

Colonial Ideologies, Narratives, and Popular Perceptions of Ethno-racial Otherness in the Dynamics of Urban Exclusion

Debates and Evidence from Mexico, Colombia,
Chile, and Argentina

by

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Although ethnic differentiations began with colonialism, racism was not widely addressed in Latin American social sciences until recently, since class perspectives were predominant. Within this, studies on residential segregation and urban exclusion have ignored race and ethnicity, with the exceptions of Brazil and Colombia. However, these issues have recently become crucial because of the adoption of multiculturalism, the impact of postcolonialism and postmodernism, the emergence of black and indigenous social movements, changes in state policy, and new trends in migration. A review of debates and evidence from Mexico, Colombia, Chile, and Argentina shows that persistent colonial ideologies, narratives, and popular perceptions of ethno-racial denial sustain various kinds of urban exclusion in the region. The evidence calls for a new research agenda to decolonize urban studies that adopts a critical perspective on the coloniality of power.

Aunque las diferenciaciones étnicas comenzaron con el colonialismo, el racismo no se abordó ampliamente en las ciencias sociales latinoamericanas hasta hace poco, ya que predominaban las perspectivas de clase. Los estudios sobre la segregación residencial y la exclusión urbana han ignorado la raza y el origen étnico, con excepción de Brasil y Colombia. Sin embargo, estas cuestiones se han vuelto cruciales recientemente debido a la adopción del multiculturalismo, el impacto del poscolonialismo y el posmodernismo, la aparición de movimientos sociales negros e indígenas, los cambios en la política estatal y nuevas tendencias en la migración. Una revisión de los debates y evidencia en México, Colombia, Chile y Argentina muestra que las ideologías coloniales persistentes, las narrativas y las percepciones populares de la negación etnoracial sostienen varios tipos de exclusión urbana en la región. La evidencia exige una nueva agenda de investigación para descolonizar los estudios urbanos y adoptar una perspectiva crítica sobre la colonialidad del poder.

Keywords: Race, Ethnicity, Urban exclusion, Latin America, Decolonialism

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As in most parts of the world, race and ethnicity in Latin America were developed during the colonial period through European conversion of biological features into crucial signifiers of difference (Wade, 2010). The Spanish crown mandated a caste system that introduced a separation among Spaniards, indigenous people, Afro-descendants, and their various mixtures, thus segregating the population in many dimensions of social life, including the residential. Ethno-racial categorization was a key organizing principle of the empire as a tool for social control, for determining individual rights, and for organizing cities. It included racial aspects such as descent or color and ethnic aspects such as the degree of acculturation to Spanish culture. These stratification systems were accompanied by ideologies legitimizing colonization (Wallerstein, 1991) that were later reaffirmed by the “scientific racism” of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

The initial three racial categories (indigenous, white-Spanish, and black-African) were then complicated by *mestizaje* (mixture), and labels varied by country. Whatever the degree of mixture, a general and persistent ideology of *blanqueamiento* (racial whitening) pointed to white dominance in the construction of most social hierarchies. Each racial group had its privileges and restrictions. By the end of colonialism, there were more than 100 variants of mixture (Benson, 2003). Indeed, recent research (Gonzalbo, 2013) has demonstrated that classification was highly fluid (with overlapping and/or changing categories over time), allowing a certain degree of contingent self-identification by individuals (especially between mestizos and indigenous people). This structural process was later reinterpreted through the creation of a founding narrative at the outset of the new national states, the so-called myth of *mestizaje*. With independence, political elites announced the end of the colonial caste system. Several influential scholars argued in favor of a “new race,” the *mestizo*, from the mixture of European colonizers and American natives (Appelbaum, Macpherson, and Roseblatt, 2003). However, the new state bureaucracies continued to operate ideologically under race-system hierarchies, and elites embarked on nationalistic projects of whitening (Loveman, 2014).

Until recently the myth of *mestizaje* was highly influential for Latin America’s social science production. A strong focus on class marked a bias that obscured or ignored issues of race and ethnicity both in disputes over marginality and in present-day neopositivistic approaches.¹ Marginality theory was one of the leading approaches for studying segregated poor neighborhoods in metropolitan areas of the region in the 1950–1970s. It included the work of various intellectuals (Anibal Quijano, Gino Germani, Oscar Lewis, and Roger Vekemans, among others) who with different nuances argued that Latin American societies produced or reproduced massive concentrations of people living in extreme poverty with no (or only informal) employment, no connection with hegemonic values, and no political participation (Cortés, 2017). It was also intellectually disputed (Delfino, 2012), with some explaining urban poverty in terms of cultural lag (modernization theory) and others in terms of a dependent economy (dependency theory) (Cortés, 2017). However, the treatment of indigenous issues by these approaches was mostly in terms of class. Much of the production of social science since the 1980s (under neoliberal pressure, devoid of critical perspectives, and U.S.-influenced), except in Brazil and Colombia, has

maintained this focus on class. In terms of residential segregation, the dominant literature in urban studies has been blind to color discrimination and exclusion, considering them exclusive to the United States. For example, Rodríguez (2001: 35, our translation) writes, “the residential segregation of disadvantaged groups . . . is not structured, as happens in the United States of America, around the racial factor,” and Sabatini (2006: 7) says, “In Latin America, we focus our attention on socioeconomic segregation, . . . considering that the distinct social inequalities, income and rank or social class, represent the most salient characteristics of social structure in Latin American countries—more than poverty, in any case.”

