eddy Sandoval at the University of Washington). Being in Michelle Habell-Pallán's grad seminar on Chicana Feminist Theory in the fall of 2011 shifted that. We read Cherrie Moraga, Chela Sandoval, Emma Pérez, Mary Pat Brady, Rosa Linda Fregoso, Theresa Delgadillo, Amalia Mesa-Bains, Laura Pérez, Sonia Saldívar-Hull, Maylei Blackwell, and Gloria Anzaldúa. Mary Pat Brady's *Extinct Lands, Temporal Geographies* altered my thinking:

If [Chicana/o literature] offers new concepts of place, land, bodies and alternative cartographies and spatial epistemologies, they do so in terms not outside of temporality but very much attuned to the deprivations of both the past and the present. Their spatial imaginaries offer critique, that ineffable desire for change, as well as examples of people thriving, resisting, and making space. Yet the work of critical geography has largely emerged without reference to the spatial epistemologies of Chicana literature. That is indeed unfortunate, since so many of its spatial claims and discoveries had been anticipated, theorized, and illustrated by Chicanas (2002, 204).

That same semester, I read Katherine McKittrick's (2006) *Demonic Grounds* for the first time. Immersing myself in these two texts, geography suddenly felt entirely different. I came to understand the spatial in a more embodied way, learning from long genealogies of Black and Chicana feminist thought not recognized by the geographic 'canon.' Reading these texts in relation is when Latinx geographies was born for me – but I didn't yet have a language, nor Latinx geographer kin, to think through these ideas with for several more years.

I also arrived at Latinx geographies by being in conversation with Black and Indigenous geographies and geographers. These were the theories that most resonated with my thinking, and those that taught me what it means to think and live in relation. In an AAG session Michelle Daigle and I organized on 'Decolonial Futures' in 2016, I spoke about *madre serpiente* epistemologies and methodologies, engaging the work of Irene Lara and Gloria Anzaldúa. When Madelaine Cahuas and Cristina Faiver-Serna approached me after that session, I remember thinking, wow, there are more of us here now. Little did I know how fated that moment would be, and what we would go on to build in the years to come.

I carry the relations and the ethic of accountability that I cultivated with Black and Indigenous scholars and compañerxs with me as we think about what Latinx geographies needs to nurture. To me, it is the relationship between Black, Indigenous and mestizx subjectivities that gives meaning to Latinx geographies. These relations structure Latinx geographies, traversing particular colonial contexts across the hemisphere, and are intertwined with long histories of colonialism, migration, imperialism, and racial capitalism. If scholars of Latinx geographies are attentive to racialized and gendered processes that have dispossessed Black and Indigenous peoples across the hemisphere for centuries, and how these formations reverberate into Black and Indigenous erasure within Latinx and Latin American hegemonics at present, then Latinx geographies can offer something politically and culturally important. We must be attentive to how relation is central to Latinx identity and refuse mestizx-centric renderings that reproduce anti-Blackness and erase Indigenous and Afro-Latinx presence.

We need a wide range of Latinx geographies and geographers to weave these epistemologies relationally – this work cannot be singular. We need Black Latinx, Indigenous Latinx, Queer Latinx, Trans Latinx, Undocumented Latinx, Disabled Latinx peoples in dialogue. We need dialogue across space (as in, across the Americas) *and* across identities to be working and thinking in relation to one another. We also need to be rooted in community, in movements, in organizing. To me, Latinx geographies, like Chicane identity, carry a political imperative. To think expansively across geographies is to see how we are connected through shared experiences of conquest, and also in struggle. To work in relation toward liberatory futures – this is what I strive for when I think, dialogue, and organize alongside Latinx geographies and geographers.

Undefining Latinx Geographies

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Over the last six years, since I began this journey in and through Latinx geographies I am continuously met with the question, what is Latinx geographies? I am unsure how to answer. I worry that attempts to define Latinx geographies play into the imperial-colonial-neoliberal academy's insatiable quest to know, categorize, brand, and intellectually own everything. I want to refuse this impulse. Latinx geographies as a growing intellectual project, subfield, framework and material, lived, embodied reality is too vast, complicated, and dynamic to wholly define. I can only speak to how I understand Latinx geographies, which is deeply connected to the places, people, and relationships I know from. I can only speak to my longing for a Latinx geographies that evades concrete borders and brings us closer to what Katherine McKittrick calls "more humanly workable, and alterable geographic practices" (2013, 15).

