The Political Geographies of D/decolonization:

Variegation and decolonial challenges of /in geography

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Abstract

Anglophone and North Atlantic geography is enmeshed institutionally, epistemically and racially in colonial modern privilege, highlighting the urgent task of addressing its modes of theorization, interpretation, and research. Decolonizing analysis builds from postcolonial, critical, feminist and racism critiques, and problematizes accounts of knowledge, subjectivity and power. In pursuit of decolonizing knowledge production and addressing global inequalities, this paper enjoins political geography to more systematically engage with decolonial analysis, conceptualization and theory. Political geography has much to contribute to interdisciplinary decolonial scholarship through contextualized, grounded, multiscalar and granular analysis of socio-spatial relations. The paper examines the common ground and potential tensions between Anglophone political geographies and decolonial theory ('decoloniality'), then examines the case of Ecuador's politics of plurinationalism to illustrate a decolonizing political geographical analysis. The case highlights how the variegated political geographies of decolonization arising within and against coloniality require from political geography a decolonial turn, which would entail divesting core political geography concepts of western norms, including plural epistemologies of space and power in analysis, and recalibrating knowledge production processes.

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Decolonizing Anglophone and North Atlantic geography raises profound epistemological, theoretical-conceptual, methodological and pedagogic challenges, nudging further reflection on knowledge production, material-embodied relations of power, and ethical and political accountability. [1] The process, purposes and peopling of decolonizing the discipline have generated unsettling and unsettled debate over recent years, in efforts to hold geography to account for pervasive exclusions, silencing, institutional racism, and Orientalism (De Leeuw and Hunt 2018; Esson et al. 2017; Noxolo 2017; Radcliffe 2017). Decolonizing analysis builds from postcolonial, critical, feminist and racism critiques, while problematizing accounts of knowledge, subjectivity and power. In pursuit of decolonizing knowledge production and addressing global inequalities, this paper enjoins political geography to more systematically

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[1] Anglophone refers here to universities and academics based in predominantly English-speaking countries where Western theory prevails; many individual geographers in those countries engage other epistemes and speak other languages. Non-Anglophone geographies are beyond the remit of this article, which – despite our engagement with Latin American and (in Isabella Radhuber's case) German language debates, reflects our current positionality and the geopolitics of knowledge production.

engage with decolonial analysis. Building on interventions in postcolonial, decolonial, and feminist geography, the paper argues that the common ground between Anglophone political geography and decolonial approaches provides a constructive basis for opening up the sub-discipline's epistemological, conceptual, and ethico-political projects to pluralizing critique and praxis. The paper offers a contextualized, historicized and critical account of power, difference, and governance that builds on political geography insights but extends this by paying focused attention to the pervasive yet contingent influences of coloniality on space, power and knowledge. Anglophone political geographies' commitment to deeply relational and granular analysis of space-power configurations suggests powerful tools for a 'spatial turn' in interdisciplinary decoloniality.

Anglophone political geography comprises multiple strands which generate a complex, ambitious and multifaceted sub-discipline characterized by a broad range of methodological, theoretical, conceptual, and substantive concerns. Its centrality in the discipline today reflects the vibrancy and richness of analysis and reach, in recent years both enlivened and chastened by a materialist turn, feminist and postcolonial geographies, social theory, environmental agendas, and more. These transformations have undoubtedly brought about a "renaissance" in political geography (Mountz 2013) in large part by means of seeking explanations in the material, the embodied, flat scalar ontologies, and relational power (section I). Postcolonial geographies' close and critical attention to the enduring and subtle dynamics of western colonial discourse, representations, and spatial expressions of power continues to underlie and animate political geography. Debates critically examine how Eurocentric knowledge and recurring colonial power attain normative invisibility in Anglophone political geography, and the wider discipline (de Leeuw and Hunt 2018). With growing recognition that decolonizing comprises complex, profoundly unsettling processes undertaken under duress (Smith 2012; Stoler 2016), so too Anglophone political geography has increasingly scrutinized world-spanning modernity and coloniality,[2] and the active presence of colonial-modern epistemological frameworks in scholarly and public understandings of the world.

Decolonial critique -- also called decoloniality -- pushes to interrogate how knowledge-making practices contribute materially and discursively to marginalize people, places and thinking, and thereby reproduce the norms and privileges of western, 'universal' knowledges and institutions. If coloniality names the dark side of modernity, decoloniality "undoes, disobeys and delinks from modernity/coloniality" (Walsh 2018: 3; in geography, see Daigle and Ramírez 2019; de Leeuw and Hunt 2018). By delinking from Eurocentric knowledge and power relations, decoloniality seeks to re-theorize and re-make the world by learning from multiple and varied spaces, times and ontologies that provide non-universal and non-Eurocentric perspectives, and dismantle world-making colonial-modern relations. Analyzing a particular spatial-power configuration through decolonizing lenses highlights the scope for -- and pathways to --

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[2]   Coloniality refers to four interconnected processes: the origins of modernity in the conquest of the Americas, the co-constitution of colonialism and the capitalist world system with modernity, the domination of non-European worlds as necessary to modernity, and the establishment of modernity's knowledge as Eurocentric (Escobar 2007: 184).

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recalibrating core sub-disciplinary concepts, frameworks and objectives in less exclusionary directions.

Building on these themes, the paper examines the multiple ways of being, knowing and making decolonized space that inform heterogeneous political actions to dismantle colonial modernity (Quijano 2000). We present a contextualized case which exemplifies decolonizing analysis in respect of three dimensions, each linked to political geographies' core substantive and theoretical concerns. First, 'universal' assemblages of sovereignty, state, citizenship and territory are approached as site-specific relational configurations of the materialization of western power, entailing material and epistemic violences. Second, the case thinks 'otherwise' about space and power from and with marginalized knowledges, thereby resituating Anglophone geography in relation to "a world within which many worlds fit." Third, the case illustrates how geographical tools, imaginations, and technologies are not neutral, as if disconnected from contested colonial-modern-decolonial dynamics. Rather decoloniality renders visible geographies' complex relations of accountability, going further than postcolonial geographical recognition of the discipline's role in imperialism and colonialism, and renders problematic current research and theorization. In sum, the case of Ecuador's contested relations across power-space-difference illustrates what a decolonial lens brings to political geographical debates on territory, geolegalities, sovereignty, collective agency, and non-state and state spaces.

The paper proceeds as follows, section 1 presents the dynamics between political geography and decolonial approaches, clarifying reasons for and pathways towards decolonizing political geography. Section 2 engages the task of analyzing power-space-difference in coloniality-modernity in the Andes. These starting points lead to a decolonizing analysis of spatial and political transformations, exploring where and how decoloniality pushes further than many Anglophone critical accounts. Substantively, it brings into focus the contested political geographies of D/decolonization which shape the meanings and political valence of key concepts (territory, state, sovereignty for instance) from outside Anglosphere knowledge production. This variegated domain of knowledge production and geopolitical and body-political positioning is explored in relation to two strands of political transformation in Ecuador namely plurinationalism (section 3) and 'second independence' politics (section 4). The paper then broadly reflects on decolonizing political geography, questions of accountability, and political geography's unique contributions to decoloniality theory and praxis (section 5), followed by conclusions.

1.   Political Geography and Decolonial Lenses

This section explores the arguments for decolonizing Anglophone political geography, and elaborates on the tensions and potential common ground between the broad field of critical political geography and interdisciplinary decolonizing approaches. The section outlines the relational turn in political geography and engagements with postcolonial perspectives and feminist geographies, before turning to decoloniality approaches which highlight the coloniality of power and knowledge. Decoloniality centers the knowledges and political cultures that exist

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outside dominant western frames, and thereby brings into focus plural alternatives, informed by distinctive understandings of space and time. Decoloniality moreover advocates working with multiple knowledge holders, inside and outside of the academy. The section outlines some parameters for decolonizing political geography, while retaining a commitment to site-specific, in-depth and relational accounts.

