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A conceptual roadmap for the study of whiteness in Latin America

Hugo Ceron-Anaya[a], Patricia de Santana Pinho[b] and Ana Ramos-Zayas[c]

[a]Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Lehigh University, Bethlehem, PA, USA; [b]Department of Latin American and Latino Studies, University of California, Santa Cruz, CA, USA; [c]Program in Ethnicity, Race, and Migration and Anthropology Department, Yale University, New Haven, CT, USA

ABSTRACT

This introductory essay outlines and contributes to fulfill the major goals of this special issue: 1) The examination of whiteness in Latin America in its articulation with broader social hierarchies, and 2) The development of a conceptual and theoretical roadmap for the study of whiteness in the region. The essay is divided into five substantive sections through which we develop our main arguments. In the first section, we offer a brief and admittedly incomplete overview of the literature on race in Latin America, paying particular attention to how whiteness was, until recently, rendered peripheral or entirely absent. In the second section, we consider the concept of 'ordinary whiteness' and its usefulness for capturing the often taken-for-granted aspects of white privilege and the everyday ways through which whiteness organizes routines, perspectives, subjectivities, and affects. In the third section, we approach the intersection of race and class to examine the materiality of whiteness in the multiple forms of economic, cultural, and symbolic capital. In the fourth section, we examine the politics of race, space, and (im)mobility in the production of whiteness in the region. In the last part, we conclude with a commentary on the methodological and epistemological challenges of studying whiteness in Latin America.

Studies of race and ethnicity in Latin America have focused predominantly on the examination of blackness and indigeneity. Processes of racial and cultural mixture, often associated with national narratives of *mestizaje/mestiçagem* and long-held ideologies of 'racial democracy,' have also been a central subject of these studies.[1] Until recently, very little scholarly attention was placed on whiteness or the social, cultural, and economic benefits associated with racial privilege. We understand white privilege as the material and symbolic advantages emanating from the 'white race' epidermal schema. In Latin America, whiteness is commonly associated with traits perceived as favorable, benign, and desirable. This array of positive attributes creates profitable dynamics for individuals, communities, and social practices viewed as 'white' or 'whiter.' This concept shapes social identities that are not always openly named as 'white' but that invariably use

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CONTACT Hugo Ceron-Anaya ✉ hrc209@lehigh.edu 🖾 Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Lehigh University, Williams Hall, 31 Williams Drive, Bethlehem, PA 18015, USA

geographical regions or social processes identified as 'white' to self-identify, for example, by using European nations to trace people's ancestry, while ignoring other locations of racialized origins. White privilege produces gains that range from notions of beauty (and, thus, more desirable partners), to legal protection (not extended to those perceived as non-white), to social distinction (which commonly translates into material benefits). White privilege is not a synonym of the North American concept of the color line because Latin-American racial privilege can be structurally imposed (as the color line model operates), but it can also be made through processes of capital accumulation.

Outside of progressive academic and anti-racist activist circles, the terms *blanquitud* and *branquitude* are often met with puzzlement when not with open disdain. Although the approach to whiteness varies across Latin America, and studies of racial privilege are more developed in some countries than in others, there is an overall dearth of scholarship on whiteness in the region. Seeking to narrow this gap, this special issue has two primary goals.

Our first goal is to examine whiteness in articulation with broader social hierarchies that are not always necessarily explicitly racial. Even though the terms 'blanquitud' and 'branquitude' may sound like a new racial designator, they are not foreign concepts (see Miskolci 2012). Instead, they aptly capture the everyday lived experiences of Latin American inequalities. By highlighting the importance of studying how systems of inequality operate to oppress populations along racial lines and how they foster everyday practices of white privilege, we build on and add to the classic and contemporary scholarship on race and ethnicity in Latin America.

The second goal of this special issue is to propose a conceptual and theoretical roadmap for the study of whiteness in Latin America. Drawing from an array of disciplinary and interdisciplinary backgrounds, our collaborators have produced research that allows us to theorize three interconnected issues that we consider crucial for the analysis of whiteness in Latin America. The first issue is what we call 'ordinary whiteness,' or the everyday ways whiteness organizes routines, perspectives, subjectivities, and affects (cf. Ramos-Zayas 2021). Secondly, we revisit long-held debates around the intersection of race and class. Rather than producing a competing approach or determining which of these elements plays a more significant role in Latin American processes of inequality, we view this intersection as situated in specific historical moments and within an always-shifting continuum that varies according to local contexts. Finally, our roadmap considers how race, space, and im/mobility provide the contours of whiteness in the region.

While this special issue is implicitly in conversation with the field of Critical Whiteness Studies in the U.S., as well as with the increasing interest in whiteness and racial privilege in the Global South, we insist that whiteness in Latin America can only be adequately analyzed in terms of its local particularities and historical trajectories. While acknowledging American hemispheric, colonial, and imperial histories, we approach whiteness primarily as a systemic process that operates and endures through deeply rooted affective and cultural relationships that are intrinsically Latin American. To consider whiteness as inherently Latin American rather than an 'imported' or U.S.-imposed phenomenon, we identify the unique traits, operations, and manifestations of Latin American whiteness.

Ultimately, we intend to highlight the need for a critical focus on how whiteness has been historically, politically, and culturally fostered at various intersecting scales: from differently valued bodies and communities to the distribution of material, ideological, and

affective resources across the region. We view these scales not as abstractions but as crucial articulations of everyday life. In Latin America, and perhaps in other regions of the Global South, whiteness is not uniquely a result of a traceable history of slavery and segregation. It is also the ongoing restructuring of that history and the afterlife of colonial and imperial crafting of affective relationships, spatial atmospheres, and imaginaries of 'equality' and 'democracy' (see González Casanova 1991; Fry 2000). To highlight the ordinary, unremarkable ways in which whiteness conditions life in Latin America, we purposefully extend the scope beyond the realm of the explicitly public and political expression of race – the legal achievement of activists, instances of explicit racial violence, etc.—to also include how whiteness is tacitly cultivated in the micro-politics of everyday life. Our collaborators in this issue examine moments in which whiteness reveals explicitly structural and material inequality and instances in which white privilege is unremarkable and sutured with everyday routines, built environments, and naturalized sociability. These approaches allow us to modify a one-size-fits-all assumption about what racial privilege looks like by considering instances in which whiteness might not visibly carry the social and cultural capital we might expect.

This introductory essay is divided into five substantive sections where we develop the conceptual, theoretical, and practical articulations of whiteness in Latin America. In the first section, we begin with a brief and admittedly incomplete overview of the literature on race in Latin America, paying particular attention to how whiteness was rendered peripheral or absent until recently. In the second section, we offer the concept of 'ordinary whiteness' and explain its usefulness for capturing the often taken-for-granted aspects of white privilege and the everyday operations that sustain its power. In the third section, we examine how whiteness operates at the intersection of race and class, looking at multiple forms of economic, cultural, and symbolic capital. In the fourth section, we discuss the politics of race, space and im/mobility in the production of whiteness in Latin America. In the last section, we conclude this Introduction with a commentary on the methodological and epistemological benefits and challenges of studying whiteness in the region.

