RETHINKING LATINO IMMIGRATION
MODERNITY/COLONIALITY AND THE GEOPOLITICS OF KNOWLEDGE IN THE
UNITED STATES

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ABSTRACT

JOSEPH L. WILTBERGER: RETHINKING LATINO IMMIGRATION:
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Questions around Latino immigration in the United States have become increasingly relevant recently as the country experiences unprecedented demographic transformations. Dominant knowledge and discourses in the U.S., which emerged from a particular Eurocentric geopolitical position, subalternize Latinos according to the logic of modernity/coloniality. Using the question of race as a point of departure, this paper applies Modernity/Coloniality/De-coloniality (MCD)—an emergent theoretical framework that has primarily been used in Latin American contexts—to the situation of Latinos in the U.S. This framework may be especially useful in anthropology, and the potential for integrating the two is explored in a critical analysis of certain widely-held understandings that significantly shape the contemporary U.S. "debate" on Latino immigration. Highly racialized ways of thinking about Latinos and immigration have been introduced in relation to certain events, ideas, and discourses that prevailed at particular historical moments and in relation to long-range historical processes of modernity/coloniality.

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INTRODUCTION:

OTHER APPROACHES TO UNDERSTANDING LATINO IMMIGRATION

The 1949 film noir *Border Incident* is a suspenseful thriller about a government crackdown on an illegal farmworker trafficking operation during the initial years of the Bracero program.[1] The protagonists of the film are a team of white men, including several government agents from the U.S. and one from Mexico, who are to solve the problem of illegal immigration. Their bi-national discussion in a Washington DC office brings about the following gameplan: the Mexican official will go undercover, disguised as a Bracero, creating the opportunity for a bi-national collaborative crackdown to apprehend the smugglers of unauthorized workers. The film opens with a scene depicting white U.S. officials drawing the names of Bracero day laborers from a lottery. The Mexicans, depicted as a herd of people waiting with anticipation on the other side of the fence, listen with the hope that they will be one of the few selected for work.

Border Incident captures Hollywood representations of Mexican-U.S. power relationships at a particular historical moment. Scenes with Mexicans are always dimly lit, and they are portrayed as slow-thinking, dirty, chaotic, and desperate victims who sometimes make the bad decision of going along with the corrupt Mexican smugglers. In contrast, the brightly lit parts of the film portray government officials in the U.S., which is presented as a

place of cleanliness, organization, legitimacy, and having the authority to bring order and civilization to the other world. The film is premised on modernity's promise of good governance, including the colonial idea of disciplining "uncivilized" Mexicans who abuse the opportunities provided by the helping hand of the U.S.

Nearly sixty years later, very similar situations continue to take place. I saw the same scene on an early December morning in a particular suburban community near Washington DC in 2006. Like in other parts of the U.S., within a span of a few years, its demographic composition shifted from an almost entirely white make-up to having a significant presence of Latinos. The recent wave of immigrants has led to a surge of racial tension there, increased attention from local police to Latino crime, and the establishment of a local chapter of the anti-immigrant group known as Minute Men.[2] After heated debates about how to manage the increasing crowd of undocumented Latino migrants that gathered each morning outside of a local convenience store, residents approved the construction of a day labor center.[3] On my visit to the center, about one hundred undocumented immigrants waited under a blocked off tent while a small portion of the names were drawn at random to meet the needs of the day's employers. I did not witness a "border incident" that particular day, but staffers guarded the borders of the tent to prevent employers from "smuggling" anyone out the back way.

Latino immigration has become a focus of public attention in the U.S., and the political and social responses to it are often hostile and misinformed. It is dramatically changing racial/cultural dynamics in communities all over the U.S., as it can no longer be understood as a process that primarily affects the U.S. Southwest. Some local communities, such as the DC suburb with the day labor center, have seen such dramatic changes that people there may be less concerned with individuals crossing the border illegally than with

the feeling that the border is crossing them, as Latin American spaces are reproduced within the U.S. Latinos recently became the largest minority group, and a white minority is on the horizon.[4] This has caused the U.S.-Mexico border to earn heightened visibility with its militarization and fortification, most recently with the 2006 Congressional approval of a 700-mile fence.

Not only is the U.S.-Mexico border a material, regulatory mechanism for migration flows, it has also grown as a key symbolic marker of how the immigration process, and people from Latin America, are interpreted and understood in the U.S. The power relationships and representations of racial/cultural differences symbolized by the southern border are reinscribed within the U.S. along internal borders between subalternized Latino subjects and those who are imagined to be rightful members of the U.S. national community.[5] The day labor center in metropolitan DC is one such example of how these internal borders divide people according to overlapping understandings of racial, cultural, and national belonging. Politics, practices and discourses related Latino immigration are linked to *knowledge* about 1) Latinos, as a group of people assigned to a racial/cultural category that are an object of discussion, and 2) migration, as a complex phenomenon on which more knowledge is needed but is having a much greater impact on the U.S., the Americas, and other parts of the world lately.

The speed and complexity with which Latino immigration is changing U.S. communities is making it a messy topic for social theorists, politicians, social movements, and the broader public. By no means are "Latinos" a homogenous group or a natural category. A Spanish speaking migrant of African decent from the Dominican Republic and a Yucatec Maya speaking migrant of indigenous background from Mexico share little in

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common, other than their categorization in the U.S. under the wide umbrella of "Latinos." Upon arrival to the U.S., people from diverse cultures, languages, and backgrounds get racialized in an effort to fit them into homogenous but messy, overlapping discursive categories that tell us little about the person and often get misapplied completely: "Latino," "Hispanic," "African-American," "Spanish-speaking," "Mayan," "undocumented," "illegal," "minority," "underprivileged," "day laborer," "poor," and so on. Even the term "immigrant" is problematic; it rests on the assumption that a person has moved from her original locale because she has been drawn toward a more progressive, modern, and developed place, and that it would be illogical to want to return to her place of origin. These assumptions negate the possibility that migrants may have a very critical view of "developed" places (Lawson & Silvey 1999; Lawson 1999), that they may come with full intention of returning to their place of origin (as is the case of many of the Salvadoran migrants that I have interviewed), or that they may quickly become disillusioned with what are often mythical promises about the "American Dream" (Mahler 1995).[6] Although many people would probably prefer to be identified otherwise, for the purposes of this paper I tend to use the category "Latinos" to describe the reality of a subaltern group in the U.S. and to refer to the (problematic) construction of a racial group in the U.S. I rarely use the term "Latino immigrant" because recent political debates on immigration tend to racially stigmatize a wide-range of people that are perceived to be "Latino immigrants" (regardless of whether or not they migrated or identify themselves as "Latino") and because the word "*im*migrant" carries the imperialistic (DeGenova & Ramos Zayas 2003) and modernist connotations that I described above.

While sociologists and political scientists tend to treat race, culture, and the nation as relatively natural, fixed categories of analysis and produce a quantifiable social theory about

migration (building models to measure how "successfully" immigrants "assimilate" into a different society, determining the "effectiveness" of state immigration policies, for example), anthropologists have provided some of the more innovative, reflexive, and critical approaches to migration theory in relation to racial/cultural dynamics. Since the 1990's, anthropology has made significant strides in contributing to theories of how migrants remain engaged with their places of origin and how they renegotiate identities in different geographic contexts (Bash, Glick-Schiller & Szanton Blanc 1995; Michael Kearney 1995; Rouse 2002) These somewhat celebratory accounts of transnational migrant agency have nevertheless been useful in re-thinking traditional understandings of citizenship and linear models of assimilation. Other migration researchers have focused on agency/structure debates, taking into account the policies and economics of immigration (Sassen 1988; Thrift 1983; Silvey & Lawson 1999; Goss & Linquist 1995) or have examined the relationship between immigration and nation-building (Chavez 1991, 1994, 2001).

The mass immigrant mega-marches in the spring of 2006 have introduced a whole new level of urgency for renewed anthropological inquiry into the relationship between immigration processes and the question of race. While anthropology has often dealt with the problem of race constructively in the past, there is little attention to new racial/cultural dynamics linked to immigration experience in recent times, particularly with respect to Latinos. I propose that new anthropological approaches to the study of migration and its relation to race should view these processes in an integrated framework linking long-term history, various geopolitical locations, and cultural-political processes of various kinds, including anti-immigrant discourses, pro-immigrant mobilizations, and the immigrants' own responses and changing subjectivities.

This paper deals with an emergent framework that takes such an approach; while it emerged in the context of a re-reading of modernity and a focus on subaltern struggles in Latin America, the framework, referred to as Modernity/Coloniality/De-coloniality (MCD), is well suited to the analysis proposed above, and indeed there are a few attempts already in this direction by scholars in disciplines other than anthropology (Grosfoguel et al. 2005, forthcoming). I contend that it has great potential to be fertile anthropological terrain for both theory construction and ethnographic research. By linking modernity with the concept of "coloniality" (to be explained in the next section), this framework offers a long-range, world-systems perspective that emphasizes the particularity and development of Eurocentric thinking, which is partially characterized by racial hierarchizations and certain other forms of classifying "Others." The framework attributes Eurocentric thinking to uneven power relations that extend through today but initially grew out of the colonial encounter and the simultaneous emergence of modernity.

From an anthropological approach that incorporates MCD, this paper contends that contemporary knowledge and discourses about U.S. Latinos emerged from a particular Eurocentric perspective. Highly racialized understandings of Latinos, molded by modern/colonial processes, inform the contemporary decisions and practices that dehumanize Latinos as subalternized subjects. While MCD has been applied to situations of people living in Latin America, it has only recently been applied to Latinos in the U.S. Nascent efforts to apply MCD to the situation of Latinos have tended to treat "race" as a somewhat flat, transhistorical category. With the help of Foucault's strategy of "eventalization," I hope to address this problem by introducing a more nuanced anthropological perspective that emphasizes how Latinos experience racism and various forms of Othering in a

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modern/colonial context. While I am not attempting to review the rich tradition of critical race theories that have melded with anthropology, my provisional analysis demonstrates how historical and contemporary profiles of Latinos as "immigrants" represent the complexity of race as a fluid, changing, historically-contingent analytical category.

This is a conceptual and analytical paper. My first goal (chapter two) is to introduce what I see as the most relevant aspects of the theoretical framework (MCD) and explain why it might be beneficial if it were better integrated with anthropology. In chapter three, I consider the question of whether MCD can be applied to U.S. contexts, and how anthropology can help in this endeavor. I review the emerging efforts of non-anthropologists to examine the question of Latino immigration through the lens of MCD, and I propose some ways that more anthropological approaches can help to pick apart the complexities of this problem, specifically with respect to the question of race. In chapter four, I introduce the Foucauldian concept of "eventalization." I use it as a tool enabling us to refine the MCD framework and to apply it to Latinos in the U.S. from an anthropological perspective. In my provisional analysis of the eventalized production of knowledge about Latino immigration in the U.S., I consider the ways Latinos have come to be understood today in a dominant U.S. imagination in relation to certain events, ideas, and discourses that prevailed at particular historical moments. Finally, in the conclusion, I propose that alternative ways of thinking about Latino immigration can be introduced in spaces that invite perspectives and conceptualizations coming from subaltern experiences and the Global South.

I. NOTES

[1] 'Border Incident.' 1949. Anthony Mann, dir. Film produced by MGM. Like the H2A agricultural guestworker program that followed it and is in place today, the Bracero program was a means for the U.S. government to legally regulate the importation of Mexican labor to fill the needs of the agricultural economy. Under both guestworker programs, the migrant workers are bound to particular employers, are denied many of the civil and labor rights guaranteed to citizen workers, and often find themselves in exploitative situations similar to those of undocumented migrants who have entered the U.S. alongside them.

