

THEMATIC CLUSTER: THE POLITICS OF DATA IN LATIN AMERICA: TOWARDS A TERRESTRIAL INTERNET  OPEN ACCESS



## Terrestrial politics and body-territory: two concepts to make sense of digital colonialism in Latin America

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### ABSTRACT

Researchers have argued that data colonialism is paving the way for a new stage of capitalism, defined as the result of the appropriation and trade of “datafied” human experience (Couldry and Mejias 2019). While we agree that data colonialism normalizes the exploitation of human beings through data, we also contend that the analysis of the materiality of this exploitation should be extended to both bodies and territories. There is a research gap in the literature on territorializing the Internet and rendering its power asymmetries visible. In order to advance in filling this research gap, this article reviews two concepts to make sense of the digital colonialism in Latin America. On the one hand, we discuss Latour’s concept of “terrestrial politics” (2017, 2018; Latour and Weibel 2020). On the other hand, we examine the notion of “cuerpo-territorio” (body-territories) (Cabnal 2010; Colectivo Miradas Critiques 2017) and conduct a critical dialogue between terrestrial politics and body-territory. We argue that the notion of body-territories can contribute to Latour’s proposal for a terrestrial politics by rendering visible the power relationships on the territories that sustain our digital society.

### KEYWORDS

Data colonialism; Latin America; environmental conflicts; feminisms

### PALABRAS CLAVE

Colonialismo de dados; América Latina; conflitos ambientais; feminismos

### PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Colonialismo de datos; América Latina; conflictos medio ambientales; feminismos

### Política Terrestre e corpo-território: dois conceitos para dar sentido ao colonialismo digital na América Latina

#### RESUMO

Estudos têm argumentado que o colonialismo de dados está abrindo caminho para uma nova etapa do capitalismo, definida como o resultado da apropriação e troca da experiência humana “datificada” (Couldry and Mejias 2019). Embora concordemos que o colonialismo digital normaliza a exploração de seres humanos por meio de dados, também defendemos que a análise da materialidade dessa exploração deve ser estendida a corpos e territórios. Há uma lacuna de pesquisa na literatura sobre a

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territorialização da internet e a visibilidade de suas assimetrias de poder. Para avançar potenciais contribuições teóricas que podem preencher essa lacuna na literatura, este artigo revisa dois conceitos para dar sentido ao colonialismo digital na América Latina. Por um lado, discutimos o conceito de “política terrestre” de Latour (2017, 2018; Latour and Weibel 2020). Por outro lado, examinamos a noção de “cuerpo-territorio” (Cabnal 2010; Colectivo Miradas Critiques 2017). Realizamos um diálogo crítico entre a política terrestre e o corpo-território e defendemos que a noção de corpo-território pode contribuir para a proposta de Latour de uma política terrestre ao tornar visíveis as relações de poder nos territórios que sustentam nossa sociedade digital.

## **Política terrestre y cuerpo-territorio: dos conceptos para dar sentido al colonialismo digital en América Latina**

### **RESUMEN**

Se ha argumentado que el colonialismo de datos está allanando el camino para una nueva etapa del capitalismo, definida como el resultado de la apropiación y el comercio de la experiencia humana “datificada” (Couldry and Mejias 2019). Aunque estamos de acuerdo en que el colonialismo digital normaliza la explotación de los seres humanos a través de los datos, también sostenemos que el análisis de la materialidad de esta explotación debe extenderse tanto a los cuerpos como a los territorios. Existe un vacío de investigación en la literatura sobre la territorialización de internet y la visibilización de sus asimetrías de poder. Para avanzar potenciales contribuciones teóricas que puedan llenar este vacío en la literatura, este artículo revisa dos conceptos para dar sentido al colonialismo digital en América Latina. Por un lado, discutimos el concepto de “política terrestre” de Latour (2017, 2018; Latour and Weibel 2020). Por otro lado, examinamos la noción de cuerpo-territorio (Cabnal 2010; Colectivo Miradas Críticas 2017). Realizamos un diálogo crítico entre la política terrestre y el cuerpo-territorio y argumentamos que la noción de cuerpo-territorio puede contribuir a la propuesta de Latour de una política terrestre al hacer visibles las relaciones de poder en los territorios que sustentan nuestra sociedad digital.