However, Latin America has experienced a movement toward multiculturalism in recent decades (Bengoa, 2009). Indigenous social movements and critical scholars have questioned *mestizaje* (Appelbaum, Macpherson, and Roseblatt, 2003), opening the way for changes in research agendas. Previous imaginaries of racial homogeneity have been challenged by the increasing visibility of indigenous and Afro-descendant communities in most countries. In addition to particular reforms there have been significant changes in the way societies understand their ethno-racial composition. Changes in censuses have been paradigmatic (Loveman, 2014): in 1980 only Cuba, Brazil, and Guatemala included a question on race, color, or ethnicity, but in 2010 18 countries did so. This was the result of political and social processes taking place in domestic and international arenas, from international policies to the rise of indigenous and Afro-descendant social movements (Loveman, 2014).

Nevertheless, censuses are double-edged swords. They are crucial for applying targeted policies to segregated groups, and, as we have said, some ethno-racial groups are directing their demands toward national censuses to increase their visibility. However, their problems are much older. Despite the evolving nature of *mestizaje*, colonial documentation employed fixed categories of difference with legal and social consequences. Ethno-racial categories were inscribed in official censuses and ecclesiastical records, describing individuals' socioeconomic statuses, residence patterns, Christian sacraments, and the like. Of all the material and symbolic practices of colonialism, censuses may be one of the most durable socially inscribed technologies of social control. They can be described as the archetypical expression of both cultural and biological forms of race essentialism—the belief that differences between racial groups are fixed and uniform “essences” that determine their classification (Soylu-Yalcinkaya, Estrada-Villatta, and Adams, 2017). As a result, the description of the social construction of each census is very useful for obtaining a synthetic portrait of different essentialisms at different moments in history in different parts of the continent, and the quantitative study of residential segregation depends heavily on how censuses are constructed by each society.

With this in mind, this paper has two goals: to criticize the ignorance and avoidance of issues of race and ethnicity in studies of segregation in Latin America and to identify the legacy of colonialism in the few existing analyses of ethno-racial residential segregation. We conclude by encouraging a research agenda that unearths the ethno-racial dimensions of residential segregation, ideally in a decolonial fashion. Because of the paucity of studies, we have chosen to cover a set of cases instead of focusing on just one, thus privileging a

comparative perspective. In what follows, we present evidence and debates on the ethno-racial dimensions of residential segregation in four cases—Mexico, Colombia, Chile, and Argentina, countries that represent different variants of the myth of *mestizaje*.

The scope of this article is limited to a review of the social construction of the racial and ethnic question in each country, its influence on the academic neglect of these factors in the study of residential segregation, and evidence of segregation and other forms of social exclusion of ethno-racial groups in some cities and regions. Our emphasis is on social constructions, pursuing the persistence of colonialism through categories such as the myth of *mestizaje* and white exceptionalism. In our description of urban exclusion, we try to go beyond the mere deployment of specific indices of segregation to include the historical settlement of social groups in urban space and their socioeconomic status, their access to public urban goods, their housing situation, their everyday experience of encounters and public space, and even their imaginaries. In addition, although we do not fully employ a decolonial framework in the analysis, in the end we propose some decolonial pathways for overcoming the above-mentioned social constructions. At the same time, we recognize that the categories of *mestizaje* and white exceptionalism do not necessarily fit the realities of Latin American countries such as Brazil, Peru, and the Caribbean islands.

ETHNO-RACIAL SEGREGATION AND LATIN AMERICA

Residential segregation has existed ever since cities were established, and the “ethnic” or “racial” prefix depends on specific historical constructions. Racial differences come from externally imposed physical categorizations, while ethnic differences are collectively ratified and expressed identities. Thus, the “one-drop rule” in the United States and the “Palestinian” identity of Arab citizens of Israel are examples of race and ethnic constructions, respectively.

