

11-2003

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Recommended Citation

Sampaio, A. (2003). Crossing Disciplinary Borders: Re-examining Latino/a Studies and Latin American Studies in the 1990s. *Journal of Latino/Latin American Studies*, 1(1), 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.18085/llas.1.1.y5622g74j4625273>

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**“Crossing Disciplinary Borders: Re-examining
Latino/a Studies and Latin American Studies in the 1990s”**

Anna Sampaio

Abstract:

Over the 30 years of their existence, studies of Latinos/as in the U.S. and the field of Latin American Studies have emerged largely as divided disciplines. That is, despite what would appear to be similar sensibilities including comparable criticisms of Western hegemony and the neo-colonial practices of the U.S., as well as the political, economic, and cultural displacement of similar populations, the two areas of study have more often regarded each other as competitive colleagues rather than complimentary practices. In the following study, I examine the nature of the two disciplines paying particular attention to the political context surrounding their formations and the foundations of their discursive frameworks. I examine changes to these disciplines in the methodological and ideological shifts surrounding the emergence of empirical and postmodern studies, and the relationship between these theoretical shifts and the expansion of globalization. Finally, I conclude with a discussion of the emerging field of transnational and bi-national studies and the opportunities for crossing the disciplinary borders between Latino/studies in the U.S. and Latin American Studies presented in this literature.

Key Words: Latinos, Latin America, U.S., Chicano Studies, LASA, NACSS, Latin American Studies

In 1997 The National Association for Chicano and Chicana Studies (NACCS) significantly expanded the scope of Chicano/a and Latino/a Studies by crossing national borders to hold its annual meeting in Mexico City. In a comparable move a few years earlier, the Latin American Studies Association (LASA) inaugurated a new section to its host of specialties; the section was appropriately devoted to studies of Latinos and Latinas in the U.S. On the surface both of these gestures appear obvious, if not insignificant, academic unions; however, when we examine them in the larger scope of disciplinary developments and recent transnational economic formations they signal a new and transformative dialogue between marginalized populations in the U.S. and Latin America.

Specifically, over the 30 years of their existence, studies of Latinos/as in the U.S. and the field of Latin American Studies have emerged largely as divided disciplines. Despite what would appear to be similar sensibilities including comparable criticisms of Western hegemony and the neo-colonial practices of the U.S. as well as the political, economic, and cultural displacement of similar populations, the two areas of study have more often regarded each other as competitive colleagues (struggling for scarce university

resources such as full time employees, budgets and office space) rather than complimentary practices. As a result, organizations such as NACCS and LASA (which represent the two largest academic organizations devoted to studies of Chicanos/as and Latinos/as in the U.S. and Latin American Studies respectively) have clung to discursive formations such as neo-classical models of immigration and nationalist interpretations of political subjectivity which have left little room for dialogue between, across, and within their own academic borders.

And yet, the past decade has witnessed a certain amount of slippage as such disciplinary divisions have given way to discursive shifts such as the emergence of transnational and post-colonial literature which promises to not only deconstruct and transgress such borders, but more importantly to re-map the boundaries of what we know as Latin America and the U.S. In particular, authors such as Néstor García Canclini (1993,1995), Carlos Vález-Ibáñez (1996,1997), Michael Kearney (1986,1995,1996), Nina Glick Schiller, Linda Basch, and Cristina Szanton-Blanc (1994,1995) along with artists such as Coco Fusco (1995), Guillermo Gómez-Peña (1998), Los Fabuloso Cadillacs and Los Tigres del Norte have in their writings and practice demonstrated the limits associated with traditional paradigms, such as development theory and nationalisms which have become their own unifying master narratives, and which have restricted research between these fields. In their place, these figures have outlined an emerging field of transnational and bi-national discourse which begins from a re-assessment of subjectivity and the movement of capital between the U.S. and Latin American and which evolves into a more heterogeneous and dialectic conception of the cultural forms, political dynamics, and social relationships which bind these areas.

Furthermore, the changes appearing in both of these disciplines are not strictly a reflection of changes in academic fashions, but themselves reflect and speak to a growing globalization which has increased traffic between the U.S. and Latin America and aided in both securing (as with the advent of stricter immigration laws) and loosening (as with the flow of information over cyberspace) the traditional borders between these sites. As such, any viable extension of this dialogue must include an examination of the changing political economy of the region and the way these forces have shaped changes in the day-to-day operations of people living on both sides of the borders.

Thus, this paper will expand on this early dialogue between Latin American Studies and Latino/a Studies in the U.S., looking for ways in which these disciplines can re-construct their own paradigms as well as consider new strategies for effecting social and political change throughout the Americas. In particular, I will examine the formations of Chicano/a and Latino/a Studies in the U.S. and the history of Latin American Studies with a view to the types of ideological trajectories that have emerged from these fields and obstructed a more fluid dialogue between them. In addition, I will examine the emerging forms of globalization, with particular attention to changes in the economic development of the areas and changes in the flow of immigration (particularly between the U.S. and Mexico) that have promoted an unprecedented level of regional integration in the past decade. In conjunction, I will examine three discursive shifts which have taken place in studies of Latinos/as in the U.S. as well as in Latin American Studies; the growth of empiricism and logical positivism in the social sciences, the popularity of postmodern/poststructural interpretations (largely in the humanities), and the formation of binational and transnational studies of migrant communities. While the first two

discursive operations provide important critiques and heuristic devices for the fields of Latino/a Studies and Latin American Studies, they are equally problematic for the ways they obscure the political expressions of opposition and transformation embedded in these fields. Thus, I conclude by discussing the third discursive formation, the emergence of transnational/binational studies, with a view to how it provides an important foundation both for integrating the fields of Latino/a Studies in the U.S. with Latin American Studies, as well as circumventing some of the problems associated with previous traditions.