Political geography has recently undergone a 'renaissance' (Mountz 2013), generating new approaches and conceptualizations of agency, political actors, power, statehood, and sovereignty. Whereas earlier frameworks tended to naturalize political actors' institutional and territorial structures and routines, accounts now stress the dynamic relational nature of political life and its spatially-contingent configurations within, in parallel to, and against the state (eg. Sparke 2006). Explanations for socio-spatial shifts now highlight the material, embodied, and flat scalar ontologies of power and agency (Marston, Jones and Woodward 2005; Dittmer 2014; Mountz 2018). In-depth, ethnographic and site-specific research has opened up for scrutiny and grounded theorization the interplay between multiple scales and diverse actors. Such interplay results in negotiated and provisional political settlements, including non-western geopolitical imaginations and forms of agency (eg. Sharp 2013; Kuus 2019). These approaches provide new understandings of political 'objects' such as the state, democracy, borders, and citizenship. Central to these advances is feminist geography which has established the scale, place and differentiated nature of the body as central in maintaining and constituting spatial relations of power (eg. Mountz 2018).

After long-term engagement with postcolonialism, voices in political geography continue to examine alternative engagements with the world, such as through non-English language geographies each with distinctive theoretical trajectories (Connell 2007; Benjaminsen et al. 2017; Halverson 2018a). Political geography has been extensively prompted by postcolonialism to query its rootedness in imperial-colonial institutionalization of knowledge and power (Sharp 2009). Heterogeneous Anglophone political geography acknowledges the intellectual and practical contributions of feminist, postcolonial, queer, and critical race theory to current concerns and frameworks, a debt continued in decolonizing debates in geography (eg. Mollett 2017; Mountz 2018; Daigle and Ramírez 2019; Jazeel and Legg 2019). However, de-centering Europe is not identical to decolonizing (Loftus 2017), as provincializing Europe (Chakrabarty 2000) is insufficient to dismantle westernizing power as long as dominant analytical-conceptual frameworks remain in place, rather than re-worked from 'border' and subaltern knowledges and positionalities (Anzaldúa 1987; Mignolo 2000; Sharp 2009). Endeavoring to decolonize geography necessitates acknowledging the asymmetrical geopolitics of knowledge production, reflecting on epistemic violence that accompanies colonial modern scholarship, and moving towards re-humanization and human with more-than-human flourishing (Escobar 2007; Maldonado-Torres 2016; Naylor et al 2018). If recent shifts in Anglophone political geography fore-ground relational explanations that query the self-proclaimed universal qualities of hegemonic relations and categories, it builds on strong foundations of site-specific analysis of power-space configurations, using qualitative and ethnographic methods to elucidate local meanings and discourses. For instance, in political

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ecology, avoiding universalizing colonial knowledge focuses attention on concrete situations and "walking with" Others and their knowledges (Loftus 2017).

Decolonial theory brings into postcolonial political geography the ontological premise of the lack of finitude to coloniality of knowledge and power (Radcliffe 2017; Naylor et al 2018). Postcolonial theory has long recognized the "crisis of the uncompleted struggle for 'decolonisation'" (Hall 1996: 244), and the impossibility of *actual* decolonization" (de Leeuw and Hunt 2018: 5, original emphasis; Stoler 2016). Decoloniality tracks enduring yet malleable configurations of coloniality and analytical temporality, prompting analysis of long*er*-standing influences on the present (since the 16th century; beyond the 'global South'). For Māori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith, decolonization is "a long-term process involving the bureaucratic, cultural, linguistic and psychological divesting of colonial power" (Smith 2012: 33). As a few postcolonial geographers note, overcoming coloniality entails opening geographical knowledge production to self-reflexive critique and to multiple alternative knowledges inside and outside the academy (Sharp 2009).

Decoloniality's premise is that modernity is entangled with coloniality, a structure of *power* (economic, political, social), *knowledge* (Eurocentric universalism, epistemic violence, and subaltern knowledges), and *being* (dehumanization of subaltern groups; colonial modern intersectional hierarchies) (Escobar 2007; Maldonado-Torres 2016; Mignolo and Walsh 2018). Extending postcolonial approaches in geography, Joanne Sharp pushed the discipline in feminist and decolonizing directions by calling for theorization to attend to marginalized knowledges (Sharp 2009), such as border feminisms and diverse sites of knowledge production (eg. Anzaldúa 1987; Asher 2013). Recognizing the significance of this step in political geography, Naylor et al (2018) urge political geography to engage more with the epistemic violence of scholarship and reorient knowledge production towards horizontal accountability to subjugated knowledges (also Mignolo 2000). According to decoloniality, knowledge production occurs in the coordinates of geopolitics and body-politics, reflecting interlinked scales of relationship, influence and specificity (Grosfoguel 2007; Mollett 2017; Naylor et al 2018: 204-6). Decolonial geographers in turn call for taking responsibility for colonial-modern dynamics of knowledge production "in one's own place," acknowledging place-specific configurations of modernity-coloniality (De Leeuw and Hunt 2018). For the authors of this piece, decoloniality entails continuous efforts to articulate Latin American, Anglophone and German-speaking academic and political debates, and to decolonize from where we stand professionally, personally, and in place. Addressing these questions, Anglophone political geography could do more to write the world by acknowledging the systematically spatial nature of modernity-coloniality. Decoloniality holds in mind modernity-coloniality's five centuries-plus of dominating power, and at the same time is alert to plural, marginalized knowledges and worldviews. Overall, decoloniality envisions a world in which many worlds fit, and proposes horizontal dialogue and epistemic parity across worlds and overturning "one-world world" frameworks, by reframing geography in relation to "multiple and diverse ways of knowing and understanding the world" (Naylor et al 2018: 199; Escobar 2007; Sundberg 2014).

Given its attention to knowledge production and multiple vantage points, geographers are situated in a unique position to re-theorize its core concern - space - from that alterity and multiplicity in modernity-coloniality (Mignolo 2000; Quijano 2000; Maldonado-Torres 2016). Rethinking key political geography terms to decolonizing opens up two directions beyond grounded 'area studies' knowledges. One avenue is to deliberately learn from, and establish dialogue with what Raewyn Connell (2007) calls Southern theory, which comprises theoretical-scholarly work originating in the global South. For example, Brazilian geographers have theorized multiterritorialities which innovates on Massey's global sense of place, Lefebvre's production of space, and Brazilian geographer Milton Santos's work (Haesbaert 2013, forthcoming). Challenging accounts of globalizing deterritorialization, the multiterritorialities concept highlights the existence of politically-, epistemologically-, and socially-diverse projects of territory-making (Haesbaert 2018). The visibility and circulation of Southern theory increase the possibilities of provincializing political geography, contingent on language skills, translation, and the westernizing university. Although this could lead to Anglophone appropriation of Southern theory (Halverson 2018b; Ferretti 2019), these risks are minimized, if not entirely eliminated, by long-term participatory and collaborative co-production of knowledge.

A second avenue for learning from alterity is theorizing the world in dialogue with plural epistemologies beyond the academy. The vibrancy of subaltern knowledge production provides insights into different standpoints on coloniality, and crucially re-conceptualize colonial-modern worlds from the underside of modernity (Anzaldúa 1987; Mignolo and Walsh 2018). Critical Black, Indigenous and global South feminisms and activisms call for urgent work with multiepistemic insights. Authority, voice and knowledge are articulated through institutionalized postcolonial intersectional hierarchies, resulting in differentiated critical perspectives (Radcliffe 2015; Mollett 2017). Delinking from coloniality's geopolitics of knowledge production thus entails "upholding ... Indigenous [, Afro descendant and other dispossessed groups'] spatial knowledge and place-based practices on their own terms" (De Leeuw and Hunt 2018: 8). Latin American geography collectives including GeoRaizAL and the Colectivo de Geografia Crítica de Ecuador aim to decolonize Eurocentric critical geographical thought by foregrounding the geographies of Indigenous, Afro-Latin and peasant groups (Ramírez Velasquez 2011; Cruz 2017; Colectivo 2017). Research with and by subaltern subjects makes visible distinctive epistemologies, challenges Anglophone theorizing, and necessitates new ethical protocols (Zaragocín et al 2018). Courtheyn (2017) outlines how moving beyond colonial modern-liberal notions of peace facilitates analysis of racialized geopolitics and silenced non-Eurocentric practices of peace.