Four clear forms of racial and ethnic residential segregation have been identified in the historical literature: classic ghettos, hyperghettos, ethnic enclaves, and exclusive upper-class neighborhoods. The classic ghetto was a delimited space in which a single stigmatized ethno-racial group was enclosed involuntarily, and parallel institutions and internal economic relations were created, mainly because of their multiclass character (Marcuse, 1997; Wacquant, 2012). There are three historical examples of this: the Jewish ghetto of Renaissance Europe, the seclusion of the Burakumin at the end of the Tokugawa era in Japan, and the black ghettos in the industrial period of the United States. Hyperghettos (outcast ghettos or single-class ghettos) (Marcuse, 1997) represent a radicalization of classic ghettos through deindustrialization, depopulation, welfare-state retrenchment, institutional abandonment, territorial stigmatization, and police repression (Wacquant, 2008), and their main characteristic is the single-class composition of their population. Examples are abundant, from the current south and west sides of Chicago to the red *banlieues* of Paris and the favelas of Brazilian metropolises. The ethnic enclave is an area where a specific ethnic community develops its own identity and economic activity, which can encourage some degree of voluntary segregation of its

residents, although under persistent forces of structural racism and ethnic discrimination. Here, the most often mentioned examples are the Jewish quarters, Spanish *barrios*, and Chinatowns of cities of the Global North, although globalization has expanded this very rapidly to the Global South. Finally, exclusive upper-class neighborhoods are areas in which a privileged ethnic, racial, and/or socioeconomic group separates itself from the rest, usually with direct or indirect state support. The best-known examples of this are white suburbs and gated communities, although each country has its own expression of territorial exclusivity. The creation of these four spatial forms is rooted in the particularities of each society's social stratification and the cultural ethos evolving from it, and these depend on the way race, ethnicity, and class have been socially constructed, mixed, and complicated in each historical and political context (Ruiz-Tagle, 2013).

Latin American precolonial cities were no exception to residential segregation. As in all the cities of antiquity, it was political-religious divisions that stratified urban settlements. Later, colonialism imposed a severe new urban order that gave physical concreteness to massive oppression. In particular, residential segregation was mandated from the sixteenth century on by Spanish decrees that favored the separation of indigenous from nonindigenous in a consistent policy of segregation (Mörner and Gibson, 1962). During colonialism and slavery, Afro-descendants had a space in plantation settlements (and other working environments), but once freed they were excluded from cities and even from entire regions. And in many countries mestizos had no legal recognition after independence and consequently no regular channels for establishing themselves in cities. After independence and until the first half of the twentieth century, the influence of eugenics as the "improvement of races" through hygiene and public health left its mark on the early phases of modern urban planning (Almandoz, 2002). This was basically translated into urban plans that separated "the civilized" from "the barbarians" (de Ramón, 2007) and began to combine ethno-racial bases of discrimination with class distance. During the twentieth century, land and housing markets ended up naturalizing and fusing ethnic and racial differences into wide class separations. For many scholars and public officials, residential segregation was produced basically by differential affordability (or, in the best case, by the political economy that led to it), thus obscuring a large number of cases in which external categorizations (race) and/or collective identities (ethnicity) were powerful influences in the socio-spatial arrangement of urban settlements. Within this general narrative, the histories and trajectories of each country and city were different.

MEXICO: DECOLONIZING A MESTIZO NATION

The most powerful narrative of the myth of mestizaje was developed in Mexico. After the Revolution, race became constitutive of nationality to the extent that to be Mexican meant to be mestizo (Loveman, 2014), differentiated from whites just in cultural terms (Villarreal, 2010). Mestizos were portrayed as symbols of identity, the future of the nation, and the biological and cultural improvement of the Mexican race, and extolling them served as proof of

nondiscrimination against the indigenous (Castellanos, Gómez, and Pineda, 2009).

Some scientific and pseudo-scientific discourses contributed to the depiction of the indigenous as culturally backward and thus to health and social policies for racial improvement (Bashford and Levine, 2010). The idea of a mestizo nation began to gain prominence when the census of 1921, the first after the Revolution, confirmed mestizos as the majority of the population, followed by the indigenous and then whites (Loveman, 2014). In 1930 racial categories were erased from the census because of the supposed integration of the indigenous into labor and politics, their cultural assimilation, and their participation in mestizaje (Loveman, 2014). These changes were supported by antiracist anthropological perspectives arguing that no clear racial distinctions could be made within the population (Castellanos, Gómez, and Pineda, 2009). Sixty years later, however, the Zapatista uprising influenced social scientists to renew their interest in racism, with an impressive growth of publications (Castellanos, Gómez, and Pineda, 2009).

