Received: 17 January 2022 | Revised: 8 November 2022 | Accepted: 1 December 2022

DOI: 10.1111/tran.12596

ARTICLE

Subverting geopolitics: The reinvention of geography in post-revolutionary Mexico

Simone Vegliò

Institute for Urban Research, Malmö University, Malmö, Sweden

Correspondence
Simone Vegliò, Institute for Urban Research, Malmö University, Malmö, Sweden.
Email: simoneveglio7@gmail.com

Abstract

Within the enduring effort to rethink geography from multiple viewpoints and new conceptual categories, critical geographers have recently sought to 'decentralise geopolitics' (An, Sharp, and Shaw, 2021, *Dialogues in Human Geography*, **11**(2), 270) by proposing alternative analyses that can tackle the Eurocentric stance that has largely defined the field. This paper contributes to this decentralising effort by bringing to light, historically, an anti-imperial discourse that took the form of a proper *geographical invention*. Specifically, the paper analyses the thought of the Mexican intellectual José Vasconcelos – who acted as Secretary of Public Education in the aftermath of the Revolution (1921–1924) – and argues that Vasconcelos' discourse represents a 'subaltern' intervention against the imperial presuppositions of the new-born discipline of geopolitics. The paper contends that Vasconcelos' thought constitutes a conscious attempt, although clearly imbued with 'postcolonial' tensions and contradictions, to challenge the 'scientific' basis of the emerging geopolitical discourse at that time. By analysing Vasconcelos' geographical and geo-social imagination through his recuperation of the myth of Atlantis and the idea of Cosmic Race, the paper illuminates an early operation of 'subaltern geopolitics' (Sharp, 2011, *Geoforum*, **42**, 271) that aimed to contrast the new wave of Western imperialism which, intensively nurtured by socio-environmentalist narratives, defined the turn of the twentieth century.

KEYWORDS
critical geography, historical geography, Latin America, postcolonial studies, subaltern geopolitics

1 | INTRODUCTION

When looking at the main themes and approaches that have defined the term 'geopolitics' since its birth in the 1890s, Klaus Dodds and Chih Yuan Woon (2015, p. 91) outline three principal streams of thought. The first one considers 'the power of earth' in terms of physical environments as a key factor in shaping and determining political events; the second

one uses the state as a unit of analysis and conceives it as a 'living organism' that engages in survival struggles within a Darwinist environment; the third one is instead concerned with the production of 'alternative geopolitical ideas and practices', that is to say, the elaboration of 'counter-geopolitical imaginations' that can subvert the imperialist-hegemonic order from diverse social and spatial locations. This paper analyses the geographical and geo-social imagination of the Mexican intellectual José Vasconcelos – who acted as Secretary of Public Education in the aftermath of the Revolution (1921–1924) – and shows the large extent to which his work is decidedly able to contain the three streams of thoughts that have hitherto defined the discipline of geopolitics. Specifically, the paper argues that Vasconcelos' geopolitics represents a 'subaltern' intervention against the imperial presuppositions of the new-born discipline of geopolitics, crucially constituting a conscious attempt, although clearly imbued with 'postcolonial' tensions and contradictions, to challenge the very basis of geopolitical discourse.

Over the past few decades, scholars have proposed to 'decentralise geopolitics' (An et al., 2021) by elaborating alternative ways whereby geopolitical events can be understood and analysed outside, and against, the asymmetric power relations that produce them (Koopman et al., 2021). This body of literature, normally gathered under the label of 'critical geopolitics', has primarily focused on the foundational nature of discourse in moulding and imagining the geographies of politics (Dalby, 1991; Ó Tuathail & Agnew, 1992), shifting the attention toward other subjects in addition to, or in alternative of, the state (Atkinson & Dodds, 2000; Dalby & Ó Tuathail, 1998; Dodds et al., 2013; Ferretti, 2021a; Koopman et al., 2021; McCormack, 2022; Sharp, 1993, 2013; Sparke et al., 2004). Being framed within such theoretical and methodological discussions, this paper engages with a historical reading of geopolitics. By analysing Vasconcelos' recuperation of the myth of Atlantis and the idea of 'Cosmic Race' he elaborated in the early 1920s, the paper argues that Vasconcelos' operation should be understood as an early illustration of 'subaltern geopolitics' (Sharp, 2011) that aimed to contrast the new wave of Western imperialism which, intensively nurtured by socio-environmentalist narratives, defined the turn of the twentieth century.