Political geography in this regard has much to gain from engagement with Indigenous and Black geographers' concerns and enquiries. Indigenous and Black geographies have made forceful interventions in the discipline, systematically critiquing complacent 'one world' frameworks and offering decolonizing concepts. The systematic racialization of modernity-coloniality in economic, geographic, political, and sociocultural relations mobilizes -- from distinct starting points -- decolonial, Black, Indigenous and antiracist geographers and others (Coulthard 2016; Simpson 2011; Simpson 2014). Political geography is beginning to engage

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with Indigenous and Black geographies' critiques about systematic violence and dehumanization of bodies and lands, resulting in a "complexity of racial and (de)colonial dynamics" (Pulido 2018: 310; cf. McConnell 2016). Decolonizing also begins a process of identifying and challenging the racialized consequences of dominant white socio-spatial epistemologies (Dwyer and Jones 2000), for example in human to more-than-human relations (Sundberg 2014; cf. Benjaminsen et al 2017).

Decolonizing political geography links across these re-framings, and specifically entails rethinking space-power dynamics in relation to "space and time [as] multiple and varied" (Naylor et al 2018: 200). Latin American geographers lead a 'geographical decolonial turn', by analyzing plural space-times where patterns of racialization and subordination work in association with diverse temporalities-territories to reproduce and challenge modern-colonial geographies (Colectivo 2017; Cruz and de Oliveira 2017; Porto-Gonçalves 2013, 2017). Anglophone geographers' interest in subaltern geographies speaks to thematic concerns of decolonizing political geographers, although the epistemic and normative links between knowledge production, power and space are fore-grounded more in the latter (Jazeel and Legg 2019). Engagements with decolonizing over recent years problematize Anglophone understandings of subject-space-power dynamics, chafing against "a limited and illusory discussion regarding modernity and decolonization" (Rivera Cusicanqui 2012: 104). As the case below shows, the material, epistemic and intersubjective violences enacted through western-normed understandings of territory, state, sovereignty and so on become visible and held to account through decoloniality.

Mushkegowuk (Cree) geographer Michelle Daigle draws attention to the specific decolonization politics that arise when Indigenous people organise to resist settler colonialism, using practices that "emanate from the longstanding and multiple political and legal orders across diverse Indigenous landscapes" (Daigle in Naylor et al 2018: 201). Rather than starting from seemingly stable 'modern' categories of sovereignty, geolegalities, autonomy and agency, this approach envisions Indigenous political-legal orders as generative of alternative political geographies that decenter western space-power relations. Indigenous practices and knowledges decolonize politics in ways that open up questions about competing geopolitical and body-political projects for territory, security, and citizenship. Through a grounded case study, this paper extends Daigle's decolonization politics to further interrogate the interconnections between political geography and coloniality-modernity.

Reimagining decolonial approaches through geographical lenses has also revealed the limitations and blind spots of decoloniality. Decoloniality foregrounds subaltern voices and experiences, yet arguably could do more to nuance analytical, political and academic imperatives in terms of spatially grounded perspectives (Asher 2013). Decolonizing feminist geographers track the multiscalar, relational qualities of gendered, racialized dehumanization, foregrounding coloniality's integral articulation of intersectionality which is often lacking in wider debates about decoloniality (Lugones 2010; Hunt 2015; Mollett 2017). Feminist decolonial geographers' attention on the scaled interrelations of territories and bodies re-theorizes (re)colonizing capitalism and embodied intersectional violence (Zaragocín 2019). In

a different vein, scholarly decolonization is critiqued for failing to self-reflexively engage with Other knowledge-holders and effectively contribute to decolonizing struggles. Decolonization can very easily slip into a short-hand, rather than advance the futurity of peoples, places and ways of knowing under coloniality (Tuck and Yang 2012).

In summary, decoloniality addresses the plural exteriority of modernity, attends to entangled material, intersubjective and epistemic violences of modernity-coloniality, and critically assesses scholarly work in terms of its silence regarding modernity-coloniality. Working across multiple epistemologies contributes to "a diagnosis of our reality, a decolonial political epistemology of the present" (Cruz 2017: 30) that unsettles western-centered procedures of knowledge production, distribution of value, and responsibility. Pursuing decoloniality analysis goes further than postcolonial, feminist and critical geopolitics to bring into focus the violences and dispossessions of modernity-coloniality, the epistemologies and knowledge production that counter them, and associated politics of accountability.

2.   Coloniality and its political disappointments: Contested political geographies

Following from the above points, we now turn to discuss the political geographies of D/decolonization, in order to decolonize analysis of territory, sovereignty, state and agency as contingent outcomes of colonial-modern assemblages. In relation to Andean modernity-coloniality, the section argues for the importance of analyzing variegated political geographies that arise in friction between formal independence and ongoing efforts to undo multifaceted colonial power. These dynamics of state, territory and sovereignty are outlined briefly to highlight the transnational, plural knowledges and multiterritorialities through which notions of national territory, sovereignty and statehood came to acquire meaning and form in Ecuador. The section thereby historicizes and contextualizes the more granular analysis of specific strands of Ecuador's variegated political geographies of D/decolonization in subsequent sections.

Nevertheless, presenting these national-regional specificities in an Anglophone-oriented journal rightly raises unsettling questions about knowledge production and circulation, as well as ethical-normative responsibility. Writing the geo- in decolonial ways highlights writing from the particularities of place to build non-universalizing and pluralizing analytics. For instance, Michelle Daigle and Margaret Ramirez (2019: 81) define decolonial geographies as "grounded in the particularities of each place... [which] are simultaneously sculpted by radical traditions of resistance and liberation embodied by Black, Latinx, Asian and other racialized communities in struggles for land and space... sites for self-determination." In the frictioned terrain between 'universal' (often Anglophone) geo-graphies that travel, and area studies' thickly-descriptive multidisciplinary knowledges nurtured in regional hubs (Jazeel 2016), however an upfront acknowledgement of this piece's epistemic contradictions is appropriate. In writing this paper, we encounter a colonial-modern gulf between rich multi-language scholarly-academic literature on Ecuador's socio-spatial-political transformations and social movements, and a primarily Anglophone, non-specialist readership. In highlighting the importance of

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decolonizing analysis, the piece offers only an incomplete negotiation of the politics of knowledge production.

From the early 16th century, Spanish presence in the Americas created colonies of exploitation where representatives of the centralized imperial power controlled land, natural resources and labor. Peruvian decolonial sociologist Anibal Quijano (2000) was the first to identify (European) modernity as inextricably entangled with coloniality, a regime of power that enforced racialized labor hierarchies (African black slavery and Indigenous tax-work tributes), structured political economic relations around the metropole, and unleashed violence on non-western knowledges and societies. Formal independence from Spain reproduced these exclusions in European forms of law, territorial boundaries, administration, knowledge, language and dominant culture. As in other world regions, the formal departure of Spanish colonizers unleashed complex politics around decolonizing which is enmeshed in multiple temporalities and overlapping spatial processes. Spanish political geographer Heriberto Cairo Carou summarizes the situation:

> "Decolonization (with capital D) is the process directed fundamentally by [elites and their allies] in diverse moments, which led [in Latin America] at the start of the 19th century (with the exception of Cuba and Puerto Rico) to the constitution of the current states which aim to be nations, based on the colonial territories of the Crowns of Castille and Aragón and Portugal [. Yet] this did not involve the decolonization [*descolonización*] (with lower case d) which is the process -- in many respects still to be achieved in the Americas and the Pacific -- of the liquidation of the diverse effects of colonization, such as the denial of rights to Indigenous peoples and ongoing domination by the colonizers' descendents." (Cairo Carou 2008: 14)

If Decolonization - with a capital D - refers to formal independence from direct colonial territorial governance, lower case decolonization (or decoloniality) speaks to ongoing struggles to challenge colonial modern relations of social, spatial, territorial and epistemic power (Cairo Carou and Grosfoguel 2010; Maldonado-Torres 2016).