Whiteness in Latin American studies of race and ethnicity

From the mid-19th century through the 1930s, as Latin American countries underwent independence wars and U.S. imperial expansion, intellectuals and political leaders faced a difficult dilemma about the idea of race: they were called to interpret the heterogeneous racial makeup of their societies and growing sense of 'national identity,' while simultaneously considering European and North American discourses of scientific racism that insisted on the inferiority of nonwhites. Despite local specificities, the outcome of this dilemma was remarkably similar across the region: the 'racial inferiority' of the 'darker races' was reorganized in terms of various forms of racial mixing. They were cleverly reshuffled under enduring ideas of mestizaje/mestiçagem and deployed as evidence of a Latin American 'cosmic race' (Vasconcelos [1925] 2015), 'racial democracy' (Freyre 1933), and other imaginaries of racial harmony – all of which continued to hierarchically position Europeanness at the top, while fomenting aspirations to racial whitening at the bottom (see Dalton 2018). Historically, such racial aspirations were occasionally enabled by periods of increased Western European (and, to a lesser extent, Middle Eastern and Asian) immigration to Latin America and the Caribbean; these occasions configured and

reconfigured regional intersections of race and class throughout the 19th and 20th centuries (Karam 2007).

During the first half of the 20th century, U.S. expansion into the Caribbean Basin powerfully shaped the region's racial dynamics.[2] The ideology and economy of white supremacy, rooted in the legacy of slavery and continental conquest, not only served to justify formal and informal colonial rule but also drove U.S. government and corporate officials to adapt familiar forms of racial hierarchy and labor control to the needs of imperial hegemony. Transnational capital, labor migration, and racial nationalism shaped, for instance, U.S. expansion into Central America and the greater Caribbean in the 1930s. In Central America, nationalists denounced not only U.S. military interventions but also the employment of Black immigrants (Colby 2011).

By the 1950s, national and even nationalistic approaches to mestizaje and its Portuguese equivalent, mestiçagem, had acquired a wide range of local modalities (Uranga 1952; Stutzman 1981; Basave 1992; Burdick 1998; Wade 1995, 2005; Roitman 2009; Moreno Figueroa 2012; Lund 2012; Loveman 2014; Palou 2014; López Beltrán et al. 2017; Sue 2013, 2021; Saldívar Tanaka 2022; Carlos Fregoso 2021). From an insistence in the value of all-things Spanish in the Dominican Republic under Franco-Trujillo's forgings of 'Hispanidad' to the reification of 'mulataje' in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Brazil, perspectives on racial mixture shared a valorization of a broadly accepted white supremacist strategy through blanqueamiento or branqueamento. In Mexico, the figure of the post-revolutionary nationalist mestizo offered a language through which the Mexican government aimed to modernize the 'backwards' indigenous population through institutions of a modern state (Knight 1990; Moreno Figueroa 2010). Tacitly or explicitly, these national projects valorized whiteness through initiatives such as European-centered education models, factory work, and immunization and hygienist discourses that aimed to bring non-white bodies closer to a white ideal (Echeverría 2019).

In the 1960s and 1970s, and despite U.S. and European imperial efforts, the Cuban Revolution and its various Marxist, anti-imperialist legacies would inspire intellectuals and dominate Latin American academic and popular political agendas. In this context, a forceful critique emerged against evolutionary models of 'development' This critique rejected the representation of Latin American economies as backwards relative to the 'advanced capitalist nations' and highlighted ways in which Latin American economic interests had become subordinated to U.S. interests (See Bértola and Rodríguez Weber 2015; Briggs 2002). Intellectuals in the region privileged social class structure and imperialism as the central power systems to dismantle; at this point, the class structure became the preeminent lens through which all other social inequalities, including race and racism, were analyzed. Any lingering dialogue around the pervasiveness of colonialism in connection to local capitalist development, and the intricate relationship between racial hierarchies and class struggle, shifted abruptly after the dictatorships that plagued the continent, particularly the Southern Cone, between the 1960s and 1980s (Grimson and Kessler 2014). This historical moment suggests long-standing conceptions of global forms of whiteness in Latin America (Hudson 2017).

Under the U.S.-led neoliberal transformations of the 1980s and 1990s, many Latin American countries adopted some form of 'multicultural' reforms (Rahier 2012). In Guatemala, for instance, such 'neoliberal multiculturalism' selectively incorporated indigenous communities into the nation-state, as long as indigenous subjects did not impose

demands that threatened state sovereignty or market structures (Hale 2005). The increasing legal and civil rights achievements of Afro-descendant and indigenous activism in the late decades of the 20th century informed a new wave of scholarship on race in Latin America (Hooker 2005).[3] These studies provided increasingly nuanced approaches to racialization and racial projects in academic and activist circles, showing that these neoliberal-friendly multicultural politics have often coexisted alongside (and often complicit with) ordinary forms of whiteness (Goldberg 2002, 2009; Ramos-Zayas 2021). In this issue, Prisca Gayles's and Marianela Muñoz-Muñoz's article, 'Unveiling Latin American White multiculturalism: Black women's politics in Argentina and Costa Rica' builds on and adds to this scholarship by demonstrating the operations of what they call 'white multiculturalism,' or the embrace of multicultural policies and discourses at the level of the state coexisting with the investment in homogeneous whiteness in everyday interpersonal practices and interactions. White multiculturalism, these authors argue, emerged in countries that have been predominantly imagined as white, such as Argentina and Costa Rica, thus underscoring the *longue durée* of Latin American aspirations to European whiteness.

During all these different historical periods, the scholarship on race and ethnicity in Latin America focused almost exclusively on black and indigenous communities and identities. However, we would be remiss if we did not highlight that a handful of intellectuals had already been pointing to the need to scrutinize the formations of whiteness in the region. As Valero explains in her 'Entre blanquitud y mestitud' research note, the first intellectuals to 'see' whiteness and turn it into an object of reflection were people who had been racialized as 'Other.' Among the forerunners of the study of whiteness in Latin America were black scholars and activists who, as early as the late 1950s, were already seeking to remove whiteness from its comfortable condition of 'neutrality.' Sociologist Guerreiro Ramos (1957), for instance, argued that the obsession of white and light-skinned *mestiço* scholars in Brazil with studying blackness revealed these scholars' sense of inferiority and insecurity regarding the vulnerability of their whiteness, or what he called 'the social pathology of whites.' By making blackness their object of study, these Brazilian/Latin American scholars reified blackness and, by extension, confirmed their whiteness. Also critical of the dominance of white intellectuals in speaking about and on behalf of blackness, the multifaceted scholar-activist Lélia Gonzalez underscored the need for black people to occupy their positions of enunciation and become recognized as knowledge producers. She defined as *branco enfezado*, the white scholar who gets angry when black people speak for themselves and no longer know 'their place' ([1983] 2020, 77).