The reading of Vasconcelos' contribution in this paper contains a twofold novelty. On the one hand, his work has not been explored under a geopolitical lens; on the other hand, his geo-social elaborations, despite the remarkable and somewhat dark contradictions, have not been discussed within the broad landscape of critical geography. As regards this latter aspect, scholars have recently shifted the attention to different systems of geographical knowledge that unfolded outside the monolithic – and predominantly Anglophone – Western canon (McFarlane, 2021; Müller, 2021; Naylor & Thayer, 2022). For instance, Federico Ferretti has engaged in a longstanding work that aims to (re)discover other geographical traditions (Ferretti, 2019) in the context of anti-colonial France (Ferretti, 2021b) and Brazil (Ferretti, 2018; Ferretti & Pedrosa, 2018). Similarly, other scholars have investigated alternative histories of geographical knowledge at the time of decolonisation (Craggs & Wintle, 2016), as well as the making of 'subaltern geographies' across the postcolonial world (Jazeel & Legg, 2019a). By understanding the term 'subaltern' as an 'ambiguous position' that is 'never completely other, resistant or alternative' to the (Western) hegemonic standards (Sharp, 2011, p. 271), this paper intervenes in these debates by offering a specific contribution. Rather than uncovering a diverse piece of geographical knowledge previously unknown to Western geography, the paper examines a geopolitical strategy that took the form of a proper geographical invention. In doing so, it contends that Vasconcelos' discourse can certainly be inserted within what Ferretti defines as the 'histories of radical geography' which 'still largely overlook non-Anglophone critical and radical traditions', and in which the Mexican intellectual offers an early and original example of subaltern geographical imagination that, despite its internal contradictions, is partially constructed 'outside', and undoubtedly against, many of 'the disciplinary and linguistically dominating canons' (2021b, p. 540).

2 | THE MAKING OF 'LATIN' AMERICA: MAPPING AND GEOPOLITICS

The making of geographical imaginations has been one of the most critical devices in articulating, solidifying, and naturalising modern imperial domains (Gregory, 1994; Livingstone, 1992; Said, 1978). Within postcolonial geography's wide critique, subaltern geography 'takes these provocations around geography, space, and representation seriously' (Jazeel & Legg, 2019b, p. 3) and is particularly interested in the enactment of alternative methods and systems of knowledge that, despite being frequently placed within contradictory and ambiguous power relations, openly defy the imperial hegemonic standards. By engaging with this critical perspective, this section explores the historical making of 'Latin' America as a subaltern and racialised space. The discussion explores two closely interrelated themes that have been pivotal in creating and consolidating Latin America as a geographical imagination: mapping and geopolitics. While mapping played an essential role in the historical constitution of Western geography and its related geopolitical implications,

both mapping and geopolitics have recently undergone epistemological challenges that aim to create a radical rupture with their Eurocentric and imperial presuppositions. Within this discussion, the paper maintains that Vasconcelos' ideas should be understood within such a broad genealogy of radical critique that has hit Western geographical thought and its imagination.

There is little doubt that maps are among the most efficient tools for creating geographical imaginations. Maps operated as discursive devices imbued with power relations (Harley, 1988; Harris & Hazen, 2005; Wood, 1993) and in which territorial and racial components were often intertwined in order to support and justify colonial projects (Crampton, 2006; Mignolo, 2005; Winichakul, 1997). Moreover, a recent wave of critical scholarship has discussed the need to 'decolonise' geographical knowledge (Jazeel, 2017; Naylor & Thayer, 2022; Noxolo, 2017) and mapping has been involved in this kind of epistemological critique. For instance, some scholars highlighted the struggles of 'unceded territories' against colonial and postcolonial naming, reclaiming the silenced indigenous knowledge that was part of those territories before the arrival of the colonisers (De Leeuw & Hunt, 2018; see also Nishiyama, 2022). As far as Latin America is concerned, several contributions incarnate this 'ontological conflict' at the level of cartography (Oslender, 2021), participating in larger reflections on rethinking crucial geographical concepts such as that of 'territory' (Colectivo de Geografía Crítica del Ecuador, 2017; Halvorsen, 2019) and visualising hitherto unspoken 'social cartographies' (Almeida & E., 2013). After all, already during the early colonial time, cartographical illustrations served as a legitimisation of imperial domains, and the colonisation of the Americas illuminates this fact.