## **1. Introduction**

For the past twenty years, Latin America has reassumed a primarily extractive economic model thanks to the recent commodities boom. The territorial expansion of extractive frontiers has aggravated the process of land concentration, expulsion and violence, resulting in perverse social relations, deep inequalities, and ethnic-racial discrimination (Porto-Golçalves 2015). These activities extend across several domains such as mining, hydro-carbon extraction, agribusiness, power generation, and the exploitation of water resources. This situation has been interpreted as a revitalization of a “neo-extractive” capitalist model subsidized by colonial, racist, and patriarchal components (Svampa 2019; Gudynas 2016; Acosta 2016; Lang, Dilger, and Pereira Neto 2016). These authors criticize this developmental model and identify means for overcoming it, i.e. advocating for

pluricultural territory that incorporates the rights of nature (Gudynas 2016, 192; de la Cadena and Blaser 2018; Latour 2004).

Decolonial thought has a strong tradition in Latin America. In the 1990s, the contributions of the Modernity/Coloniality group (M/C) highlighted the need to think about our persistent realities and inequalities through the construction of alterity in the Global South and the category of “coloniality,” which made it possible to differentiate the process of historical colonialism in Latin America from the process of the constitution and persistence of colonial mechanisms and structures of domination in the former colonies (Quijano 2005; Grosfoguell 2008; Mignolo 2015).

A reading of maps of environmental conflicts and technological-commercial disputes evidences the permanence, or rather the evolution, of colonial forms of domination, which continue to operate within the mechanisms of the total system of the colonial and modern capitalist world. We seek these references to look in a complementary way at the processes of colonialism that we discuss – their epistemic and technoscientific, subjective and aesthetic-racial dimensions. All these dimensions are implicated in the hierarchical definition and differentiation of the human body, between humans and nature, and between what is considered developed and undeveloped.

Extractive activities have a high social and environmental impact and have been questioned in a broad critical and analytical framework encompassing both criticisms of extractivism and of decolonial theories, which are closely related to political ecology and practices and political activisms in territorial social movements. Taken together, these theoretical-analytical horizons contribute to understanding the reconfiguration of colonial mechanisms for the sale of raw materials, the occupation of territories (generating processes of concentration and expulsion), and material and symbolic violence. Currently, these mechanisms are established on the basis of an economic model that has transformed the countries of Latin America into “major exporters of nature” (Svampa 2019, 41). We observe their direct relationship with these territorial and environmental conflicts that multiply with the exploitation and commercialization of nature and the resulting violence and advances in reconfigured modalities of patriarchal capitalism in territories and communities occupied by traditional populations and indigenous peoples.

There is an exorbitant growth of technology companies, especially those aligned with a “digital economy,” dedicated to information technologies and data management (Srnicek 2018). This inspired analyses seeking to describe the way the capitalist system has reformed itself as a data-centric economy. Zuboff (2019), for instance, talks about the era of surveillance capitalism, in which platforms and all other forms of digital interactions are susceptible to surveillance processes (classification and processing) of data. That is, some digital interactions produce records in the form of data, which become valuable for companies in this sector. Initially, this data is used to optimize the experience of the services provided, but according to the author, data is now mostly extracted to be traded in the behavioral market: a process that intensifies the extraction of surplus values. Other authors have offered accounts of the concentration of power in a group of companies (Sadín 2018; Zuazo 2018), leaving us in the condition of unconscious producers of digital raw material for these.

Critical studies have explored this line of discussion from data technologies that affect Latin American traditional communities and their potential knowledge (Garcia dos Santos

2003), and also popular and rural women's (Lobo 2021). Others emphasize from a subaltern perspective the analysis of submissive effects that are traditionally inherent in accumulation processes and have intensified and changed substantially, as in the case of so-called data colonialism (Couldry and Mejias 2019; Amadeu da Silveira 2021). Couldry and Mejias (2019, 11) understand that the profusion of data-based companies and technologies has focused on the appropriation of life, relationships, and human freedoms: specifically on "the capture and control of human life itself through appropriating the data that can be extracted from it for profit" (Couldry and Mejias 2019, 11). This surplus value generated through data extraction is also based on systems, algorithms, and platforms that extract personal data and guide choices and interests. This extractivism not only produces profits for companies working with this exchange of data, but also locally reinforces mechanisms of subjugation of life and relationships (11). For Couldry and Mejias (2019), data colonialism presents itself as a substantial change in relation to the colonialist extractivism that marked capitalism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, once it appropriated the spectrum of human life which would be "outside" of the previous exploration cycles, "dispossessing human subjects of their capacity as independent sites of thought and action" (Couldry and Mejias 2019, 6). Its particularity resides in the appropriation of the many aspects of human life and experience, and not only its material elements like wealth or land, "dispossessing human subjects of their capacity as independent sites of thought and action" (6). Similarly, Crawford (2021) describes systems based on Artificial Intelligence (AI) as "planetary systems" which are not limited to massive data collection processes and the provision of "intelligent" and "interconnected" services. They are in fact a fully integrated "extractive industry" which encompasses extractive processes ranging from the mining of essential materials for their physical components, to the exploitation of programmers' work in Europe to produce the algorithms, and the extraction of data to consolidate machine learning: AI "is both embodied and material, made from natural resources, fuel, human labor, infrastructures, logistics, histories and classifications" (8).