[2] See N.C. Aizenman and Timothy Dwyer, 'In Herndon, Only Feet Away But Worlds Apart' Washington Post.com Dec 9, 2005. Available at www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/12/08/AR2005120802068.html.

[3] See Karin Bulliard, 'Herndon Day Labor Center Declares its First Year A Success.' Washington Post, Feb 27, 2007.

[4] According to 2000 U.S. Census report, whites are expected to be a minority by 2055.

[5] See Josiah Heyman's extensive work on the militarization and symbolism of the U.S.-Mexico border, and Rouse (2002) on the recursive nature of the U.S.-Mexico border as "internal" borders in the U.S. See Anderson (1987) on the concept of the imagined national community, and Chavez (1991) on relationship of Latino immigration to the imagined community of the U.S.

[6] Based on my interviews with Salvadoran migrants during ethnographic fieldwork. Some migration theorists have inquired into the ways the narratives of migrants themselves can offer critiques of modernist theories of development by highlighting their contradictions (Lawson & Silvey 1999, Lawson 1999). See Mahler's (1995) ethnography titled *American Dreaming* for an analysis of migrant disillusionment with U.S. life.

II.

**THE MODERNITY/COLONIALITY/DE-COLONIALITY (MCD) FRAMEWORK
AND ANTHROPOLOGY**

As the discipline of anthropology became increasingly reflexive during the late twentieth century, new areas of critical inquiry emerged, including postcolonial theory, critical race theory, the anthropology of modernity, and subaltern studies, among others. However, rarely do we link these conceptual areas. Modernity/Coloniality/De-coloniality (MCD) provides such integration, making it a potential fit for the complex, nuanced analysis of ethnographic anthropological projects. MCD arose out of primarily Latin American scholarship in sociology, world-systems, literature, and philosophy by drawing on the contributions of Anibal Quijano, Enrique Dussel, and Walter Mignolo, among others.[1] Through a different geopolitical positioning, its authors claim to introduce a critical, alternative Latin American perspective to the long history of hegemonic, Eurocentric knowledge production. In contrast to the widely-known theories of Foucault and Habermas who associate modernity with industrial 18th century Europe, MCD defines modernity in an alternative way, as a project that began with the conquest of America and the colonial encounter. In doing so, the MCD framework excavates the roots of contemporary power relations in a world-systems context in order to propose a possibility for undoing modern/colonial power relations through projects of "de-coloniality." I propose that MCD

has the potential to be useful to anthropology, which often addresses the multiple, complex systems of exploitation, subalternization, racism, and Othering across the globe. In this section, I will outline what I see as some of the most useful concepts that can be gleaned from MCD, and how they can work together with anthropology. Later on, I will provisionally apply these concepts to the question of Latinos in the U.S.

Re-reading Modernity

A central MCD concept is the potential connection between modernity and colonial processes. According to dominant interpretations (although there are varying ideas about its genealogy), modernity originated in northern Europe around the time of the Reformation, Enlightenment, and the French Revolution. It solidified during the industrial revolution and gradually diffused to other parts of the world. In contrast, MCD views modernity as springing out of the Renaissance and the 1492 encounter with the New World. According to this other framework, its genealogy can be traced to multiple sites of origination, first in southern Europe and its colonies; later in northern Europe.

Critiques of modernity tend to be based on Western scholarship that has modern Europe as its geopolitical roots. MCD suggests that this is problematic because even our critical understandings of modernity thus emerge from an exclusively European experience. Much of the anthropological investigation of modernity is rooted in the work of authors such as Foucault and Habermas. Playing a pivotal role in shaping the discipline is Foucault's emphasis on the power relations that characterize European modernity (the racial dimension of biopolitics, the notion of governmentality, the regulation of sexuality, the power of discourse, and so on) (Foucault 1977, 1978a, 2003). MCD draws from similar critical

inquiry, but poses the possibility that the knowledge and power relations that characterize modernity are global, that such critiques must also take into account colonial relations, and that modernity cannot be solely interpreted according to the terms of the European experience. Rather, modern regimes of power are shaped by and constitutive of global processes that were set into place during the colonial encounter.

The connection between modernity and colonial processes, in the view of MCD, is established through a particular logic rooted in Christianity and the Renaissance. The logic of salvation and European superiority was employed during the colonial encounter to justify the subalternization of local knowledge and the economic exploitation of indigenous groups and slaves. A key insight of MCD is how the resulted modern/colonial world system operated on the basis of hierarchal classifications. Enrique Dussel (1995, 2000) proposes that the modern systems of management, regulation, and exploitation—popularly understood to have originated in the period of industrialization in Europe—actually began with the exploitation of slaves by colonial administrations in the Caribbean. MCD imagines that the Enlightenment was not one of the origination points of modernity, but rather a second wave of it. It was a later modern/colonial project that operated according to the same logic of salvation and hierarchal ordering of the world, but reimagined it in terms of science, progress, and secularism. MCD therefore thinks of modernity as a *project* rather than a natural, evolutionary stage in history (a view shared by many Western scholars). Furthermore, it is a *colonial project*. I favor MCD's reading of modernity, because it focuses on the ways a historically-produced ideology privileges the more "progressive" over the Other can play out in global, national, and local colonial processes across multiple domains, including knowledge production, the economy, culture, and political society.

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The Coloniality of Power

The concept of "coloniality," a term originally coined by Peruvian sociologist Anibal Quijano (1991), is used in MCD to describe the hierarchal ordering of power relations that were set into motion during the co-occurrence of colonialism and modernity. It signifies the enduring persistence of colonial influence even after periods of independence according to hierarchal classifications. Colonizers categorized and organized the colonized according to race, ethnicity, gender, religion, and other forms of social existence, with the white, male, colonizing norm at the top of the hierarchy. As transformative processes such as religious conversion, miscegenation, and political independence have occurred since the colonial encounter, people have continuously been ranked and organized according to a colonialist logic. This coloniality of power functions within the context of modern projects (the privileging of reason, science, and secularism in knowledge production, the building of economies and nation-states, and so on) to produce situations of exploitation and subordination for people who ranked farther down in the hierarchy. According to MCD, the coloniality of power involves mechanisms and practices of inclusion/exclusion that are exercised across multiple domains, such as through the authority granted to certain forms of knowledge, the economy, and institutions. MCD sees modernity and coloniality as mutually constitutive projects.

MCD supposes that the initial line between colonizer/colonized (referred to as "the colonial difference" throughout this paper) should still be used as a key reference point in attempts to make sense of how the complex systems of power relations and logic of hierarchal classification are organized today. The colonial difference came to distinguish

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those who were wounded by the experience of colonialism—Franz Fanon's *damnè*, or "wretched" of the earth—from those who tend to benefit from it (Fanon 1963, Mignolo 2000). Because race/ethnicity is an immediate and enduring marker of the colonial difference, the hierarchy has a significant racial/ethnic dimension. However, MCD suggests that the coloniality of power operates along all modern categories of social existence, including nationality, race, ethnicity, sexuality, gender, class, culture, spirituality, and so forth. Global processes reproduce a complex set of colonial dynamics that perpetually construct the Other: the non-white, the non-Western, the non-Christian, the more indigenous, the woman, and the more traditional.

The global dynamics that modernity/coloniality describes makes it a concept that could be very useful to anthropology and distinguishes it from frameworks and concepts used in anthropology that may appear to be similar.   In anthropology, the period of *colonialism* tends to be referred to as a moment and process that shaped contemporary forms of power relations, racism, and Othering. *Postcolonial* theory acknowledges the influence of contemporary *colonial legacies*, focuses on the relationship of the metropole to its former colonial territories, and considers this relationship in a period of formal independence. *Coloniality*, in contrast, signifies an enduring presence of colonial situations and relationships (as opposed to *effects*, *influences*, or *legacies* of colonialism) that go beyond former colonial powers and their directly colonized territories, and as Grosfoguel, Saldivar, and Maldonado-Torres (2005; forthcoming) phrase it, operate in "periods of independence without decolonization." Many would argue that these contemporary colonial situations should be called *imperial* or *neo-colonial*. The concept of *coloniality*, unlike *imperialism* and

neo-colonialism, describes situations that extend beyond the scale of the nation-state to encompass the many ways these enduring colonial power relations transcend scale.

De-colonial Thinking

Finally, the emphasis that MCD puts on the geopolitics of knowledge is something that could be helpful for anthropological analysis and constructive projects. MCD takes into account how dominant ways of thinking about the world are rooted in a Eurocentric, colonial tradition of knowledge production. A widely-held, Eurocentric logic positions Others (people in non-Western nation-states of the "Third World," poor indigenous groups within these countries, immigrant groups of color in the U.S., and so forth) as belonging to places and cultures that should be more developed, more modern, more capitalist, more rational and more civilized. These assumptions about who constitutes the Other and how they fit into a modern/colonial hierarchy are rooted in a particular geopolitical position of knowledge production.

The proponents of MCD claim that their alternative conceptualization of modernity/coloniality is distinct from both dominant and critical Eurocentric understandings in part because these ideas have come out of a different geo-political and epistemic location linked to a tradition of Latin American critical scholarship. This tradition includes Latin American liberation theologies and philosophies, and dependency theories. The former, which developed during the 1960's and 1970's, called for the liberation of the oppressed Other (usually exploited workers and peasants). Radical dependency theories emerged in Latin America around the same time and countered the modernization paradigms that were then arriving from the North, which were premised on the modernist evolutionary

development models.[2] In conceptualizing coloniality, Quijano built on the more radical

dependency theories; he took them further to challenge the traditional/modern binary,

economic reductionism, and the use of the nation-state as a unit of analysis, by contending

that all of these categories are Eurocentric inventions central to the coloniality of power

(Grosfoguel, et. al forthcoming).

MCD claims Latin America as its geopolitical and epistemic position. Its advocates

see such a geopolitical shift in knowledge production as critical to the move away from

eurocentrism and an unlearning of the categories that determine the hierarchy of the

coloniality of power. This radical contention raises a number of questions. Has a tradition of

Eurocentric thinking permeated the university system and the wider public sphere, and does

it often go unquestioned? If Other ways of thinking—from different geopolitical positions—

were more visible and recognizable, would the world look different to us? Where is their

room for thinking in ways outside of a Eurocentric perspective? What kind of impact would

it have on modern/colonial regimes of power? Could a shift lead to a new hegemony, new

categories of difference, or the production of different colonial regimes?

In the MCD view, thinking Otherwise is possible; the framework poses several

possibilities for "de-colonial" projects. (I will tentatively discuss the possibility of emerging

de-colonial projects in the conclusion). MCD's propositions for decolonizing knowledge, in

my view, could be useful for the production of constructive anthropological theory. First,

MCD contends that people who have colonial experiences and alternative, non-Eurocentric

conceptualizations may be strategically positioned to engage in collective thinking and

dialogues to produce knowledge that is outside of the dominant Eurocentric perspective,

forming perhaps what Boaventura De Sousa Santos, one of the architects of the World Social

Forum, calls "epistemologies of the South." In this respect, decolonizing knowledge also leads us outside of the academy as well. It is both a political and epistemological project, and is produced through the thinking of activists and intellectuals in all sorts of forums and spaces, especially in those that open up within and among social movements.

Critical "border thinking" is the idea that knowledge produced from the "borders" of modernity/coloniality has the potential for decolonizing effects (Mignolo 2000). It refers to the creativity, energy, and conceptualizations that tend to come from people who have life experiences and histories as the *damné* (Fanon's term), or subaltern, generally speaking. It can also include the kind of thinking that comes from "in-between" experiences of Americas' borderlands and diasporas, or from an identification with "nepantalism," the Aztec word for being between two worlds, as Gloria Anzaldua (1987) called it.