While placing the 'new' territories on the map, Western cartography represented the Americas – as well as Africa and, partly, Asia – as spaces populated by monsters, cannibals, and naked or semi-naked women often accompanied by animals, thus indicating the savageness and backwardness of these continents in comparison with Europe, which was usually depicted as an elegant lady (Mignolo, 1995, 2005, 2014). In short, the action of modern colonialism clearly articulated its rhetoric through the grammar of race (Dussel, 1995; Mignolo, 1995; Quijano, 2000). The orientation of maps began famously to change too, and the North/South division took the up/down shape that is familiar to us today; at the same time, 'Europe' emerged as a central part of the world, both spatially and socio-historically, promoting itself as the first and most advanced civilisation (Coronil, 1996; Quijano, 2000). However, the history of 'Latin' America as a geographical location was forged shortly after the liberation from the colonial powers, when the new-born states began to be the target of new imperial desires. For instance, to prevent the British action, Napoleon III's France claimed its 'natural' right over those territories, arguing for the substantial cultural similarities resulting from the fact of being 'Latin' like France (see McGuinness, 2003). Meanwhile, the United States began to rise as a regional power and by the mid-nineteenth century started competing for the political and economic control of that portion of the Americas. As McGuinness noted, the Colombian intellectual Jose Maria Torres Caicedo – anticipating the Napoleonic imperial claim – had devised the idea of Latin America as a political project already in the 1850s; however, in Caicedo's case, it was a project that aimed to resist the US action in the region. By using the theories of race in vogue at that time, Caicedo argued for a confrontation between the 'Saxon race' and the 'Latin race' (McGuinness, 2003, p. 99). In brief, during that period, the 'idea' of Latin America (Mignolo, 2005) began to rise swiftly. As with the case of the 'invention' of the Americas that accompanied the period of the conquest (Dussel, 1995; O'Gorman, 1972), the articulation of a geo-social and geopolitical project rapidly acquired a solid racial connotation. After all, as Tenorio Trillo underlined, Latin America 'has never designated a geographically or historically tangible reality – at least not with a minimum of empirical and conceptual rigor' (2017, p. 1). Although there is not a widely agreed date or event indicating when this process took off,[1] Walter Mignolo stressed that '"Latin" America, all of a sudden, became a new "racial" category defined not by blood or skin color but by marginal status (determined by a myriad of markers such as geographical location and language) in relation to Southern Europeans' (2005, p. 73). Once again, the making of geographical imagination was constitutively racialised.

The 'arrival' of Latin America signified the simultaneous presence of four interconnected geopolitical dimensions, all entwined with a racial character. First, as mentioned above, the region's new name aimed to naturalise the French geopolitical aspirations. Second, at the same time, the European descendance, which would begin to be labelled as Latinity (*Latinidad*), constituted a necessary marker of inclusion for the ruling elites in the new-born nation-states, thus acting as a formidable racial device that placed in subaltern position indigenous, Afro-descendant populations and, to a different extent depending on the case, mixed-raced people (*mestizos*); this aspect had obviously significant consequences in the articulation of these countries' geopolitical views and aspirations. Third, by the last decades of the nineteenth century, the imperialist ambitions of the United States over Latin America became fully explicit and this, combined with the related ideology of White supremacy, made Latin America quickly become 'darker and darker' (Mignolo, 2005, p. 33). Fourth, as a symmetrical reaction to the latter point, the idea of Latin America began to be used to organise projects of resistance against United States imperialism (see Gobat, 2013). As we will see in more detail later, this complex and fully racialised geopolitical environment is crucial to understand the construction of Vasconcelos' subaltern geopolitics.[2]

The transition to independence did not stop mapping activities but, on the contrary, triggered new needs in terms of spatial representations, and cartography would become one of the most important postcolonial challenges. The ruling elites used cartography as an indispensable tool to solidify and naturalise the new-born nation-states. Such a postcolonial mission is well-highlighted by James Akerman, who underlined the 'almost universal attention newly independent states pay to the production of new maps and atlases that affirm their independence and identity' (2017, p. 8). However, this operation was often imbued with the typical postcolonial doubleness in which, while proposing sharp ruptures with the colonial past, it embodied an effective tool for 'internal colonialism', which is to say that the existing 'disproportionate distribution of power among elites, indigenes, regions, and ethnic groups within decolonizing states' just deepened (Akerman, 2017, p. 3). As will be shown, it is precisely within these profound postcolonial tensions that Vasconcelos' work took shape. In the meantime, the geographical fervour that accompanied the naturalisation and consolidation of the nation-states was complemented by a likewise international enthusiasm for geography as a science.