Origins of Chicano/a and Latino/a Studies in the U.S. and Latin American Studies

In the mid 1960s, Ethnic Studies programs emerged throughout the country from a context of civil disobedience and social movement among young racial minorities. These programs, which were established primarily in and around the fields of Chicano/Mexican American Studies, African American Studies, Asian American Studies, and Native American/American Indian Studies, attempted to alter the presentation of racialized subjects within traditional academic contexts, to create a “space” within academia to focus on the experiences and interests of racial minorities, and to reassert an active and transformative subjectivity in the face of an oppressive educational system. While the scope and intentions of some Ethnic Studies programs extended beyond this attempt to challenge representation, space, and subjectivity within academia, these characteristics helped to shape the theoretical discourse within these movements.

In other words, these programs challenged both the ontological and epistemological understandings of racial minorities in the academy by looking at the ways in which Western intellectual traditions had constructed categories of race and how these constructions exacted a certain type of violence comparable to forms of political and economic exploitation. Finally, in challenging these constructions, programs in Ethnic Studies also offered possibilities for resistance and change in the forms of literature, ideology, and history written from the perspective of racial minorities.

Within Chicano/a and Latino/a Studies, while there were important critiques of Americanization and assimilation formed by scholars such as Ernesto Galarza and Americo Paredes (which greatly informed the direction of activists prior to the 1960s), the origins of the discipline emerged with the political opposition of the Chicano and Latino movements in this country between 1965-1975 (Contreras, 1993; Gómez-Quíñones, 1974, 1978, 1990; Muñoz, 1970, 1984, 1989; Rocco, 1970). That is, while Mexican American activists and academics grounded their perspectives in the research on race and inequality developed in this earlier generation, their focus during the 1960s and early 70s expanded concerns with structure and systematic forms of oppression and launched a cultural renaissance within Latino/a communities across the country. Moreover, key to the construction of an oppositional discourse in this period was the re-conceptualizing and eventual re-construction of Latino/a subjectivity with an emphasis on an identity which was self-determined, culturally conscious, politically active and humanistically oriented.

As such, the formation of Chicano/a and Latino/a studies became linked to a form of cultural nationalism which borrowed from independence movements in Latin American and which situated Chicanos/as within an indigenous past that had been

subjected to 500 years of oppression. Moreover, in its activist manifestations this cultural nationalism translated into the birth of organizations such as the Crusade for Justice in Denver (1964), the Brown Berets in California (1968), the Alianza Federal de Mercedes in New Mexico (1963), the Young Lords in New York (1970), and La Raza Unida Party in Texas (1971). While these groups were dedicated to promoting the political empowerment of Chicanos/as and Latinos/as through transforming public educational facilities, securing rights to land grants, providing protections against police brutality, developing culturally competent social service programs in Latino/a neighborhoods, and developing an alternative political party to address the particular needs of Chicanos/as and Latinos/as, they were equally important in constructing a new form of political citizenship. In particular, this generation of activists asserted a more engaged and transformative leadership which sought to displace the political and ethnic hierarchy of the U.S. (which privileged white male elites) with the growing numbers of politically conscious Chicanos/as and Latinos/as (Cabán, 1998).

Furthermore, in the process of building a new and explicitly non-white America, participants in the Chicano movement centered their activities in educational institutions. In drawing on this strategy, schools became a significant sight for organizing because they represented both a collection of intellectuals who had the space to engage in such debates about alienation, and because many movement activists saw them as the foundations of civic engagement in the U.S. Thus, out of these efforts grew the first Mexican American Studies Department at the California State College at Los Angeles in 1968, led by Ralph Guzman. In the following year comparable programs and departments were established at the University of Texas at Austin, Notre Dame University, and the University of California, Los Angeles (Muñoz, 1989). Today there are more than 85 departments and programs across the country offering coursework and degrees in Chicano/a and Caribbean studies as well studies of Puerto Rican and Dominican communities in the U.S. (Bataille, Carranza, Lisa, 1996). Furthermore, in 1972 the same cadre of young Chicano/a and Latino/a students and faculty helped to establish the National Association of Chicano Studies, and the first NACCS conference was held that year (Muñoz, 1989). In addition to serving as an institutional mechanism for the promulgation of Chicano/a and Latino/a studies, and a source of support for scholars in the field, those who convened this first NACCS conference also imagined an organization of scholars who would critically examine the needs of their communities and attempt to build creative solutions to these issues. Thus, as the NACCS mission statement maintains:

The National Association for Chicana and Chicano Studies (NACCS) arose in 1972 in order to encourage a type of research which would play a key part in the political actualization of the total Chicana/o community. As such, this association of Chicana and Chicano scholars was not envisioned as an academic embellishment, but as a structure rooted in Chicana and Chicano political life. NACCS has, from the beginning, presupposed a divergence from mainstream academic research. Our research efforts were aimed at directly confronting such tenuous images and interpretations and challenging the structures of inequality based on class, racial, and sexist privileges in this society. In shaping the form of this challenge, NACCS holds firm the conviction that our research should

generate information that can lead to effective problem solving action. Our research should address itself to the pressing problems and issues affecting our communities (NACCS Mission and Purpose, 1999).

As such, the work of the Chicano movement was aimed at reconstructing citizenship from a cultural vantage, as well as reforming the very process of inculcating civic duty. Finally, in place of the more prevalent practice among educational institutions of cultivating patriotism and ethnic invisibility among young students, Chicano movement activists substituted a spiritual and cultural identity, one that stood in opposition to the state and its repressive racial formations and one which was cultivated from a Chicano-centered national consciousness.

Formation of Latin American Studies

While the origins of contemporary Chicano/a and Latino/a Studies were located in writings and political contestations that predated the 1960s activism, so too did Latin American Studies have its origins in the late 1940s and early 1950s of this century. As Cabán (1998) has documented, in the post-WWII era of Cold War anti-communism the U.S. sought to consolidate its hegemony by promoting a pan-Americanism aimed at uniting Latin American economic aspirations with U.S. political objectives. In particular, U.S. economic objectives included raising the overall national incomes of allied Latin American states, accelerating industrialization, agricultural productivity, stabilizing prices, and increasing the level of exports to the U.S. To this end, Congress passed the National Defense Education Act in 1958 with the aim of funding research on the Third World. In particular, Title VI of the Act provided for the construction of the earliest programs in Latin American Studies by establishing area studies centers, language training programs, and by acquiring various historical and specialized foreign documents for research libraries in the U.S. (Cabán, 1998). Thus, despite the political dispositions (or lack thereof) of individual scholars funded under Title VI, Latin American Studies emerged initially as an extension of the U.S. government in conjunction with various Latin American states as a means to expand the political ideology of modernization and the economic process of liberalization (Cabán, 1998).