Since the early 2000s, the number of scholars working on whiteness in Latin America has been growing rapidly, and although it is not possible to list them all here, we highlight Bento (2002), Schwartzman (2007), Piza (2000), Sovik (2009), Miskolci (2012), Santos (2018), Müller and Cardoso (2017), Maia (2017), Moreno Figueroa (2010), Godreau (2015), Edwards (2020), Mara Viveros Vigoya (2013, 2015), Casaus (2000), Telles and Flores (2013), Navarrete (2022) as well as the authors assembled in our special issue and those whose books are analyzed in Roosbelinda Cardena's book review essay in this volume: Ribeiro Corossacz (2017), López Rodríguez (2019), and Aguiló (2018). These authors have been in conversation with the scholarship on whiteness produced in the United States (Crenshaw 2019; Lipsitz 2006; Frankenberg 1993; Jacobson 1999; Kolchin

2002) and the U.K. (Hall 2003; Ware and Back 2002). At the same time, whiteness studies in and about Latin America should not be understood as an offshoot of U.S.-based Critical Whiteness Studies. It has developed as the result of the urgency to respond to and analyze the specificity of racism and white privilege in the local realities of Latin American countries. Nonetheless, while we focus on Latin America, paying attention to all its racial, ethnic, and social diversity and particularities, we are cognizant that whiteness in the region is simultaneously part of a global project (Goldberg 2002, 2009). Whiteness in Latin America is influenced by U.S. racial models and alternative configurations of racial privilege emergent in the Global South. It is in this complex and generative academic, historical, and political context that we position this special issue.

Ordinary whiteness

Racism and racial inequality ought to be studied in terms of their broader structural-material aspects, and in the subtler ways they are lived and experienced in everyday, affective and ordinary life. While acknowledging their equal weight and mutual imbrication, our contribution in this special issue is on the latter. We propose to trace how structural-material racial inequalities are expressed, sustained, and challenged in and through daily experience. Although recognizing the crucial importance of anti-racist activism, we also come to terms with the fact that most people are not activists, at least not in the conventional sense of publicly campaigning in support or opposition to a cause or deliberately participating in organized social movements. All people are, nonetheless, producers of culture, an obvious but often overlooked fact. Because 'culture is ordinary' (Williams 1958), everyone, regardless of social position, actively engages, even if unevenly, in both the traditional and the creative processes of meaning-making and can, therefore, respectively, uphold or challenge hegemonic meanings.

Thus, the ordinary acts of 'racializing culture' (Lewis 2007) require that we examine how everyday interactions and practices contribute to racialization. Whiteness, blackness, and all other racial identities are produced and reproduced through the daily actions of people in 'everyday dynamics of micro-social relations' (Lewis 2007, 879). By scrutinizing the ordinariness of whiteness, the papers assembled in this special issue detect how conformity and resistance to racism and white privilege occur in micro-dynamics of everyday life, and not only at the macro levels of institutions, constitutions, and the state. Our concept of 'ordinary whiteness' sheds light on everyday activities, spatial practices, and interactions as simultaneously *expressive* and *productive* of the power of whiteness (i.e. as the *actions* that reinforce the *structure*).

The 'ordinary' aspect of the concept of whiteness, therefore, points to that which is routine, conventional, predictable, and taken for granted. To denaturalize whiteness, it is necessary to unpack these different meanings of ordinary and, even more important, to identify and analyze how the actions that sustain whiteness work in mundane and, therefore, *apparently* invisible ways. Exploring the ordinary dimension of whiteness helps challenge the widely held notion that whiteness in Latin America is always and necessarily invisible. Racial privilege, or even the embodiment of 'white' as a racial identity and 'whiteness' as a system of power, have operated in invisible and hyper-visible ways (Costa Vargas 2004; Moreno Figueroa 2010; Viveros Vigoya 2013, 2015). The degree of the (in)visibility of whiteness varies according to context, but it is also contingent on the eye

of the beholder (Hall 2003). Whiteness can be more or less visible in different regions of a given country. For instance, white bodies can either 'stand out' or 'blend in,' which usually depends less on the phenotypical majority than on the region's or nation's dominant racial discourse. The hypervisibility of whiteness is more widely recognized, for example, among anti-racist activists and academics while remaining relatively latent, even if not entirely absent, outside of those circles.

We argue that, in Latin America, the reiteration of the power of ordinary whiteness in everyday life happens through three main intersected processes that are often simultaneous and overlapping: 1) the production of otherness and racelessness; 2) the engagement with a racial terminology that downplays, while paradoxically sustaining, the importance of whiteness; and 3) the rational rejection of, but affective commitment to, what Pinho (Pinho 2021a, 2021b) calls 'aspirational whiteness.'

Through the concept of 'ordinary whiteness,' we aim to disentangle the subtle Latin American distinction between a whiteness that is never taken for granted or fully neutralized, on the one hand, and that which is, on the other hand, selectively activated, downplayed, and rendered affective or performative. Bonhomme's article in this issue provides an example of this tension. In 'We're a bit browner but we still belong to the white race,' the author demonstrates how whiteness plays out in the Chilean context. Using the case of a multicultural working-class neighborhood in which Latin American and Caribbean migrants live alongside poor Chileans, Bonhomme shows how locals draw on state-sponsored narratives about the 'white origins' of Chile to distance themselves from their fellow impoverished neighbors. The article explains how whiteness is deployed to emphasize the supposed intrinsic differences between 'white' locals and 'non-white' migrants – from ways of cooking to understandings about the usage of communal space. Everyday forms of whiteness are used to cement moral barriers between people with the same socioeconomic position and who would, hence, otherwise greatly benefit from collective political action.

Although the study of the ordinariness of racializing cultures is valuable everywhere, it is particularly relevant in contexts where the power of whiteness has been historically concealed in national narratives of racial mixture, like those that have been so common in Latin America (López Rodríguez 2019; Moreno Figueroa 2010). Ordinary whiteness, as an operational concept, enables us to examine how whiteness functions in Latin American discourses of mestizaje/mestiçagem more through the production of otherness and 'racelessness' than by making itself visible or explicit (Ribeiro Corossacz 2017). Racelessness is the denial that race matters, either because it is not biologically sound or because it is considered 'divisive' and, thus, not socially worthy. Anti-racist activism has succeeded in challenging these notions, establishing competing narratives that have not only recognized the existence of racial inequalities in Latin America but made them into the very basis for legal reparations and constitutional revisions, inaugurating what has been called the 'multicultural turn' (Paschel 2018; Hale 2005; Rahier 2012, 2019). At the same time, discourses that downplay the significance of race continue to operate in everyday life, commonplace interactions, and regular practices. In that sense, several of the papers gathered here carry out a much-needed and complementary theorization of the racelessness that is found most noticeably in the discourses that celebrate racial mixture and less obviously and paradoxically, in multiculturalist discourses also.