As Catherine Walsh (2005), another important MCD advocate, suggests, thinking Otherwise is enabled through knowledge production that is situated in local histories and struggles that are often invisiblized or subalternized. As a de-colonial project, she works with a university in the indigenous Andes that runs counter to the traditional European model. The university is an effort to decolonize epistemology through "transdiscplinarity" and to cultivate new domains of study.

Finally, whether de-colonial thinking is produced in universities, in social movements, or in other spaces, the MCD framework views it as more inclusive of alternative visions than the hegemonic Eurocentric imagination of a universalist utopia. Rather than a hegemony of universality, de-colonial thinking involves a non-universalist imaginary: a hegemony of diversity, or "diversality." MCD is critical of the Western, liberal idea of "multiculturalism," because it is built on the univeralist idea that dominant majority groups

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should promote the "tolerance" of the "Others" (Hage 2000). MCD's alternative utopian vision embraces diverse ways of thinking, doing, and being; it encourages dialogue, and an end to dehumanization.

The Modernity/Coloniality/De-coloniality framework has the potential for useful engagement with anthropology. However, it has room for further development. Some have criticized its authors for not taking enough precaution to avoid rigid essentializations and naturalizations of the very binaries they attempt to interrogate. Anthropology has a tradition of denaturalizing the familiar, of creating the possibility for stepping outside of oneself, and of promoting a reflexive, inter-subjective form of inquiry into social theory. It has much to bring to MCD as well. In the next section, I will tentatively explore the possibility for the two to work together with respect to the question of Latinos in the U.S.

II. NOTES

[1] The MCD framework comes from the accumulation and fusion of concepts from multiple projects and authors. For an overview of the research group work, see Escobar (2003). For an explanation of coloniality and de-colonial thinking, Mignolo's "Coloniality of Power and De-Colonial Thinking" describes these two concepts.

[2] Among the first and strongest critics of modernization theories were more radical dependency theorists in Latin America including Theotonio Dos Santos, Ruy Mauro Marini, Vania Bambirra, and Anibal Quijano. See Grosfoguel (2000) for a review of Latin American dependency theories.

III.

APPLYING MCD TO U.S. CONTEXTS: LATINOS AND IMMIGRATION

"The United States and Mexico are two entirely different nations. The United States has as its founders people who came here for intellectual reasons, freedom of religion. Mexico was founded by a group of people who came to plunder, the conquistadors… we have a clash of civilizations: the pilgrims versus the conquistadors, the civilization based on Newton's Principia Mathematica and the great philosophers of Europe versus the blood-and-sand character of Mexico, which is based on Aztec warriors and the conquistadors. We are asked to absorb millions of people from this culture; we are unable to assimilate them, so they are asking for their culture to be maintained here in ours. This is a direct threat to the Age of Reason, to the ascent of man, and will end in a massive conflict. It has to be stopped."

- Glenn Spencer, founder of *American Border Patrol*, an Arizona-based civilian border militia[1]

Spencer's words and actions offer a particular demonstration of how modernity/coloniality is at work in the U.S. Many critics of anti-immigrant rhetoric would be quick to notice the nativist racism underlying his ideas and practices, but would not consider how it is intertwined with modernist narratives and a Eurocentric imagination of history that stretches from the colonial encounter to today's wave of migration in the Americas. This paper is not meant to be a critique of anti-immigrant rhetoric by certain "racist" actors; my goal is to demonstrate the prevalence of hegemonic forms of knowledge about Latinos in the U.S. These ways of thinking are not only embedded in the explicit language of anti-immigrant activists such as Spencer, but are the basis for more widespread understandings of Latinos today.

The U.S. has a colonial history that is quite different from those of Latin American nations. Although those who have advanced the MCD framework theorize that it is applicable on a planetary level in terms of a modern/colonial world-system, there have been few attempts to employ the framework in analyses of situations outside of Latin America. Can the Modernity/Coloniality/De-coloniality framework be applied to U.S. situations? A group of scholars outside of anthropology are attempting to apply it to the situations of Latinos in the U.S. (see Grosfoguel, et. al 2005), but this project is in a nascent stage. MCD has also been confined primarily to non-ethnographic methodologies outside of anthropology.[2]

In this section, I consider the applicability of MCD to U.S. contexts, with particular attention to the situation of Latinos. In my view, the coloniality of power operates in the U.S. much like it does in Latin America. I will focus on the way coloniality works in harmony with a persisting hegemony of Eurocentric, racialized understandings to shape U.S. existence. I suggest that anthropological approaches to exploring this question can contribute to recent attempts by MCD proponents to understand how modernity/coloniality works to subalternize U.S. Latinos. In order to support my proposal, I make the following three contentions, each of which I address in more detail throughout the rest of this chapter.

First, the geopolitical positioning of knowledge in the U.S. is dominantly Eurocentric. "Racial thinking"—the underlying consciousness of racial difference that affects relative understandings among groups of people—is a definitive aspect of this Eurocentrism, and it shapes dominant discourses and practices that affect Latinos. Racial thinking tends to be

denied today, in part because it blends with and gets disguised by the hegemony of other

highly naturalized, Eurocentric ideas.

Second, this dominant, Eurocentric knowledge implies the formulation of hierarchies of

classification that have their roots in the colonial encounter. Considering that racial thinking

is complexly interwoven with other aspects of Eurocentrism, a hierarchy does not exist in

singularity. Although it has a strong racial dimension, it exists across several domains and

may vary depending on subjectivities, and historical and spatial contexts. The transnational,

layered colonial experiences of Latinos illustrate these complexities.

Third, hegemonic Eurocentric knowledge—with its racial thinking and hierarchies of

classification—is practiced through regimes of coloniality. These include practices of

inclusion/exclusion, exploitation, and domination. These practices can be seen in the work of

modern institutions, the global economy, imperial processes, borders, education systems,

social movements, and so forth. As the materiality of modern/colonial logic, these regimes of

practice further dehumanize and subalternize Latinos in the U.S. along multiple lines of

social existence.

Eurocentrism and Racial Thinking

  From the persepective of MCD, a Eurocentric way of thinking predominates in the

U.S., a product of a hegemonic geopolitical knowledge positioning that stems from the

historical privileging of the "superior" European over all else since the co-emergence of

modernity and coloniality.[3] It therefore has a significant modernist, colonialist and racist

dimension. Modernist thinking in the U.S. can be seen in the faith that is put in technological and scientific progress, along with "facts" that are used to classify things according to what is already known. Race is one of these tools for classifying people and making order of the world. It is an analytical category in social research. In a general way, race informs knowledge, discourses, and practices of institutions, groups, and individuals, whether or not they are perceived as "racist." Our knowledge of racial difference is a part of our unspoken consciousness, and it is constitutive of—but not exclusive to—Eurocentrism. It affects how we perceive the world, make our decisions, go about our daily lives, and perceive and interpret others. I refer to the influence of racial identification and categorization on consciousness and knowledge production as *racial thinking*.

In the U.S., the modernist liberal search for progress through human equality incorporates a particular form of racial thinking. Racism often operates invisibly, and, like other metropolitan populations, people in the U.S. tend to share the Eurocentric idea of a "colorblind" society where racism ceases to exist. A December 2006 CNN special series on race in the U.S. illustrated this. The host of the program asked the question "are we racist?" to a panel and audience of people from the U.S., who tensely debated and argued the topic.[4] The demographic representation on the show was representative of how confusing, contradictory forms of racial thinking are used to forge decisions about who belongs to a nation, a culture, a race, or some other imagined group. Ironically, all of the show's participants in the debate spoke English and seemed to fit a mainstream racial rubric that designates who belongs to what Benedict Anderson (1987) would call the "imagined" U.S. national community: they all appeared to fit the categories of White, African-American, and Asian. Apparently no Latinos were invited to participate. Anthropologist Leo Chavez, who

has extensively studied the relationships between Latino immigration, media representations, and nation-building, states that Latinos, especially immigrants, are frequently viewed as outside of the "imagined community" of the U.S. nation (1991, 1994). To complicate the question further, if others had produced the program to include Latinos, would they have been light-skinned or dark-skinned? Would they have spoken English, Spanish, Aymara, or English with an accent? Would they have been immigrant, first-generation, or have pre-colonial ancestral ties to the Southwest? Would their roots have been in Puerto Rico, Mexico, Cuba, Chile, or elsewhere? I raise these questions to encourage an introspective and dialogic interrogation of the complicated and non-singular meanings of "Latinos" in the U.S.

Such inquiries are not possible by only employing mainstream social science methods, because Eurocentrism constrains the possibility of even engaging with them. If we were to hand out surveys to the U.S. population asking about race, most would probably respond as best as possible in ways to not reveal any ideas that would be regarded as racist. Our racial thinking, as Franz Fanon put it in his 1967 work Black Skin, White Masks, is "the unspeakable." Jacqueline Martinez, in her (2000) discussion of her own struggles as a Chicana lesbian to gain acceptance in the academy, proposes that the same kind of phenomenological analysis that Fanon used is necessary to interrogate our racialized consciousness and how it shapes the way we interpret groups of people as subaltern Others.

In the U.S., the word "racist" has become a label that gets applied to certain actors and groups who speak the unspeakable, creating the illusion that race has been erased from the minds of more liberal, progressive-thinking people. A recent news report by National Public Radio, for example, criticized anti-immigrant hate groups and white supremacist organizations for "infiltrating" the national immigration debate with outlandish stereotypes

and false ideas about Latinos (that Mexican immigrants bring with them leprosy and malaria, for example).[5] According to the report, such groups exploded in growth by 250 from 2005-2007 and are increasingly taking on anti-immigrant agendas. Latinos have been targeted with cross-burning, death threats, and hate crimes in the same way as blacks in the U.S. South. The report demonstrates how even critical liberal perspectives tend to attribute racial thinking and racist practices to certain actors or groups that appear to deviate from the supposed norm that has allegedly "progressed beyond" racialized conceptions. The soundclip that closes the report raises doubts about this liberal presupposition: in a radio program recorded before a live audience, an anti-immigrant activist expresses her disgust with border patrol policies that do not prevent immigrants from re-entering the U.S. after repeated deportations. The host of the program interrupts by yelling, "shoot him!" The crowd erupts in laughter and applause. After the chilling response, an analyst interviewed in the news report suggests that maybe "you can't blame it all on hate groups."

Perhaps it is challenging to recognize the role of racialized knowledge plays in our thinking because it is a "messy" category. It is fluid and indefinite. It is easily mixed with conceptualizations of culture, ethnicity, and nationality, and anthropologists have identifed how racial differences are perceived in terms of class, gender, and sexuality.[6] From an MCD view, racialized knowledge orders groups of people hierarchally, highly invested in ideas about who is "modern" and "superior." I suggest that it is thus impossible to isolate racial thinking from gendered, classist or other categories of modern/colonial thinking.