The myth of mestizaje had the consequence of negating the contribution of Afro-descendants (Hernández, 2004; Sue, 2013). Their invisibility can be explained as a result of slavery and assimilation (Castellanos, Gómez, and Pineda, 2009), but Afro-descendant groups have recently organized to call attention to their existence as a distinctive group and have achieved, in 2015, the implementation of an intercensus to be officially counted (INEGI, 2017). In that year 1.2 percent of the population identified itself as Afro-Mexican, in 100 municipalities accounting for more than 10 percent and in 22 municipalities more than 30 percent (INEGI, 2017). Although Mexico City, Baja California Sur, and Nuevo León are supposedly not part of the historical distribution of this population, INEGI (2017) argues that because of internal migration they now have significant Afro-descendant populations (between 1.5 and 1.9 percent). However, many Afro-Mexicans call themselves *morenos*, so the figures may be higher (Gregorius, 2016). On top of this, most Afro-descendants identify themselves as indigenous, and significant numbers speak a native language (INEGI, 2017).

Racism persists in the everyday language of schools, politics, and the media, reasserting old racial hierarchies (Castellanos, Gómez, and Pineda, 2009). There is evidence of increasing racialized humor about blacks and indigenous people (Sue and Golash-Boza, 2013), prejudice against dark-skinned people, coded employment preferences for lighter skin, family obstacles to the entry of dark-skinned people through marriage, and Afro-descendants' distancing themselves from a black identity, among other problems (Sue, 2013). There is also evidence of urban indigenous people's (and especially women's) filling the least-skilled jobs and suffering labor discrimination in workplaces (Castellanos, Gómez, and Pineda, 2009). In addition, a large part of Mexican society believes that the indigenous are limited by their ethnic background and should abandon their customs and live apart (Castellanos, Gómez, and Pineda, 2009). And there is racism against Afro-descendants as well, with cases of deportation to other countries, despite having Mexican ID, by police arguing that there are no blacks in Mexico (Gregorius, 2016).

Mexico's indigenous population increased in the 2000 census through self-identification, among the changes made in Latin American censuses in the 2000

round stemming from precedents like International Labor Organization's Convention 169; 21.5 percent of the population identified itself as indigenous (INEGI, 2015). Studies of ethno-racial segregation show that patterns of indigenous residence follow those of the poor except that the levels of concentration are more extreme, their areas more crowded, and their locations more peripheral (Monkkonen, 2012). A strong correlation persists between race and class in Mexican society (Castellanos, Gómez, and Pineda, 2009), including linguistic characteristics and self-perceptions of ethnicity (Barbary, 2015).

The lives of indigenous people in southern cities are characterized by concentration in marginal neighborhoods, with some networks of mutual support, in a hostile environment marked by historical stigmas. They are seen as foreigners, illegitimate residents, and even invaders or appropriators, especially in the city of San Cristóbal de las Casas. Indigenous people and mestizos coexist in public spaces, but their exchanges are mediated by prejudice that reinforces discrimination against them (París, 2003). In the Pachuca Metropolitan Area, there was a rise in ethnic segregation between 2000 and 2010, with the indigenous concentrated on a small-scale coinciding with historically marginalized areas or restructuring (Linares and Ramírez, 2014).

On a regional scale, the segregation patterns of the indigenous are strongly related to the socioeconomic stratification of the territory. Chiapas, Oaxaca, and Guerrero are areas where poverty is concentrated (Barbary, 2015) and the great majority of households experience economic insecurity and exclusion from access to public services, including water, electricity, sanitation, education, and health. The geographic and communicative isolation of indigenous communities has meant their exclusion from the social and economic improvements of the rest of Mexico. In addition, outmigration to the United States and Canada has had a deleterious effect on rural communities, especially indigenous ones (Castellanos, Gómez, and Pineda, 2009). With regard to Afro-descendants, the 2015 intercensus describes their lower living standards and housing conditions, participation in the labor market, and educational levels and higher numbers of young people neither employed nor in school (INEGI, 2017). In the municipalities in which they are concentrated, most are involved in agriculture, livestock, forestry, hunting, and fishing. We could not find any studies on the relationship between these figures and residential segregation.

FROM MESTIZAJE TO MULTICULTURALISM IN COLOMBIA

From the sixteenth century on, African slaves were brought to Colombia in large numbers to replace the declining indigenous population in mining, agriculture, textile manufacturing, and domestic service. Some blacks lived as *cimarrones* (runaway slaves) in free towns called *palenques*. African slaves fought for independence with the promise of absolute freedom, becoming around 60 percent of Simón Bolívar's army (de Roux, 2011). However, the myth of mestizaje in Colombia included only indigenous people and Spaniards in the makeup of the country (Paschel, 2013).