However, much like the origins of Chicano/a and Latino/a Studies in the U.S., the character and content of Latin American Studies as a discipline changed with the political rebellions (both inside and outside of American universities) of the 1960s. That is, with the onset of independence movements and nationalist rebellions across the region of Latin America, and with political support from organizations such as the Alliance for Progress along with generous financial backing from the Ford Foundation, the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS), and the Social Science Research Council (SSRC), Latin American Studies became an important vehicle for collecting information on the region and translating this into viable foreign policy initiatives (Cabán, 1998). Furthermore, in May 1966, in an attempt to further consolidate their efforts, an international meeting was convened with the directors of centers which had received Title VI funding under the National Defense Education Act as well as scholars whose research on Latin American was funded by Ford, the ACLS, and the SSRC. This meeting

ultimately led to the creation of the first Latin American Studies Association (Cabán, 1998). Today the Latin American Studies Association boasts a membership list of 4,800 scholars (25% of whom reside outside the United States), and is “the largest professional Association in the world for individuals and institutions engaged in the study of Latin America” (Welcome to LASA, 1999). Ultimately, collaboration between the U.S. and Latin American scholars increased in this period following LASA’s inception, particularly as Latin American Studies programs in Latin American (i.e. Chile, Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, and the Andean countries) were supported with money from the Ford Foundation and other generous backers such as the ACLS and the SSRC (Cabán, 1998).

Thus, in its initial construction, Latin American Studies differed significantly from Chicano/a and Latino/a Studies in the U.S. by virtue of its support for extending American foreign and economic policy to the Central and South American regions and for its efforts to curtail any threats to the security of the U.S. as a global power. Moreover, this support which took the form of collecting information and translating it into viable policy recommendations was often employed in the process of repelling insurgent movements of the region which opposed American penetration and involvement. In addition, with their initial focus on promoting modernization in the region, Latin American scholars frequently crossed national and nationalist boundaries to promote economic growth and institutional development in what was viewed as a largely underdeveloped region.

However, in their inceptions, both Latin American Studies and Studies of Chicanos/as and Latinos/as in the U.S. were not without various shortcomings that provided room for substantive critique from scholars and activists who felt marginalized by the early departments and national organizations. Thus, I will examine some of the internal critiques of these two disciplines as a way to explain their transitions from both oppositional and accommodational discourses and their gravitation toward empirical, postmodern and transnational discursive developments in the past two decades.

Critiques of Chicano/a and Latino/a Studies and Latin American Studies

While the logic of cultural nationalism dominated both the political expressions of activists in the Chicano movement and the scholarly contributions of those in the field, it was not without serious limitations that would eventually paralyze the discipline by the 1980s. That is, cultural nationalism helped to construct and maintain a coherent historical memory for Chicanos/as and Latinos/as throughout the U.S., one that simultaneously challenged the hegemonic discourse of Americanization and sought to empower racialized communities by presenting a history of discrimination, subjugation, and spiritual foundations for empowerment that was intended to speak to (and for) all Latinos/as.

Unfortunately, in the effort to construct such a totalizing conception of Chicano/a sovereignty, nationalism replicated several of the same forms of domination it had feverishly challenged. With respect to the mapping of Latino/a communities and Latin American struggles cultural nationalists tended to reverse the dichotomous colonial relationship of first world patron and third world subjects (and its attendant dyads including "core/periphery," "global/local") and substituted a picture of North America as

corrupted and materialized, and the South (particularly Pre-Columbian Latin America) as righteously spiritual and devoid of capitalist immoral complications.

In addition, the readings of Latino/a history posited by cultural nationalists situated the origins of racial and colonial subjugation of contemporary Chicanos/as within the annexation of Mexican land after the Mexican-American War and the subsequent signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. As González and Fernández (1998) point out, while there were long-term material implications from this loss of land and capital with the early Californios and Mexicanos, such a reading of the past is complicated because it posits a unilinear conception of racial formations. In other words, rather than positioning race, racism, and discrimination as political and social constructions borne out of a convergence of various forces within any given period, cultural nationalism suggests some inherent racist quality in the initial American occupation that survived unscathed for over 150 years despite collective efforts among Latinos/as to promote social change. Furthermore, by locating this initial injury in a form of cultural genocide and by situating the recovery of this lost cultural/spiritual past as the centerpiece of the Chicano movement, cultural nationalists tended to leave relatively untouched the changing global economic structures that readily inscribe and exploit Latino/a labor.

And yet, for all these shortcomings, possibly the most difficult aspect of cultural nationalism evolved from its tendencies toward reductivism and essentialism. By this I mean the tendencies within nationalism to flatten complex and often contradictory events in the past and substitute them for a more coherent and affirmative interpretation of Chicano/a and Latino/a experiences. In many ways the continual battles which were waged within the movement over participants legitimacy and over their efforts to maximize one's cultural "authenticity" promoted a process whereby selective traditions, customs, and mannerisms were isolated and scrutinized for their "legitimacy." This process was coupled with a reification of these selective customs, rituals, and/or traditions and an effort to re-signify the cultural value and meaning associated with these symbols in a uniformly affirmative discourse. Such essentialism posits an end to politics and conflict among Chicanos/as and Latinos/as—a formal resolution to the discontinuity between Mexicans, Mexican-Americans, Chicanos/as, Mexicanos/as, and Latinos/as (Spivak, 1997). Moreover, it allows cultural nationalism to form its own metanarrative or master theory equivalent in its authorizing capacity to the hegemonic discourse of Americanization which it sought to displace.