The analysis of racelessness is taken up, for example, in Geisa Mattos's and Izabel Accioly's Otros Saberes essay 'Tornar-se negra, tornar-se branca,' which considers the deep racial hierarchy embedded in Brazilian discourses of racial democracy. In their co-written auto-ethnographic essay, the two Brazilian authors - one self-identified as black and the other as white – analyze the novel and increasingly common process of recognizing oneself as 'white' in Brazil, *vis-à-vis* the longer-established process of 'becoming black' (Souza 1983). Inspired by Berg and Ramos-Zayas's (2015) concept of 'racialized affects,' they document the everyday social impact of their respective racial self-discoveries. A significant contribution of this essay is the engagement with an emergent discussion of 'branquitude' in the often-overlooked Northeastern Brazilian state of Ceará and the erratic antiracist efforts of progressive whites. Racelessness is filtered here through a reckoning with whiteness that acknowledges 'productive silences' and 'absent presences,' as shown in Garcia Blizzard's article on representations of race in Mexican Cinema. This author draws on the idea of the racialization of class (Ceron-Anaya 2019) to illustrate how upper-class women articulate perceptions of belonging through a combination of racialized and class dynamics that are commonly perceived as exclusively class-based.

Racelessness takes a different form in Tatiane Pereira Muniz's analysis of the ultrasonographical diagnoses of glaucoma. Muniz shows how racism and whiteness are enacted through a notion of technological neutrality that materializes race in the technological artifacts of biopolitics. In her essay, the author demonstrates how race (initially dismissed in the biomedical field as a clinically meaningless category) persists as an absent-presence that permeates purportedly 'neutral' technoscientific productions and everyday practices of health workers in Brazil. Muniz's analysis of the alleged racial neutrality of biomedical technological equipment used for diagnostic purposes in Brazil reveals its detrimental effects on non-white bodies.

The assumed racelessness of whiteness often requires marking otherness as exclusively or overly raced. The papers here show that the otherness against which a 'racially neutral' whiteness establishes itself can be domestic or foreign. Gayles and Muñoz-Muñoz depart from the doubly othered position of black womanhood to develop a comparative theoretical and methodological approach to researching whiteness in Argentina and Costa Rica, two nations that have historically embraced whiteness over mestizaje and which have adopted a late-twentieth-century multiculturalist discourse. Grounded on critical race and black feminist frameworks, the authors demonstrate that black women's experiences offer a critical vantage point to understand whiteness in Latin America. By rendering black women's bodies both invisible and hypervisible, the racelessness of whiteness can be guaranteed.

Also emphasizing the production of otherness for the centrality of whiteness in multicultural discourses, Macarena Bonhomme analyzes the everyday life of a marginalized urban neighborhood in Santiago, Chile. Using rich ethnographic details, the author illustrates how Chileans point out a wide array of daily interactions to highlight foreigners' ways of doing things (particularly Peruvians and Haitians) as clear examples of their otherness while stressing their dispositions as 'white.' Bonhomme demonstrates how whiteness is central for contemporary forms of racism and race-making in a Chilean context of increased South-South Latin American and Caribbean migration. In tandem with Bonhomme's analysis of migration in Chile, Daniela Marini's essay also examines

South-South migration to demonstrate how Bolivians function as the racially marked 'Other' that legitimizes the racelessness of Argentinian whiteness. Examining environmental justice activism, Marini shows that the struggles over toxic pesticides, notwithstanding its socially progressive origins, have prioritized consumers' health while neglecting the plight of Bolivian farmworkers who fall outside the racial markers that constitute whiteness in Argentina. Latin American discourses that idealize nature and environmentalism become fruitful conduits to the study of whiteness and the impact of the self-obliviousness of whiteness, even among some socially progressive sectors.

The power of whiteness is reiterated in everyday life through the circulation of, and affective engagement with, racial/color terms that indicate non-blackness, racial in-betweenness, and approximation to whiteness. Underscoring instances and systems of white privilege in Latin America, racialized language and terminology play a ubiquitous role in undermining the centrality of race while sustaining the importance of whiteness, which at times appears as neutral and at other times as obviously marked. In 'Privileged whites and white privilege in Puerto Rico,' Guillermo Rebollo-Gil analyzes the meanings of *blanquito* in Puerto Rico and among Puerto Ricans navigating their light-skin privilege on the island and in the mainland United States. Rebollo-Gil shows how whiteness 'travels' across national boundaries and how Puerto Ricans (and other Latinos) are not always or necessarily perceived and treated as 'people of color' in the U.S. Furthermore, the fluidity of the island's racial spectrum affords white Puerto Ricans the cultural grammar that enables them to assign race to others (i.e. to freely call Others 'negro' without this becoming an issue), to publicly acknowledge racial difference, and thus, to 'live whiteness more freely.'

In addition to examining lingering and diverse concepts of whiteness, blackness, and racial mixture, the articles assembled in this special issue also consider the relational and situational ways in which whiteness intersects with national and regional social hierarchies, analyzing the shifting meanings of race and color terms in Latin America, their variations across time and space, the relations between whitening and whiteness, as both processes and ideals, as well as between *blancura/brancura* and blanquitud/branquitude. Latin American notions of *blanqueamiento/branqueamento* or whitening play a unique role in whiteness's contemporary strength and malleability. The interrelated yet distinct concepts of whiteness and whitening interact by designating how whiteness is attributed and by whom; speculating about what rejecting/embracing whiteness means; and granting structural power to affective relations across race, particularly when these racial identities are played out in intimate contexts, such as within families.

Among many Latin American whites and elites, there seems to be an enduring affective, aspirational and aesthetic commitment to structures of whiteness, regardless of any conscious or public articulation against such structures. In "Whiteness wars in 'Las niñas bien'," Mónica García Blizzard deploys a coloniality of power approach to examine the economic and ideological dimensions of whiteness in Mexican cinema. Traditionally an agent in the idealization of the local construct of whiteness, Mexican cinema has recently turned a critical lens toward whiteness, as Garcia Blizzard compellingly demonstrates. Through a close reading of the 2018 film 'Las niñas bien,' the author examines the malleability and adaptability of whiteness as an insidious category behind the myth of Mexican mestizaje. Femininity is also a central axis through which whiteness is embodied, performed, and evaluated. This is evident among the present-time Mexican characters

examined in Garcia Blizzard's article as well as in the case of the 19th-century Portuguese domestic workers in Brazil, who attempted to emulate French women's supposed expressions, gestures, poses, and adornments, examined in Sonia Roncador's article 'White *criadas* and the servant crisis in pre-abolition Rio de Janeiro.' These two pieces bring much-needed attention to the connection between gender and whiteness, a topic that, with important exceptions (Viveros Vigoya 2013, 2015; Ribeiro Corossacz 2017; Arceo-Gomez and Campos-Vázquez 2014; Ceron-Anaya 2019), is yet to be more fully explored. It is undeniable that whiteness operates differently among women and men. In this regard, the ordinariness of whiteness calls attention to how individuals mediate their experiences of embeddedness in an intersectional nexus of class, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, nationality, and region.