Extending the spatial dimension of these points, D/decolonization refers here to an ambivalent, messy and incomplete terrain of political contests and pluralized spatial dynamics, through which colonial-modern power is challenged and alternatives generated, in part through geographical imaginations, practices, and methodologies. This conceptualization treats the dynamics between coloniality, modernity and D/decolonization as contingent, open-ended, and contested relations between political actors, knowledges, and socio-spatial relations. American-born descendants of European settlers led Ecuador independence wars from Spain, and declared an independent nation-state in 1830. Capital D Decolonization is discursively and procedurally tied to a recalibration of inter-national relations promising geopolitical parity and internal sovereignty. Whereas this moment postulates a singular irreversible shift in status, what endures is the stubborn reproduction of modern-colonial economy, politics, society and subjectivity (Quijano 2000; Grosfoguel 2007; Stoler 2016). The ontic claim of Decolonization closes down discussion of the coloniality that endures (Maldonado-Torres 2016). The interminable politics of lower-case decolonization (decoloniality) rumbles on precisely because of enduring coloniality. As a result, the politics of decolonization in the colonial present is generatively

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plural and heterogeneous, due to the "many contradictions, contentions and possible pathways to decolonization" (Sium et al 2012: i). As this paper illustrates, lower case 'decolonizing' (*descolonización*) comprises a complex contentious process, differentially conceived and pursued over time and space, by heterogeneous actors across bureaucratic, geopolitical, religious, cultural, linguistic, and knowledge relations.

To further "critique and reimagine decolonial theory through a geographic lens" (Naylor et al 2018: 200), this paper examines the variegated political geographies of D/decolonization. The concept teases out the social and spatial variegation of D/decolonization politics, asking decolonial questions of coloniality's production of space, politics and knowledge production, and posing political geographical questions about the granular complexities of coloniality-modernity. Together these provide insights into *how* decoloniality is made and by *whom* and thereby unpacks colonial modern political geographies.

Since the late twentieth century, Ecuador has been the arena for significant and unique transformations in territoriality, citizenship and the state. As elaborated below, decoloniality analysis can understand how and why practices, discourses and imaginations of state, territoriality and sovereignty erupt, and the non-Eurocentric knowledges and subjects involved. French and American revolutions selectively inspired Latin American 19th century leaders to forge a 'republican imperialism' with ethnoracial hierarchies, sharp socio-economic distinctions, and elite entitlement to modernizing territorial control (Simon 2012), while mimicking metropolitan forms of identity, sovereignty, and governance and disregarding subaltern politics and knowledges. Unlike mid-twentieth century Africa and Asia, Ecuador and Latin American states retained large – and influential – numbers of settlers and growing shares of mestizo ('mixed' Europe-oriented populations), and encouraged European immigration. These political geographies resulted in Andean 'liberalism' that guaranteed creole descendants' status and socio-economic security, while denying or forcibly removing the Indigenous and Afro-descendant rights (Rivera Cusicanqui 2012: 100). Historical geographies of D/decolonization continue to inform contemporary discursive reference points in contests over the state, citizenship and territory (sections 3, 4). Ecuador remained locked into global capitalist and exchange systems, exporting agricultural foodstuffs and then petroleum, while relying on informal sectors and smallholder agriculture for labor reproduction. In the mid-twentieth century, political economic dependency and an over-reliance on North Atlantic markets and political cultures was widely criticized in government and political circles. A postcolonial modular state form and republican rule constructed themselves hegemonically in relation to motley political societies and non-western spatial ontologies. Territorial domination did not eradicate Other epistemologies and *ch'ixi* modernities and counter-publics: the Aymara term *ch'ixi* denotes motley, heterogeneous (including subaltern) differences, practices and relations in partially-overlapping, partially-connected, political societies (Chávez. Mokrani and Tapia 2009; Vega Camacho 2010; Rivera Cusicanqui 2012).

Decolonizing knowledge production within and against these assemblages of coloniality-modernity also arose through South-South and critical party, union and anti-poverty movements; anti-colonial Fanonian and marxist writings inspired political and civic movements

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(Galeano 1971). Through the 1980s and 1990s, mobilization began against neoliberalism, racism and unequal distributions, energized by rising inequality, political and financial instability, and Indigenous organizations (Walsh 2002). Indigenous and peasant territorialities incubated subaltern sociospatial relations and epistemologies that engendered challenges to hegemonic political and spatial relations. As such the interactions across tensioned fields of modernity-coloniality and D/decolonization can be understood in relation to multiterritorialities, as the concept (introduced above) unpicks the dynamics of space, territory and power in postcolonial and interconnected worlds. Multiterritorialities emerge from social-environmental-place relations that precede/ work against/ reproduce themselves independently of and/or in relation to the postcolonial state in intersecting diverse flows, processes and place-making.[3] Apprehended through symbolic meanings and imaginative geographies and place-making practices, multiterritorialities co-exist in a frictioned cross-scale plurality (Haesbaert 2013). Territorialities are mobilized by diverse groups, some expressing European notions of territory, state, and power, others partially overlapping with the latter yet partly co-constituted with non-western epistemologies and practices (Haesbaert 2012; Porto-Gonçalves 2013). Appreciation of multiterritorialities and plural spatial epistemologies in turn suggests how emplaced actors and territories come to think and act in decolonizing or re-colonizing ways, that are intrinsically geographical in imagination, expression and practiced.

Ever-widening public protests and weak governments led to electoral demands for political system reorganization and anti-neoliberal measures at the turn of the 21st century. Promising an end to the "long night of neoliberalism," Ecuador's outsider candidate Rafael Correa and party promised to "re-found the state." A largely urban, largely European-oriented, coalition favored overhauling a corrupt inefficient state and within a year, a Constituent Assembly was convened to re-write the rules of citizenship, territory, sovereignty and statehood.[4] With diverse elected members (Indigenous, feminists, anti-neoliberals, liberals, and environmentalists), the Constituent Assembly gathered views from across the tensioned politics of D/decolonization (Santos 2010). Reflecting diverse epistemologies, the 2008 constitution introduced rights-based principles of decentered sovereignty, plural economies, intercultural democracy, the rights of nature, and the state's responsibility to ensure *Buen Vivir* (living in plenitude in harmony with nature) (Viteri 2002; Radcliffe 2012; Gudynas 2016). Ecuador declared itself:

> A Constitutional state of rights and justice, [which is] social, democratic, sovereign,
> independent, unitary, intercultural, plurinational and secular. It is organized in the form
> of a republic and is governed in a decentralized manner. (Constitution 2008, Article 1)

State re-founding gained widespread public support in anticipation of eliminating colonial legacies and forging a sovereign future in a declarative vocabulary of new beginnings.

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[3]   Contingent and continuously reconstituted, multiterritorialities exhibit a range of functionalities, routinizations and institutionalization, varying from (for example) state-led extractive territorialities, to Afro-Latin and Indigenous place-making (Haesbaert 2013).
[4]   Latin American anti-neoliberal regimes re-wrote constitutions to boost inclusion and to incorporate social movements, resulting in open-ended highly politicized outcomes.

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Anglophone analysis frequently represents Ecuador (and Bolivia) as a singular liberal-modern state being radically reformed by non-western principles (eg. Van Hulst and Beling 2014). Decoloniality analysis, by contrast, points to the friction between modernizing/re-colonizing territorialization and practices to remake power, knowledge and being. The next sections delve into Ecuador's variegated political geographies of D/decolonization. [5] Focused on state transformations (cf. Simpson 2014), the paper sheds light on why and how coloniality-modernity plays out in the plurinational intercultural state model (section III), and an anti-metropolitan national sovereignty agenda (section IV). These two agendas have confronted hegemonic postcolonial templates for geopolitics, statecraft and political economy, drawing on and articulating varied geographical imaginations, forms of socio-spatial organization, and types of geographical tools. In this context, decolonial analysis provides crucial insights into the geopolitics and body politics of processes that animate the two strands of D/decolonizing politics.