For me, Latinx geographies is a way to articulate how Latinx people are geographical; that they indeed hold geographical knowledge, engage in spatial practices and are integral to the production of space. When I started my PhD in geography in 2012, I was hard-pressed to find the stories, experiences, knowledges and struggles of Latinx people in my classes and disciplinary journals. Latin Americans existed in the pages of Latin American geography, but once in the "Global North" it was as if they were no longer worthy of geographical study. It was as if diasporic Latinx people who trace their roots to Latin America and the Caribbean living in the Global North could not be authors of their own lives and communities. I found

texts by Laura Pulido, Lorena Muñoz and anti-racist, anti-colonial, feminist geographers and read myself into the pages.

Latinx geographies is wayfinding. It is finding your way back home, to yourself and to your community, after years of Eurocentric schooling left you thinking you and the places and people you come from do not matter. It is charting a different path to a destination real, imagined and always changing through an overwhelming sea of whiteness that is geography. It is learning of Moraga and Anzaldúa's (1981) *This Bridge Called My Back*, from your women of color feminist friends, reading its pages cover to cover, and then continuously wondering about Moraga's "a theory in the flesh," Anzaldúa's "el mundo zurdo," the Combahee River Collective's "A Black feminist statement," Audre Lorde's "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House" and Chrystos' poems. It is reading and re-reading Katherine McKittrick's (2006) *Demonic Grounds*, Dionne Brand's (2005) *What We All Long For*, Leanne Simpson's (2017) *As We Have Always Done*, Carmen Aguirre's (2011) *Something Fierce*, and Sylvia Wynter's (1995) "1492: A New World View." It is interrogating the absented presence of Black Canada and Black geographies across the Americas and globally. It is refusing the lie of any safe, comfortable belonging in settler colonialism. It is grappling with the unfinished project of liberation. It is listening to Lido Pimienta's "Quiero Jardines" and finding your way again.

Latinx geographies is bridge-making. It is bringing Latinx Studies into conversation with human geography and asserting that Latinx Studies has always been geographical. It is weaving together Black, Indigenous and Latinx Studies/geographies to understand how there would be no Latinx geographies without Black and Indigenous geographies. It is looking for the ways Latin American, Caribbean, Asian, Oceanic and Middle Eastern geographies shape and intersect with Latinx geographies. Indeed, Latinx geographies are relational and haunted by slavery, genocide, conquest, and imperialism. Latinx geographies are the borderlands, the shoal, the plantation, the hacienda, the plot, la chacra, el campo, the brown commons, the *ni de aquí ni de allá*, quilombo, *pacífico*, *barrio* and so much more. While Latinx geographies are deeply interconnected with Latin American geographies and *Abya Yala*, they are not the same. Latinx geographies is reckoning with the bridges that cannot always be built or sustained. How do you explain your wounds living in the north to the family you left in the south? How can we dismantle the racial-colonial hierarchies of anti-Blackness and anti-Indigeneity across the hemisphere? Latinx geographies is disappointment because *Latinidad* is not freedom, and your people will inevitably let you down and break your heart.

Latinx geographies is a place. It is Tkaronto. Kensington Market. My dad's store. A portal home with cherished things left behind made anew. My *tío's* apartment in Scarborough with the TV on loud and honey-colored parquet floors we transformed into our playground. My *tía's* kitchen table in Mississauga. The smell of freshly cooked rice. Tamales wrapped in green banana leaves. The love in a bowl of *caldo de gallina*. An unwritten recipe passed down for generations. My immigrant family's stories and secrets. Mailed cassette tapes, scattered letters, scratchy phone calls at 6am. My friends and I, sweating out the heavy weight of our parents' expectations dancing in the darkness of a basement party, nightclub and anywhere the city offered us an escape. Latinx geographies are all the ways Latin America, Peru, Hualal, La Esperanza Baja, are etched into my existence and the spaces the people I love create.