Nowhere were the damaging implications of such cultural reifications experienced more clearly than among the Chicanas and Latinas who were active in the development of the discipline. Most notably, to combat both the persistence of patriarchy within Chicano studies, and the continued existence of racism and class exploitation Chicana feminists of the late 1960s and early 1970s began to form their own academic support networks and call for their own space within the academy (García, 1997). By the 1980s Chicana feminists' consistent attempts to reform and restructure Chicano studies began to assume a more concrete shape as Chicana studies conferences such as a 1982 Conference in Austin became more frequent and groups such as *Mujeres en Marcha* organized in defense of Chicana studies at the National Association for Chicano Studies (NACS) (Orozco, 1986; Pesquera and de la Torre, 1993). In 1983 these efforts were consolidated with the formation of the Chicana caucus of NACS and the creation of

MALCS (Mujeres Activas en Letras y Cambio Social), two scholarly organizations dedicated to analyzing the power relations within the community at large, and in the university, that perpetuate gendered, racial, and class subordination, and to placing Chicanas as speaking subjects at the center of their academic work. The creation of these organizations was followed in 1984 by the first NACS conference ("Voces de la Mujer") dedicated exclusively to examinations of gender within the discipline, and the inauguration of a Chicana/Latina summer research institute by MALCS in 1985.

In Latin American Studies, while feminists constructed critiques of the patriarchal character of the discipline and state practices that subjugated women both in the U.S. and Latin America, the formation of literature on women in Latin American took on a different form than that of Chicana and Latina feminists in the U.S. That is, research and writing in this area frequently linked the struggles amongst women against sexism with a wide array of battles throughout third world countries against economic exploitation (Fee and González, 1977). The importance of this link between sexism and class exploitation, and between third world women was evidenced in the early stages of feminist research and activism, with events such as the Moscow World Congress of Women in 1963, the United Nations International Women's Year Conference in 1975, and the Wellesley Conference on Women and Development in 1976. As such, writings on the conditions of women in Latin America often identified a material source to the division of sexes and the proliferation of patriarchy. In addition, while they pinpointed the formation of capitalism as instrumental in the subjugation of women they specifically pointed to the growing integration of the world system of production and the negative effects of modernization and economic liberalization on Latin American women (i.e. the breakdown of municipal, state, and social services, the atrophy of democratic operations of trade unions and community interest groups), as key to the understanding of women's contemporary exploitation (Nash and Fernández-Kelly, 1983; Nash and Safa, 1985; Bose and Acosta-Belén, 1995; Rogers 1979).

Thus, in the early 1970s the undaunted pursuit of modernization prevalent in early Latin American studies was tempered by the emergence of various materialist critiques (of which dependency theory was arguably most prevalent) formulated in large part by Latin American scholars in Latin America and by leftist academicians in the U.S. (Gunder Frank, 1967, 1969, 1972; Chilcote and Edelstein, 1986). By and large, dependency theorists along with Marxists, and other radical scholars critiqued the U.S. for constructing a neo-colonial relationship with Latin America, through reliance on the exportation of American economic practices and foreign capital for the future of the region. As such, activists and scholars dedicated to the political sovereignty and economic empowerment of Latin Americans (particularly those tied to the movements for independence from U.S. controlled and state sponsored governments), began to critique both the control over Latin America exerted by the U.S. and the efforts to justify and normalize this relationship in Latin American Studies. And while these critics succeeded in asserting a counter-hegemonic discourse into the field of Latin American Studies with the creation of journals such as *Latin American Perspectives*, they soon faced new challenges from a methodological and ideological shift in the discipline prompted by an intensified push toward globalization and regional economic integration in Latin America (Cabán, 1998:200).

Globalization and Discursive Shifts in Studies of U.S. Latinos/as and Latin America

By the 1980s both Latin American Studies and Chicano/a and Latino/a studies in the U.S. were undergoing profound theoretical and methodological changes prompted in part by the internal criticisms of the field outlined above. However, the restructuring of these disciplines in the past two decades cannot be explained merely as a routine evaluation of their core principles, or strictly as a response to the internal shortcomings. Such interpretations tend to detract from a greater examination of the ongoing changes in global capital between the 1980s and 1990s. These economic shifts, aimed at promoting greater regional and economic integration, dramatically impacted the demographic make-up of Latino/a communities in the U.S. and the traditional political boundaries separating Latin America from the U.S. Thus, I will briefly review the motivations and effects of this process of globalization followed by an examination of the epistemological impacts of this global restructuring on studies of Latinos/as in the U.S and Latin America.

Globalization

At no time did the movement toward globalization become more apparent than in the past two decades as countries in Latin America including Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, Panama, and Venezuela, intensified their drives toward political democratization. Three factors substantively impacted the trend toward globalization in Latin America in this period (as in other parts of the world such as the Pacific Rim), they were: employment of neo-liberal economic policies, deregulation of U.S. domestic markets, and increased mobilization of capital and information across national borders (Sampaio, 2002).

Within a relatively short period of time countries throughout the region increased their commitments to neo-liberal economic theory and forged a series of transitions which included the devaluation of national currencies, reducing import tariffs and trade restrictions, privatizing public resources, and deregulating financial and industrial sectors in an overall effort to minimize the role of government in the economy while strengthening the private sector. As a result, various Latin American countries expected to achieve greater productivity and reduced inefficiency by curtailing the costs of imported capital and transforming local economies to favor exports (Sampaio, 2002). Within Latin America, the effects of these efforts aimed at bolstering economic growth and regional integration are evident in the levels of trade as well as the traffic in goods, services, and peoples across the region. In particular, reports from the Department of Commerce document the precipitous growth of the state economies in countries favoring neo-liberal economic plans such as Brazil, Chile, Columbia, El Salvador, Peru and Venezuela (*Statistical Abstract of the U.S. 1998*, Nos. 1302, 1304, 1324, 1347, 1348). Furthermore, when we examine the levels of trade between the U.S. and Latin America (particularly the region of Central and South America) from 1990 to the present, we see a steady increase in both the levels of NAFTA related imports as well as exports, resulting in an overall level of trade which surpasses the balance of U.S. trade with the rest of the world (*Tracking U.S. Trade, 1999*).