3.   Decolonizing postcolonial political geographies I: Agendas for the plurinational intercultural state

Ecuador's 2008 constitutional declaration of plurinationalism was the first in its history. Yet the geographical imaginations and political geographical experimentation informing the Constitution had emerged over decades from Indigenous, peasant and racialized groups. Indigenous movements and communities generate non-universal and contingent forms of geolegalities, collective agency, territory and understandings of sovereignty. To best understand this radical alterity and impacts on political geographies, we draw together relational contextualization (political geography), openness to marginal knowledges (postcolonial insights), and critical attention to colonial-modern geopolitics/political geographies of knowledge production (decoloniality analysis). A set of Ecuadorian multiterritorialities re-made and re-thought state, territory and citizenship 'otherwise', to contest the coloniality of power, knowledge and dehumanization. They brought more-than-western praxis and epistemologies (including geographical concepts and practices) into the public sphere -- eventually to the Constituent Assembly. These geographical dimensions raise ethico-political questions about when, where and how geographical tools and methods materially contribute or not to decolonizing agendas.

From the mid-twentieth century, collective and individual agency animated Indigenous and peasant claims for land and territory, political participation and autonomy. Experiences of being rural, racialized and dispossessed generated critiques and proposals for alternatives. Racialized subalterns constituted themselves as collective political subjects when dispersed ethno-linguistic movements and multiterritorialities coalesced into the national CONAIE Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador to coordinate uprisings, create a political

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[5]   This synthetic account of the most significant of Ecuador's variegated D/decolonization political geographies draws on our own and others' work in Spanish and English, and is informed by extensive, ongoing discussions with Indigenous and Afro descendant leaders and people, critical thinkers in/outside the academy, and political figures and officials.

party, and voice anti-neoliberal critiques (Pacari 2008). From the mid-1980s, Indigenous and peasant movements prepared agendas to transform space, place and postcolonial rule. In this sense, the contingent articulation of collective agency raises questions around who and how sovereignty is identified and analyzed outside a European frame (McConnell 2016; Kuus 2019), rethinking political geographies from within and against modernity-coloniality.

Embedded in quotidian practices and geographical imaginations from diverse multiterritorialities, these movements contributed the proposal for a plurinational intercultural state. The plurinational intercultural state refers to plural territorialities and governance with substantive and formal rights and dignity for all racial and social groups. Indigenous movements had long demanded territorial control, due to longstanding struggles for autonomy, self-determination and dignity. These demands were articulated relationally against dominant schema (including modernizing development, and neoliberal multiculturalism) that denied full political subject-hood and epistemic parity. Indigenous and subaltern decolonial projects are not secessionist as "the condition of possibility for an indigenous hegemony is located in the modern nation's territory" (Rivera Cusicanqui 2012: 95; Ulloa 2012). Plurinationalism would realize relational autonomy within the nation-state, refounding the nation-state around *ch'ixi* principles (Cholango no date: 3; Resina 2015: 91). The proposal meant scaling up *de facto* Indigenous, Afro-Ecuadorian and motley subaltern territories and geolegalities into a *de jure* plural settlement. Their geolegalities include customary justice process in the interstices of state-sanctioned statutory law, practiced in systematized ways and bolstered by formal education and professionalization.

Plurinationalism re-imagines state governance and its geographies as plural, multi-scalar and grounded in meaningful local places, a statehood model with a multiplicity of politico-administrative territorialities (which are defined by connection to place and racial-ethnic diversity) (Schavelzon 2015; Radhuber 2009, 2014; Postero 2017). Diverse advocates of plurinationalism envision it as a means to counter the exclusionary and singular postcolonial state. Additional demands were the overturning of racialized and impoverishing uneven development, and ideologies that condoned dehumanization (including regional variants of liberalism, and marxism). Plurinationalism thus represents a political geography that emerges out of colonial-modern spatial-geographical exclusion of racialized subordinated nationalities, and a proposal to reorganize state-space-power for plural marginalized subjects (CONAIE 2007). Humberto Cholango, president of CONAIE's Andean federation, suggested:

> "The European invaders came [and] appropriated the territories of which our ancestors had been the owners and *señores* [lords (sic)] for thousands of years. Since 1830, we the majority of Ecuadorians especially Indigenous nationalities and pueblos were excluded from rights; no state policies existed to permit us a dignified life." (Cholango no date: 1-2)

Establishing national scale rights and epistemic equity would challenge dehumanization and dispossession, while retaining everyday practices and interactions rooted in ch'ixi epistemologies and livelihoods. Re-thinking state political governance within existing frontiers, plurinational administration would comprise overlapping multiethnic, multi-scalar dynamics of decision-making and territorial organization, embedded in high levels of local autonomy.

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Plurinationalism explicitly breaks with Eurocentric forms of statehood and political subjectivity. According to Indigenous leader Nina Pacari, plurinationalism awards full status to existing but subordinated "differentiated political cultures." Plurinationalism, by bringing differentiated political cultures into horizontal relation with European forms, anticipates a process of epistemic decolonization (Pacari 2008: 47). The Indigenous Development Council noted,

> "In the national territory, there are not just simply citizens [because the] 'nationalities and peoples' exist with collective rights which are not the sum of individual rights. […] The relation between nationalities, peoples and citizens [under plurinationalism] means the introduction of a new subject who will break apart the foundations of the modern[-colonial] nation-state and overhaul the discourse and practice of rights established under the French Revolution. [… T]he constitutional recognition of the plurinational intercultural state is not simply a change of name. Instead it signifies a new way to conceptualize, understand and construct the state…" (CODENPE-AECID 2011: 18-19)

Plurinationalism in this way interpolates a subalternized collective subject in relation to ongoing coloniality, to engender a unique state-citizen dynamic. These rights claims arose from assertive indigeneity in which plural 'Indigenous' subjects are forged at the interface between modernity-coloniality and 'more-than-western' epistemologies and practices. The centrality of geographical imaginations, practices and knowledges in plurinationalism indicates the vibrancy of subaltern geographies that radically pluralize and de-center Eurocentric conceptions of society-space-power dynamics.

Indigenous plurinational proposals relied on networks that produced and systematized praxis and critique across sites including legal expertise (national statutory professional and customary), local government experiences, and alternative Indigenous municipalities. Plurinationalism discounts existing decentralization (CODENPE-AECID 2011: 56-57), seeking instead to strengthen multiterritorialities through grounded configurations of authority, customary law and decision-making (CONAIE 2012; Schavelzon 2015: 73).[6] Non-Eurocentric imaginative geographies were voiced: CONAIE's 2012 proposal pictured horizontal socio-political relations embedded in diverse multi-scalar and often inter-ethnic territories. These elements informed CONAIE's engagement with the Constituent Assembly in 2007,[7] and

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[6]   However, the 2008 constitution placed Indigenous territorial circumscriptions (CTIs) into a 'special regimes' category rather than create political-administrative spaces with legitimate alternative authority (Constitution 2008: Art. 242; Resina 2015: 102-3).

[7]   CONAIE released a draft constitution, later a 'constitution', with three core demands - a plurinational state, control over territories, and official acceptance of Indigenous languages (Becker 2011; Schavelzon 2015).