Indeed, Latinx geographies are complicated geographies. Neither entirely celebratory or resistant, fraught, oppressive, or painful, but filled with longing for something more or something else. Perhaps, a “more humanly workable and alterable geography” (McKittrick 2013, 15). Latinx geographies are undefinable.

Caminando Juntxs: Rumbo a La Utopía

La utopía está en el horizonte. Me acerco dos pasos, ella se aleja dos pasos. Camino diez pasos y el horizonte se desplaza diez pasos más allá. Por mucho que camine, nunca la alcanzaré. Entonces, ¿para qué sirve la utopía? Para eso: sirve para caminar (Galeano 1994, 184).

Our theorizations of Latinx geographies resist stasis, finality or conclusivity. Yet, within this fluidity, some streams and strands stand out. First, across our entries it is clear we each understand Latinx geographies as a field of study that is committed to an anti-colonial and social justice praxis, indebted to critical geographers that have come before us and inspired by the activist roots of Chicanx and Latinx Studies and the radical contributions of Black geographies and Indigenous geographies. Second, we demonstrate how doing Latinx geographies is methodologically diverse and profoundly shaped by the embodied knowledges and relationships we have formed with each other and our communities as Latinx scholars.

In Diego’s entry, practicing Latinx geographies involves grappling with its genealogies in radical Chicanx student activism and finding home in community. For Guillermo, it is articulating his experiences as a Queer AfroMexicano through poetry and becoming an interdisciplinary scholar that examines and challenges racialized health inequities. In Cristina’s case, it involves honoring the testimonios of Latina community health workers struggling for environmental justice in communities she’s been in relationship with as a health worker herself. For Yolanda, it is engaging with the stories of her communities, bringing to light the complexities of their lives, the injustices they face and how they resist. For Magie doing Latinx geographies means thinking relationally and building an ethic of accountability with Black and Indigenous scholars. Similarly, for Madelaine, doing Latinx geographies means building bridges across Black, Indigenous and Latinx Studies/geographies, refusing to confine Latinx geographies into a sole, exact definition and instead heeding McKittrick’s (2013, 15) call to thinking deeply with the people and places you know from in the pursuit of more “humanly workable geographies.” Together, these different approaches to doing Latinx geographies reject a superficial “mix and stir” form of representation. We do Latinx geographies not simply because we are Latinx geographers, or studying Latinx people’s geographies, but because our work is grounded in deep, ever-evolving, relationships of care, reciprocity and accountability with different Latinx communities we belong to and are in solidarity with.

There are endless possibilities for the future of Latinx geographies. While our conception of Latinx is expansive, and we call attention to the ways mestizaje and Latinidad erase Blackness and Indigeneity, there is a need for more work that rigorously engages with Black/Afro-Latinx, Puerto Rican, Caribbean, Central American and Indigenous geographies. This would also contribute to ongoing debates in Latinx Studies that are remaking the field in ways that foreground Black/Afro-Latinx, Caribbean, Central American, Indigenous and Afro-Indigenous voices (Dinzey-Flores 2019; López Oro 2021; Figueroa 2020). There is also a need for more research exploring how Asian, Filipinx, Oceanic, and Middle Eastern geographies

specifically intersect with Latinx geographies (see Ocampo 2016). Thinking with Zaragocin et. al's (2022) and Muñoz' (2018a, 2018b, 2016b) contributions, we also underscore the importance of future Latinx geographies scholarship engaging in hemispheric analyses bringing together critical perspectives from across Abya Yala and Turtle Island and grappling with processes of settler colonialism (Pulido 2018). By taking these different paths, we may better understand how we can work towards social transformation in relation with other oppressed communities.

Latinx geographies has drawn us together as a collective to dream and walk towards a more just future. This future on the horizon resembles a utopia. As Galeano (1994) writes above, it is not easily accessible, and at times evades us. He asks, "What good is a utopia if we can never reach it?" The response: it keeps us walking onward. We walk towards a utopia for "the present is not enough" for marginalized people (Muñoz 2019, 27). As José Esteban Muñoz (2019, 26) writes, "There is something queer about the utopian...to participate in such an endeavor is not to imagine an isolated future for the individual but instead to participate in a hermeneutic that wishes to describe a collective futurity." *Estamos en rumbo a la utopía* for we know we must queer this reality to build a future for all of us. It is in this spirit that we have shared our reflections, extending our hearts and hands to you the reader as we continue to walk together.