More recent examples of these efforts aimed at bolstering economic growth can be found in a host of trade agreements such as the Plan Puebla-Panama as well as the

Caribbean Basin Initiative, the Caribbean Community (Caricom), and *El Mercado Común del Sur* (MERCOSUR) (Bonilla, 1998). Finally, this shift in economic policies is apparent in the day to day operations of farms such as those in Chile's desert regions. That is, territory which had recently been the province of small subsistence farmers has been transformed in the past two decades into an agricultural haven where the main fruits produced are harvested almost exclusively for U.S. markets (González-Estay, 1998).

However, in the decades since Latin America embarked upon these political and economic transformations, the limitations of such strategies have become apparent, especially in the increased polarization of citizens within countries, as well as the increasing numbers of immigrants who have been displaced from local labor markets. Morales (1998) reports that while poverty levels climbed throughout most of Latin America to reach 41% in 1980, the percentage of Latin Americans living in poverty continued to escalate throughout the decade and reached nearly 50% by 1990 (1998:7-8). In addition, the impact of these efforts extended far beyond the boundaries of Latin America as the United States witnessed an unprecedented surge of immigration from Mexico, Central, and South America and a commensurate increase in the levels of poverty, underemployment, and wage deflation among U.S. Latinos/as (Sampaio, 2002).

In particular, while there was a significant increase in the overall migration of Latin American residents to the U.S. in the 1980s the traffic of migration increased dramatically in the past decade. While Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) reports documented the entrance of 1,653,300 migrants from Mexico entering the U.S. between 1981 and 1990 (approximately 183,700 migrants per year), there were over 1,651,400 Mexican migrants entering the U.S. between 1991-1996 (approximately 330,280 migrants a year, a growth of approximately 146,580 migrants per year over the previous decade). This evidence suggests that there has been a significant growth in immigration from Mexico in the past two decades, a period correlating directly with the economic changes toward globalization (Immigrants Admitted by Country of Origin: 1981-1996, 1998). Comparable increases exist in migration from Central and South America and particularly in the number of immigrants arriving in the U.S. from the Dominican Republic (*Statistical Abstract of the U.S. 1998*, Nos. 5-11). Furthermore, while there was a substantial increase in the numbers of immigrants entering the U.S. in this period there is also evidence suggesting they were increasingly younger, less educated, and poorer than previous waves. As Jorge Chapa (1998) has suggested, the fact that recent immigrants are less educated and younger than earlier generations reflects a severely troubled economy and political state in Mexico and Latin America.

Economic integration also created a new market and opportunities for a professional-managerial class of Latin American entrepreneurs, sales representatives, consultants, engineers, and other highly educated workers to enter American and European economies (Chapa, 1998). Specifically, the employment of neo-liberal policies augmented the numbers of Latin Americans living in poverty, as well as those living in relative comfort, while precipitously shrinking the Latin American middle class. Furthermore, globalization provided greater opportunities for Latin Americans in professional occupations to migrate to the U.S. for training or employment. As such, the increased migration of this elite class of workers in the 1980s and 1990s aided in the expansion of a U.S. Latino/a middle-class; however, the experience of these workers

differed greatly from the larger percentage of working class migrants in the country (Sampaio, 2002).

In a related matter, U.S. Latinos/as witnessed a persistent decrease in wages and benefits commensurate with globalization. Specifically, between 1975-1989 average earnings growth slowed to the point of stagnation while income inequality grew. By 1993 these conditions were exasperated by an extended global recession which resulted in staggering unemployment and wage decreases that reached even traditionally secure white collar workers (Chapa, 1998:77). In particular, in 1992 the rate of job displacement among Latino male workers surpassed the rates of Anglos and African-Americans and by 1995 unemployment rates among Latinos surpassed that of African-Americans for the first time in American history. The impacts of Latino displacement and decreases in wages have equally impacted the social prospects and social mobility of Latino/a laborers as traditional networks of support (i.e. familial networks) have become strained and Latinos/as experience lower levels of educational attainment (Chapa, 1998).

With the onset of a recession and a weakened currency, U.S. Latinos/as were also bombarded by a strong nativist movement marked by the passage of anti-immigrant legislation and propositions as well as a concerted effort to restrict the rights of documented and undocumented immigrants. In particular, California voters passed Proposition 187 a restrictive law intended to prevent both documented and undocumented immigrants from accessing public health services, education, and welfare services. The passage of this proposition was followed by a host of restrictive immigration laws passed in the Congress in 1996, most notable of which was the Immigration Reform and Responsibility Act, the Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act, and the Welfare Reform Act.

Ultimately, the privatization and rollback of government subsidies in Latin America (such as those on oil, gas, and tortillas) propelled a migratory shift from Latin America to the U.S. In particular, information exports from the U.S. such as innovative technologies produced changes in the manufacturing and distribution of products, such as agricultural commodities, thereby undermining broad sectors of Latin American farmers and ranch owners and increasing the push toward migration. These economic changes were coupled with the intensification of civil war in parts of Central America, resulting in the de-territorialization of thousands of campesinos and rural citizens in this region (Kearney, 1996; Hamilton and Chinchilla 1997). As such, both the global economic changes and the effects of these changes produced significant demographic shifts in Latin America and the U.S., prompting scholars to reconsider traditional methods (e.g. descriptive observation, qualitative field research) and ideologies (e.g. nationalism, behavioralism) surrounding studies of these populations. One solution to these changes emerging from the social sciences, was the gravitation toward empirical applications in studies of Latin America and Latinos/as in the U.S. This change provided researchers the opportunity to operationalize their questions regarding these populations and produce more structured theoretical models to understand the changes and predict future outcomes.

Empiricism

In examining the simultaneous development of movements toward empiricism within both Latino/a Studies in the U.S. and Latin American Studies, we must first recognize that these projects were not merely the efforts of a small cadre of intellectuals, but themselves represented and served larger political and economic changes taking place across the globe. Specifically, the enthusiasm over empirical applications converged with the emergence of a Latino/a and Latin American middle-class and particularly with the expansion of a professional-managerial contingent in these communities. In addition, these changes were themselves the effects of a re-structuring in American and Western economies from a largely Fordist economy driven by manufacturing jobs to flexible-income/wage work as well as profound political impacts of a host of policies aimed at removing *de jure* and *de facto* barriers of discrimination or political repression (Stetson, 1997).