John Law describes the limits of social research methodology in studying "messy" subjects. Race, as an analytical category, fits his description well:

"[…We] were finding it impossible to map because it was a mess. And, somewhat strangely in a way, our instinct was to ask reality to adjust itself so that indeed it could be

properly mapped […] That was the first [problem]. The second, which dawned on us somewhat more slowly, was that we were trying to study something that was a moving target. Actually a shape-shifting target too [...] It is in theory – and sometimes in practice – possible to make distinctions between the various relavent entitites, and then to relate them to one another. But maybe, we slowly came to believe, it wasn't actually like that in reality. Maybe we were dealing with a slippery phenomomenan, one that changed its shape, and was fuzzy on the edges. Maybe we were dealing with something that wasn't definite. That didn't have a singular form. A fluid object." (2004: 4)

Marisol de la Cadena's (2000) work, Indigenous Mestizos, demonstrates the

complexity, fluidity, and manipulability of race. She discusses its temporally shifting

constructions in Peruvian national discourse in relation to culture and physiology:

"Thus, while former dominant ways of imagining differences continued, overt references to race were silenced by culture now bearing its own conceptual right to mark differences. Along with this shift, and simultaneous with its rejection by intellectuals and politicans, the Peruvian definition of race acquired overt biological and phenotypical connotations, while expelling culture from its sphere of meaning. Yet, given the historical antecendents, the independence of the notion of culture and race was never total, either conceptually or politically. This implicit intertwinement was highly consequential for the present hegemony of racism: shielded by culture, former essentialisms were acquitted from racism, as they joined the international chorus to condemn biological determinisms." (2000: 29)

In Peru, constructions of race shifted from biological to cultural terms, thus affecting

thinking. In the U.S., race theorists have noted a similar trend. Sociologists have linked the

denial of racism in the U.S. since the 1964 Civil Rights Act to the refashioning of race as

culture, and named this the "new racism" (Giddens, Duneier, & Appelbaum 2003). The way I

see it, this cultural racism is far from "new." De la Cadena recognizes that race cannot be

understood as either singularly biological or singularly cultural since the colonial encounter.

This parallels the U.S. experience: colonists on missions to "civilize" and convert, and early

anthropological theories of social Darwinism, for example, are part of the long history of

cultural racism (Baker, 1998). In my view, the link between these early social Darwinist

ideas to more recent development theories (Mazuri 1968), elucidates the coloniality of

popular perceptions today about the capacity or incapacity of "cultural" groups of people (as representing nationalities, ethnicities, or races living within or outside of U.S. territory) to make "progress" toward more modern ways of life.

The Question of Hierarchies

Granting complexity, messiness, and particularities, MCD sees racial thinking as nevertheless rooted in a particular, Eurocentric knowledge trajectory that has been formulated through modernity/coloniality. Building on Quijano's (1991) conceptualization of coloniality, MCD proposes that the occurrence of the colonial encounter and the emergence of modernity set into motion a hierarchy of classification according to race, ethnicity, and other forms of social existence. Quijano initially built on the concept of "internal colonialism" to imagine how the coloniality of power operated in Peru, since white and mixed race elites with colonial ancestry had significant power over national politics and capital (Quijano 1998). Similar situations exist throughout Latin America, and the MCD framework has since been applied to several contexts there.

Although similar situations exist throughout Latin America, there is a distinct colonial experience of the American region that is now the U.S. Direct kin relations of elites to colonial ancestry tend to be obscure or non-existent. The small group of (mostly Latino and Latin American) MCD proponents who are applying the framework to the U.S. attempt to explain what U.S. hierarchies of coloniality look like in distinction from Latin American contexts. Although their model is somewhat transhistorical and reductionist, Grosfoguel, Maldonado-Torres, and Saldivar (2005)—in considering the situation of Latinos—provide the following useful rubric to respond to the question of hierarchies in the U.S.

The authors introduce three categories: *colonial/racial subjects of empire*, *colonial immigrants*, and *immigrants,* on the basis that migrants arrive to metropolitan spaces that have pre-existing power relations that are informed by colonial history, imaginaries, and knowledges, and include a racial/ethnic hierarchy linked to a history of empire.

Colonial/racial subjects of empire include such groups as blacks, Native Americans, Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, Chinese Americans, Pacific Islanders, and Filipinos. Within empire, they have been a part of such U.S. colonial histories as anti-black slavery and racism, the genocide and colonization of Native Americans, the colonization of Spanish and peripheral territories in the Mexican American and Spanish American wars, and the exclusion/detainment/labor exploitation of immigrants of color who arrived far before the recent mass wave of immigrants from Latin America. Through these processes, coloniality's hierarchal power relations formed in a way that privilege(d) Euro-Americans and subject(ed) colonial subjects of empire to racialization and inferiorization.

Immigrants are considered to be those migrants who are racialized as "white" and experience upward social mobility. They are able to be publicly assimilated to the metropolitan population, sometimes even during the first generation, once they learn the dominant language and local manners. They may include migrants from Europe or people of European origin from other regions of the world (Euro-Australians, Euro-Latinos, Euro-Africans, and so on.) In some cases, they may include people who are constructed as "honorary whites" due to favorable federal government policies. Such groups might include Japanese business executives or Cuban anti-communist refugees in Miami during the Cold War era.

Colonial immigrants include migrants from peripheral and neocolonial locations in the capitalist world economy. The racist constructions of *colonial/racial subjects of empire* are applied to these recent arrivals, racializing them in familiar ways. Salvadorans in Los Angeles experience "Chicanoization," Dominicans in New York experience "Puertoricanization," Haitians and Afro-Cubans experience "African-Americanization," and so on. This process reproduces the experiences of *colonial subjects of empire* for the *colonial immigrants*, even though they were never directly colonized by the U.S. metropolis and often come from "independent" countries. They may, however, share—and, in my view, have been "pushed" to migrate to the U.S. by—the "neo"-colonial experiences of imperial U.S. military or economic interventions in the forms of counter-insurgency efforts, development work, or exploitation from neoliberal regimes.

These categories are valuable because they introduce coloniality to understandings of the experience of Latinos and other subaltern groups. As these authors contend, central to the U.S. imagination is the "immigrant analogy," in which immigrants of all colors, places, and experiences of coloniality are imagined as a relatively homogenous group. Even immigrant activists who remind us that we are "a nation of immigrants" invoke a nationalist imagination of the tradition of European immigration.

The Eurocentric "immigrant analogy" is employed consistently in social theory and discourse as immigrant groups are compared and contrasted, using the successful European immigrant experience as the point of reference. Less successful forms of incorporation of other migrant groups are sometimes considered to be a result of "cultural" problems of immigrant groups. Such arguments do not account for diverse forms of incorporation and experiences of coloniality, and they allow the dominant population to dismiss their own

legacies of colonialism and racism. The U.S. gets imagined as a level playing field, erasing power relationships, colonial histories, and structural discriminatory practices, such as the lack of access to high-quality education and jobs, and racial oppression, segregation, and exploitation. Perhaps the Eurocentrism of this assumption—that one can judge the assimilability of a group in reference to the European immigrant experience—is most apparent if we use a reverse logic: did the first Europeans to arrive to the Americas assimilate well to American Indian cultures?

In my view, these interpretations of "cultural" difference do not just erase colonial experiences, but they are also tied up with modernist ideas. For example, we hear news stories about the Latino immigrant man as trailblazer, hard-worker, and family hero while those who are perceived as not living up to this "model citizen" picture are depicted as problematic.[7] Representations of more conservative political visions lean toward rugged individualism—the unchecked potential for any man to be able to pull himself up from the bootstraps—by which anyone can fulfill the "American Dream." More liberal imaginations put equal faith in the "immigrant analogy" and the "American Dream," by committing to the promise of the Western, modern idea of individual "rights" protection. By believing that temporarily imperfect mechanisms of governance can be corrected through proper democratic participation and the good citizenry of civil society, people will eventually have the rights they need to become upwardly mobile and overcome discrimination. In either vision, the U.S. is imagined as an even space with the world's most progressive systems for equal opportunity to acquire wealth, privilege, and a superior, modern way of life.

While Grosfoguel, Saldivar, and Maldonado-Torres (2005) use the racialization of colonial immigrant subjects to outline a general racial/ethnic hierarchy, I propose that we

keep the "messiness" of race in mind to dissect the complexity and fluidity of such a hierarchy. From my persepective, a general hierarchy like the one the authors describe exists in the *structural* realities of institutional and practiced racism in the U.S. However, it can be variable, fluid, and multiplied when we view it in terms of the racial *thinking* and Eurocentric *logic* that exist in minds and are represented in voices and discourses (as opposed to the materiality of wealth/power differences.)

In their recent collective work, Appelbaum, Macpherson, and Rosemblatt (2003) suggest we can move "beyond mechanistic contrasts of U.S. and Latin American racial systems." They see continuity between the U.S. and Latin American experience, considering the colonial encounter to be the starting point for racialization. *Racialization*, in their view, is an analytical tool for "marking human differences according to hierarchical discourses grounded in colonial encounters and their national legacies" (2). They suggest that distinguishing *race* from *racialization* allows us to stress the ubiquity of both, "while highlighting the specific contexts that have shaped racial thinking and practice" (2). From their transnational perspective, the meaning of race and interpretation of hierarchies varies throughout the Americas according to nation, region, time, and subjectivities. For instance, they ask "how ideas regarding race have changed over time and how racial ideas have constructed dichotomies between North and South (as well as between and within Latin American nations)," and they "do not assume that race has always and everywhere made reference to biology, heredity, appearance, or intrinsic bodily differences," but instead "look at how historical actors themselves deployed the term" (2-3).

Although firmly planted in the colonial encounter, racial thinking is highly complex; it varies according to diverse subjectivities, as well as temporal and spatial contexts. De la

Cadena, in her work on Peru, explores the shifting and variable meanings of race according to fluid group subjectivities. She notes how dominant national discursive constructions shift over time, and represent the relationships of geography and landscape to modernity, indigeneity, and local colonial histories. The agency of subaltern groups to strategically manipulate their representation through their familiarity with dominant nationalist racial hierarchies and rubrics complicates the picture further. This is demonstrated in her in-depth portrait of indigenous Peruvians who choose to appear "de-Indianized" in order take advantage of double identification as "indigenous mestizos."

De la Cadena's discussion of the "messiness" of racial thinking in Peru resembles U.S. experiences. Brodkin's (1998) How Jews Became White Folks and What That Says About America, for example, illustrates the temporality of racialization processes. The diverse subjectivities of different migrant groups in the U.S. implies variations in hierarchies of classification. For instance, a white man who is unfamiliar with Latin America may view Mexican and Puerto Rican migrants as people of the same "inferior culture." As DeGenova and Ramos-Zayas' (2003) ethnographic account of Latinos in Chicago illustrates, the Mexican and Puerto Rican's views of each other are likely to be shaped by unequal political/citizenship terrain, and complex, relative interpretations of their histories and cultures. Depending on subjectivity, either group may view themselves as "superior" to the other in particular ways.

A conversation I had with a Brazilian migrant illustrates the ways hierarchies are complicated by shifting subjectivities and contexts. He was a light-skinned mestizo from urban Brazil, hired at a meat-packing plant for his Spanish and English proficiency to manage Mexican and Central American immigrants. He told me that we could easily become

friends because he was "white" like me, but that he could not make friends in the local community because they were "Indians." I suspect that he felt the need to distinguish himself from the "inferior" workers because he assumed that, as a white man, I would not be likely to make such a distinction and would instead "racialize" him as simply "Latino." The incident demonstrates how migrant experiences of coloniality begin in Latin America, and are layered on again in the U.S. in different ways through racialization processes.

Further complicating the layered experiences of coloniality that migrants experience is "discursive colonialism," as Chandra Mohanty described in her (1991) critique of Western feminist scholarship. Development discourses and other modernist discourses tend to construct Western countries as more modern and superior. This has the colonizing effect of the discursive cultivation of a development subject, reproducing in Latin America what Nanda Shrestha (1995) described in his account in his experience in Nepal.

Regimes of Coloniality

Eurocentric thinking is exercised in practice. Based on knowledge that takes into account racial and other hierarchies of classification, these practices continue to order the world in ways that privilege those who are viewed as having more ties to European ancestry or Western ways of life. Regimes of coloniality, responsible for these ordering processes, are executed through the myriad practices of inclusion/exclusion, exploitation, and domination that continue to subalternize certain groups and privilege others.