The *fin-de-siècle* socio-economic and technological transformations strongly impacted political perceptions; the world swiftly scaled up for the first time to a global, profoundly interconnected dimension, and the consequent structures of power were far from clear. Starting from the last two decades of the nineteenth century, geography assumed a special character. On the one hand, it sought to account for the international socio-cultural and economic structures by providing strictly biological and environmental justifications; on the other, it aimed to unveil the geopolitical laws that were thought to underlie the recently born international scene. Within the Euro-[North]American context, the first case consisted in the elaboration of a group of theories that gathered under the umbrella of social Darwinism; the second signified the birth of geopolitics as a scientific discipline. Of course, the two were deeply interconnected. Geopolitics was immediately marked by a strong colonial attitude, as a discipline primarily created to resolve the 'imperial preoccupations and social Darwinist anxieties about the survival of states and empires' (Dodds & Woon, 2015, p. 91). It remarkably resembled a science of imperialism. The belief that the formation of large territorial entities was crucial to achieve a dominant international role was widely shared among Western powers' political and intellectual elites, and the acquisition of colonial extensions was considered to be pivotal in terms of both socio-material profit and international prestige. By assembling geophysical and environmentalist arguments, a long wave of geopolitical theorists proliferated at the turn of the century. It was the birth of classical geopolitics (Dodds & Woon, 2010).

The father of geopolitics is commonly considered to be the British geographer Halford Mackinder (1861–1947), who advocated the centrality of heartland control for the achievement of international supremacy. On the other shore of the Atlantic, the American Alfred Mahan (1840–1914) opted instead for the crucial role of sea power as a unique and irreplaceable element to achieve international power, using the British Empire as an iconic demonstration. Others, such as Friedrich Ratzel (1844–1904), applied geographical determinist approaches joined with the mechanical transfer of Darwinist ideas to social science, offering a mix of biological, environmental, and racial elements that would tragically be foundational for the birth of Nazi geopolitics (especially through the concept of *Lebensraum*, the 'living space'). In addition to Ratzel, it is worth mentioning at least Ellen Churchill Semple (1863–1932) and Ellsworth Huntington (1876–1947) as leading scholars who proposed a close relationship between power, physical environment, and racial aspects. To sum up, classical geopolitics combined 'the global strategizing of Mackinder with social Darwinist insights including the state as a living organism', building on the idea that 'a geopolitical perspective armed with maps and statistics was believed to be an indispensable part of the state and its intellectual armoury' (Dodds & Woon, 2015, p. 92). However, most significantly, the birth of geopolitics would also generate a wave of counter-geopolitical thought which, in multiple and heterogeneous ways, proposed 'alternative imaginations, and practices' (Dodds & Woon, 2015, p. 91) against the imperial and Eurocentric notions of the discipline.

Within the rich constellation of contributions that have explored the history of critical and alternative approaches to geopolitics, some works have particularly engaged with the Latin American context. For instance, by re-exploring the work of Brazilian critical geographers, Ferretti showed (Ferretti, 2018, p. 12) that Josué De Castro (1908–1973) not only influenced the thought of a crucial figure in the field like Milton Santos, but also anticipated critical geopolitics as a 'progressive discipline' already in the 1940s by challenging the economicist and reductionist perspectives on geography and development that were hegemonic at that time. Rather explicitly, one of De Castro's works was called *Geopolitics of Hunger* (published in 1952) and was part of a larger discussion on geopolitics within a network of Brazilian radical thinkers (Ferretti, 2018; see also Ferretti & Pedrosa, 2018, p. 712). This Brazilian progressive approach to geopolitics is of significant importance given the abovementioned conservative, Northern, and imperial presuppositions of the discipline, elements that had been further exacerbated during the era of Nazi geopolitics.[3]

Another remarkable example of an alternative approach to geopolitics can be found during the Cold War, a period in which the Euro-[North]American mechanistic ideas of development supported a set of geopolitical aspirations over