In other words, the gravitation toward empiricism and specifically its most methodologically rigorous application as positivism, can and must be contextualized within these developments to understand how new educational opportunities were opened up for Chicano/a and Latino/a youth in the U.S. and Latin American scholars in Mexico, Central, and South America to enter fields such as Sociology, Political Science, Economics, and how the disciplines themselves were transformed. Furthermore, beginning in the late 1960s and extending to the 1990s there is a formative shift which occurred in the disciplines of the social sciences (Political Science in particular) away from the previous paradigms of liberal pluralism and behavioralism and toward rational choice theory, that is coupled with an instrumental view of political behavior and the pursuit of rigorous methodological practices. What essentially began as an attempt to examine the behavior of individuals as efforts to rationally maximize their interests in the public sphere, soon became the mantra of Political Science associations and publications across the country (and eventually came to govern studies of International Relations with the proliferation of realism/neo-realism and game theory) (Green and Shapiro, 1994). However, while proponents of rational choice theory were not the first or only intellectuals to posit that individual actions are geared toward maximizing their interests, their work was distinguished by the systematic manner in which it was applied to human behavior. Furthermore, at the heart of rational choice theory lie a complex set of assumptions about the nature of political actors that was to be applied to all decisions made by individuals in the public sphere. These assumptions included: utility maximization, a stable and rank order of preferences, a focus on the individual as the preferred level of analysis, consistency, homogeneity, and universality.

Thus, these assumptions form part of the foundation within rational choice theory, one which moves social science disciplines into an ever greater simulation of the natural sciences. Specifically, the assumptions established in rational choice compliment the basic principles of scientific replicability, parsimony, objectivity, and falsifiability. Furthermore, they lead rational choice theorists to support "an instrumental conception of individual rationality by reference to which people are thought to maximize their expected utilities in formally predictable ways. In empirical applications, the further assumption is generally shared that rationality is homogeneous across the individuals under study" (Green and Shapiro, 1994: 17-18). Finally, as the social sciences gravitated

toward models of scientific analysis that emphasized the rational actor, the research conducted in these disciplines on Chicano/a and Latino/a communities in the U.S. along with research on Latin America became increasingly influenced by these methodological shifts.

For example, if we examine research on race and ethnicity published in the *American Political Science Review* (the main research engine of the American Political Science Association), we see that after 1972, virtually every article relating to race/ethnicity and politics published by the journal made use of some combination of rational choice theory and/or regression analysis producing a climate in which studies deviating from this formula were critiqued as being "essentially journalistic" (Albritton, 1979:1023). Studies employing regression analysis tended to oversimplify the very categories of race, producing instead static variables that reduced the meaning of the terms. Similarly, rational choice theorists, subverted any possibility of asserting a political or oppositional subjectivity in the production of knowledge by constructing a meaning of race that rested on the objective assessment of actors' rational calculations, thereby leaving behind interpretations of race or ethnicity which don't fit the boundaries of rationality. Ultimately, in their pursuit of scientific rigidity all of these studies sought to produce outcomes that have maximum universalizability—an attempt which assumes the existence of a singular truth and which obstructs more intimate knowledge of subjects themselves.

The culminating effect of these changes in the 1980s was the emergence of a new cadre of young, upwardly mobile, Chicanos/as and Latinos/as who, were on average, more educated than previous generations and whose academic training was increasingly informed by methodological and ideological paradigms that rewarded precise approximations of "truth" via quantitative analysis. In turn, literature in these fields (and particularly in Political Science) reflected these socio-economic changes by examining the experiences of Chicano/a and Latino/a communities and Latin America not as heterogeneous projects of identity, class, or ethnic expression, but often as new variables in old equations to be operationalized and falsified.

Within Latin American studies, the changes which were influenced by the preponderance of rational choice theories shifted the focus of scholars from area studies to a level of analysis that privileged the nation-state (Cabán, 1998). As such, beginning in the 1980s, there is a sizable increase in social science research that adopts a rigorous empirical approach to Latin American Studies and draws research questions and evidence from data sets relying on statistics of national figures (i.e. trade, levels of import/exports, GNP and GDP). And while this period provided an initial opportunity for scholars to explore the links between Latin American Studies and studies of U.S. Latinos/as through a proliferation of immigration research, the focus on nation-states and attempts to empiricize the information on immigrants led to a doctrine of immigration which positioned migrants as simply temporary sojourners or permanent residents on a path to assimilation. Such arguments were consistent with forms of neo-classical economic theory which maintained that immigrants chose to migrate from their countries of origin because of a combination of push and pull factors which resulted in an embracing of new life in the receiving country and a withering away of affinities within one's home country. This tendency within Latin American Studies of situating individual residents as strictly wedded to a singular nation-state identity tended to obscure a more complex examination

of the distinct racial and ethnic positions of immigrants as both members of their countries of origin and as Latinos/as in the U.S.

One method of critique which emerged simultaneously with the movement toward positivism and which effectively challenged much of the social scientists assertions of objectivity in Latino/a and Latin American Studies was postmodernism (my use of the term here also includes related trajectories such as critical theory, poststructuralism, structuralism, deconstruction, and postcolonial studies). I will briefly examine the formation of this discursive movement and its relationship to the fields of Chicano/a and Latino/a studies and Latin American Studies and consider some of its benefits and limitations.