MCD proponents (Grosfoguel, et. al forthcoming) view coloniality's operation in the U.S. in three ways: colonial/imperial processes (slavery, the massacres of indigenous peoples, territorial expansion, capitalist expansion, and so on), internal colonial processes

(racism toward blacks or immigrants of color, for example) and colonial forms of knowledge (primarily racist theories and discourses). The authors also contend that in the U.S., the coloniality of power is marked by a relationship between race and labor, which parallels Quijano's initial application of the concept to the Latin American experience. Quijano suggested that white elites in Latin America continued to remain in positions of power during times of independence, and that they had the most access to salaried labor while more indigenous and black populations were reduced to more exploitative labor conditions because of the legacies of their roles as slaves and serfs. In the U.S., whites were made the majority early on, and certain forms of capitalist relations were accelerated that depended on salaried labor. However, in the U.S., darker skin colors can be associated with labor exploitation, second-class citizenship (or the denial of citizenship), and disproportionate levels of incarceration. Similarly, whiteness can be associated with the benefits of full participation in political society, financial mobility, and access to resources that facilitate opportunities for justice and protection according to laws.

Such structural differences and large-scale colonial/imperial processes are apparent in the experience of Latino migrants today. They are subjected to structural, institutional and episodic racist discrimination. For example, workers in Latin America are increasingly displaced as a result of processes of neoliberal global capitalism at the same time that the U.S. border is increasingly being militarized. Immigration policies are designed to obstruct their integration into society by denying access to education and political participation, and by driving down their wages and allowing for more exploitative working conditions.

Through its long-range historical perspective, MCD broadly links labor exploitation and racism to modern/colonial processes and knowledge production. An anthropological

perspective could enrich understandings of coloniality's operation in the U.S. and elsewhere, in ways that go expand on the general political/economic structural realities and broad racial generalizations that MCD proponents have already emphasized. With its "thick" description and attention to particularity, ethnographic methodology has the potential to complement general or quantifiable effects of coloniality. The integration of anthropological theory and methodology could help explore coloniality's multi-layered effects in more nuanced ways: how people are othered not just along lines of racial difference, but along *multiple* lines of social existence as a result of the colonial Eurocentric logic that privileged masculine over feminine, Christians over other cosmologies, modern over traditional, and so forth.

How these layered, complex regimes of coloniality affect Latinos in more nuanced ways is a question worthy of further investigation in anthropology. On an ethnographic scale, how are Latina women affected by exploitative labor practices in different ways than Latino men, and what modern/colonial logics are behind this? At this historical moment in a given place, does some particular Latin American nationality experience particular types of discrimination because it is viewed as racially inferior to other Latino groups, and how is this tied to Eurocentric logic? How is a particular regime of coloniality destructive to a local environment where Latinos are living? How are the politics of fear in the U.S. around undocumented Latino immigration part of larger regimes of coloniality?

Although entire ethnographies are required to respond to these questions, I hope that the anthropological approach that I take in the next part of this paper sheds light on some of the complexities and nuances of the coloniality of power in the U.S. in relation to the situation of Latinos, both in its discourses and its enacted practices at different points in time. I use Foucault's concept of "eventalization" to demonstrate the historical contingency of

meaning-making processes that have informed today's debate over Latino immigration. Far from transhistorical "racism" or "nativist sentiments," the tensions and violence that erupt in response to Latino immigration issues today are particular to time and place but operate according to modernity/coloniality and Eurocentric thinking.

III. NOTES

[1] Quoted in James Reel, 'Men with Guns,' Sojourners, July-August 2003, p. 27-31

[2] Carmen Medeiros's (2005) analysis of development projects in indigenous communities in Bolivia is the first effort to combine this theoretical framework with ethnography.

[3] The naturalization of Eurocentrism has affected the academy. We do not tend to question the assumption that secularist science and humanism can explain the world; it was not until 2003 that anthropologist Talal Asad isolated secularism as something peculiar and worthy of being studied. Even in anthropology, despite its growing reflexivity and critique of the modern West, "traditional knowledges" or "local knowledges" are worthy of being studied, but do not merit academic status in their own right.

[4] Paula Zahn Now, Dec. 12, 2006. CNN.

[5] Jennifer Ludden, 'Supremacists Groups Take Up Immigration Issue' *NPR* Mar 6, 2007. Available at http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=7725295

[6] See Moss 2003

[7] See Arlene Davila's work on comparative representations of Latinos to other immigrant groups in public media. See Thornburgh, Nathan "Inside America's Secret Workforce" Februrary 6, 2006 *Time*, for a news feature article that exemplifies constructions of the "trailblazer," "model citizen" immigrant who is followed by "problem" immigrants.

IV.

EVENTALIZING THE STIGMATIZATION OF LATINO IMMIGRATION

The debate on Latino immigration is heavily informed by some problematic, but dominant, ideas about Latinos. This chapter examines the racial thinking that positions Latinos (migrants, immigrants, and native born in the U.S.) as a subaltern group and its intersection with knowledge production and discourses related to immigration. By applying Foucault's research strategy of "eventalization," I would like to uncover how certain ideas about Latinos have become, or are becoming, naturalized through the relationship of knowledge production to historical events. In Foucault's words, eventalization is a procedure that consists of finding the connections and encounters that produced power relations and strategies at particular moments, which later formed what serves as evidence, universality, and necessity. It can show the multiplicity of processes and relations that produce what operates as natural, something taken for granted, as closer to fact than interpretation. It is a strategy to distance us from preconceptions, to remove false claims, and to show the peculiarity of certain seemingly universalized ideas by viewing their formulation through multiple, complex historical processes (Foucault 1978).

Some of the (often negative) ways that Latinos are perceived in the U.S. can be de-naturalized through the lens of eventalization. The theories and ideas that have been invented, the stereotypes and profiles formed, and the ways of thinking sedimented are not

arbitrarily determined or isolated from social and cultural changes, political events, and other historical processes. If we consider that the strong geopolitical tradition of Eurocentric knowledge production in the U.S. is rooted in the colonial encounter and the emergence of modernity, then a long-term historical perspective can reveal the foundations of the colonial, modernist, and racial logics that have far from disappeared.

In thinking about the eventalized production of the popularly recognized meanings of "Latinos" today, two considerations should be taken into account. First, there is a complex interrelationship between social theory production, the dissemination of ideas through public discourse, and broader cultural-political changes at different historical moments. Simple cause-effect relationships and binaries should be avoided; rather, these processes are mutually embedded and constitutive. Furthermore, what I call "dominant" understandings and perceptions on the national scale have particularities depending on subjectivity, region, and so forth. Anti-Latino immigrant discourses, for example, have certainly been influential on the national level, but they play out and are constructed in particular ways depending on regional contexts. (Someone in rural Arizona may have a much different understanding of what it means to be Latino than someone in the Bronx.) Second, anti-immigrant and racist narratives play only one role in the genealogy of knowledge production about Latinos that has contributed to their positioning as a marginalized, subaltern Other in the dominant U.S. imagination. Rather, there is continuity between the thinking of nativists and that of Latino immigrant rights activists: they are different interpretations and spins on what are viewed as "the facts," on the dominant, taken for granted interpretations of what goes on around us, originating from what could have initially been widely-accepted or even very peculiar ideas.

I will first offer a brief background on some of the anti-immigrant and anti-Mexican thinking, practices, and politics that prevailed when colonial and expansionist ideologies and biological theories of race were prominent, spreading from the colonial encounter to the early twentieth century period of eugenics. My focus, then, moves to the latter half of the twentieth century onward, when the language of racial thinking shifted. I will provisionally interrogate some of the Eurocentric categories and assumptions about Latinos that I see as having developed in relation to other processes and events during this more recent period, including the rise of ideas, discourses, and initiatives around development, neo-liberal globalization, and security. In my view, these occurrences have heavily informed today's often negative perceptions and interpretations of Latinos, taking the form of negative profiles and stereotypes for discrimination) and the ways the immigration debate is framed in the U.S.

From Colonialism to Eugenics: The Racialization of Immigrant Subjects

Looking into its long-term history, we see the initial logic of missionaries and colonists, who believed the supposed superiority of the white, European, Christian, "civilized" man over all others justified the elimination and exploitation of indigenous populations in the Americas. During the making of the U.S. in the late eighteenth century, "founding fathers" made citizenship constitutive of race by granting it only to free whites, unless someone underwent the process of "naturalization." (The context in which this term originated connotes its colonial logic; that it was somehow "unnatural" to be non-white). Future expansionist projects operated according to a similar logic. For instance, Waddy Thompson, a southern diplomat, advocated for U.S. territorial expansion on the basis that the "Indian race" of Mexico consists of "lazy, filthy, viscous, creatures," and Richard Henry

Dana, a congressman, described Mexicans as an "idle, shiftless people" to push for U.S.

commercial expansion into northern Mexico (Acuña 2000). The idea of an innately superior

"Anglo-Saxon" race was used in national discourses in the years leading to the Mexican

American War in 1846, and to justify other U.S. imperial goals under Manifest Destiny

(Horsman 1981). Following the war, Mexicans—who were crossed by the U.S./Mexico

border while they continued to live in their ancestral lands in what is now the southwestern

U.S.—were reduced to second-class citizenship through the local non-adherence to the

Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo's protection of land and voting rights, and the Federal Land

Act of 1851, which deprived land from Mexicans (Acuña 2000, Menchaca 1993).

During the latter half of the nineteenth century, the emergence of Darwinian theories

about the evolution of the human race in anthropology and biology brought "scientific"

justifications to these racial ideas and politics. Anthropologists drew from the social

evolution theories of Morgan, Tyler, and Spencer, to hypothesize about race with respect to

indigenous-European encounters in the New World. For example, Hunt (1870) commented

on the value of "replenishing" the U.S. population with continued immigration of Europeans

of "the Anglo Saxon race", and Frere (1882) pondered the possibility for an "uncivilized

race" to "continue to exist" in the presence of a "civilized" one during colonial encounters.

After the Civil War, racist theories prevailed in national discourses to support exclusionary

politics and hate-group violence in the black South and the Mexican Southwest. Mexican,

Chilean and indigenous miners in California, for example were considered "half-bred" and

"sexually depraved" (Akers Chacón & Davis 2006). The same theories permeated public

rhetoric surrounding the Spanish American War of 1898 to justify the conquest of Spanish

territories (Merriam 1978).

During the early twentieth century, anthropologists, biologists, and geneticists offered a new scientific stamp to exclusionary politics and racist movements through the development of a repertoire of eugenics theories that catalogued people according to genetic hierarchies. Eugenics theories, which by the 1920's were taught in U.S. universities, were used to justify segregation policies, anti-miscegenation laws, as well as sterilization and euthanasia programs, which were often directed towards immigrants of color (Tyner 1998, 1999, 2006; Roberts 1997). Eugenicists advocated for Mexican migrants to be sterilized, excluded from public services, and deported. They ultimately led to the first mass deportation of an estimated half million Mexicans, and the subsequent "criminalization" of "illegal" immigration (Acuña 2000).

Eugenics theories became especially influential in national discourses, politics, and economic relations because they gained the sympathy of powerful figures of U.S. capitalism, including Henry Ford, Andrew Carnegie, and Leland Stanford. Ford advocated the idea that poverty resulted from maladapted "inferior breeds" that lacked the "enterprising spirit." At a 1928 congressional hearing, the Eugenics Office that had been established at the Carnegie Institute, with the support of Congressman John Box, requested that the Hoover administration exclude Mexicans from the U.S. because of their "inferior racial biology." Box argued that "the illiterate, unclean, peonized masses moving this way from Mexico be stopped at the border." He opposed those concerned with agricultural labor demands who supported Mexican immigrant "tolerance" on the basis that they were "a quiet, inoffensive necessity" who were "not much more than a group of fairly intelligent collie dogs" (quoted in Akers Chacón & Davis 2006).