In Latin America, exploitation can be analyzed not only as a dynamic of the colonialism of life, relationships, and experiences based on data systems, but also of bodies and territories. The global and local deregulation of large economic and technoscientific projects – such as those related to the expansion of agricultural frontiers, mining, hydroelectric dams, urban security, and monitoring projects – provoke territorial and social conflicts. Such conflicts trigger processes of exclusion and violence, but also of organized women's collective resistances.

Therefore, we adopt the understanding of territory together with the formation of collective identities of resistance not in the abstract, but as a category that is configured in the concrete and real space-time relations between nature–culture/territories–communities. These relations enable the material conditions necessary for the existence of horizons of meaning for life and "open a new theoretical-political lexicon that is a challenge for social sciences hitherto marked by Eurocentrism" (Porto-Golçalves 2015, 8). Territory is understood as a category that brings together nature and culture not defined by National States, or even by the demarcation of borders. The main demarcation of territory in this understanding is given by the relations between people and places, which allows multiple territorialities, plurinationalities, and territorial autonomies, as we see in the cases of Bolivia, Ecuador, and Mexico (Porto-Golçalves 2015, 8).

These conflicts generate “resistances in territories and creation of new political lexicons” as understood by Tait and Gitahy (2019, 10) – and also in this article – as part of the territorial, political, and epistemic dispute that manifests itself in multiple forms within a broader context of Latin American politics in the twenty-first century; and the rapid rise, followed by rapid decay, of governments identified with the left or with “progressivism” accompanied by resistance to extractivism as explored in this article. This scenario has been analyzed by authors such as Eduardo Gudynas, Maristella Svampa, Aberto Acosta, Virginia Vargas, Lilian Celiberti, and Arturo Escobar in several of their works and jointly in the collection *Rescatar la esperanza: Más allá del neoliberalismo y progresismo* (2016).

In the current Brazilian context, the capacity of indigenous mobilization in the face of extractive attacks supported by the government itself was emblematic. The First National March of Indigenous Women of Brazil 2020 (with the slogan “Territory, Our Body, Our Spirit”) brought together thousands of women from more than 130 communities in Brazil. This march accompanied an intensification of threats by Bolsonaro’s government (elected president in 2018) to the existence and regulation of unworthy territories and disclosure of deforestation and burning records in the Amazon and other national territories. The document<sup>1</sup> prepared by the women of the march highlights the historical violation of land and body, updated through the intensification of mining activities, threats to the regularization of indigenous territories (revision of the “Indigenous Temporal Framework”), and lack of access of indigenous people to justice, health, and gender policies.

On the other hand, we discuss the notion of body-territory as an emerging notion in Latin America within a broader context of ecoterritorial feminisms or “emerging latino-american ecofeminisms” (Tait and Moreno 2021) originating from the struggle and resistance of peasant and indigenous women. The notion emerges from their practices and knowledge, from their territories, community experiences, and solidarity among women. It is in this context that the notions of “cuerpo-territorio” or “cuerpo-tierra” or “territorio-cuerpo-tierra” are gaining ground. These ambivalent and multiple conceptions highlight the interdependence between bodies and territories, between community and nature, the identities and ways of life, and also evidence the joint attack dynamics of patriarchal-colonial-capitalism manifested by exploitation over nature, on the body, work, time, and life of women (Cabnal 2010, 2018; Paredes 2017; Collective Miradas Críticas 2017). These notions have been developed by several collectives of women who establish potential alliances in terms of actions and epistemologies of resistance when they come together in a radical critique of the extractivism of nature.