Whiteness at the intersections of race and class

Academic and popular approaches to race have fallen along two main veins when it comes to the intersections of race and social class in Latin America. On the one hand, conventional approaches view race as unreadable, even irrelevant, outside of classic or neo-Marxist frameworks. Under these perspectives, economic relations are regarded as the *true* organizer of power dynamics in all spheres of social action. Racialized dynamics are viewed as mere consequences of the capitalist system resulting from class inequalities. However, this argument does not help understand why racial hierarchies, and particularly whiteness, are critical elements in the constitution of national identities (Loveman 2014; Sue 2013), nor does it allow us to explore why labor markets consider whiteness a valuable asset alongside other individual skills (Arceo-Gomez and Campos-Vázquez 2014).

On the other hand, scholars inspired by identity politics frameworks have reacted by almost isolating 'race' and protecting its analytical value by detaching it from social class-focused approaches. This perspective generally prevents scholars from analyzing why economic elites are considerably whiter than the rest of the population in their respective nations (Ceron-Anaya 2019; Ramos-Zayas 2020). While Latin American intellectuals have generated important Marxist and neo-Marxist scholarship focusing on how class distinctions shape cultural and political disparities, in this volume, we demonstrate instances in which traditional class analysis is insufficient to capture enduring regional inequalities.

A more productive way of examining the relationship between race and class is to see these axes as co-constitutive instead of in competition with one another. The work of Echeverría (2019) provides a valuable framework to understand whiteness as a capitalist ethos, or, as Perla Valero explains in her Perspectives essay in this issue, 'a character or way of being, living and behaving, that are characteristic of capitalist modernity.' In that sense, blanquitud/branquitude (whiteness as an ethos) can also be displayed by racialized subjects even while it coexists with racist practices based on blancura/brancura (phenotypical whiteness) (Valero, in this volume). In this issue, we thus consider how whiteness operates in different yet complementary ways:

> Understanding whiteness as a social identity, a social condition, and a social practice, we conceive of whiteness also as an ideal, promoted discursively as a major social value to be preserved, by those who already possess it, or acquired, by those who do not (Pinho 2021a, 64–65).

The achieved success and wealth of some 'non-white' people have often been used to delegitimize the relationship between whiteness and class structures. People commonly highlight the (few) non-white individuals who move up in the class hierarchy to demonstrate that there is no connection between class relations and the perception of whiteness in the region. This logic, however, fails to recognize the complexity of whiteness in Latin America. For example, notions of who is white, or 'whiter,' than someone else are deeply encumbered by the dynamics of consumption. Moreover, there is a strong tendency to disassociate 'white phenotype' from 'white behavior,' as is the case of poor light-skinned individuals who may not 'act white' enough because of their class. The opposite is also true. It is not rare to find people of an apparent non-white 'look' who can be perceived as 'closer' to or 'almost white' based on their class-based behavior and consumption patterns. Paradoxically, this is the case with some wealthy non-white professional athletes, musicians, and performers, whose examples are commonly used to discredit the connection between class and whiteness.

The present section delves into the relationship between class and whiteness by presenting three interrelated arguments. First, that whiteness and other dynamics of racialization are not subordinated to class structures, as has long been argued in Latin America. Second, expanding on a Bordieuan argument, we maintain that whiteness operates as a structural force at the field level; hence, whiteness is one of the forces that influences the forms capital can take, and vice-versa. Finally, we argue that the power of whiteness in shaping social fields inevitably impacts how people, wittingly or not, internalize attitudes, dispositions, and emotions.

Instead of following a pattern of subordination, racialized hierarchies and class dynamics share a symbiotic relationship. Class and whiteness cannot be studied as separate entities, nor can we establish the supremacy of one over the other. These two overlapping layers influence and constitute relations of domination in Latin America. However, this does not mean that whiteness and class operate under a universal pattern in which money produces a whiteness-effect regardless of national contexts and regional conditions. In some instances, one takes precedence over the other, while the relationship may reverse in different national or historical contexts. For example, in his ethnographic study about exclusive golf clubs in Mexico, Ceron-Anaya (2019) found that the possession of financial resources allows members of the lower middle class to claim a 'whiter' identity via the consumption of expensive objects such as golf clothing and equipment. However, the same process does not operate in the same way among members of the upper-middle and upper classes. Among these groups, acts of consumption do not immediately translate into a perceived whiter identity. In these cases, people were required to demonstrate the possession of more expensive forms of capital, such as cultural capital associated with exclusive institutions accumulated over long periods.

Sonia Roncador's article offers a critical analysis of how class and racial hierarchies are mutually constitutive. Examining the presence of Portuguese maids in 19th century Rio de Janeiro, Roncador shows how, when they arrived, the whiteness of Portuguese *criadas* destabilized the hierarchy of employer-employee relations in domestic work, characterized until then by a neat mapping of race onto class. White employers feared that white criadas would threaten their racial authority and that they could instill, among black servants, the possibility of modern and less patronizing forms of work relations. Examining whiteness as a form of symbolic capital whose value varies within a system

of gradations of whiteness (Pinho 2009), Roncador demonstrates that the vulnerability of the criadas' whiteness must be understood in relation to the vulnerability of their employers' whiteness. In both cases, the meanings attributed to phenotypes and the ability to perform Europeanness operated as competing forms of capital.

To scrutinize the embodied forms of cultural capital demonstrates that whiteness in Latin America rarely operates along a continuum that consistently produces the same results, regardless of historical and national contexts. For example, subjects of 'perceived white phenotype' can lose the status associated with these physical features because of their lower-class condition, such as what in Mexico is called *güero de rancho* (white peasant) and in Puerto Rico is applied to the anti-modern *jíbaro* figure (Guerra 1998). Conversely, a considerable accumulation of cultural capital of Anglo-American or European extraction can make a dark-skinned subject 'closer to' or 'almost white' in a region where the epidermal schema possesses a certain degree of fluidity. These examples illustrate that whiteness shapes and is shaped by the forms that capital takes in everyday life.

Class and whiteness – as well as all other ethnoracial identities – are so deeply intertwined that the latter affects how the different forms of capital operate in the region. For instance, whiteness profoundly influences the meaning of cultural capital when Western artistic traditions are viewed and celebrated as fine art. At the same time, popular art (most times rooted in indigenous and African traditions) is presented as folk art in the best cases, or completely ignored as an irrelevant expression, in most other cases. It is noteworthy that few countries in the region have museums dedicated to popular art, while almost all have large museums dedicated to 'fine arts.' In its institutional form, cultural capital is also strongly associated with academic and cultural entities that fervently emulate Western educational traditions; for instance, Anglo-American schools, national museums that frequently present exhibits of European or Anglo-American artists, conservatories of music that passionately teach European originated genres, while in most of the above cases local artistic and scholarly traditions are relegated to divergent exhibitions and academic topics.