The story of eugenics and its relationship to capitalist and political dynamics operated according to the logic of modernity/coloniality. Ideas about inferior racial biology were mixed with faith in modern science, and capitalist regimes came to resemble the same kind of expansionist and colonial regimes that preceded them. Regimes of coloniality can be seen in the massacring and exploitation of "uncivilized" races during European colonial expansion, the denial of civil participation and exploitation of people of color during times of U.S. expansion within the Americas, and the biopolitics and bioeconomics of eugenics.

The Coloniality of the "New" Racism

Anthropologists such as Franz Boas, W. Montague Cobb, and Ruth Benedict, among many other scholars in biology, genetics, and psychology, took to refuting the pseudo-scientific form of eugenics anthropology, which, over time, accumulated to enough critical mass to transform official discourses that before had employed a pervasive biological racism. As part of a UNESCO campaign against prejudice and discrimination, physical anthropologists and geneticists issued an official "Statement on the Nature of Race and Race Differences" in June 1951, which adamantly refuted prior "scientific" claims about the alleged connection of the supposedly "biological" characteristics of behavior and intelligence, to race categories (Comas 1961). With the UNESCO statement, biological theories of race were fiercely rejected, and racist ideas became increasingly reframed in terms of culture. This marked the turn toward "new racism" in the U.S. (Giddens, Duneier, & Appelbaum 2003). However, as I suggested in the previous section, this has not been a shift toward strictly "cultural" terms. Undertones of biological interpretations of race pervade, and racial thinking is highly interbred with modernist and colonialist thinking. Today,

cultural/racial discourses and their complicity with "scientific" knowledge-production take forms that range from the subtle to explicit. They remain consistently situated around the colonial difference, and they are laden with Eurocentric judgements, including the capacity or incapacity of groups of people—categorized according to ethnicity, race, nationality, or some other form of "cultural" belonging—to make "progress" toward more "modern" ways of life.

The ideas about Latinos that ensued from the second half of the twentieth century onward have continued to be connected to historical sociocultural processes and political events, despite the changing language of racism. These developments are not disconnected from the historical events that preceded them; instead, the ideas that have followed draw from the same logic of modernity/coloniality and racial thinking. The "cultural" characteristics of groups of people, including Latinos, have been problematized through the production of discourses and scientific theories at different moments to reproduce the practices and politics of inclusion/exclusion. In my view, this process has resulted in three recent, overlapping, and hegemonic interpretations of Latinos by the majority U.S. public as a group of people whose "race/culture": 1) shares an unshakeable "Third World" quality, an association that is connected to certain ideas about development and modernization that have prevailed since the 1950's 2) is resistant to assimilating to "U.S. culture," an idea that has been advocated during the 1990's backlash to the wave of Latin Americans who have migrated as a result of new hardships under free trade/neo-liberal regimes in the Americas, and 3) makes them more likely to be "criminals," "felons," or "terrorists," an assumption that has been produced during the post 9/11 era of security discourses.

Development Discourse and the Threat of "Third Worldization" in the U.S.

The idea of the "Third World" was produced as a result of the theories and discourses about the modernization and development of nation-states that have prevailed since U.S. President Truman's term (Escobar 1995). Following social Darwinist evolution models rooted in colonial ideologies, advocates of modernization theory argued that "underdevelopment" was bound by the internal problems of nation-states that would pass through a natural line of evolutionary stages.[1] Despite refutations of these reductionist theories for not taking into account longer-term, global processes, it is fair to say that their permeation of discourse throughout the development decades has led to a widely-held impression that nation-states, as an assumed "natural" unit of analysis, will inevitably progress from more traditional to more modern, from poorer to wealthier. In the age of neo-liberal globalization, modernization theories and discourse have seen a resurgence, and conveniently serve the interests of people, organizations, and institutions that are the primary beneficiaries of neo-liberal globalization within the global capitalist system.

Following this Eurocentric line of thinking, negative characteristics may be assigned to groups of people bound by geography/culture on the scale of nation-states. Even though the term "Third World" is used less frequently lately ("the Global South" appears to be taking its place, carrying similar meanings and imagery), its meaning is widely-understood, making it a useful category for interrogation. The modernist ideas and images associated with the "Third World" in part shape how Latinos are perceived, interpreted, and (re-)categorized in the U.S. It is arguable that they are generally viewed by the majority in the U.S. as coming from an "underdeveloped" economy, a deficient government, and a more traditional society and culture. The category "Third World" represents backwardness, instability, and a

disruption of the natural order of things (Slater 2004). It translates to more particular

stereotypes about people according to gender, age, nation, and so forth (women as baby-

bearing, men as hard-workers, youth as gang-members, for example). Blame is attributed;

people may be seen as either helpless or responsible for their situation profile. For migrants

of Latin America who have arrived to the U.S., I contend that cultural racism works not only

through the often contradictory processes of racialization and re-categorization in comparison

to other minority groups in their new geographic context (Grosfoguel et al. 2005), but also

according to racialized impressions about the degree to which their background can be

considered "Third World" or "modernized," "underdeveloped" or "developed."

If the U.S. majority includes both nativists and Latino immigrant activists,

conservatives and liberals, then the meaning of "Latinos" is interpreted differently according

to varying subjectivities. However, if there is a dominant conceptualization of the "Third

World" as generally able to be imagined as those faceless, relatively homogenous, non-

Western places that have pervasive poverty, disease, mortality, a lack of sanitation, and

government corruption, then the reproduction of this imagery in popular media and discourse

has made the "Third World" a dominant, naturalized idea in the U.S. even though

subjectivities may vary according to someone's or some group's political, cultural, or other

kind of background. It is an idea that demonstrates how the logic of modernity/coloniality

spreads across the political spectrum in the U.S., even though it is more explicitly in the

voices of people like Glenn Spencer, the founder of the Arizona border militia quoted in the

previous chapter.

From a rightist perspective, people may be constructed as culturally lazy, idle and

effortless in making progress to change their "Third World" situation. They are believed to

be responsible for their conditions of "underdevelopment," they have become accustomed to it, and they are judged as lacking the cultural-political will-power to make needed changes. Negative characteristics are then easily attributed to groups of people according to impressionistic judgments about their "level" of development, which appears to be bound by geography/culture on the scale of the nation-state. In considering that colonial immigrant subjects are also viewed as Third World subjects, it is easy to see how this kind of judgmental thinking makes its way into anti-immigrant rhetoric that invokes a modernist valorization of particular immigrant groups and attributes blame to justify exclusionary practices.

From a more leftist political angle, people of the Third World are interpreted as victims of such conditions, and are likely to be considered to be in need of development interventions from the more "superior" West. From this perspective, the U.S.—as a nation whose governance, resources, and cultural practices are "superior" to and more "progressive" than others—is responsible for determining more effective political, cultural and economic reorganizations for Third World countries. Perceptions about the need for people to "catch up" to the West—and the interventions themselves—are colonial: they might include international loans, Peace Corps voluntarism, neo-liberal economic reforms, micro-lending, population control education, religious missioning, medicines, community organizing, democracy building, agricultural reform, and so on.

No matter where one's thinking falls on the political continuum, the dominant way of thinking about the Third World makes the immigration process a confusing, messy business. Some may ask, to what degree do Latino migrants in the U.S. (as "Third World" people) "deserve" *local* interventions? Migrants who arrived without the right legal documents, with

known illegal entry, and without the prized warrant of refugee or asylum status, puncture the

functionality of modern, lawful, bureaucratic systems such as those of education, health care,

labor unions, policing, housing, tax collection, and political representation. By crossing

national borders, the migrant confuses the neat and clean, dominant modern/colonial

imaginations about the solidity of nation-state bound people that should be able to ascend

through "stages" of development.

Perhaps people in the U.S. today are more alarmed by the imagination that their

country could undergo some reversed form of development theory, a sort of "Third

Worldization."[2] David Rieff's 1991 work, Los Angeles: Capital of the Third World,

describes the interpretations, sentiments, and responses of people in Los Angeles to the city's

growing "Third World" neighborhoods as a result of immigration, and the racial dimension

of these ideas:

> "Paradoxically, in leaving their homelands in the Third World to go to L.A., the
> immigrants had in fact joined the Third World for, in many cases, the first time in their
> lives. Because the term "Third World" really only made sense in America, or some other
> rich country; that is, as an antonym to some other world, the white world, say. What else
> bound such diverse places as Mexico, El Salvador, the Philippines, South Korea, Hong
> Kong, and Iran, which were so unlike one another in terms of language, culture, history,
> and national character, if not the weight of some enormous counter-distinction that made
> even these intricate questions seem secondary? The answer, of course, was that just such
> a supervening category did exist, in Los Angeles as everywhere else in America, and it
> was race." (239)

Latino immigrants, it seems, tend to get perpetually perceived as people of the Third World,

as Others who are outside of what Benedict Anderson (1983) called the "imagined

community" of the nation (Chavez 1991, 1994).

Rieff also comments on local humor about the "browning" of the city from both the

wave of Mexican and Salvadoran immigrants, and from the increasing scarcity of water to

meet the demands of the city's population. David Slater (2004) suggests that Rieff's

argument could be extended to reconceptualize the space of the Third World (or the Global South). This seems possible, considering how certain neighborhoods (or even entire regions, such as Appalachia) of the U.S. have limited resources, and lack political and economic attention to the point that they could be viewed as exterior to a "First World" society. Perhaps undocumented Latino migrants could be said to continue to live in the Third World even within the U.S., because they have minimal formal political representation and are essentially "outsourced" labor by working outside of the formal U.S. economic sector. The Third World can be re-imagined to include textured spaces around the globe rather than as a relatively homogeneous space that begins south of the U.S.-Mexico border.

By rethinking the thinking the space of the Third World, preconceived, historically-produced ideas of what constitutes the Third World are de-naturalized through its alternative reapplication. As a naturalized reference point, the Third World is an idea used for the interpretation, judgment, and discrimination of Latinos. It fits the logic of modernity/coloniality by implying the superiority of the Western and the more modern over the seemingly less modern Other, and retraces the line of colonial difference.

"Neo-liberal Immigration" and the "Clash of Civilizations"

Sociologists have identified a correlation between the growth of neo-liberal globalization and free trade in the Americas and increased migration from Latin America to the U.S. Although borders have been opened to free flows of capital, they have been closed to people through border militarization and immigration restrictions. In seeking new livelihoods, neo-liberalism's displaced and exploited workers have had to take greater risks during border crossings and as illegalized residents in the U.S.[3] Historians Justin Akers

Chacón and Mike Davis (2006) name this process "neo-liberal immigration." Although this term ignores the role of other possible forces driving migration from Latin America, it nevertheless focuses our attention on the significance of a historical moment. "Neo-liberal immigration" could be used to refer to a new period of time that is best marked by the 1994 simultaneous approval of the North American Free Trade Agreement and two anti-immigrant legislative measures, California Proposition 187 and Operation Gatekeeper.[4]

During this historical moment of neo-liberal immigration, a new discourse has emerged about the "threat" of "illegal" Latino immigrants both to the U.S. economy and its "culture."[5] Adding to what is now an extensive body of academic literature that treats undocumented Latino migrants as reified entities of economic transaction for the purpose of determining how beneficial or detrimental they are to the U.S. economy, social theorists began taking more interest in hypothesizing about the assimilability of certain groups by race, culture, nation, language, and other categories.

Migration theories—including the celebratory transnationalist theories that became popular in the 1990's, which imagined that all migrants could assimilate into today's "multicultural" U.S. society if they built on transnational cultural, social and economic capital—have tended to use the white, European immigrant analogy as a point of reference.[6] Grosfoguel, (2003) criticizes Princeton sociologist Alejandro Portes, one of the most well-known specialists in the area of Latino immigration, for advocating "culture of poverty" theories which stigmatize certain migrant groups (such as Puerto Ricans in the Bronx and Haitians in Miami) as failing to achieve upward economic mobility in comparison to other groups (such as Cuban business leaders in Miami, and other "success" stories) because they have failed to take advantage of "transnational social capital" and "micro-networks."[7] San

Juan (1992) makes a similar critique of "the unintentioned racism of ethnicity-oriented scholarship" (38) through its perpetuation of the assimilation model and its popularism of such ideas as "multiculturalism."