Latin America (Slater, 1993), being the region part of the not-aligned geography labelled as Third World. To oppose this operation, some Latin American thinkers elaborated the school of Dependency Theory, blaming the socio-political structure inherited from colonialism for the subordinate political position of the region. *Dependentistas* proposed a variety of approaches, including radical (Frank, 1970), neo-Marxist (Dos Santos, 1970),[4] and reformist perspectives (Cardoso & Faletto, 1979). These attempts, as Slater argued, represent a way to 'theorise back' and against the 'new colonization of the imagination' (1993, p. 430) enacted by the United States to achieve political control over the region. Other remarkable examples countering mainstream geopolitics can be found in more recent times, when social and indigenous movements, and more generally non-state actors, expressed a model of anti-geopolitics, which is often also characterised as geopolitics from below (Routledge, 2003). One iconic case in this sense is that of the Zapatista movement in the 1990s, when the indigenous group revendicated its autonomy within, and against, the Mexican state; *Zapatistas*' struggle particularly involved social, political, and cultural imaginations, therefore – also – articulating a proper 'war of words' (Routledge, 2003, p. 242). To give one last example, building on the idea of anti-geopolitics and adopting a feminist stance, Sara Koopman (2011) analysed the case of Western volunteers protecting vulnerable human bodies in Colombia, showing the existence of another model of challenging hegemonic geopolitics 'from below'; a model that, building on feminist geopolitics, she names as alter-geopolitics. Here again, the analysis moved away from traditional interstate relations to explore practices that mobilised alternative models of political knowledge and imaginations. To summarise, it is precisely within this wide genealogy of counter-geographical and counter-geopolitical imaginations that Vasconcelos' discourse exemplifies an early and original attempt to decentralise the foundations of Western hegemonic geographical thought.

3 | SUBALTERN GEOPOLITICS: THE MYTH OF ATLANTIS AND THE COSMIC RACE

José Vasconcelos (1882–1959) is a central figure in Mexico's twentieth century. As an intellectual and prolific writer, Vasconcelos was one of the most influential figures in leading the cultural character of the Mexican Revolution (1910–1920). After the revolutionary period, he held prominent positions such as Rector of the National University (1920–1921) and Secretary of Public Education (1921–1924), being also one of the presidential candidates in the 1929 elections. He was a politician, writer, philosopher, and intellectual who played a fundamental role in shaping Mexico's post-revolutionary identity. It is possible to consider 1929 as the end of Vasconcelos' political activity: although he continued his intellectual work throughout his life, the political defeat he suffered in the 1929 presidential elections signified a substantial and permanent retreat from official politics. The discussion in this section principally concentrates on the short book *La Raza Cósmica* (The Cosmic Race) Vasconcelos published in 1925, a book which is powerfully able to encapsulate his geopolitical thought at that time. The book's core point is that racial mixture makes the best expression of human beings: to prove his argument, Vasconcelos mobilises a strictly geographical and geo-social discourse that shakes up the main historical notions of Western geography.

As it begins, the book immediately dismantles the rhetoric of the New World. Vasconcelos highlights that 'in the opinion of respectable geologists, the American continent included some of the most ancient regions of the world', and this point is demonstrated not only by 'the architectural ruins of legendary Mayans, Quechuas, and Toltecs' that 'are testimony of civilized life previous to the oldest foundations of towns in the Orient and Europe', but also, and more importantly, by the fact that, 'as research advances, more support is found for the hypothesis of Atlantis as the cradle of a civilization that flourished millions of years ago in the vanished continent and in parts of what today is America' (1997 [1925], p. 7). Vasconcelos' move intends to shift the very understanding of geological history by bringing into the scene a new continent that makes him able to account for a new human history. In doing so, he rapidly dismissed the Western/colonial discourse of novelty and newness that accompanied the conquest of the Americas. As Quijano and Wallerstein famously noted, 'the New World was new, that is not old, not tied down to tradition, to a feudal past, to privilege, to antiquated ways of doing things' (1992, pp. 551–552) and, according to that narrative, was therefore a historical duty to dominate and civilise it. Vasconcelos seeks to get rid of this imperial narration. By using geological reasoning, he argues 'if we are, then, geologically ancient, as well as in respect to the tradition, how can we still continue to accept the fiction, invented by our own European fathers, of the novelty of a continent that existed before the appearance of the land from where the discoverers and conquerors came?' (1997 [1925], p. 8). The revelation of such a fiction implied a radical geographical shift.

The myth of Atlantis has a millennial history – its first appearance is in Plato, within the dialogues of Timaeus and Critias – and countless cartographical representations. Two moments are of considerable relevance throughout this long