Postmodernism

Much like the changes which took place in the social sciences, beginning in the early 1980s there was an emerging class of young intellectuals who, by virtue of their training in humanities related departments, had been exposed to methodological and ideological shifts in their fields toward postmodernism. Furthermore, mirroring the changes which were occurring in the social sciences, this new generation of scholars began to apply these methods with increasing frequency in their own investigations of Chicano/a and Latino/a communities and Latin American studies. In its academic capacity, postmodernism provided the necessary theoretical tools for students to deconstruct and challenge the essentializing and reductivist tendencies of both nationalist discourse and social scientific paradigms. In particular, scholars trained in a variety of "postmodern" interpretations effectively deconstructed homogenized principles of race and ethnicity, and offered new readings of subjects, truth, and rationality as decentered, non-foundational and thoroughly contextualized phenomena (Saldívar, 1985). In short, postmodernism substituted coherence and consistency for an endless spectrum of "difference, distance, and determinate complexity" (Pfeil, 1994). Furthermore, where the concept of space as a formation of political identity was erased in positivism or constructed in largely linear terms in nationalism, postmodernism asserted a purely "local" concept of space and by extension focused on localized expressions of knowledge and resistance (Foucault, 1977b).

While the areas of criticism which were opened up by the challenges of postmodern critics proved useful to expanding the study of Chicanos/as and Latinos/as and Latin America beyond reductivist and essentialized rhetoric, these pursuits quickly presented another problem for those interested in the history and political expressions of these populations. In much the same way that the pressure toward professionalizing the social sciences had limited the possibilities for political expressions of subjectivity, so too did the crush of enthusiasm for postmodernism threaten any assertions of agency or will. Specifically, at the heart of postmodernisms' critiques of modernity lie a degree of contempt for the liberal subject conceived as a universal, homogeneous, and rational actor (and by extension the collective expressions of these individuals in the form of nations, class, ethnic or racial associations).

These readings of modernity were most clearly articulated in the writing of French historian Michel Foucault (1972, 1977a, 1977b, 1980). Echoing the suggestions of Roland Barthes, Foucault maintained that "the [modern] subject is dead." In other

words, the seemingly endless efforts by scholars from anthropology and the social sciences to isolate, explicate, and replicate the core principles of human existence and ultimately arrive at some irrefutable truths, were largely efforts waged in vain. Furthermore, Foucault suggested that the modern or pre-modern subject could not be dissected like a tissue sample to arrive at its core elements because those "elements" which constructed individuals were not to be found in the individual themselves. That is, subjects retained no essential core, no irrefutable truth, but were rather "constructed" from a convergence of institutional constraints, structural logic, cultural processes, and common values acting on human bodies within any given time and place. As such, the meanings and value of this subject, understood then as a fully constructed phenomenon, could be altered only with substantive changes to the subject's discursive framework (Foucault, 1977a, 1980). Furthermore, Foucault suggested that in studying modern subjectivity, researchers (in particular he was speaking to historians) would be better served by examining the discursive frameworks that constructed subjects (i.e. by examining their position vis-à-vis institutions such as the economy or education) rather than by interrogating subjects themselves (Foucault, 1980).

While this framework proved to be useful as an heuristic challenge to positivist paradigms as well as pedestrian forms of nationalism, by thoroughly de-centering any supposition of individuality it also disabled expressions of oppositional politics in the university by situating identity and experience in such specific positionality and obscuring any discussion of collective consciousness, self-determination, or common history. As such, in its most "nihilistic" forms, postmodernism flattened the political subjectivity which lay at the heart Chicano/a and Latino/a studies and which was critical in much of the research on Latin American populations and successfully "froze its subject in the unreflexivity valorized particularity of their experience." (Pfeil, 1994:22). Thus, by deconstructing the modern liberal individual and questioning the assumptions of history and subjectivity upon which these practices are based, postmodernism also threatened the formation of all identities, including those of more marginalized populations.

And yet, if postmodernism presented the most formidable challenge to positivistic reductionism and the obscuring of oppositional politics within the social sciences, it should not be flippantly discarded. I maintain that there are elements of postmodernism grounded in the political and social critiques of multinational capitalism from postcolonial studies and transnationalism that help to broker these dilemmas of subjectivity without simply capitulating to empiricism or rudimentary nationalism.

In particular, social/cultural critics such as Aronowitz (1981), Laclau and Mouffe (1985), and Soja (1989), have suggested that changes in the nature of capital (i.e. the means of production, the relations of production) have led to changes in attendant cultural and intellectual contexts and the concomitant production of both logical positivism as well as postmodernism. Specifically, Frederic Jameson (1984, 1991) borrows a schematic first developed by Ernst Mandel to argue that there have been three fundamental shifts in the history of capital, each one drawing on, expanding, and in some way altering its predecessor with the final stage of multinational capitalism culminating in what we now know of as postmodernism. What marks the development of this stage is an emphasis on the emergence of new forms of business organization (specifically the proliferation of multinational companies) whereby traditional nation-state boundaries become weakened and capital is exchanged openly, with minimal restrictions, across the globe. Also

featured in this stage of capitalism are: the new international division of labor, a heightened complexity in the dynamics of international banking and stock exchanges, new forms of media interrelationships, the proliferation of computers and automation, and the flight of production to advanced third world countries (Jameson, 1991:xix). It is from this context that "postmodernism" emerged. Culturally, it entailed the insertion of individual subjects into a "multidimensional set of radically discontinuous realities" (Jameson, 1991:413). In the lived experiences of people this has translated into a sense of schizophrenic decentering and fragmentation reflected in the disproportionate emphasis on local events and localized knowledge.

As such, in this framework, the movement toward postmodernism constituted more than simply a heuristic tool or a choice of ideology, but equally implied a different cultural and intellectual structure rooted in global economic transformations. Furthermore, this global restructuring and the forms of cultural logic which emerged from it provided an important critique of the negative impacts of the undaunted pursuit of positivism and necessitated a more careful look beyond national borders for researchers conducting studies on Chicano/a and Latino/a communities. However, for all of these benefits the movement toward postmodernism could not resolve the shortcomings mentioned before, particularly the tendency to obliterate various functions of modernity despite their centrality for expressions of oppositional logic. Thus, in this final section I will examine more carefully the proliferation of transnational and bi-national research as a third discursive movement in both Latino/a Studies and Latin American Studies that offers new possibilities and insights for integrating these two areas of analysis.