This article aims to review two concepts – terrestrial politics and body-territories – to make sense of these territorial issues linked to digital colonialism. We conduct a critical dialogue between these two concepts by reinforcing the notion of a terrestrial Internet (Suárez and Lehedé forthcoming). Agreeing with the discussions of data colonialism as the normalization of exploitation of human life, we also contend that data colonialism goes further than human subjectification, having strong material grounds in Latin American territories. Based on these two concepts, we discuss the materiality of digital colonialism (Kwet 2019) in our interconnected world. On the one hand, we analyze the concept

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<sup>1</sup>See: <https://cimi.org.br/2019/08/marcha-mulheres-indigenas-documento-final-lutar-pelos-nossos-territorios-lutar-pelo-nosso-direito-vida/>.

of “terrestrial politics” discussed in recent works by Latour. According to the author, we have to connect the territory we live on with the territory we depend on. The author refers to this connection as the landing of politics on earth (Latour and Weibel 2020). This focus implies a reorientation of earth as the thin layer which all (human and non-human) life depends on (Latour 2018). We propose that the notions of body-territories and terrestrial politics render visible the power relationships on the territories that sustain our digital society. Our line of argumentation has the following structure: in section one, we review key contributions to the concept of terrestrial politics. In section two, we do the same with regard to feminist contributions related to body-territory. In the final section, we conduct the critical dialogue among these two concepts and give further insights into the terrestrial Internet. We conclude the article by reaffirming our argument that the notion of body-territories can contribute to Latour’s proposal for a terrestrial politics by rendering visible the power relationships in a renewed way, concerning both the bodies and territories that sustain our digital society.

## 2. Towards a terrestrial politics of the Internet

The focus of Latour’s work in recent years has been on terrestrial politics (Latour 2004, 2017, 2018; 2020). The background work for the terrestrial turn can be found in the book *The Politics of Nature* (2004), where the author disputes nature as unity that at the same time fits the binary thinking between nature and culture. He rather proposes exploring the multiplicity of nature and the imbrications with culture. In *Facing Gaia. Eight Lectures on the New Climatic Regime*, Latour continues with this objective. As a way to call for new metaphors that can account for this multiplicity, the author asks the following question: what will replace the old ways of looking at nature? He proposes Gaia in order to disentangle the ethical, political, and scientific aspects of nature (Latour 2017); this metaphor offers a new way of looking at nature that implies a redistribution of nature and the social (120). Latour states that Gaia renders visible the multiplicity of terrestrial agents that take a role in “nature” beyond the human, also resignifying with that notions of sovereignty and geopolitics. He states that the conflicts among territories are taken over from the old views of conflicts among nation-states (266). The territory, then, is no longer limited to state sovereignty; instead, he claims that with terrestrial politics new forms of sovereignty emerged that are not just established by human actors, but also by terrestrial agents as active stakeholders, and from where overlapping sovereignty emerges.

In *Down to Earth. Politics in the New Climatic Regime*, Latour further develops the idea of terrestrial politics to bring forth new metaphors. He advocates for a terrestrial concept that is not related to an institution, but to a new actor, i.e. the terrestrial that has a different role in nature. According to him, the state cannot take the place of politics any longer (15). The terrestrial is not only a point of focus, but a perspective that grants agency to terrestrial agents. In that sense, the terrestrial is not a passive framework for human action, but participates in reorganizing politics (34). A key element of the terrestrial politics has to do with Latour’s idea of the disconnection of territories (Latour 2017, 2018; Latour and Weibel 2020). For him, the issues of the new climatic regime are a clear example of the disconnection of territories, which he summarizes as follows: “we no longer know on what we depend for subsistence” (Latour 2017, 59). He then proposes

to move from a human-centered politics to a terrestrial one in order to connect the two territories that are commonly disconnected: the one in which we live and the one on which we depend for subsistence, but which normally remains invisible (2). He gives an example of the disconnection of territories in which the necessary resources are extracted to maintain the illusion that we only live in the first territory.

The pattern of referring to politics as the dispersion of any unity to explore sites and possibilities is observed not only in relation to technology and nature, but also regarding the Earth itself. First, Latour proposed Gaia in order to question nature (Latour 2017). Then he suggests the terrestrial in order to abandon the idea of Earth as outside or as below and over that which the human exercises dominion over, as a way to bring politics down to Earth (Latour 2018). In his recent book *Critical Zones. The Sciences and Politics of Landing on Earth* (Latour and Weibel 2020), the author goes deeper in his argument of offering different concepts to oppose both nature and Earth as a unity. *Critical Zones* is a concept that the author takes from the Earth Sciences to study the “skin of the living earth” (Arènes, Latour, and Gaillardet 2018). With this concept, he focuses on soil as that very thin layer on which all forms of life depend. Here, just as in other works, Latour asserts that we need thick descriptions to give account of new ways to inhabit the Earth (5). According to him, the role of Earth Sciences will continue to play a key role in the earthly descriptions necessary for a terrestrial politics.