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garnered public support to foster unity in diversity (CODENPE-AECID 2011: 60-87; Resina 2015: 79-83).[8]

In relational contrast to nationalist histories, Indigenous advocates narrate plurinationalism in terms of 500 years-plus of decolonizing action. "The wars of independence did not achieve the liberation of our peoples. The uni-national state was [merely] the outcome of wars between the English and Spanish crowns" (CODENPE-AECID 2011: 33). The ontological relation between subaltern subjectivity and national territory is re-grounded, re-historicized through a critique of coloniality. Extending decolonial philosopher Enrique Dussel's point that the European Cartesian subject was preceded by centuries of "I *conquer*, therefore I am," political geographer David Slater (2004: 12-16) usefully suggests that European expansion sutures "geopolitical power and the territorialization of thought" such that "territory [is] based on a self/other split that can only be fully grasped in the frame of conquest."[9] In this context, plurinationalism prefigures a break with modern-colonial state power as *spatial* and *dehumanizing* and in its place asserts Indigenous sovereignties. Transcending the self-other split by pluralizing subjectivities in multiterritorialities, plurinationalism also challenges norms of individualized rights-bearers:

> "The plurinational state will guarantee the political and economic, cultural, spiritual and territorial rights of all peoples, nationalities and originary nations, vis-à-vis the group of states in the Andean region, in Abya Yala [ie. the Americas], and at the international level, pursuing peace, harmony, equality and solidarity as well as cooperation and development." (CONAIE 2012: 36)

In terms of pragmatic governance, Indigenous, Afro-Ecuadorian and motley political alternatives had already, since the late twentieth century, been based in 'alternative' municipalities, subaltern imaginations, and ordinary practices of justice, education and health. CONAIE organized Indigenous and Afro-descendant geographies into socio-spatial units called 'nationalities and peoples', for whom plurinationalism expressed "everyday acts of indigenous resurgence" (Sium et al 2012: xi), rather than unprecedented and unknown futures (CONAIE 2012: 43; Mignolo and Walsh 2018).

Plurinationalism addresses the racialized foundation of postcolonial citizenship, and the denial of full personhood and authority, restricted recognition, and inadequate redistribution. Without centering antiracist designations of diverse but equal citizens, plurinationalism could not challenge dominant policy approaches to so-called 'cultural minorities.' Countering the slow violence of neglect and disregard (CONAIE 2012: 91; CONAIE-FENOCIN-FEINE no date: 7; Resina 2015: 74, 76), rights-bearing subjects aim to dismantle "over 500 years of [colonialist]

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[8]   Support from non-indigenous Alberto Acosta (then Constituent Assembly president) ensured plurinationalism was incorporated into the Constitution. Acosta advocates communitarian territorial projects, plural citizenship and decentralized pluralising sovereignties to realize autonomies (*El Universo* 2008; Santos and Jimenez 2012: 157).

[9]   Similarly, decolonial feminist Curiel (2007) suggests coloniality's social categories and hierarchy naturalizes European claims over territories and resources, generating an articulation of geography and power across scales.

imposition, domination and annihilation of peoples and nationalities" (CODENPE-AECID 2011: 79). "The decolonization of the country and the state [will] permit a just and egalitarian participation" (Maldonado 2008, cited in Becker 2011: 54-55). Plurinationalism's counterpoint is interculturalism, namely effective anti-racism action and the re-humanization of public life (CONAIE-FENOCIN-FEINE no date: 5). Indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian women are the strongest advocates of combining individual and collective rights to tackle postcolonial intersectional hierarchies of space and power (Radcliffe 2015; Zaragocín et al 2018). Interculturalism required nation-wide action, institutions, policy and new standards of social interaction (CONAIE-FENOCIN-FEINE no date; Álvarez 2010: 6; Santos 2008: 187-190).

From multiterritorialities to plural forms of politics with heterogeneous subjectivities and praxis, emerged plurinationalism's re-conceptualization of sovereignty (Acosta 2010; Álvarez 2010: 5; Radhuber & Radcliffe, no date), articulating an alternative to Eurocentric notions of state sovereignty. Extending Anglophone political geography's relational and dynamic accounts, Ecuador's particularities "render multiple the concept of sovereignty" (McConnell 2016: 5), a multiplicity best understood in colonial-modern context and subaltern-non-western knowledge production (eg. Ulloa 2012). Decolonizing an account of sovereignty teases out marginal geopolitics and body-politics of knowledge production, and context-specific 'makings' of sovereignty. In CONAIE's (2012: 36) terms:

   "Plurinational sovereignty will substitute the current exercise of sovereignty based on the dominant sector's hegemonic interests and instruments, in order to establish a new conception of sovereignty based on the power and political will of originary, *montubio* [recognized nationality], Afro-Ecuadorian and mestizo people, [Indigenous] nationalities and nations."

From subaltern viewpoints, sovereignty could become detached from a modular exclusionary nation-state to encompass plural multiscalar geographies and *ch'ixi* multiterritorialities, epistemologies and practices (eg. Radhuber & Radcliffe, no date).

Decolonial analysis foregrounds the plural practices of territory, state, and agency ineluctably tied to modernity-coloniality, and known from a "geo-political and body political location of the [subaltern] subject that speaks" (Grosfoguel 2007: 213). Asking decolonial questions of plurinationalism makes visible the epistemological and praxis-based interconnections between lived geographies, re-worked geographical imaginaries and socio-territorial re-organization to, in Cairo Carou's words, "liquidate the diverse effects of colonization" (cf. Postero 2017: 408 on Bolivia). Analyzed in these terms, the plurinational state model reflects longstanding, critical and alternative-building social organization. Doing justice to contingent dynamics, decolonial analysis makes visible and treats as valid the knowledges that inform plurinational concepts (collective subjects, Indigenous and Black territories, agency, sovereignty). These plurinational meanings and concepts arose from within and against modern-colonial power, territory, knowledge and difference, and speak to the hybridizing, blurred margins between and across differentiated political ontologies and subjectivities. Moreover, analyzing the plurinational state model in a decolonizing political geography frame brings into focus the non-neutrality of geographical knowledges, practices and imaginations in modernity-coloniality.

Accountable to Indigenous knowledges (Daigle and Ramirez 2019), this D/decolonizing agenda highlights how plural geographies were reclaimed, re-made, and re-imagined, resulting in proposals at scales and leverage unfamiliar in other countries (such as settler colonial North America). Nevertheless, plurinationalism was not the sole re-articulation of territory, sovereignty and power to engage Ecuador's entanglement with modernity-coloniality, as the next section shows.

4.   Political geographies of D/decolonization II: 'Second independence'

Despite plurinationalism appearing in the 2008 Constitution, its small-d decolonizing impetus has not subsequently been prioritized, a political outcome that requires recognizing the messy, contested political geographies of D/decolonization. Decoloniality's analysis of power, subjectivity and knowledge in contradictory coloniality-modernity brings into focus in the Ecuadorian case a state-led politics of 'second independence'. Rupturing any assumptions that D/decolonization dynamics are universal or homogeneous, this strand highlights the variegated political geographies contesting (multifaceted) modernity-coloniality. In relation to chronopolitics and territory, the section unpicks the ontic claim that Decolonization closes down coloniality, and demonstrates connections between geographical knowledges and specific politics against coloniality-modernity.

Having re-founded the state with a new Constitution, the Alianza Pais government (2006-17) articulated an agenda that queried neocolonial relations of neoliberalism by drawing on left epistemologies of dependency theory. These epistemic coordinates positioned the state in relation to an internally-oriented singular sovereignty that stood against hostile and neocolonial international geopolitics. Between 2006 and 2017, disentangling from 'colonial metropolitan powers' was at the forefront of government actions and rhetoric, reorienting the country's political relations with territory. Among its first actions were the rejection of a free-trade deal with the USA, the closure of a US military base, and the restructuring of and partial default on national debt, accompanied by anti-neoliberal, anti-(neo-)colonial discourses that pitted Ecuadorian people against threats to resource control. Acting on this diagnosis, the government called for increased national sovereignty and the loosening of historically restrictive international relations. The government talked of "second Independence", adopting a politically-significant temporal and geographical frame for D/decolonization politics.[10] The second independence chronopolitics revolved around settler colonial independence in 1830, compared with plurinationalism's emphasis on Spanish colonialism and imperial republicanism (cf. Dittmer 2014). During Independence Day celebrations, the president announced, "our peoples of the Americas are struggling as brothers for our second and definitive independence" (Bernal 2014: 443). The unfulfilled promise of 1830 was attributed to persistently disadvantageous economic and political relations with metropolitan countries. Following the 2008 constitution's ratification, however, "Ecuador has decided to be a new country, the old structures have been destroyed ..." (quoted in Bernal 2014: 452). Second independence

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[10]   In this, it differed from plurinationalism, and -- for different reasons -- from Bolivia's Morales-MAS government (Postero 2017).

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represented the achievement of sovereign statehood and foretold a new global system, symbolized in the government party's name; PAIS refers to 'country' (*país*) and its acronym to a 'proud and sovereign country/homeland' ('Patria Altiva [i] Soberana').

