

# Call for Papers: Decolonising Latin Americanist Geography

Special Issue for the *Journal of Latin American Geography*

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Recent debates in Area Studies have linked the production of academic knowledge to larger paradigms of colonialism and neo-colonialism (Sidaway et al. 2016; McClennen 2007). As English has become the dominant language of the academy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, English-language journals have assumed a hegemonic role as arbiters and disseminators of expert knowledge. This is particularly true in geography, where the dominant journals are based in the United States and the United Kingdom.

*JLAG* grew out of the area studies tradition, and scholars resident in North American and European universities produce the vast majority of its content. While we strive to publish scholarship in Spanish and Portuguese, these represent only 20% of articles in an average issue. Even though the content we publish is intended for diverse audiences, our 2015 data show that 85% of our article downloads came from the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, Germany, and Holland. Only 3% were from Latin America. This is due to a number of factors including pay walls, lack of access to digital resources, different research methodologies, and a lack of mutual engagement – all indications of an imbalance in academic knowledge production about the region.

We are concerned that the *Journal of Latin American Geography* is contributing to the colonisation of academic knowledge and the continuation of Latin American Studies as a problematic conceptual architecture. This special issue on “Decolonising Latin Americanist Geography” seeks to address the prevailing imbalances by calling for academic articles, essays, and commentaries written by scholars *in or from* Latin American territories on the following themes:

- The concept of *El Norte / Lá Fora* (Global North, USA/Canada, Western Europe), the value of thinking about El Norte as an Area, and its meanings and manifestations in Latin America.
- The influences of *Yanquis, Gringos*, and northern Others on/in the region’s architecture, urban form, public policies, environment, culture, etc.
- The impacts of public policy, trade, diplomacy, and/or military intervention *del Norte* on Latin American bodies, territories, and spaces (Plan Colombia, NAFTA, USAID, Peace Corps, BID, IMF, World Bank, etc.)
- The utility of “Latin America” as an analytical category
- Any area of geographic research undertaken in “foreign” territories by Latin American scholars (here, we would consider articles written by indigenous scholars on so-called national cultures and spaces, as well as Latin American scholars researching within the region, e.g. Hoffmann 2015).
- The relations of knowledge production and exchange between Latin American scholars and their Northern counterparts
- Teaching about El Norte / Lá Fora in Latin American universities

These contributions can take the following forms:

- Academic Article (8,000 words) – A piece of original scholarship that contributes to the geographic literature and advances understanding of a given issue.
- Annotated Essay (3,000 – 4,000 words) – An exposition that builds an argument around a central theme, using citations less amply than a traditional academic article but with sufficient documentation for fact checking.
- *JLAG Perspectives* (1,000 – 1,500 words) – An opinion piece that reflects on contemporary events, contains hyperlinked references to news items, reports, and personal experience.

Potential contributors are asked to send an extended abstract (500 words) in Spanish, Portuguese, or English by January 20, 2017 to: [jlag@clagscholar.org](mailto:jlag@clagscholar.org). Please use “*JLAG Special Issue*” in the subject heading. The editorial board will evaluate the abstracts, communicating with authors regarding the composition of the issue. If accepted, we would ask for completed articles to be delivered by April 30, 2017.

## Reference

- Hoffmann, Bert. 2015. “Latin America and Beyond: The Case for Comparative Area Studies.” *ERLACS* 100: 111–20.
- McClennen, Sophia. 2007. “Area Studies Beyond Ontology: Notes on Latin American Studies, American Studies, and Inter-American Studies.” *A Contra Corriente* 5 (1): 173–84.
- Sidaway, J. D., E. L. Ho, J. D. Rigg, and C. Y. Woon. 2016. “Area Studies and Geography: Trajectories and Manifesto.” *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 34 (5): 777–90.