In this article, we claim that the proposal of terrestrial politics can contribute to recent discussions about digital colonialism in Latin America by rendering visible its materiality. As Latour argues, the “more the digital, the more material an activity becomes” (Latour 2011, 802). While much focus has been placed on the accumulation of power from big technologists such as Google, Apple, Microsoft, and other so-called tech giants (Sadín 2018; Zuazo 2018; Zuboff 2019), the activities of these companies remain disconnected from the territories that sustain them. This is in part because the idea persists that the digital space is immaterial. Latour’s contributions are key to territorializing the Internet and making sense of digital colonialism in Latin America. In particular, we believe that the idea of disconnection of territories can help us to connect the territories that we live in with the territories that sustain our digital interactions. From this perspective, we will refer here to the territory of the Internet as that which sustains our digital society (the territory on which we depend). This includes, for example, the territories where Internet infrastructures are located: the satellites, the routers, the submarine cables, the bits that are being transferred, the data centers, the computers and the data that are stored (La\_jes 2018; Lechón & Ramos, Doria, 2020).

The focus on the earthly biofilm on which all life-forms depend, also referred as *Critical Zones*, also bring to the surface how the Internet is terrestrial. Metals, minerals, chemical substances, and other resources that support the technology industries come from “critical zones”: not only in the sense in of Latour and the Earth Sciences, but also in the sense in which in Latin America territories in dispute are called *zonas de sacrificio* (Bolados et al. 2017). These are territories where, due to the activities of extractive industries, dispossession, displacement, and social erosion prevail. In the same line, Parikka (2015) points out that the current phase of capitalism is characterized by moving extracted parts of various materials into devices. Gabrys (2011) states that a computer can carry up to 1000 and a

smartphone around 200 different materials (La\_jes 2018). However, all these materials do not disappear when they are no longer used, but are only taken out of certain consumption circuits and placed in others, thereby affecting new territories in the form of electronic waste and pollutants.

Following this line of thought, data mining is not just a metaphorical way to refer to the process of identifying patterns in large volumes of data (Parikka, 2015); it is also a very terrestrial activity if we take into account that key materials for devices are metals and minerals such as lithium, gold, and silver. These metals are at the same time the cause of social struggles in the Global South (Svampa 2019). Electronic devices carry heavy and toxic metals such as lead, mercury, cadmium, and PVC (Peace 2010), thereby representing a high health risk for both the bodies and the territories where they are transported in the form of technological waste. The data centers that sustain our cloud economy are terrestrial in the sense that they intensively require space, water, energy, ventilation, and labor. In addition, the data stored in centers require intensive amounts of electricity, space, and water to operate, and data generation depends on a multitude of human energy to produce the devices, and on more humans connected to the devices to produce the data. Most of the communication for the Internet across continents is terrestrial, if we take into consideration that 99% of all transoceanic digital communication is done via maritime cables (Starosielski 2015).

### 3. The body-territory resistances: a cartography in digital times

Latin American feminist authors have contributed to discuss from diverse feminisms (Cabnal 2010; Espinosa, Gómez, and Ochoa 2014; Gargallo 2014; Lang, Dilger, and Pereira Neto 2016; Bolados et al. 2017; Svampa 2021) how women in this region have played a leading role in social struggles and in processes of collective self-organization linked to the field of human rights and the defense of the most excluded sectors; to which have been added in recent decades environmentalist struggles related to anti-extractivist. The denomination “of ecoterritorial feminisms” (Svampa 2021) and “south ecofeminisms” emphasizes their link with the ecoterritorial turn of the struggles and with feminist constructions around environmental justice (Toro Pérez et al. 2020; Svampa, 2021).

Women organized within peasant and indigenous movements in several Latin American and Caribbean countries have been questioning the exploitation and commodification of nature and life, not only the transformation of seeds into commodities but also the commodification of Nature in a broader sense – rivers, mountains, forests, and all biodiversity (fauna and flora). In numerous collectives of women who have organized themselves in Latin America, the conflict between capital and life as a crisis of civilization is evident. These collectives have developed theoretical and conceptual tools for this resistance, such as the formulation of the notion of body-territory. The notion of conflict between capital and life is brought up here in the context of feminist movements and the feminist economy, mainly in its “disruptive” aspects (Pérez Orozco 2005). It proposes a complete reconfiguration of economy, work, and care policies (in the social and environmental domains), placing the sustainability of life at the center of economic and social relations (Pérez Orozco 2005; Tait 2015).