Ada Ariza Aguilar's Otros Saberes piece, 'The white in my eyes,' explores the realm of art to demonstrate how class and racialized ideas collide in Latin America. The author examines the unfortunate history of the portrait of nineteenth-century Colombian President Juan José Nieto Gil. The canvas was abandoned for a long time in the basement of a museum. Since being rediscovered, it has not been hung alongside the portraits of all other Colombian presidents but exhibited in a parallel hall. The indifference that Nieto Gil's painting has long received is linked to this political figure's lower-class and black origins. His class and 'limited whiteness' situate him in a different rung from the rest of the Colombian political elite. What's more, Ariza Aguilar shows how this painting has followed the same fate as Nieto Gil's literary work, which is still regarded as insignificant, despite – or rather because – it touches upon the lives of lower-class racialized subjects in nineteenth-century Colombia. Ariza Aguilar complements her analysis of the painting by presenting a set of contemporary portraits she painted to question Colombian ideas about whiteness. These artistic pieces invite the public to wonder what type of artifacts and artists, and their respective cultural capital and racialized identities, are worth being included and exhibited in museums, galleries, and public buildings.

Race, space and im/mobility in the production of whiteness in Latin America

Whiteness in Latin America gets coded on built environments, landmarks, and even natural landscapes. The power of the regional, spatial logic on which Latin American whiteness operates is characterized by economic models of 'development' (and, since the 1980s, neoliberalism); a geopolitical position as a 'Third World'/'Global South' region; a deep aspiration towards and obsession with 'modernity' as civilizational trope; and the dramatic coexistence of the poorest and tractable indigenous and black labor, on the one hand, and global white elites, on the other, exacerbating the power of this regional logic of Latin American white supremacy. For instance, spatially coded forms of whiteness discursively and ontologically reveal the logic of white privilege and the very material consequences of uneven capital accumulation in Latin America. In her book *Parenting Empires*, Ramos-Zayas (2020) examines how the transformation or equivalency between feelings and morality that characterizes Latin American whiteness underscored everyday parenting practices in the affluent, predominantly white areas of Ipanema in Brazil and El Condado in Puerto Rico. In these neighborhoods, a moral economy of privilege emerged from conceiving space in post-social, almost immaterial terms; these were metaphysical explanations for social inequality that drew from an esoteric language of environmentalism, personal growth, and inner world cultivation. Elite parenting and reinforced child-centered nodules of urbanism, while centered on 'personal growth,' 'emotional intelligence,' and other presumably non-material qualities, contributed to justifying social inequality and fostering a moral economy of privilege.

We aim to capture the relationship between the multiple scales in which whiteness in Latin America is mapped onto space: through projects of economic development, as affective landscapes, and in relation to regional and transnational mobilities, borders, and displacement. In particular, we focus on how national concerns and values are conveyed, modified, and reproduced through quotidian routines, everyday sociability, and regional idioms and practices of privilege. A profoundly geographical and spatial phenomenon, 'whiteness' in Latin America produces an everyday environment in which the normative, ordinary power to enjoy social privilege gains moral value, notwithstanding increasing levels of amoral racial prejudice, regional discrimination, and wealth inequality.

The dialectics of space and race show how investments in both racism and anti-racist struggles are highly evocative of affective and physical landscapes, ancestral imaginaries, and collective memories. Ordinary whiteness is especially solidified in presumably unremarkable spaces in which everyday routines unfold. Rather than exclusively focusing on the built environment, we envision space as a landscape of racial meaning and a moral topography; space becomes a means through which racial relations constitute themselves in a concrete form through a logic of uneven capital investment (Harvey 1993).

In such spaces and landscapes, class distinctions are often communicated along a divide between individuals who fulfill assumed decorum or etiquettes for 'belonging' and those who fail to match conventional modes of behavior and possess limited forms of capital (including the racialized implication of the latter). For example, in his book *Privilege at Play* (2019), Ceron-Anaya finds that the spatial organization of highly exclusive clubs in Mexico City simultaneously articulates class and racialized dynamics. Regarding the former, some of the most distinguished clubs in this metropolis are located in central tracts of land, which are entirely invisible to the average city dweller through architectural

barriers. Inside, members celebrate the exclusivity of these sites expressing a wide range of arguments praising the class distinction of most fellow members. These narratives frequently stress the beauty of the facilities to justify why only a few should access these sites. These class-based narratives commonly contrast the internal organization of space with the larger urban landscape. The former is perceived in terms of elegance, cleanliness, nature, and morality, while the surrounding metropolis represents a set of opposite categories. The imagination of space, however, extends beyond traditional class accounts.

Confirming our arguments about racelessness and aspirational whiteness (Pinho 2021a, 2021b), affluent Latin Americans use discursive and aesthetic elements to map whiteness onto the spaces they inhabit. For example, many refer to concrete physical spaces using English-language terms – i.e., clubhouse, caddies house, driving range, shopping malls – suggesting a direct link between these sites and their European or U.S. origins.' Moreover, affluent people frequently reproduce the connection between space and whiteness via a wide arrange of aesthetic elements to imagine a 'white geography;' that is, architectural styles that openly evoke European or U.S. fads in their façades, interiors, construction materials, and even in the ubiquitous lush green grass (which commonly requires imported maintenance equipment and seeds).

Across Latin America, neighborhoods (e.g. barrios, colonias, vecindarios, urbanizaciones, caseríos, asfalto, morro, favela, gated communities) are more than just physical and institutional arrangements, becoming instead proxies for racial and class distinctions and views on 'stability,' 'community,' and commercial 'viability,' as well as of 'crime,' 'decay,' and 'waste.' Such multiple conceptions of space are not necessarily suggestive of radically different social experiences but of a recognition that spaces are conceived, perceived, lived and embodied (Roth-Gordon 2016) in fundamentally different ways, even within the same city. Through our encounters with spatial narratives, we adopt a set of spatial dispositions, and develop a repertoire of potential ways of being in relation to particular geographies and social settings. As David Harvey observes, 'representations of places have material consequences insofar as fantasies, desire, fears, and longings are expressed in actual behavior' (1993, 22). By considering space in material and affective terms, this special issue shows how whiteness in Latin America becomes a visible topography of contrary qualities; whiteness conditions the terrain of labor, transformation, and self-fashioning; it also underscores a domain of experiential citizenship and a manifestation of the nation-state at the most intimate levels.