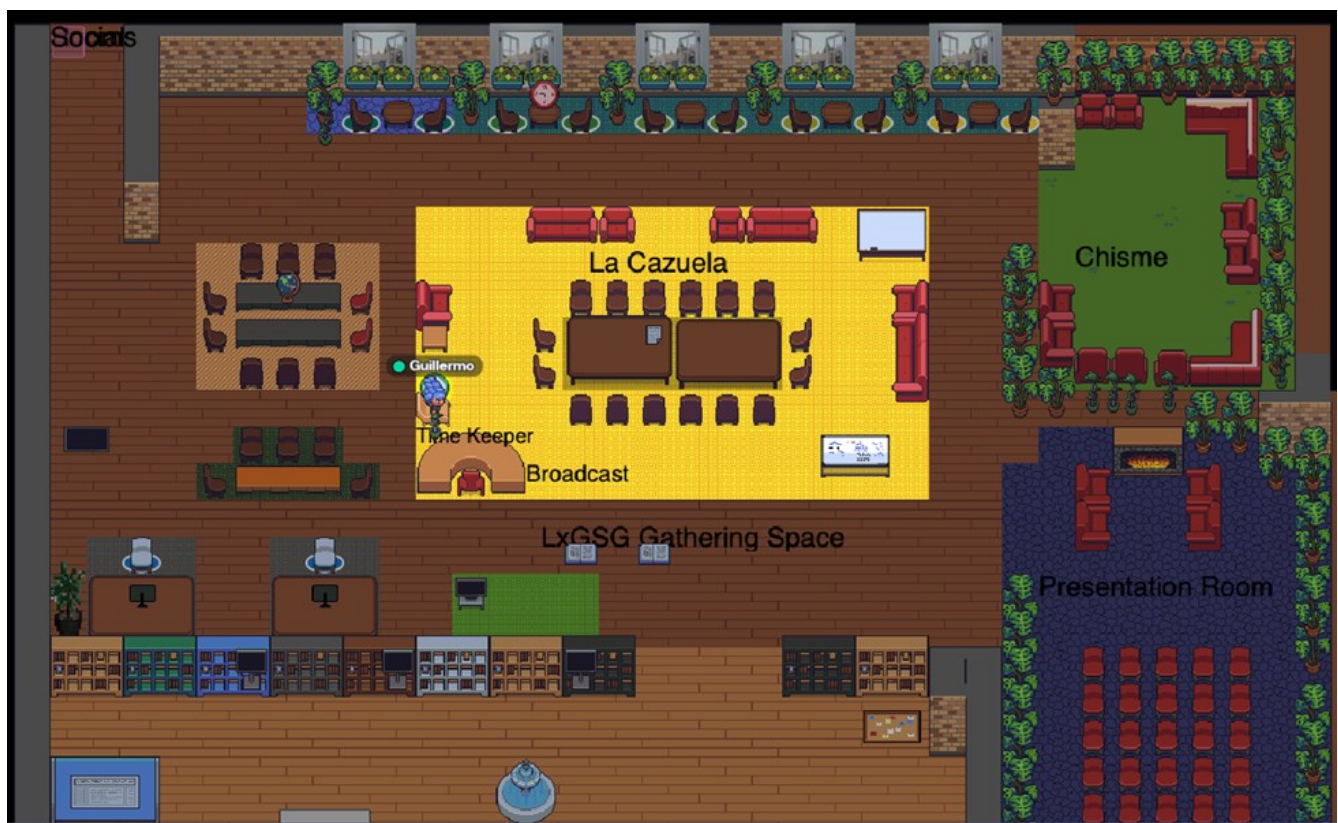


Figure 1. A screen capture of the Latinx geographies virtual gathering space where we held our weekly *Cafecitos*. The space was built on the Gather.town proximity-based chat platform. "Rooms" are signified in the colored squares, with yellow for *La Cazuela*, green for *Chisme*, blue for the *Presentation* room, and seats at the top of the screen where we could work independently during our writing sessions.

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