The collective “Miradas Críticas del Territorio desde el Feminismo”<sup>2</sup> – which articulates groups of women across European and American countries – is central here, as well as the “Red Latinoamericana de Mujeres Defensoras de los Derechos Sociales y Ambientales”,<sup>3</sup> which acts collectively across the continent at the interface between feminisms and environmental thinking. Here we explore the notions that emerge from collectives of indigenous women who self-identify with indigenous community feminisms.

At the same time, women are being affected and building resistance to the extractive projects across Latin America for gold, silver, and other minerals such as lithium, that are key components of the computers and infrastructures that sustain our digital society. A portion of these collective actions have been mapped and can be viewed on the Environmental maps.<sup>4</sup> This initiative catalogs and documents socio-environmental conflicts around the world, gathering stories of communities that fight for environmental justice with the objective of giving visibility and helping to hold accountable those who promote attacks on territories (forests, rivers, mountains, etc.). The specific map on conflicts involving women was developed with the support of the “Red de Mujeres Defensoras”; 21 conflicts are currently catalogued, all located in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The description that accompanies this map emphasizes that women are not only affected by extractive activities, but also take actions to strengthen themselves against the dynamics of violence and discrimination, actively participating in proposing and maintaining new forms of territorial and community enhancement. This map was created by an alliance of women to make their struggles visible through mobilization, “Movilización de Mujeres Afrodescendientes por el Care de la Vida y los Territorios Ancestrales,” in April 2015.

Another women’s collective was constituted within the Latin American Council of Social Sciences<sup>5</sup> (CLACSO): the working group “Cuerpos, Territorios y Feminismos,” initiated by the collective “Miradas Críticas del Territorio desde el Feminismo,” which proposes reflections on geopolitics and patriarchal violence from the perspective of ecofeminism, decolonialism and a feminist political ecology of the Global South. One key question that emerged concerns a popular feminist education that rethinks the relationship between the body and territory, disrupting the subject–object distance, and proposing an understanding of the body as “constituted” by the space it inhabits, its climate, its geography, its history, and its food (Gabón 2018). Therefore, the existence and the “health” of territories for these collectives are closely linked to the health of bodies and communities.

When there is conflict in the territories, we feel a pain that materializes directly in the body and specifically in the body of women: mines, oil wells, roads, contaminated water ... etc. They are damaged territories where violence takes place: femicides, harassment, attacks on bodies that need to be cared for. When someone needs care, we are the women who take care of it. The violence generated by extractivism leaves traces on our bodies, and when our rivers or lagoons are polluted by the mine or oil, we have a double job. We go for water to places where it is clean, we take care of those who get sick and that tires and affects us. (Collective Miradas Críticas 2017, 13)

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<sup>2</sup>See: <https://territorioyfeminismos.org/about/>.

<sup>3</sup>See: <https://www.redlatinoamericanademujeres.org/nosotras>.

<sup>4</sup>See: <https://ejatlas.org/>.

<sup>5</sup>See: <https://www.clacso.org/cuerpos-territorios-y-feminismos/>.

There are multiple conflicts in different countries with specific territories, contexts, and communities. But this diversity of women's collective actions in territorial and environmental resistances has not prevented the consolidation of common proposals and alliances (Svampa 2021; Tait and Moreno 2021), expressing themselves, using cross-cutting slogans, such as: "We put our bodies on the front lines in the struggle"; "Neither the land nor women are territories of conquest"; "Our territory is our body and our spirit"; "Water cannot be sold, it must be cared for and defended"; "Seeds of resistance in women's hands"; "The sustainability of life over profit." These mobilization maxims arise from various territories in and between countries as in the conflicts signaled in the previous map and the named collectives and organizations, but they are also part of broader territorial and ideological alliances.

As these phrases point out, their actions have been anchored in the understanding that bodies often get sick because they reproduce power relations in the capitalist, patriarchal, colonial, racist and anthropocentric systems. We highlight the emergence of collectives of indigenous women who conceive their ideas within the feminist frameworks of indigenous peoples of Aby Yala, who have built their praxis around the identity of a community feminism. It is in the context of these collectives that the notion of *cuerpos-territorios* arises.