history. The first one occurred in the aftermath of the conquest of the Americas, when the geo-imperial enthusiasm in Europe created a cartographical race that aimed to map every angle of the new-shaped earth, something that Mezzadra and Neilson persuasively named as the period of 'the primitive accumulation of modern cartography' (2013, pp. 30–37). Even the myth of Atlantis was invested by that cartographic ardour. Among the several attempts at mapping the invisible continent, the German Jesuit scholar and mapmaker Athanasius Kircher designed in 1665 what is probably the best-known map of Atlantis in history (currently preserved in the British Library in London). The interest in the location of Atlantis was used to explain the origins of the American native populations already at that time; in the sixteenth century, several Spanish notable figures such as the bishop Bartolomé de las Casas, the historian Francisco López de Gómara, and the well-read explorer Pedro Sarmiento de Gamboa suggested the possibility of the Atlantean origins of Americans (Díaz, 2012; Guerrero, 2016). The second part of this history takes place toward the end of the nineteenth century. At that time, when the discussion about Atlantis seemed to have vanished, the American congressman Ignatius Donnelly (1882) resurrected it by writing the book *Atlantis: The Antediluvian World*. Donnelly's story has several elements in common with Vasconcelos'. In addition to the location, which Donnelly also places in the Atlantic Ocean, the North American politician considered Atlantis as 'the region where man first rose from a state of barbarism to civilization' and, when its population then spread across the planet, it gave birth to the great ancient civilisations, such as the Egyptian, Greek, and others (Donnelly, 1882, p. 1). In such a way, Donnelly stepped into the debates about race and imperialism that were accompanying the transition to the new century. It is not clear whether Vasconcelos was aware of the existence of Donnelly's text; however, the Mexican rather similarly stated in the *Raza Cósmica*: 'with the decline of the Atlanteans, the intense civilization was transported to other sites and changed races: it dazzled in Egypt, it expanded in India and Greece, grafted onto new races. The Aryans mixed with the Dravidians to produce the Hindustani, and at the same time, by means of other mixtures, created Hellenic culture' (1997 [1925], p. 9). Hence, Atlantis, according to Vasconcelos too, was the starting point of the world civilisations. However, his Atlantis was not a civilisation with indefinite human features, but it consisted in the 'civilization of the red men', that became before 'the civilization of the white men' (1997 [1925], p. 7).

A twofold strategy is visible in Vasconcelos' use of the myth of Atlantis. On the one side, Vasconcelos' remaking of geography shakes off the foundations of the Western geographical knowledge that emerged in the early colonial period. He openly defies the geographical discourse that accompanied the insertion of the Americas in the map, an operation in which, as Mignolo suggested, 'the center of the world was not determined geographically but ideologically' (1995, p. 261). By shifting that centre – and its related history – through the invention of Atlantis, Vasconcelos subverts the map of the colonial discourse.[5] On the other side, the history of Atlantis allows Vasconcelos to mobilise and overturn the racial discourses and conceptions that were legitimising new imperial projects in Latin America and elsewhere. By reinventing the theory of race and placing the red Atlantean people as the precursor of the subsequent world civilisations, including the white, Vasconcelos not only 'scientifically' rejects the novel imperial rhetoric that was arguing for non-White peoples' intrinsic backwardness but, contrary to views such as Donnelly's, he uses that argument to conceptualise a sharp division between the two Americas. Here again, the existing socio-political and cultural hierarchies are turned upside down. Taking a closer look at *La Raza Cósmica*, it is possible to rapidly identify the book's target: the imperialist desires of the United States over Latin America. However, before delving into this central aspect, it is worth focusing on the postcolonial environment from which Vasconcelos' discourse unfolded.

There is an apparent contradiction in Vasconcelos' racial conceptualisation. While he flags up the significant extent to which race was used as a method to place Latin American peoples in an inferior position and justify a variety of political actions (among which imperialism), he nonetheless readopts a racial discourse to overturn such a position (important analyses of Vasconcelos' work are Camargo, 2007; De Beer, 1966; Fell, 1989; Garrido, 1963; Grijalva, 2004; Miranda, 2009; Pacheco Finella, 1967; Pineda Buitrago, 2013; Stavans, 2011; Taracena, 1982). As for the relation between racism and the Mexican Revolution, Alain Knight stated that 'the mestizo ... became the ideological symbol of the new [post-revolutionary] regime' (1990, p. 86) and, as a part of that operation, Vasconcelos' re-appropriation of racialising colonial techniques has been heavily criticised (for instance, see Manrique, 2016). Knight noted how 'indigenismo [*Indigenism*] tended to reproduce many of the racist assumptions of the preceding "Westernism," which it formally opposed'; that is, while the post-revolutionary discourse sought to represent a radical reaction 'against Porfirian racism, it continued to operate within the racist paradigm – it could not, in other words, break out of that paradigm, but chose rather to criticize and invert several of its basic tenets' (Knight, 1990, p. 87). Vasconcelos' discourse was evidently trapped in this profound contradiction. As Tenorio Trillo suggested, Vasconcelos' theory was a sort of 'scientific racist antiracism' which 'led him to expand the nineteenth-century racist theories into the twentieth-century post-revolutionary era' (1996, p. 211). That is to say that, while Vasconcelos' conception of race diverged from those promoted by Porfirian intellectuals before