Alianza Pais's epistemology of sovereignty in international relations was rooted in strong intellectual currents of Latin American marxist and left politics since the mid-twentieth century, especially dependency theory. During Cold War geopolitics, dependency critiques challenged metropolitan political economic orthodoxies (Kay 2010). Ecuador's post-2006 government synthesized human rights frameworks with dependency; the president spoke of how neo-colonialism granted "capitalism more rights than human beings" (Correa 2014: 30). The government employed and consulted with thinkers associated with these epistemologies to slam the noxious effects of state "de-territorialization". State *re*-territorialization became a policy objective, birthing a dominant centralized form within existing multiterritorialities (Haesbaert 2013). Government agendas reasserted direct control over national territory to avoid financial destabilization and corporate enclaves (Acosta 2010: 19).[11] Imperial relations with the United States, international financial institutions, and transnational corporations attracted opprobrium, prompting the cutting of ties with the World Bank. Investments were sought from China, Venezuela and Iran in a bid to intensify South-South alliances and forge an anti-West axis, with echoes of mid-20th century Bandung/Third World geopolitics (Dávalos 2013: 192).

The 'second independence' project articulated sovereignty in relation to a foundational national territory in the name of the people, as in the 2006-11 government plan:

> "[We aspire] to be a country that enjoys sovereignty in food, culture, energy, monetary policy, and is embedded in international relations of mutual respect and cooperation. [We aspire] to think together about the construction of Latin American sovereignty, to realize [19th century independence fighter Simón] Bolívar's dream of the 'Greater Country' [*Patria Grande*], where respect and the defense of the rights of peoples, communities, peoples and states prevails." (Programa de Gobierno 2007: 9; Acosta 2010: 26)

These geographical modalities, relations and imaginations underpinned and informed understandings of sovereignty. Instead of Indigenous and Black sovereignties 'from below', state boundaries were reasserted over the national territory (cf. McConnell 2016: 15). To regain control over resources, inventories of national renewable and non-renewable resources were compiled, simplifying exports to new trade partners, and strengthening *internal*-directed control over territory. Justified as a break from colonial metropolitan control, the government treated territory as an arena for the management of land, water, air, and subterranean minerals (Gudynas 2016).

'Second independence' D/decolonization politics endorsed and applied types of geographical techniques and knowledge production that worked to materialize this program. Geographical knowledges included territorial ordering (*ordenamiento territorial*), micro-planning, and

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[11]   International petroleum companies were placed on service provider contracts, leaving the state with complete ownership of crude oil.

'special projects' to demarcate functional sub-national geographical areas and ease resource inventories (Asher and Ojeda 2009; Bonilla et al 2016). Aligning geographical knowledge production and statecraft generated "territorial partitions" (Vela-Almeida 2018: 134) that cut across Indigenous and Afrodescendant multiterritorialities (and criminalized resistance to state-led extraction). Subaltern places were represented as problems, as they concentrated the worst economic effects of neocolonial neoliberalism. The government decided that "to consider misery as just part of the Andean landscape" was racist (*El Comercio* 2012). Yet this stance disavowed coloniality's racial hierarchies even as it re-centered state political economic frameworks. Environmental and Indigenous epistemologies were cast as anti-modern and uncivilized: "We can't be beggars sitting on a sack of gold ... It's barbaric to oppose mining and petroleum extraction" (*Contrainjerencia* 2012; cf. Dávalos 2013). Consolidating longstanding settler privilege, the 2008 constitution legislated for central government decision-making power over national subsoil resources, and restricted Indigenous autonomy over non-renewable resources, in direct contradiction with constitutional plurinationalism (Constitution 2008; Radhuber & Radcliffe, no date). In contrast to plurinationalism's heterogeneity, Alianza País's political geographies expressed expansive territorial control, re-animating creole independence leader Simon Bolívar's vision.

'Second Independence' political geographies fore-grounded spatial imaginaries of creole struggles against Spain, metropolitan neoliberal geopolitics, and mid-twentieth century dependency epistemologies. Sovereignty's "hard kernel" (McConnell 2016) was defined in relation to metropolitan geopolitics, even while it asserted European-colonial norms of state-territory relations. Decolonial analysis reveals how powerfully recursive coloniality is (Rivera Cusicanqui 2012) accounting both for enduring colonial-modern arrangements of space, power and difference, and the coherence and urgency of moves against coloniality. Yet second independence politics also represents a discursive and ideological "move to settler innocence" (Tuck and Yang 2012) in a non-Anglophone settler colonial context. Second independence Decolonization spoke from and for a territory defined spatially and temporally in relation to European-creole settlers, thereby erasing Indigenous presence and duress. The case highlights how variegated D/decolonization politics has been constituted relationally across scales, with geographical imaginations, spatial projects and knowledges giving it meaning and substance.

Attending to plural knowledges about statehood, citizenship, territory and sovereignty foregrounds colonial-modern dynamics in the relative status and subjugation of spaces, subjects and knowledges, and -- crucially -- plural understandings and practices of core political geographic concepts, including sovereignty, autonomy, political agency, and geolegalities. Not only does this open out geography to political-epistemological multiplicity but, in linking epistemologies to colonial-modern histories, it raises questions about the sub-discipline's accountability in colonial-modern knowledge production. We turn now to explore the broader implications for decolonizing political geography and decolonial scholarship.

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5.   Discussion

The ongoing and unsettling process of decolonizing Anglophone political geography requires more than internationalizing, provincializing, or centering area studies knowledges. Engaging with non-English conceptual and theoretical contributions comprises one part of broader decolonizing, that challenges core notions of power, knowledges, and responsibility. Regarding political geography, decoloniality prompts questions including in what ways do contingent assemblages of colonial-modernity constitute relations of power, space and difference? How can we think critically beyond colonial-modernity and its political geographies? These questions are answered through contextual, granular and relational analysis. Analyzing mid-twentieth century global struggles against colonialism, Frantz Fanon highlighted uncertain and subtle trajectories, as "various means whereby decolonization has been carried out have appeared in many different aspects [such that] [d]ecolonization comes in many shapes, reason wavers and abstains from declaring what is true decolonization and what is not" (Fanon 1990 [1961]: 46). Reprieving Fanon's focus, the paper highlights the variegated political geographies of D/decolonization and their distinctions on criteria of power, subjectivity (dehumanization versus re-humanization), and knowledge.

Synthesizing these points, three dimensions of decoloniality speak to Anglophone political geography. First, decoloniality analysis situates the entities of political geography -- states, territories, sovereignty, citizenship, among others -- in relation to colonial-modern processes. Coloniality-modernity expresses and fluidly comprises a dynamic assemblage with a scalar flat ontology founded on colonial intersectional intersubjective relations, metropolitan-oriented capitalism, and Eurocentric knowledges. Decolonization goes further than critical geopolitics and postcolonial geographies because it argues that the action and thinking behind alternative sovereignties (an example from Ecuador) cannot be understood outside the dynamics of coloniality-modernity and border knowledges. Southern theory theorizes and produces knowledge outside north Atlantic Anglophone circuits (Connell 2007), and de-centers Euro-Atlantic dominance despite the increasing global influence of the neoliberal Westernizing university (Cupples and Grosfoguel 2018). Yet university geographies reflect a particular locus of enunciation and knowledge production that exists within (and often at odds with) plural processes outside academia (Rivera Cusicanqui 2012; Colectivo 2019). Decolonizing hence goes further in analyzing the world as it is constituted in relation to modernity-coloniality. Moreover, decoloniality is not solely relevant to the majority (postcolonial) world as it prompts consideration of modernity-coloniality within the plural spaces of metropolitan power (Cairo Carou and Grosfoguel 2010). Finally, a critical decolonial political geography brings into focus variegated coloniality-D/decolonizing relations. Rather than a singular switch from a postcolonial to a singular 'non-western' political system, struggles against unjust colonial modern geographies are plural.