Whiteness, and racial identities, more broadly, develop from an intimacy, proximity, and familiarity with the environments and landscapes that frame everyday routines, practices, and sociability. In so doing, spatial arrangements become fundamental for the embodiment of white attitudes, perceptions, and worldviews. Rather than examining grand denunciations or affirmations of whiteness, we deliberately focus on the unremarkable, quotidian practices and immediate experiences that may be overlooked precisely because of their apparent insignificance when compared to national politics or explicit anti-racist activism. The spatial organization of whiteness has been crucial to local discourses that evaluate the racial content of the communities and their interests and policed boundaries of status and privilege. Examining whiteness in Latin America requires humanistic and social scientific attention to the ubiquitous and tacit ways whiteness becomes spatially codified, neutralized, and embodied.

Maile Speakman's Research Note in this issue provides a clear example of how:

whiteness works as an economic, social, and historical structure that marks people by neighborhood of origin, family inheritance, proximity to foreign capital, and ability to move seamlessly between multiple local and international geographies.

Analyzing the Airbnb Experience 'Paint a graffiti with Havana Street Art,' Speakman shows not only how tourism maps race onto place (through, for instance, making specific black Cuban neighborhoods 'exotic'), but also how it allows whiteness to be translocal and mobile by keeping blackness fixed and immobile. Furthermore, the entangled processes of tourism and gentrification rely on and further the representations that tie blackness to stasis, tradition, and the need for rescue while endowing whiteness with mobility, modernity, and the ability to salvage others. Drawing on extensive ethnographic research, this Research Note illustrates how gentrified spaces shed unique perspectives on the intersection of whiteness and racial capitalism in contemporary Caribbean urbanism.

Also making sense of whiteness in a Caribbean context, Guillermo Rebollo-Gil reveals how white privilege among Puerto Rican *blanquitos* is constrained by both class and geography, where blanquitos' life conditions illustrate far-reaching racial processes on the island, such as extreme patterns of social segregation and preferential access to goods and services that are not only off-limits but also predominantly invisible for the great majority of the population. As a result, while requiring exclusivity, white privilege is at the same time woven into Puerto Rican everyday life. In this sense, the dialectics of race and space operate in relation to boundaries and borders and the constraints and opportunities these pose on national displacements and transnational mobility (see Caldeira 2000; Dinzey-Flores 2013; Godreau 2015). Boundary is understood spatially and metaphorically in this special issue, linking the materialist and symbolic analyses of social and spatial demarcation. Rather than viewing the boundaries of whiteness exclusively in instances of explicit, extreme racist manifestations, we consider how these boundaries operate as an ordinary form of sociability in everyday life in Latin America.

Also looking at boundaries, but in this case, between species, Mara Dicenta's article, 'White animals: racializing sheep and beavers in the Argentinian Tierra del Fuego,' demonstrates that the inclusion of non-human animals in studies of race and ethnicity help elucidate how racism is projected onto space. Dicenta analyzes how Argentina's white exceptionalism was articulated in the 1940s with the meanings attributed to sheep and beavers as markers of whiteness, showing that the interspecies articulation of whiteness enables white privilege through bringing together ideas around breeding, racial purification, nature domestication, and land appropriation. Aspirational whiteness is, in this case, not just the desire to live among white citizens but also among 'white animals,' upon whom white moralities and the racialized geographies of nation and region were projected.

Regionalism has historically supplied a powerful language of spatialized racial differentiation in Latin America. The regional (e.g. the coast versus the sierra; the Northeast versus the South; the capital city versus the provinces) has provided the tropes and binaries through which a country's racial order becomes legible at the level of the nation. Ariza Aguilar and Bonhomme's pieces demonstrate the critical role that spatialized racial differentiations play in the production of otherness and, as a result, whiteness. Ariza Aguilar's Otros Saberes text shows that because nineteenth-century Colombian president Gil Nieto came from a region racialized as black, his geographical origin was used as a sign

of untrustworthiness, not only when he was alive, but also in the present context. As evidence, Nieto Gil's portrait is still not exhibited in the same gallery alongside other Colombian presidents. Meanwhile, Bonhomme demonstrates how Chileans associate Haiti and Peru as countries that are incompatible with the 'white' origins of their nation. Locals strongly embrace a spatialized racial hierarchy, marking Haitians and Peruvians as eternal outsiders to the Chilean nation (Postero, Risør, and Prieto Montt 2018).

Struggles over social space and the differences they produce are inseparable from more general conflicts over inequalities of power and wealth and the very cultivation of whiteness. As a fluid and unstable formation, race must necessarily be deployed through symbolic conventions that connect the characteristics that code it to stable physical and spatial referents. Thus, the technologies of race are primarily economic and spatial. Space is a condition reflected in social practices and might reveal information about social practices and beliefs that are otherwise hidden. Ordinary forms of whiteness in Latin America intersect with racism as a product of specific historical geographies, varying across places according to processes such as colonialism, regional and transnational migrations, formal and informal labor markets, and built and natural environments. Our understanding of space as constitutive of racial formations requires that we consider conditions of racial privilege even when landscapes seem devoid of racial tension; that is, all people are racially placed in specific, though highly variable, circumstances and according to local, national, and hemispheric racial thought.

Economic globalization and the restructuring of social relations, induced by the crisis of the state, deindustrialization and recent urban insecurity, have increased inequality and social exclusion, widening the gap between rich and poor in Latin America. Paraphrasing Svampa's famous book title, the impact of these global economic restructurings, thus, impacted the middle classes by dividing them between those who won and assimilated into the traditional upper classes and 'those who lost' and have become part of the 'new poor' (2001). In these processes, space, place, and im/mobility remain central to the determinations of who is, who has been, who may become, or no longer partakes in whiteness.

By considering the material, symbolic and affective contours of space, we empirically examine how whiteness effectively conditions everyday social abilities, naturalizes social and physical segregation, and produces hierarchical conventions. This volume's contributors remain attentive, even vigilant, to the multiple spatial scales that inform and mold the meanings of whiteness in Latin America. Methodologically, they trace how national perspectives and idioms around racial privilege and neutrality are empirically accessible only when approached as an essentially local, everyday series of ordinary conventions.

A brief commentary on methodologies and epistemologies of whiteness

The articles assembled in this special issue approach whiteness in several Latin American countries and from a broad range of thematic, theoretical, and disciplinary perspectives. Each contribution, while cutting-edge in its own right, is also a building block for the overarching theoretical framework we, as co-guest editors, lay out in this introductory essay. The concept of whiteness allows scholars to demonstrate how distinct material inequalities produce racialized identities in sites and among populations that have primarily remained protected by their presumed racial neutrality. The contributions to

this issue explore whiteness as an analytical concept that sheds light on political relationships, discursive practices, and everyday embodied experiences, revealing how certain groups benefit from racial disparities in politically, socially, quotidian, and systemic ways.