The question of whether the latest wave of migrants is "capable of assimilation" into the U.S. was also taken up in rhetoric and scholarship by nativists, who have strategically framed Latinos as people who cannot assimilate. In his 1996 national bestseller, The Clash of Civilizations, Samuel Huntington, former president of the Political Science Association and prominent professor at Harvard University, argues:

> "Mexicans pose the problem for the United States […] the American population will […] change dramatically in the first half of the twenty-first century, becoming almost 50 percent white and 25 percent Hispanic […] the central issue will remain the degree to which Hispanics are assimilated into American society as previous immigrant groups have been […] some evidence suggests that resistance to assimilation is stronger among Mexican migrants than it was with other immigrant groups and that Mexicans tend to retain their Mexican identity, as was evident in the struggle over Proposition 187 in California in 1994." (204-205)

According to his racialized interpretation, "Hispanics" are not just a threat to U.S. "culture," but also to modernity and Western "civilization." This broader thesis makes transparent how the cultural racism of such (in)assimilation theories can be laden with the same kind of modernist, colonial and racial thinking used in social Darwinist and modernization theories. In Huntington's view,

> "Modernization involves industrialization, urbanization, increasing levels of literacy, education, wealth, and social mobilization, and more complex and diversified occupational structures [….it is] a revolutionary process comparable only to the shift from primitive to civilized societies, that is, the emergence of civilization in the singular, which began in the valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates, the Nile, and the Indus about 5000 BC. The attitudes, values, knowledge, and culture of people in modern society differ greatly from those in a traditional society. As the first civilization to modernize, the West leads in the acquisition of the culture of modernity. As other societies acquire similar patterns of education, work, wealth, and class structure, the argument runs, this modern Western culture will become the universal culture of the world." (68)

He took the thesis further with his latest book <u>Who Are We? The Challenges to America's Identity</u> (2004), which focuses on his strategic interpretation of a U.S. national identity in terms of white, "Anglo-Saxon," "core culture" that is under siege by "Hispanics." In this work, the objective was to provoke anti-immigrant thinking along any of the blurry lines of perceived difference in race, culture, language, nationality, modernity, and colonial history.

Despite widespread criticism of his work, Huntington is a public intellectual from a respected institution whose goal is to affect new policy and strategies. He has been quite influential on the minds of people who are learning about Latino immigration for the first time, as well as on those who feel its impact in their daily lives. The popularity of his ideas earned him a place on the national bestseller list. Similar logic surfaces in the anti-immigrant rhetoric of CNN's nightly editorial news anchor Lou Dobbs, and on website blogs and response postings to news articles and editorials on immigration issues. In the MCD view, his thinking, although extremist, fits the broader geopolitcial location of Eurocentric knowledge.

The prevalence of assimilation theories, the immigrant analogy, and Eurocentric nativist rhetoric are not isolated from the regimes of coloniality that have emerged at the same time as the new wave of Latino immigration during times of neo-liberal reform. Since the 1990's, popular perceptions and social theories about the alleged "inassimilability" of Latinos, or the particular nationalities/cultural groups within this category, have determined exclusionary politics and practices that go beyond the emergence of civilian border militias. For example, in the political realm, local approvals of English-only legislation, relegation of immigrant children to the exterior of the education system, and the denial of pathways to

citizenship are vivid examples of the way racial judgments about assimilation play out in specific contexts.

Post 9/11/2001 Security Discourses and the Idea of "Threatening" Foreigners

The most recent development that has shaped dominant understandings of Latinos for racist and discriminatory ends has come about in the post 9/11 era of security discourses. By this I mean the prevalence of new and reconfigured discourses about perceived security threats on any scale: they might include threats to national security by terrorists, community security by gangs, family security by sex-offenders, or personal security by identity thieves. There has been a prevalence of media coverage and political attention to Latino immigration at the same time that concern about security has captured the public imagination, and I contend that associations of Latinos with particular kinds of security threats are increasingly being made in public discourse.

Akers Chacón and Davis (2006), in their recent work aimed at exposing the foundations of anti-immigrant sentiments, vigilantism, and politics in the U.S., discuss how after 9/11, justifications for Mexico-U.S. border militarization, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) crackdowns on undocumented immigrants, and policies that promoted racial profiling more broadly became increasingly framed in terms of the war on terror and less in terms of immigration issues (even though all known terrorists entered the U.S. with legal permission on airplanes or by crossing the U.S.-Canada border, and none crossed the U.S.-Mexico border). This is in contrast to the anti-immigrant discourses employed around the mid-1990's anti-immigrant legislative measures, which were

implemented with the help of the discursive construction of Latino immigrants primarily as "threats" to the U.S. economy and "culture."

Perhaps the logic behind these regimes of coloniality—of the increased post-9/11 racial profiling and detainment of colonial immigrant subjects, whether or not they are perceived to be a likely terrorist threat—fits in multiple ways within modernity/coloniality. Although media attention was directed toward the unjust treatment of Middle Eastern-looking immigrants following the terrorist attacks, how have Latinos been affected, even as "unlikely" terrorists? If there is a perception that Muslim "cultures" have a history of breeding radical religious fundamentalists, was there also a discourse following 9/11 that Central American "cultures" have a history of breeding Marxist insurgents? Are immigrants from Central America or the Middle East perceived as more likely to have anti-U.S. sentiments, or are they simply subject to the same regimes of coloniality (border militarization, anti-immigrant political initiatives and movements, profiling, detainment) as a result of their racial categorization?

Complicating these questions further is the issue of Latino gangs, who are also viewed as a threat to security. Gang membership among Latinos has grown significantly, and the gangs have increasingly become the target of local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies. In the post 9/11 period of security discourses, Latino gang members have been described as more than just threats to local communities. They have been compared to international terrorists, as federal anti-gang crackdowns have recently become mixed with anti-terrorist efforts. Perhaps the images of Latino gangs get mixed with the modern/colonial logic about anti-U.S. terrorism, and the violence, instability, and corruption that Slater suggests get associated with the Third World.

For example, media and government officials reporting on MS-13 gang activity in the U.S. seem to have contributed to an association of young Salvadoran men in particular with the likelihood to be gang members, insurgents, and terrorists. MS-13 has recently been targeted by multi-agency collaborative crackdowns led by the Department of Homeland Security, which characterize it in their press information as a "Salvadoran gang" that operates in the form of "transnational cells" comparable to Al-Qaeda.[8] Although it originated in Los Angeles, later proliferated to Central America, and today has a diverse Latino membership (many of whom are native-born or non-Salvadoran, and are far removed from the 1980-1992 El Salvador civil war), it is frequently misrepresented in discourse as consisting of foreigners exclusively from El Salvador who have somehow become culturally "accustomed" to violence as a result of their country's history of war.[9] These misinformed discourses about "cultures of violence" are further disseminated in multiple ways. For example, at an outreach information session on gangs at a California public high school, local police described MS-13 gang members as people who know violence as just "a part of life" because of their war experience, many of whom are ex-guerilla fighters who bring violent strategies to the U.S.

The relation between Latino gang stereotypes and security discourses is a product of racial thinking. Latinos get categorized as Others who threaten the stability and civility of the U.S. The gangster profile demonstrates how "racism" involves subjective interpretations of people along several, overlapping categories for hierarichal classification according to modernity/coloniality. Determining who is a threat takes into account histories (of war, of instability), gender (males are viewed as more likely to be terrorists, to be gang members), age (young men are more threatening than old men or children), modernity (the more "underdeveloped" the place of origin, the more instability, corruption, and violence one is

accustomed to), nationality (Salvadorans are perceived as more threatening than, say, Mexicans), as well as race (confused with and spoken of as "culture").

Finally, one other association that is emerging is that of Latino immigrants and sex offenders. In 2006 the Sensenbrenner Bill introduced the idea of a "state of crisis" and a new discourse of criminalization/felonization by proposing that immigrants living in the U.S. without legal authorization be declared felons. This new discourse has made room for the possibility of news reporters, anti-immigrant activists, and politicians to strategically associate the "criminality" of being an "illegal immigrant" with the behavioral likelihood of committing a felony. It has been propelled, I suspect, by a new ICE-led federal crackdown, on sex traffickers and sex offenders. This is not to say that any one person is exempt from the possibility of committing a crime; instead, my concern is that racist logic guides deliberate associations, undue attention to certain matters, and theories that problematize entire "cultures." In addition to framing undocumented immigrants seeking paperwork for jobs as "identity thieves," there seems to be increased attention by the news media to the suggestion of some anti-immigrant activists that undocumented Latino immigrants are somehow more likely to commit sex crimes.

Research by the Violent Crimes Institute provides one example of how these stigmatizing associations are drawn from Eurocentric thinking and a modern/colonial logic. Based on the profiles of a select group of convicted sex offenders and the assumption that Latino immigrants tend to be male, the organization proposes that roughly 2% of *all* undocumented immigrants in the U.S. are sex offenders.[10] Speaking the language of "culture," the organization's reports contribute to the stigmatization of Latinos as unstable, violent people and justifies these claims with modernity's stamp of "scientific" research:

"The fact is that South American male attitudes toward females are often archaic and misogynistic. Thus it is not surprising that the U.S. is seeing more attacks against women and little girls committed by these immigrants… Perhaps such primitive behavior stems from the homeland culture […] Not only are criminal immigrants coming from cultures that are misogynistic, but they are changing U.S. culture in response to their sickness […] The reason is that they hope to change these democratic societies. Instead of adopting and assimilating into countries they choose to migrate, they often cluster together in neighborhoods and bring their hate filled belief systems with them […] Illegal aliens are criminals and must be treated as such."[11]

White supremacist and anti-immigrant groups have drawn on this organization's work to support nativist rhetoric. Further demonstrating the interrelationship of knowledge production, discourse formation, and the politics of coloniality, the Violent Crimes Institutes was cited in the 2006 U.S. Congressional House Committee on Homeland Security report titled "A Line in the Sand: Confronting the Threat of the Southwest Border."[12]

I suspect that the discursive association of "illegal immigrants" and "sex offenders" is becoming more prevalent in public discourse and the news media, beyond the rhetoric of anti-immigrant groups and ICE press reports. For instance, in 2005, a New Hampshire police chief arrested a local Latino man that he suspected was an undocumented immigrant as a gesture to the community, stating "just as with a sex offender, the hope is that they will go and register with the state. If they don't they are violating the law."[13] Similarly, the producers of a 2006 Washingtonpost.com multi-media feature on the immigration debate chose to include a border patrol officer's sweeping, judgmental impression of unauthorized migrants in their five-minute long report on the issue:

"In the beginning I felt sorry for more of them than I do. And then you realize that half of them are lying to you. You get them back to the station and you have this guy you think is just a hard worker coming to support his family. You get him back to the station, you run his fingerprints, he's a child molester convicted in Michigan and he's spent three years in prison in the United States. What's he going to do now when he gets back in the United States? He's not going to be near my children."[14]

The idea that Latinos are likely to be pedophiles and rapists that threaten the security of communities, families, and the nation seems to have emerged at a particular historical moment, in which concerns about security pervade in U.S. national discourse. From the MCD view, this racialized and gendered idea is likely rooted in the modern/colonial logic that Others are savage, unstable, dirty, sexualized, and so forth.