Transnationalism

Despite its location in the context of globalization, the notion of transnationalism cannot be reduced strictly to the regional integration of markets or the production of globalized commerce. As Glick Schiller, Basch and Szanton Blanc (1994, 1995) point out, the process of globalization is equally impacted by immigrants' themselves building familial and social networks which transgress the boundaries of multiple nations. Specifically, they argue:

Transmigrants are immigrants whose daily lives depend on multiple and constant interconnections across international borders and whose public identities are configured in relationship to more than one nation-state. They are not sojourners because they settle and become incorporated in the economy and political institutions, localities and patterns of daily life of the country in which they reside. However, at the very same time, they are engaged elsewhere in the sense that they maintain connections, build institutions, conduct transactions, and influence local and national events in countries from which they emigrated (Glick Schiller, Basch, Szanton Blac, 1995:48).

Moreover, Latin American immigrants are compelled to build and maintain these social networks not merely out of nostalgia for one's home country, but because they provide support structures in the midst of a global climate that is generally not supportive of its immigrant populations. That is, in both the U.S. and Europe, contemporary

immigration policies have not only made the process of immigration more costly, more time consuming, and generally more difficult but they have also resulted in the removal or suspension of immigrant rights as well as access to basic social services. Such racism has contributed to a heightened sense of political and economic insecurity for immigrants as well as their descendants.

Thus, building social networks provides a means by which immigrants who have migrated are able to strengthen their own economic position in their new homes while also securing the resources and social position of family and community members back home (i.e. by sending remittances). These connections have also provided immigrants with the opportunities to have their children cared for by family members in their home countries, to continue participating in family decisions, to make regular return trips, and to build homes and small businesses even while they engage in similar activity in their new locations. Thus, by constructing such transnational networks families and individual immigrants are able to "maximize the utilization of labor and resources in multiple settings and survive within situations of economic uncertainty and subordination" (Glick Schiller, Basch, Szanton Blac, 1995:54).

Finally, the multiple linkages which connect immigrants to their home countries while also binding them to information, products, and services from throughout the world have also been facilitated by an unprecedented growth in telecommunications and transportation technologies. The frequency and availability of international travel coupled with the proliferation of telephone services, affordable faxes, accessible email, and internet facilities help maintain close, secure, and virtually immediate connections to home.

Ultimately, the need to move beyond a strictly nation-state approach in both Latin American Studies as well as Chicano/a and Latino/a studies in the U.S. becomes increasingly apparent with the dissolution of traditional state powers. In response to shifting demographics and the desire for regional economic integration, states have become committed to opening up domestic markets, transferring regulatory capacities to private industry, and generally scaling back the size of government with the elimination of social welfare programs such as Aid to Families with Dependent Children. In addition, the capacity of states to intervene on matters of interest (such as recent battles in the U.S. over restricting immigration) has been weakened by a proliferation of international agreements as well as non-state actors (i.e. Non-Governmental Organizations such as Amnesty International, or ethnic lobbies in the U.S. such as the National Council of La Raza) which often produce "unintended consequences" with even seemingly innocuous decisions (Sassen, 1998). In the aftermath of these changes, states such as the U.S. have been forced to continually negotiate with multinational corporations and manufacturing giants such as Guess jeans, GMAC, and Nike to sustain manufacturing centers in the U.S. or risk increased job displacement and possibly another recession. Nation-states have also had to negotiate and often compete with a proliferation of non-governmental organizations in regions such as Latin America over the establishment of a host of domestic policies such as immigration law and citizenship status (Sassen, 1998).

However, while traditional state powers have dramatically weakened in the context of globalization, it would be premature to argue that nation-states themselves have become obsolete. In particular, the formation of regional economic blocs such as the European Economic Union, requires the implementation of a various legal and

constitutional guarantees that only states can provide (Sassen, 1998). As such, by virtue of economic integration the roles of states have been re-defined, and where domestic policy once governed daily operations, international political economy now serves as the guiding force for government (Cabán, 1998). With regards to the impact on studies of Latin American and Latinos/as these alterations in state powers require commensurate re-definitions in our study of politics in the U.S. and Latin America and even more importantly a re-definition of political citizenship.

Conclusion

Thus, both globalization and the transnational networks established by economic integration have produced a context in which the familiar knowledge about Latino/a communities or Latin America drawn from nationalist discourse and positivist paradigms in the social sciences are becoming incomplete at best and inaccurate at worst. To researchers and scholars working in and around Latino/a and Latin American Studies this means that we must construct an alternative methodological map that can adequately capture the international and transnational boundaries of this multinational population. Nowhere does this type of dialogue appear more necessary than in studies on immigration and immigrant communities between Latin America and the U.S. In particular, I maintain that the groundwork for integration between Latin American and Latino/a Studies lies in positioning these new waves of migrants as part of synchronic flow of capital, goods, and resources between the U.S. and their countries of origin. In particular, with the shifts toward regional economic integration it becomes insufficient to depict migrant communities as temporary sojourners or permanent settlers even when their transportation to the U.S. extends over a number of years. Rather, these communities, like their U.S. born counterparts, must be seen as part of a larger economic framework in which traditional identities wedded to a singular nation-state or the traditional patterns of national economic development have been replaced by a more heterogeneous construction of identity that is both drawn from specific social locations and speaks to global/regional economic changes.

Finally, while the practice of imagining a Latino/a political subjectivity that operates in a multinational context is not new (important contributions to this process exist in the growing body of literature on Puerto Rican and Dominican politics and the migration between mainland and island communities, along with the literature of Cuban American political groups seeking to direct U.S. foreign policy and alter the political environment of Cuba), this construction of political citizenship has yet to penetrate the field of Chicano/a politics and to engage more publicly with the dominant paradigms in Latin American Studies. In other words, in the research presented here I've outlined both the obstacles and potential bridges to uniting fields of Latino/a Studies and Latin American Studies, with a particular view to how globalization has aggravated inequalities and facilitated a discussion on linking populations of Latinos/as across state boundaries. While neither time nor space permit a more detailed discussion of the future of this union, research in this area will have to grapple with the types of political divisions outlined here.

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