The articles reflect on a broad range of countries, including Argentina, Chile, and Costa Rica – where whiteness has become a taken-for-granted aspect of national identity – and Mexico, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Colombia, and Brazil – where national narratives of racial mixture have historically been dominant. This extensive country coverage is not cursory but very intentional and, in our opinion, crucial to an understanding of whiteness that reflects historical, geopolitical, and regional specificities and commonalities.

We assembled an interdisciplinary group of collaborators representing the fields of history, anthropology, sociology, literature, and film and media studies. They represent diverse ethnic/racial identities and institutions and are at different stages of their careers. Challenging the geopolitics of knowledge and offsetting U.S.-centered paradigms, most of the texts assembled here were written by Latin American scholars, and in some cases, they were originally written in Spanish or Portuguese. Examining different aspects of ordinary whiteness, the papers deepen the theoretical debates and empirical approaches to race and ethnic studies in Latin America, thus unsettling categories have long remained unmarked and neutral.

The papers cohere around three main issues. First, they highlight the significance of studying whiteness in Latin America. Second, they propose effective ways, theoretically and methodologically, to understand why and how whiteness matters in Latin America. Finally, they consider 'whiteness' on the ground, as it intersects with dominant regional narratives and the alleged erasure of racial differences.

These articles also make important methodological contributions to the study of whiteness, analyzing the benefits and limitations of such research strategies as ethnography and auto-ethnography (Mattos and Accioly; Rebollo-Gil; Marini; and Bonhomme), multi-sited and interdisciplinary use of archives (Speakman, Pereira Muniz, and Dicenta), analyses of travelogues, newspaper advertisements and legal cases (Roncador), critical discourse analysis (Gayles and Muñoz-Muñoz), post-structuralist analysis of representations in art (Aguilar) and film (Blizzard), transregional theoretical approaches (Valero), and book reviews (Cardenas) to examine whiteness in the past and present. Although the methods the authors employ are not new, they have been creatively adapted to examine dynamics, structures, and narratives that have long escaped the academic gaze. These methodological options offer a foundational ground from which we expect to see novel hybridizations as the field expands its analytical scope.

Studies of whiteness have been central to our individual and collaborative intellectual endeavors as co-guest editors of this special issue. Two of us come from the field of Sociology and one from Anthropology; yet all of us have pushed beyond our mainstream disciplines to work in interdisciplinary fields and programs such as Ethnicity, Race, and Migration (Yale), Latin American and Latino Studies (UCSC), and Sociology and Anthropology (Lehigh). Our participation in these interdisciplinary academic projects has convinced us of the urgency and need to move the spotlight from an approach to race that examines only or primarily subaltern populations to one that considers the experience of individuals, institutions, and cultural practices that benefit from white privilege. In that sense, this special issue contributes to the sociological and

anthropological practice of 'studying up' that, although initiated in the 1970s, is still overshadowed by research on subaltern populations. But the issue also shows that, because it circulates discursively, whiteness is not restricted to the upper classes; its aspirational logic encompasses entire societies and regions while feeding its global reach.

While co-guest editing this special issue, we have remained attentive to our self-positionings as Latin American scholars based at U.S. universities, who thus participate in transnational dialogues on race from a very particular standpoint, and whose racial identities shift as we navigate different racial formations. It has been important for our reflections on race and whiteness that each one of us grew up in a different country in Latin America (Mexico, Brazil, and Puerto Rico), where we developed social, familial, and affective understandings of inequality, privilege, and our specific positionalities regarding class and race. Our Latin American racialized positionalities have, at times, converged with, and at other times, diverged from, the racialized forms in which our identities have been interpellated in the U.S. through the terms 'Latinx/a/o,' 'white Latinx/a/o,' 'Afro-Latinx/a/o,' 'white-presenting,' 'POC,' as well as 'white' or 'black.'

Notes

1. For a discussion about mulataje, see Buscaglia-Salgado (2003). For a broader discussion about the distinction between terms related to "racial mixing" in Latin America, see also Rahier (2003).
2. There are exceptions here related to the Anglophone and Francophone Caribbean. It may be a good moment to specify that we are focusing only on continental Latin American nations and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean. Otherwise: Among the first intellectuals to deal with the racial problem was the Martinique Communist Aimé Césaire, who would develop the concept of "blackness," emphasizing the Afro-descendant and colonial particularity of the Caribbean. Although Césaire wrote in French and his political life was linked to Europe more than to the American continent, he was a strong influence on Frantz Fanon, also from Martinique, whose works were translated into Spanish in Cuba during the 1960s, with notable repercussions. In his Fanon (2008) Black Skin, White Masks, another major work, Fanon used the tools of psychoanalysis, well known among the white upper and middle classes of the continent, to understand how coloniality and racism worked at the time. He argued that more than a political prejudice against skin color, racism was a cultural and social subordination that required the cooperation of the dominated. The disparity in collective rights gained by indigenous and Afro-Latin groups in recent rounds of multiculturalist citizenship reforms in Latin America has to do with the fact that collective rights are adjudicated based on possessing a distinct group identity defined in cultural or ethnic terms. Indigenous people are generally better positioned than most Afro-Latin-Americans to claim ethnic group identities separate from the national culture and have therefore been more successful in winning collective rights. One of the potentially negative consequences of basing group rights on the assertion of cultural difference is that it might lead indigenous groups and Afro-Latin-Americans to privilege issues of cultural recognition over questions of racial discrimination as bases for political mobilization in the era of multicultural politics.
3. For an analysis showing the complexity of situating class as the main focus to understand Latin American social problems see Estefane and Thielemann (2018). We should also add that one of the most famous Mexican sociologists, Gónzalez Casanova (1965), argued that the problem of the country was class, not race.

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Notes on contributors

Hugo Ceron-Anaya is an Associate Professor of Sociology at Lehigh University. His work analyzes how class structures, racialized dynamics, and gender relations influence the organization and behavior of the upper classes in Mexico. He is currently working on a research project about hyper-gentrification, education, and whiteness in Guadalajara, Mexico.

Patricia de Santana Pinho is Professor and Graduate Program Director in the Department of Latin American and Latino Studies at the University of California, Santa Cruz. She researches whiteness, blackness, racism, and resistance to racism in Brazil and more broadly in Latin America. She currently has two research projects underway: the first analyzes whiteness and the rise of the far-right in Brazil, and the second examines whiteness and the intersection of race and international academic mobility in the context of the Brazilian "Science without Borders" program.

Ana Ramos-Zayas is Frederick Clifford Ford Professor and Chair of the Ethnicity, Race, and Migration Program and the Anthropology Department at Yale. Her work examines race, wealth, kinship, and the anthropology of emotions and affect among US Latinx populations and in Latin America, particularly Brazil and Puerto Rico. Her latest book, Parenting Empires: Class, Whiteness, and the Moral Economy of Privilege in Latin America (Duke UP, 2020) examines the workings of neighborhood life, elite parenting practices, and US Empire.

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