Analyzing modern-colonial assemblages builds on approaches widely shared in political geography, including relational, multiscalar, grounded, granular interpretations of diversely positioned actors and institutions. Ecuadorian political geographies of D/decolonization can be understood as deeply relational; plurinational and second independence projects both focused

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on state reform, each criticized global capitalism, [12] and called for greater sovereignty/ autonomy, permitting fragile alliances. [13] But by systematically addressing material and intersubjective dynamics as colonial-modern geographies and intersectional, decolonizing political geographies contributes to deeper understandings of political contests and the spatial expressions of power and resistance (Cruz 2017: 31), as laid out in sections III and IV.

Second, decoloniality recognizes, acknowledges and works out from the accumulated knowledges and critiques of marginalized subjects. De-centering the academy by engaging with Southern theory is important, yet does not substitute for horizontal acknowledgement of geographical knowledges and praxis outside academia. These knowledges especially subaltern insights pinpoint the consequences of colonial-modern violence and injustice. From borderlands/*las fronteras*, such standpoints speak to the undersides of colonial-modern assemblages of power, knowledge and being. Understanding power-space dynamics decolonially embraces a radical contingency, not merely in processes' geographical-historical specificity but in the heterogeneity of *knowing* the world otherwise. Resituating relations of space-power-territory in the frame of modernity-coloniality assemblages subtly yet significantly shifts analysis and interpretation. It shifts understandings of multiple temporalities to the slow violence of coloniality-modernity (eg. Dittmer 2014; de Leeuw 2016), and re-spatializes the heterogeneous divisions/connections between humans and more-than-human. It extends beyond critical political geographies and geopolitics into the *multiepistemic* formation of collective and individual agencies and subjectivities (cf. Kuus 2019). Decolonizing political geography teases apart multiple sovereignties (McConnell 2016), by foregrounding constitutive Indigenous and subaltern knowledges and practices in making them (Ulloa 2012; Simpson 2014). Decolonizing the "one-world world" of hegemonic knowledge systems engages the frictioned relations between political ontologies, working towards a world in which many worlds fit (Blaser 2014; Radcliffe 2019). Decolonizing political geography thus deliberately delinks from Euro-Atlantic conceptual axes to engage with plural knowledges, facilitating contributions to the 'pluriversity' (Mbembe 2016).

Third, however, geography's particular locus in knowledge production requires ongoing critical accountability to populations and individuals marginalized by modernity-coloniality. Decoloniality seeks to materially reverse the exclusion of Indigenous, Black and other subjects and border knowledges (Tuck and Yang 2012; Sundberg 2014; Naylor et al. 2018). Indigenous and Black geographers and geographies lead the arguments for geography's responsibility for transformational change and its accountability to decolonial movements in places where we work and live (eg. Esson et al. 2017; De Leeuw and Hunt 2018). Accountability in this sense goes beyond a schematic scholarly objective to encompass a number of aspects. On one hand,

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[12]   Humberto Cholango (no date: 2), then president of Andean Ecuarunari federation, slammed "the capitalist system and its father, North American imperialism."
[13]   CONAIE's initial alliance with Alianza Pais broke over issues of racism and territory, with CONAIE prohibiting government entry into Indigenous territories (Resina 2015: 279-80; cf. Postero 2017 on Bolivia). In October 2019, Indigenous protests across Ecuador succeeded in forcing the revocation of a government decree removing fuel subsidies.

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decoloniality means assuming responsibility for one's own place in modern-colonial knowledge, power and intersubjective relations, in a particular location and history. Such measures relieve the unequal burden of challenging modernity-coloniality that falls on racialized and subordinate groups. Embarking on this process takes material and embodied steps to enact decolonization, bypassing "moves to settler innocence" or reducing decolonizing to an academic buzzword (Tuck and Yang 2012; Noxolo 2017). Given the widely divergent ends to which geographical analysis and tools are put in D/decolonizing politics (as the Ecuador case illustrated), dismantling intersectional privileges and re-making geographical teaching, learning and research remain an urgent challenge.

Emergent geographical critiques of the interdisciplinary decoloniality take it to task for eliding context-specific colonial-modern geographies and social differentiation. Although decoloniality's macrosocial and long durée framework brings into focus the assemblage of coloniality-modernity, it does not build "multiscalar comprehension in spatiotemporal terms of concrete practices and experiences" (Cruz 2017: 30-31). Geographers can thereby critically engage with decoloniality by foregrounding granular accounts of intertwined daily and structural dynamics, and spatial and social experiences. In contrast to interdisciplinary decoloniality's spatial metaphors, decolonizing political geography can occupy the "locus of enunciation [not as] a metaphor but [in relation to] a geographicity of the social and the political" (Porto-Gonçalves 2017: 38-9). More remains to be done however in carefully parsing theoretical, politico-ethical and substantive parameters in light of intertwined colonial-modern norms of gender, sexuality, nature, and class in everyday life, resistance politics, and knowledge production.

6.   Conclusions

Colonial modernity and decolonizing processes are irredeemably dislocated and differentiated in their configurations of power, subject formation, and knowledge (Fanon 1990 [1961]; Hall 1996). In light of the spatially diverse outcomes of these dynamics, the paper explores the potential consequences of rapprochement between Anglophone political geography and decolonial analysis (decoloniality). Having outlined the common ground and tensions between these two analytic approaches, the paper argued for opening up Anglophone political geographies in decolonial directions. Resituating analysis of sovereignty, citizenship, territory, agency and the state in relation to modernity-coloniality and its configurations of knowledge, power and subjectivity teases open dominant understandings of space and power. The paper made the case for three decolonizing steps, namely re-thinking power-space relations in relation to modernity-coloniality's *ch'ixi* exteriority, attending to the entangled material, intersubjective outcomes and epistemic violence of modernity-coloniality, and undertaking critical scholarship that is accountable to the material dimensions of decolonizing. An application of these analytics to Ecuadorian political transformations highlighted the fruitful common ground between critical political geography, and decoloniality's insights into the enduring, multilevel, multi-faceted realities of coloniality in the present. The paper highlighted the analytical importance of political geography's granular, 'real time', grounded, multiscalar understandings in order to

provide contextualized, contingent, and multiscalar depth and richness to decoloniality's macro-scale and longue-durée approach.

Building on initial discussions in decolonizing political geography, the paper draws attention to how the politics around decolonization in the colonial present is generatively plural and heterogeneous, due to the diverse and contradictory dynamics of coloniality-modernity. The concept of variegated political geographies of D/decolonization thereby focuses attention on the geographically- and historically contingent assemblages of coloniality and actions against coloniality, from formal independence chronopolitics to plural space-times, and from globally hegemonic forms of nation-states, territory, sovereignty, citizenship (and so on) to epistemically distinct imaginations, practices, and spaces. Political geographies of D/decolonization comprise practices, agendas, conceptual-theorizations that pursue variegated ends framed by coloniality, and that arise from and critically re-think enduring yet contested spatial features and geographical projects. Ecuador illustrated how heterogeneous political projects articulate sovereignty, Indigenous-state relations, geopolitics and territory in varied ways, reflecting colonial-modern dynamics of power, knowledge, and being. The messy, contested and dynamic political geographies of D/decolonization rupture any assumption that decolonizing is universal or homogeneous, and thereby challenges critical political geographies to pay closer attention to the material and epistemic forces of modernity-coloniality.

Examining the where, how and consequences of D/decolonizing actions contributes to a "decolonial political epistemology of the present" (Cruz 2017: 3), that is intrinsically a political geography. Spatial projects, geographical imaginations, and relations with space and scale are key to D/decolonial politics in direct substantive ways. Valter do Carmo Cruz (2017: 31) stresses the need to decolonize our geographical thinking to understand structural macro-scale processes *and* the micropolitics of everyday practices. Decolonial analysis significantly re-frames core political geographical concepts such as sovereignty, territory, and the state, as it teases apart the plural epistemologies at play and highlights a multiplicity of geographical knowledge production processes. Anglophone geography is poised to embark on decolonizing its position in worldly geopolitics of knowledge production and imperatives of un-learning, and engaging with Southern theory and praxis.

Declaration of competing interest
None.

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