the Revolution, nonetheless, 'it formed part of the same discussion, in the same terms, and it derived from the same basic assumptions' (1996, p. 212). Such a sort of trap has frequently characterised the transition to postcolonial time; however, as Craib pointed out, 'the fact that formerly colonized subjects did not escape the boundaries created by colonial powers does not, of course, mean that newly formed states were somehow inauthentic or colonies in postcolonial drag' (2017, p. 17). And it is precisely by taking account of these deep and perhaps often inextricable inconsistencies, which have usually defined the terrain of the postcolonial condition (Mezzadra & Rahola, 2006), that makes it possible to better understand the convoluted articulation of Vasconcelos' thought. After all, by scaling up to a geopolitical dimension, Knight noted that, as a result of the United States' two military invasions of Mexico (the most important of which terminated with the acquisition of nearly one third of Mexican territory in 1848), during the post-revolutionary period 'the task of creating a viable, coherent nation – a nation that was more than a mere "geographical expression" – was never more daunting, never more pressing' (2010, p. 84). It would be limiting, if not entirely misleading, not to consider this specific postcolonial socio-political context when evaluating Vasconcelos' geographical and geo-social constructions. Tenorio Trillo particularly stressed that, during that period, 'not only was a political balance still being negotiated with arms, money, and words, but also the concepts of nationalism, national culture, and education were in a state of flux' (1996, p. 202). And the figure of Vasconcelos, including its dreams, ambitions, and apparent contradictions, can certainly epitomise like few others such an incessant and often inconsistent state of flux.

Going back to *La Raza Cósmica*, in the second part of the book Vasconcelos reveals without any hesitation his main political concern: 'the Yankees will end up building the last great empire of a single race, the final empire of White supremacy' (1997 [1925], p. 20). This crucial line allows us to see Vasconcelos' book under the lens of a peculiar anti-imperialism in which he does not merely highlight the perils of the northern neighbour but also mobilises and reorganises a whole geo-racial toolkit to claim the natural right of the Mexican state – and by extension of Latin America – to freely decide its geopolitical destiny. Despite declaring the positive impact of the European fathers (see quote above), Vasconcelos sheds a dark light on the white race, especially when the expression is used to indicate the United States and England.[6] The opposition was, therefore, between 'the northerners' ethnic immurement' that was an obstacle to peaceful racial mixing[7] and 'the southerners' openness' that instead consisted in 'the most favorable fact if one thinks ... of the future, because it will then be immediately plain that we belong to tomorrow and they belong to yesterday' (Vasconcelos, 1997 [1925], p. 60). In doing so, Vasconcelos disarticulates the postcolonial temporality that assigned to former colonies a permanent condition of wait for (Western) progress and civilisation (Chakrabarty, 2000) and instead prospects the inescapable historical process that would bring Latin America to a state of international importance and prestige. Nonetheless, it is crucial to note that for Vasconcelos the 'new race' would not dominate the others as it had occurred until then; on the contrary, 'what is going to emerge out there is the definitive race, the synthetical race, the integral race, made up of the genius and the blood of all peoples and, for that reason, more capable of true brotherhood and of a truly universal vision' (1997 [1925], p. 20). Hence, while to a certain extent Vasconcelos' racial discourse represented some continuity with the ideas of the Porfirian regime, his articulation of a sort of 'Messianic Hispanism' was remarkably unique as, differently from the previous generation of intellectuals, he 'did not believe that prototypes of modernity and cosmopolitanism existed. Rather, they had to be *created*' (Tenorio-Trillo, 1996, p. 218; italics added). Crucially, this creative articulation of postcolonial modernity was envisioned through a distinct regional perspective that could finally liberate Latin America from being the object of new imperial actions. In relation to this latter point, although in his peculiar way, Vasconcelos seems to deserve to be placed within the long tradition of Latin American anti-imperialism. Despite proposing, and overturning, one of the typical tools of European colonialism such as that of race, he undoubtedly understood the unification of the 'Latin' part of the Americas as a necessary defence against the reiteration of foreign aggressions.