Abolition of slavery came in 1851, but Colombian laws recognized only the status of "indigenous" (Cunin, 2004). Former slaves were considered new

citizens but without equal rights or opportunities, land, housing, or access to education and political participation (de Roux, 2011). In that context, most blacks moved to relatively isolated regions such as the Pacific Coast, the North of Cauca, and the Patia (de Roux, 2011), establishing themselves as a free peasantry and reaffirming their racial identity. This historical regional segregation had indigenous people and mestizos occupying the Andean highlands and blacks settling in the lowlands and on the coast (Williams, 2013). The penetration of illegal activities brought the armed conflict to the formerly peaceful Pacific Coast in the 1990s (de Roux, 2011; Williams, 2013), leading to the massive, forced displacement of black communities (Restrepo and Rojas, 2004). The number of displaced Afro-Colombians tripled during the 1990s, totaling 2.2 million by 2000 (Escobar, 2004). The hopelessness of displaced people arriving in the cities affected their struggles for territorial and cultural rights (Restrepo and Rojas, 2004) as they experienced forcible inclusion in capitalist modernity and new negotiations of space and race (Williams, 2013). Because of their proximity to the Pacific Coast, Cali and Medellín have historically concentrated more blacks, but since the 1990s Bogotá has grown as a new destination (Villamizar, 2015).

Racial categories were included in the 1990 census (Loveman, 2014), and the new constitution of 1991 and the Law of Black Communities that it mandated gave Afro-descendants rights to collective lands, ethnic development, and political participation, mandated the study of Afro-Colombian heritage in schools, and designated special seats of representation (Cunin, 2004; Escobar, 2004; Loveman, 2014; Paschel, 2013). Both pieces of legislation provided a critical political opening, with a recognition of ethnic difference, culture, and identity instead of racial equality as was traditionally the case in Brazil and the United States (Paschel, 2010). This led to increasing ethno-racial pride and self-identification in the past 20 years (Loveman, 2014), although indigenous people living in urban areas have not followed a similar pattern of identity politics. According to official figures, in 2005 10.6 percent of the population identified themselves as black or Afro-Colombian and 3.4 percent as indigenous (Hernández, 2005). However, the number of Afro-descendants is highly questionable because of the still-pejorative connotation of the term "black" (de Roux, 2011). The current situation of Afro-Colombians is very disadvantaged: blacks have the lowest incomes, limited access to health, education, and social services, and high levels of infant and maternal mortality (Paschel, 2010; Villamizar, 2015; Vivas, 2013).

Ethno-racial segregation in Colombia is mostly regional: 90 percent of the Pacific Coast population is Afro-descendant (Paschel, 2010). However, around 70 percent of blacks live in cities, with an important presence in Cali, Cartagena, Buenaventura, and Medellín (Agudelo, 2004; Barbary, 2004; de Roux, 2011) and, recently, Bogotá. Cali has persisting patterns of high segregation and unequal access to services (Vivas, 2013). Blacks, indigenous people, and mestizos are concentrated in the poorest areas, with consequent imaginaries of exclusionary otherness and skin color. There are accounts of police abuse and violence, unemployment, verbal attacks, discrimination in public transportation, and perceptions of insecurity (Urrea and Quintín, 2000). The areas of black-mulatto concentration are called "ghettos" (Urrea and Quintín, 2000), capturing blacks' lack of mobility and social integration. As for the

indigenous, 21.4 percent of them live in cities, but their segregation dynamics have been far less studied (Paz, 2012).

Bogotá, Medellín, Soacha, and Barranquilla also present high levels of racial segregation, and Afro-Colombians experience racism and discrimination on their arrival and in trying to find housing (Villamizar, 2015). In Bogotá, clusters of blacks in the south, northwest, and center of the city present higher rates of vulnerability in comparison with mestizos (Villamizar, 2015). Today's black identities revolve among the remaining stereotypes, the indigenized mold of the 1991 Constitution, and the homogenization of diverse black ethnicities under the single label "black communities" (Restrepo and Rojas, 2004). The disadvantaged position of Afro-descendants relates to the long-term processes that link regional inequalities with the racially hierarchical composition of classes (Barbary, 2004).

Indigenous people tend to be concentrated in the East, where they represent 22–61 percent of the population, while in some central regions they are almost absent (DANE, 2005). Those who live in the countryside have bilingual educational programs and a collective and self-governed territory that amounts to almost a third of Colombia's land (Cunin, 2004), but their relationship with peasants is marked by political isolation (Bocarejo, 2012). We could not find studies on their urban segregation patterns.

OLD AND NEW POLITICS OF RACE IN CHILE

In Chile, the myth of *mestizaje* took the form of a white national imaginary through the assumed extermination (except in the South) of indigenous populations and a low percentage of Afro-descendants. The cultural apparatus created the image of an exceptional and privileged race: the Chilean mestizo as a synthesis of two patriarchal and warrior races (Swedish immigrants to Spain and indigenous Araucanos or Mapuche) that was whiter than in other countries. This new race became part of a modernization project, a symbol of nationalist ideology, and a source of popular culture (Gutiérrez, 2010; Subercaseaux, 2007). Mapuche were able to resist the Spanish invasion and were originally extolled as warriors by the newly independent Chileans. However, they were then discriminated against as uncivilized and relegated to small territories (Richards, 2016). Rights of citizenship were granted to Mapuche south of the Biobío River, where they remained independent from the Chilean state until the end of the nineteenth century. However, this divide reinforced the binary identity construction between whites and nonwhites and excluded them from the national project and from the political, scientific, and academic ideals of European superiority. Thus the term *indio* was reserved for people living in the South and denoted violence, poverty, rebellion, lack of history, and so on (Waldman, 2004). The 1813 census included a query on origins, with categories of "Spanish and foreign European" on one side and "caste" on the other. However, the query was deleted, and the indigenous were counted separately. Besides, officials believed that queries on religion, race, or language were irrelevant (Loveman, 2014) and that there was a single unique race with equal rights and duties (Estefane, 2004: 57).