Community feminism is manifested by two key notions: community, and a specific modality of feminism which emerges from specific configurations of patriarchy in their bodies and territories. For the Bolivian communitarian feminist Aymara Julieta Paredes Carvajal (2016), this feminism arises from popular or impoverished sectors (including peasants and indigenous people) disregarded by feminisms from both the Global North and South. The community is understood as an "inclusive principle that takes care of life" (Paredes 2010, 78) and in terms of the processes of "depatriarcalización/decolonización" with safeguards against violence and oppression (Gargallo 2014, 47).

The actions of this feminism are expressed in the protection of territories and in the community experience of indigenous women, based on their own cultures and histories: of singular relations with their bodies-territories, their ancestry, sense of community and nature. The body-territory and the body-earth were notions developed especially in the speeches and publications of the Guatemalan community feminist Maya-Xinka Lorena Cabnal; according to her, the body is as much a space as the territory in constituting the identity of indigenous women, which in turn is related to indigenous spirituality that implies the unity between everything (water, land, air, well-being, freedom, spirituality, community). For this reason, the first step of these indigenous women was to recognize that women's bodies have been expropriated historically; and then to reflect on where this body lives and its relationship with the elements of nature and the cosmos and on the fact that, for this relationship to be good and harmonious, both bodies and territories need to be healthy (Cabnal 2010).

Patriarchy is also seen as an ideology that has affected and continues to deeply affect the indigenous peoples' body-territory because it disparages the feminine and justifies different levels and forms of violence. The need to move forward with the anti-patriarchal struggle ("depatriarcalización") is understood as part of the recovery of land and territory because "historical violence and oppression exist both for my first territory, the body, as well as for my historical territory, the land" (Cabnal 2010, 23).

The penetration and violation of the body-territory in the colonization process is precisely the beginning of the patriarchal junction (“*entronque patriarcal*”), a meeting between the European colonial patriarchy and an ancestral patriarchy present in many indigenous communities (Paredes 2017, 5–8). This meeting can have profound significance in the establishment of complicities and common interests in controlling female bodies and territories, strengthened by the mechanisms of internal coloniality of thinking, feeling, acting, and being. The unequal relations of power in the feminist community epistemology affirm “that there is an ancestral original patriarchy, that it is a structural millenary system of oppression against the indigenous and indigenous women” (Cabnal 2010, 14).

The feminist community action starts from the body and the feelings experienced in it for the recovery of the dignity and beauty denied to female bodies, a project of collective and personal liberation that accompanies the community’s recomposition. The depatriarcalización/decolonización action starts from this feeling and reflects from the bodies, from a feminist memory as a history inscribed on the bodies, a memory that can heal the sick bodies-territories, including relearning beauty and the right to pleasure from the body (Gargallo 2014, 170). Currently, community feminism can be understood as a broader movement that continues to expand throughout America through political, epistemic, and territorial alliances, and has been expanding its performance in networks that involve several countries such as those mentioned here.

This colonialism thus persists to the present day, producing forms of submission and servitude (cognitive and material). It does not vanish as the world progressively enters a digital information age; on the contrary, colonial practices are updated and diversified, aiming at the control and administration of information flows, as well as the extraction of data for primitive accumulation and production of submission.

The body-territory has also been appropriated by feminist collectives that are working with digital culture. These collectives are part of the new political positioning called feminist hacktivism (Reis and Natansohn 2019). Such is the case of the Laboratory of Interconnectivities that are activating spaces of *autodefensa* where they mobilize the body as a way to defend the territory of the Internet (Laboratorio de Interconectividades, 2020).

#### 4. Conclusions: digital colonialism, terrestrial, and embodied

This article sought to contribute to the discussion about the new modalities of coloniality and extractivism articulating the terrestrial (or environmental) conflicts that sustain our digital society and their mechanisms of inequality. A parallel can be observed between the dimensions of violence and expropriation of primary colonialism, and new forms of exploitation that characterize the processing of human bodies’ data. We also noticed that in both cases, forms of resistance on epistemic and terrestrial political grounds are emerging, articulating ways of countering the impacts and risks of privatization and control that take advantage of the local economic weaknesses and the absence of legal frameworks.