By eventalizing knowledge production about Latinos, the ways in which they are negatively perceived can be denaturalized. What appeared to be a natural trajectory of accumulation of scientific facts, can instead be viewed as invented ideas that vary according to historical contexts. The political events and social changes that are underway at any given moment are not isolated from the theories, discourses, and ideologies that prevailed at that time. The particularities of how Latino are interpreted by the U.S. as a whole are contingent upon the particular events at a historical moment. However, from an MCD perspective, these contextualized interpretations are still guided by a fundamental Eurocentric logic within the broad and consistent context of modernity/coloniality.

IV. NOTES

[1] See Mazuri (1968) on the link of Social Darwinist theories to modernization theories

[2] This point was raised by Michael Kearney at the November 2006 Annual Meetings of the American Anthropological Association in San Jose, CA, in his presentation titled 'The Contradictions of Class Dynamics and Politics.'

[3] Many sociologists have analyzed this pattern, such as Douglas Massey, Nestor Rodriguéz, Jacqueline Hagan, and Wayne Cornelius

[4] Although neo-liberal reforms were being implemented prior to this moment in various parts of Latin America during the 1970's and 1980's, NAFTA has proven to significantly change the dynamics and degree of transnational flows of people and capital in North America

[5] See Nevins (2001) on the rise of discourses on the "illegal alien"

[6] What I call "celebratory" theories of transnationalism include those put forth by several anthropologists who followed the lead of Bash, Glick Schiller, & Szanton-Blanc (1995), among others, to focus on migrant agency and globalization processes. Although I critique their lack of attention to colonial history, it should also be recognized that such theories made strides to counter more reductionist assimilationist models of migrant integration and helped to offer alternative conceptualizations of citizenship. For a critical look at the Western concept of "multiculturalism," see Hage (2000).

[7] See Portes (1987), (1992), (1994), (2000)

[8] See James Loy 'Testimony by Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security Admiral James Loy Before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence' 2005 available at www.dhs.gov/dhspublic/display?content=4357; *FBI National Press Office* 'FBI Announces Coordinated Law Enforcement Action Against Gangs' 2005 available at www.fbi.gov/pressrel/press105/ms_13operation090805.htm; Traci Carl 'U.S., Central American Law Enforcement Unites Against Gangs' *Associated Press* Feb 18 2005; and Zach Werner 'FBI Targets MS-13 Street Gang' (2005) available at www.pbs.org/newshour/features/july-dec05/gangs_10-05.html

[9] Ibid. Also see Elana Zilberg (2004) for research on the MS-13 gang. Information on police outreach information session taken from interview with teacher of the high school on Nov. 28, 2006. The informant stated that the police officer's information about violence as just a "part of life" from war experience, was allegedly based on information from one of the initial gang leaders, who, in my view, has the self-serving and strategic interest of being perceived as a victim of violence rather than as perpetrator, to be relieved of responsibility for the violence he perpretrates.

[10] Ibid., Deborah Schurman-Kauflin, 'The Dark Side of Illegal Immigration: Nearly One Million Sex Crimes Committed by Illegal Immigrants in the United States,' 2006 *Violent Crimes Institute*, online at www.drdsk.com/articles.html#Illegals.

[11] Deborah Schurman-Kauflin, *Violent Crimes Institute*, 2006. Article available at http://www.drdsk.com/articles.html#ImportingViolence

[12] Report available at www.house.gov/mccaul/pdf/Investigaions-Border-Report.pdf See Schurman-Kauflin's website www.drdsk.com/index.html for information on police, military, & Homeland Security training.

[13] Pam Belluck, 'Town Uses Trespass Laws to Fight Illegal Immigrants,' *New York Times*, July 12, 2005.

[14] Christina Pino-Marina. 'On the Front Lines of a National Immigration Debate: Immigration in Arizona' Oct. 20, 2006. *Washingtonpost.com* video. Available at www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/video/2006/10/19/VI2006101900833.html

<center>**V.**</center>

<center>**CONCLUSION: SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND THE DE-COLONIAL OPTION**</center>

The MCD framework has the potential to be very useful to anthropology, and to contexts outside of Latin America. The relationship of regimes of coloniality to modernity pertain to many anthropological questions and should be made more visible in the discipline. Anthropology's interrogation of taken-for-granted categories (such as race) and its attention to the historicity and genealogy of what have come to be understood as "natural" in particular spatial and temporal contexts make it a practical complement to MCD.

Scholars in disciplines outside of anthropology have begun to attempt to introduce the MCD framework to U.S. contexts to address the question of Latinos. Anthropological approaches have the potential to improve and expand upon these efforts, and the MCD perspective has the potential to benefit anthropological studies through its long-range historical perspective and emphasis on the constitutive nature of modernity/coloniality. The application of MCD to the U.S. reveals the dominant, Eurocentric logic of hierarchal classification that catalogues people according to race, ethnicity, and other forms of social existence in relation to the history and regimes of modernity/coloniality. Through an MCD lens, Latinos are positioned as a subaltern Other in the U.S. today in accordance with Eurocentric, racialized knowledge, and regimes of coloniality. Anthropological approaches to

the same questions about the situation of Latino immigration could reveal how regimes of coloniality play out in particular ways in the U.S.

Regimes of coloniality are evident in the interrelated and historically contingent discourses, knowledge, practices, and politics in the U.S. that continue to frame Latinos as an inferior, subaltern group. Using Foucault's strategy of "eventalization," we can see how at particular historical moments, the meanings around Latinos and immigration shifted, but various regimes of coloniality remained in place. Particular discourses, scientific theories, interpretations, and ideologies were invented in relation to other events at different historical moments that reinforced various forms of Latino marginalization, exploitation, and exclusion. Despite the particular contexts of these events, Latinos have been conceptualized as the less European, less civil, less modern, less white, and so forth, according to a consistent modern/colonial logic that persists today.

The study of the situations and circumstances of migrants coming from Latin America is slippery territory, and today it demands careful articulation, given the current political terrain. A more self-reflexive and critical approach to research on Latino immigration is needed. The geopolitical position of knowledge production in the U.S. favors Eurocentrism and a set of racial categorizations that tends to operate silently today. The same historically-produced categories and assumptions, evident in public discourse and debates on Latino immigration, are often reproduced without question; they universalize, they have been naturalized, and they are taken for granted.

If knowledge production is linked to established configurations of modernity/coloniality—to the initial European logic of conquest, salvation, and progress— then shifting the geopolitics of knowledge, as MCD advocates propose, is integral to de-

colonial projects. De-colonizing knowledge about Latino immigration should involve the inclusion of conceptualizations that are not rooted in Eurocentric logic. "Border thinking" (Mignolo 2000) and "'Other' thinking" (Walsh 2005) about Latinos and immigration may well include perspectives from the Global South; they should include Latino and Latin American conceptualizations and perspectives.

In my view, *in the U.S.*, the debate over Latino immigration has been heavily shaped by recently-produced perceptions about security and national identity, and homogenizing, negative stereotypes about people with Latin American backgrounds. However, *in Latin America and among Latinos*, the debate tends to be framed much differently. In order to shift the terms of the U.S. debate and to interpret these questions differently, Other perspectives and Other ways of thinking need to be made visible. Latino immigration will be understood in alternative ways only through a de-colonizing shift in the geopolitics of knowledge.

MCD proposes that the "border thinking" and "Other thinking" that form de-colonial projects can take place within academia, outside its boundaries, and in hybrid spaces. Although advocates of MCD tend to focus on the potential for de-colonizing knowledge and epistemologies beginning within the realm of universities (including decolonizing the university apparatus itself)[1], I suggest that non-university, alternative spaces are some of the most creative, generative sites of knowledge production, particularly when they are sites of social movements.

The mass mobilizations of immigrants and their allies in the spring of 2006 introduced new voices, subjectivities, and ideas into the immigration debate. The messages that Latinos began delivering to the U.S. public at the marches and following them have included stories about the emotional hardships of divided families, the aspirations of high

school students who lack opportunities to attend college, and testimonies about the violations of human rights and human dignity at borders and worksites. On the national scale, for the first time, many people in the U.S. began to think about immigration in different terms. It was no longer simply about demographic statistics, economics, and national security. Their new knowledge about it had turned it into a *human* issue. Since early 2006, this is visible in the countless new solidarities formed, and the voices of concern raised about the inhumanity of illegal immigration.

New spaces for dialogue have opened up and new activist networks have been forged recently. One development is the proliferation of social forums, which are gaining significance as sites of activist dialogue and networking. Following the lead of the World Social Forum, 2006 saw the first U.S. Social Forum, including the first Border Forum, where issues of Latino immigration have had a high priority.[2] Another important space for dialogue, networking, and intervention (not surprisingly) is the internet. Web-blogging about immigration has taken on new proportions, and is providing a venue for Latino perspectives and interpretations of the movement, and of other social, cultural and political changes at this historical moment.[3]

Activist and Latino organizations are responding to issues around Latino immigration more than ever before, and they are approaching various issues in innovative ways. The work of these groups extends far beyond labor and farmworker organizing, which tends to be popularly imagined in the U.S. as essentially the meaning of "Latino activism." For example, some MCD proponents are researching the ways Latino/Latin American youth groups, now emerging throughout the U.S. and Latin America and with a range of visions, could be considered part of de-colonial projects through work that is actively defining and re-defining

Latinidad. Cross-border coalitions, as Susan Jonas (2005) contends, have a great potential to challenge hegemonic U.S. definitions of the terrain and terms of the debate over Latino immigration. Countering and complicating dominant ideas about Latino immigration through the representation of diverse interests and a transnational presence, they introduce Latin American knowledge, perspectives, strategy, and new tools of intervention to U.S. activism. Given the increasing presence of leftist, indigenous, and anti-globalization thinking in movements throughout Latin America, it seems that the transnational connections to such changes in the Global South may potentially bring similar changes in thinking as they flow farther north. Relevant examples of this might include the Zapatista's Other Campaign, with its anti-globalization world view. It came to the U.S.-Mexico border in 2006 to discuss EZLN perspectives on immigrant rights issues, and, in collaboration with activists from the U.S., took part in a symbolic border shutdown.[4] Another organization that exemplifies such potential is the Oaxacan Binational Indigenous Front, a transnational group that represents the cultural, political, and human rights concerns of indigenous groups in Oaxaca that also have a presence in the U.S.[5]

As the condition of possibility for rethinking Latino immigration has opened through the spaces and actors of social movements, the new terrain of Latino immigration at this historical moment is increasingly characterized by politics and practices that are designed to instill fear and dehumanize Latinos. In the year 2007, ICE implemented a record high of more than 200,000 deportations, and at least 200,000 more are planned for 2008. New national-local immigration policing collaborations have accelerated the detainment and deportation of undocumented immigrants, increasingly on the grounds of minor legal infractions such as traffic violations. Complaints of racial profiling have surged among

Latinos, and anti-Latino sentiment is evident in websites, blogs, and in everyday casual interactions among strangers or at workplaces. The regimes of coloniality that operate on this new terrain of Latino immigration pose a challenge to the potentially de-colonizing work of social movements. In such a terrain, the possibility for a de-colonial shift—for a reconceptualization of Latinidad and a rethinking of Latino immigration—remains an open question.

V. NOTES

[1] On "de-colonial thinking" in the academy, see Mignolo 2001 on "de-colonial thinking," and Amawtay Wasi's *Documento Base* (2004), the alternative university in the indigenous Ecuadoran Andes

[2] See www.ussf2007.org for information on the 2007 U.S. Social Forum, and see www.forosocialfronterizo.com for information on the 2006 Border Social Forum.

[3] For an example of one such blog with a "Latina perspective," see latinalista.blogspot.com

[4] See http://publish.indymedia.org/en/2006/09/847520.shtml for a report on the Otra Campaña's 2006 presence in Tijuana

[5] See www.laneta.apc.org/fiob/index.html for information on the Oaxacan Binational Indigenous Front

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