Racism became attached to the formation of the nation-state, including the military encroachment on Mapuche lands and their acquisition by Chilean and foreign colonists (Waldman, 2004). During the 1920s and 1930s, the Chilean political system sought the integration of the Mapuche, providing roads and rural schools. During the first half of the twentieth century, Chile maintained its ethno-racial homogeneity and did not include any racial category in the census (Loveman, 2014), continuing to count the indigenous separately. Social movements privileged class ideology over ethnic content and multiculturalism privileged redistribution over recognition, but policies were only ameliorative (Richards, 2016). During Allende's government (1970–1973), indigenous peoples were recognized as individuals whose culture differed from that of most of the country, although the political left never separated the indigenous question from the rural question. Later, the military dictatorship banned Mapuche organizations and many members were detained and disappeared, while new legislation allowed Mapuche individual ownership of land in an attempt to convert them into small farmers. From 1990 on, a new indigenous social movement began to emerge (Bengoa, 2009), and a new Indigenous Law protected Mapuche's land and encouraged them to enter into the political system. However, they were denied access to natural resources, their voice in decisions about new hydroelectric dams was not taken into account, and their incorporation into agroforestry was highly disadvantaged (Waldman, 2004).

Although slavery was abolished in 1811, Afro-descendants disappeared from official statistics, and most of them were forced to migrate to Peru (Campos, 2017; Oro Negro, 2001). The few that remained were "whitened" and "diluted" by *mestizaje*. Before the 2012 census, there was a mobilization of Afro-descendant communities for inclusion and visibility, but its only achievement was that census officials were trained to write "Afro-descendant" in the cell assigned to "Other." In 2017 the census was repeated in an abbreviated fashion and without any such training. The only ethnic question is still about indigenous self-identification. Today, racism against natives is being recognized more openly, and many Mapuche communities are now involved in protests and struggles with private and state interests in their rural territories.

In metropolitan Santiago, self-identified Mapuche are 4.58 percent of the population and almost as numerous as in Araucania, where they have historically lived. Mapuche arriving in Santiago during the twentieth century were forced to assimilate into the segregated periphery without establishing ethnic enclaves, but as part of a new moment of Mapuche identity politics there is some degree of voluntary segregation in some districts that has led to a cultural emergence (Fontana and Caulkins, 2016) and an ethnification of the demand for housing (Imilan, 2017). Thus, beyond discrimination and inclusions, the Mapuche's identity and culture have been preserved to a degree and strengthened (Gissi, 2004).

The proportion of Latin American immigrants has grown from 0.81 percent in 1992 to 7.0 percent in 2019, with a huge increase in the past 10 years. Peruvians, Bolivians, and Argentines were the majority up to the 2000s, but since then Venezuelans, Haitians, and Colombians have increased exponentially. Most immigrants, especially Afro-descendants, suffer exploitation and exclusion as workers. They live in fear of being portrayed in the media or mistreated by

Chileans and of the experience of being “the Other” in the city (Margarit and Bijit, 2014; Tijoux, 2013). Low-income immigrants are concentrated in the centers of big cities and relegated to an informal, illegal, and racist housing stock (Contreras, Alo-Louko, and Labbé, 2015). In cities like Santiago and Antofagasta, they experience intense turnover, degradation, and disinvestment, favoring illegal markets (Contreras, Alo-Louko, and Labbé, 2015; Margarit and Bijit, 2014). Besides, they live in highly overcrowded conditions and many of them in new informal settlements (Stang and Stefoni, 2016).

WHITE EXCEPTIONALISM IN ARGENTINA

The self-image of Argentines as a white nation of European descent is the legacy of politico-intellectual campaigns of whitening, extermination of natives, and selective immigration programs (Ko, 2014) supporting the relationship among race, culture, and progress (Courtis et al., 2009). White exceptionalism means that Argentines consider themselves ethnically and racially different from the rest of Latin America, with a categorical preference for people who came from Europe and a particular disdain for *mestizaje* (Ko, 2014). By the late nineteenth century indigenous peoples were geographically and politically scattered between “civilized areas” and territories under indigenous rule (Courtis et al., 2009). The military campaigns of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries opened those territories for white agriculture, and natives were incorporated as the labor force (Courtis et al., 2009). At the same time, census reports insisted on the decrease of the indigenous population and their dilution in the general mass (Loveman, 2014).