In this sense, we articulate our argument around the critical dialogue between the terrestrial politics with the notion of “*cuerpo-territorio*” used by feminist collectives in Latin American to mobilize and confront the economic, cultural, and patriarchal dimensions of the attack on their territories. This notion, defined throughout the text, has been

strengthened in the bonds of mutual support between women and communities and has functioned as an epistemic-political strategy. The extraction and control modalities imposed on Latin American bodies-territories point to the need to deepen reflections on current “lines of conflict” and “constant wars” (Latour 2017). These reflections need to be fostered across interdisciplinary and subaltern approaches, recognizing the effects of digitalization over current strategies of exploitation, and over molecular levels of the body and human experience. A fully “decolonial turn” would only be feasible when locally oppressed communities and experts are able to recognize the coercive alignment between territorial and data expropriation.

Dispossession as a colonial practice of resource plunder has been related to the term “data colonialism” by considering the extraction of data as commodities that have value in the digital society (Mejias and Couldry 2019). And while it is true that data has a commodity value, it is also part of the material network of the Internet and resource extraction. Therefore, we need to broaden the limited sense in which we normally understand extractivism and extend it not only to politicize the way in which natural resources become commodities and then data, but in the ways in which bodies and territories are materially affected due to consumption, lack of privacy, and surveillance on the one hand; and on the other hand, as a result of health impacts from constant exposure to radiation antennas, and pollution of rivers, air, and soils that produce various diseases.

Latour’s proposal of terrestrial politics helps us in connecting the digital networks with their territories and struggles. However, from Latin America, the contributions about the territory, affectations, and resistances have been extensively discussed (Erpel 2018; Escobar 2015; Ramírez and López 2015). These contributions allow expanding the idea of terrestrial politics. Just as terrestrial politics, they claim that human beings are not at the center as closed and superior entities exercising dominion over the land, but this does not necessarily imply that humans disappear from the analysis. At the same time, the affectations on territories are not dissociated from the body. On the contrary, as argued by Latin American feminisms, this requires understanding human bodies as territory-bodies; as open entities that are affected and affect the places they inhabit.

On the other hand, according to Latour, the Earth Sciences are key to terrestrial politics and critical zones (Latour 2018, 2020). Even if the argument about the role of Earth Sciences in terrestrial politics does not necessarily deny the importance of other disciplines (i.e. social sciences) to terrestrial politics, we claim that the bodies-territory contributions render visible the vital role of both social and Earth Science in terrestrial politics. The critical zones in Latin America are not only critical for the Earth’s crust, but also for the bodies that cohabit these territories, and that resist on the front line and embody the consequences of the regime of digital colonialism. We maintain that the focus within Earth Sciences on studying terrestrial politics goes hand-in-hand with the Social Sciences: Sociology, Political Science, Human Geography, and interdisciplinary areas that analyze resistance in territories. The Social Sciences and other interdisciplinary studies produce knowledge about slavery, exploitation, violence, territorial impacts, inequalities and displacements that should not be relegated in their role to thick descriptions necessary for terrestrial politics. In line with the contributions of body-territories, the territory of the Internet is also materialized on affected and affecting bodies.

The coloniality processes in Latin America are continuously manifested, but on different bases, through the reconfiguration of old geopolitical and economic asymmetries which affect bodies and territories through reconfigured forms of colonialism and extraction. These modalities incorporate rationalities and technological strategies exercised through violence, control, extraction, and surveillance of maximizing profits for transnational companies, expanding the *zonas de sacrificio*. In this process, bodies, experiences, territories, and subjectivities are commodified, and extraction produces the raw material for two symbiotic processes: first, to enhance applications and instruments which are sold back to Latin American and African countries; and second, to use these to produce order through the bodies-territories control mechanisms. These bodies are being violated with physical, psychological, and material damage in networks that cross online and offline dichotomies. However, they are also being affected by the disconnection of territories. Because of this, we claim that the category of the body-territory can contribute to Latour's proposal of terrestrial politics by rendering visible the tensions among entanglements among human and non-human terrestrial actors.

As a result of the dialogue of terrestrial politics with the discussions of Latin American feminisms which create, from bodies very much placed on the earth, strategies of resistance against the effects upon their body-territories, we maintain that the Social Sciences have to reassemble themselves to examine the corporeal disputes over the territory of the Internet and its effects on the various territories (including the maritime and aerial territories), as well as the humans that embody those disputes that sustain our digital society. We believe that the category of bodies-territory makes it possible for us to discuss a truly terrestrial politics and achieve a decolonial radical perspective to make sense of digital colonialism in Latin America.

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