Argentines also constructed a belief that Argentina had no Afro-descendants (Jensen, 2013). Their presence was erased from records and consciousness, despite evidence of the arrival of hundreds of thousands of Africans in Argentina under colonialism (Ghosh, 2013). In fact, black slaves were about a third of Buenos Aires’s population in the early nineteenth century (Ghosh, 2013). After independence, the black population waned because of the inclusion of blacks in the military for the deadly war against Paraguay in the mid-nineteenth century, the yellow fever epidemic in Buenos Aires in 1871 (Ghosh, 2013), and the migration of some to Brazil and Uruguay, which were somewhat less hostile to them (Ghosh, 2013). Besides, their heritage was repressed and distorted by a hegemonic imaginary (Solomianski, 2015). In this context, Argentina never included a query in its census to capture race or color after independence, and public officials in 1865 believed that Argentines were entirely white (Loveman, 2014). During the twentieth century the only census to include a query on race or ethnicity was a special census on indigenous peoples in 1960 (Loveman, 2014). During the 1930s and 1940s, Buenos Aires experienced strong internal migration because of Peronismo and industrialization, which reinforced discrimination against the indigenous. New socio-ethnic appellatives such as *cabecita negra* (little black head) and *descamisados* (shirtless) appeared, and older ones such as *criollo* or even “Argentine” were resignified (Grimson, 2008; 2016). To this day, the working class is racialized as “black.” Public opinion considers the *villas miserias* populated by dark-skinned people, either local or from neighboring countries (Ko, 2014). Latin

American foreigners are treated as a different race: Bolivians and Paraguayans are called *bolita* and *boliguayos* (Kaminker, 2015; Ko, 2014).

However, the intellectual climate of the last part of the twentieth century contributed to the expansion of studies on the Afro-Argentine and indigenous heritage (Solomianski, 2015), and several recent changes have been made in that direction, suggesting a shift toward interculturality (Grabner, 2012). Indigenous peoples were constitutionally recognized in 1994, and their autonomy was acknowledged in 2000. The bicentennial census (2010) included the categories "Afro-descendant" and "indigenous" for the first time since 1887 as part of a racial sensitivity campaign that demonstrated the existence of Afro-Argentines (Jensen, 2013; Ko, 2014). This census reported 4.5 percent immigrants (most from South America), 0.4 percent Afro-descendants, and 2.4 percent indigenous people. The inclusion of ethno-racial categories was surrounded by negotiations and disputes in a context of the internationalization of black movements in the previous decade and a conference against racism organized by the United Nations (López, 2006). In addition, school textbooks started to include the history of indigenous and Afro-Argentine peoples (Ko, 2014).

Nevertheless, there has always been resistance due to conservatism and social inertia (Ko, 2014), and therefore differences have passed from invisibility to hypervisibility (Kaminker, 2015). There are racist discourses against the indigenous in schools and in the Congress and against immigrants in everyday life (Courtis et al., 2009). The Mapuche established in the South are considered an excluded ethnic minority living under linguistic and cultural domination, and emancipatory movements have emerged for historical reparations and the fulfillment of international agreements (Vázquez, 2002). Immigrants from Bolivia, Paraguay, and Peru are the majority of the low-wage workforce and are discriminated against because of their indigenous traces. Thus, the current migratory waves have concentrated the government's and social science's agenda on race (Kaminker, 2015).

The few studies on ethno-racial segregation show socioeconomic dynamics intersecting with racism (Kaminker, 2015; Segura, 2012), from the racialization of *villas miserias* (Margulis, 1997) to the formation of nationality clusters, with conflicts over the construction, use, and disposition of urban space (Kaminker, 2015). In the city of Rosario, a concentration in a port area since the late nineteenth century of Afro-Uruguayans who are stigmatized as backward is becoming more visible due to the rapid changes of the area (Broguet, 2016). In Mar del Plata, immigrants from nonbordering countries are located in central areas and immigrants from bordering countries in small localities and dispersed settlements in rural areas (Lucero, 2003), and in Buenos Aires there are high rates of segregation of Paraguayan and Bolivian immigrants (Mera, 2014).

CONCLUSIONS

There are various versions of the myth of *mestizaje*. In Argentina and Chile it was thought of as whitening. In Colombia and Mexico it stood for a mixed population in which indigenous ancestry was acknowledged as significant but destined to disappear in time. In all countries except Colombia,

Afro-descendants were overlooked until very recently. The persistence of the myth has led to a broad denial of racial discrimination in Latin America and nationalistic pride in *mestizaje*, especially when compared with the strict segregation and lack of interbreeding of the United States (Dulitzky, 2005). Regarding the national self-image, both in Chile and in Argentina most people consider themselves whiter than other Latin Americans, and in all four cases the elites are almost exclusively white and live in highly segregated and exclusive neighborhoods. Chile, Argentina, and Mexico have denied their history of Afro-descent and have begun to recognize it only recently. In Colombia Afro-descent is discriminated against by the majority and, despite growing feelings of pride, is still assumed with shame by a significant number of blacks. *Mestizos* are discriminated against in Argentina, considered as the majority in Chile and Colombia (although not the elites), and culturally extolled in Mexico. Only lately is there a gradual trend toward ethno-racial self-identification among the indigenous people of Mexico's lower classes and Afro-descendants in Colombia, as part of an incipient politico-cultural shift toward interculturality in Argentina, and with some degree of voluntary segregation and cultural emergence of indigeneity in Chile. In fact, in Chile's "social outburst" since 2019, millions of people have been demonstrating with just two flags, Chile's and Mapuche's.

Although the historical ethno-racial construction was different in each country, domination and privileges have been common outcomes. Persistent patterns of ethno-racial segregation in Latin America, coupled with class segregation, are a legacy of colonial and nation-state-building ideologies. This is expressed at different scales because of long-term settlement patterns and migration and linked to the location strategies of immigrants and to racism against people with nonwhite traces. In all four countries, resistance and the integration into labor markets of migrants tend to create racialized neighborhoods either in central areas or in poor peri-central or peripheral neighborhoods (many of them informal). Evidence of the intersectionality of ethnicity, race, and class is strong. A decolonial framework following the concept of the "coloniality of power" (Quijano, 2000) allows us to understand the structural bases of this relationship. National cultural constructions (e.g., the myth of *mestizaje*) sustain and reproduce a capitalist global order and foster strong local relationships between ethno-racial and socioeconomic hierarchies. Society assumes that *mestizos*, Afro-descendants, and indigenous people are low-value individuals whom it can abuse in terms of poor interpersonal treatment, lower wages, and poorer neighborhoods. Following these insights, we can understand how the variants of the myth of *mestizaje* conceal ethno-racial differences under the supposed predominance of socioeconomic residential segregation. In this regard, although we have presented studies in Colombia and Mexico that show evidence of some "porosity" in high-income areas toward Afro-descendants and the indigenous, these are exceptions. As Wade (2013: 44) reflects, "Ideologies and practices of *mestizaje* contain within them dynamics of equality and difference and of racial democracy and racism at the same time." This means that the ethno-racial dimension of segregation does not establish an isolated social hierarchy, since it is strongly interconnected with gender and socioeconomic difference.

An important part of the evidence presented above comes from the census, which is used for making differences visible but, more important, as a tool for essentialist classification inherited from colonial technologies of social control. In a sense, then, we are trapped in a decolonial conundrum, trying to call attention to the variety of our differences using the same methodologies that silenced those differences. All censuses rely on self-identification for ethnic and racial classification. Although there is no external imposition, the categories are always preestablished and few not just for the sake of statistical parsimony but because of a profound and ingrained process of producing essences and separating discrete groups. Just as the U.S. census stopped counting “mulattoes” in 1930 and adopted the “one-drop-rule” (separating blacks and whites), several Latin American countries have adopted political measures to separate and classify their populations along ethno-racial lines, and this has often had spatial consequences. Two processes are extremely helpful for recognizing this influence: law and the production of space. Lefebvre (1991) argued that social relationships need factors that fix them, and therefore both the enactment of laws (e.g., apartheid legislation) and the configuration of space (e.g., residential segregation) turn social dynamics into a concrete reality—a reality that ends up being much more difficult to transform (see also Blandy and Sibley, 2010; Butler, 2009; Harvey, 1973). Despite the emergence of multiculturalism in Latin America, the persistence of ethno-racially segregated cities and regions will put the brakes on any rapid transformation.

A decolonial perspective for the study of the racial, ethnic, and class aspects of urban exclusion should consider at least four factors: (1) the use of fluid and historically constructed categories of analysis, (2) a relative and intersectional positionality of class, race, and ethnicity that complicates any strict analysis of fixed categories, (3) an acknowledgment of ethno-racial self-identification, while recognizing that these rarely match external categorizations and that the two serve different interests (the former for recognition and the latter for domination), and (4) recognition of local conceptions of space and practices of urban exclusion different from what the state and the academic tradition impose on the study of residential segregation and related problems. All of this calls for an effort from scholars in terms of both socio-historical content and methodological heterodoxy. We believe that, under the current wave of social movements in the continent, new research approaches to the decolonization of urban scholarship are being built.

NOTE

1. A notable exception here is José Carlos Mariátegui, considered the first Latin American Marxist, who argued that the indigenous masses were the true proletariat of the continent. For other exceptions, see Young (2019).

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