Before Vasconcelos, notable figures such as Simón Bolívar (1783–1830) and José Martí (1853–1895) – among others – profoundly encouraged ideas of political and socio-cultural unity of Latin America as a unique way to face colonialism and imperialism, using *mestizaje* as a unifying factor (for instance, see Miller, 2004, p. 1–26). The Cuban intellectual Roberto Fernández Retamar, who worked extensively on José Martí and his anti-imperial thought, labelled Vasconcelos' *La Raza Cósmica* as 'a book as confused as the author himself'; nevertheless, he pointed out, it was 'full of intuitions' (1989, p. 5). Despite his remarkable differences from Bolívar and Martí, Vasconcelos put forward a geopolitical and geo-social project that had points of contact with them. To give one example, a couple of years before the publication of *La Raza Cósmica*, while still working as a minister, Vasconcelos highlighted that 'Mexico is only one of the twenty nations sharing the same blood and language, nations that are separate for now but, sooner or later, they will have to unify ... because the feeling of race is even more vigorous than that of patriotism' (Secretaría de Educación Pública, 1923, p. 16). He explicitly declared the absolute need to continue Bolívar's work, 'partly because he realized the danger into which we were falling by dividing ourselves into isolated nationalities, and partly because of his gift of prophecy, formatted the plan for an

Ibero-American federation which some fools still question today' (1997 [1925], p. 18). Reminding what several decades after would characterise the critique of the racialised condition of *Latinos* living in the United States, such as the iconic work of Gloria Anzaldúa (1987), Vasconcelos forcefully stated that 'we think that there is no race until we cross the United States border and we find out that we have already been classified, and even before we had the opportunity to define ourselves' (1934, p. 21).[8] As Tenorio Trillo noted, Vasconcelos aimed to construct an 'iberista' argument which could be 'alternative' to the 'enlightened West': being marked by 'non-individualism' and 'mestizaje', it had to lead to 'a new civilizational option born from lust' (2017, p. 75).

While for Vasconcelos there was no question about the need to integrate Latin America into a unique socio-cultural and political subject having the Cosmic Race as its epicentre, there is not a clear dividing line between what is biological and what is cultural in his ideas. The intellectuals of post-revolutionary *indigenismo* were far from proposing a consistent view in that sense; in general terms, there was the assumption that the 'positive aspects of Indian culture could be preserved, the negative expunged' (Knight, 1990, p. 86), therefore implying that mixing was not only a biological but also a cultural action, in a way in which it was possible to optimise each part's elements. In any case, Vasconcelos specified that in North America racial mixture was overcome and 'Northamericanism' took its place. Instead 'Latinamericanism', he maintains, is a 'truly universal' model whose 'mission embraces all Latin American countries', but 'we have to exclude the United States, not because of hate, but because they represent another expression of human nature' (Secretaría de Educación Pública, 1923, p. 603). Once again, Vasconcelos deploys conceptual devices typical of colonialism and imperialism, such as discourses on race and human nature, to defend Mexico and Latin America from new imperial aggressions. In doing so, he clearly operates within the ambiguity of the postcolonial condition, that is to say, a 'scene' in which, somehow surprisingly, 'colonialism returns at the moments of its disappearance' (McClintock, 1995, p. 11).

Vasconcelos' theory of racial mixing was also an open attack on positivism and social Darwinism. The second part of *La Raza Cósmica* engages with the struggle against positivism and its project of 'whitening' society. Vasconcelos makes an explicit claim to disown the scientific value of 'the brutal Darwinist selection', stressing that it is 'valid, if at all, only for inferior species, but no longer for men' (1997 [1925], p. 32). Knight noted that, by 'reversing older biological assumptions – those of Spencer and Agassiz, which had deemed hybrids inferior to pure races – Vasconcelos both saw and applauded the process of global mestization'; in that sense, such a leading role of the *mestizo* in post-revolutionary society 'did represent a departure from the cosmopolitan, Europhile ethos of the Porfiriato' (1990, p. 86). While criticising Darwinist conceptions of society, Vasconcelos underlined that in positivist theory, 'the White, particularly the English-speaking White, is presented as the sublime culmination of human evolution; to cross him with another race would be equivalent to muddling his stock' (1997 [1925], p. 33). A few lines before this strong denunciation of theories (and practices) of white supremacy, he draws his original conceptualisation of race, arguing that 'the most illustrious epochs of humanity have been, precisely, those in which several different people have come into contact and mixed with each other. India, Greece, Alexandria, Rome are but examples that only a geographic and ethnic universality is capable of giving the fruits of civilization' (1997 [1925], p. 32). As a sort of paradox, Vasconcelos' geo-social arguments to support the arrival of the Cosmic Race relied on a vivid commitment to universality, which was used to confer dignity, and thus geopolitical autonomy, to Mexico and more broadly to Latin America.

4 | CONCLUSION

Critical geopolitics is defined by its engagement with alternative methods and concepts seeking to account for, and struggle against, the world of politics. Within this context, colonialism and racism are considered (instead of militarism) as driving forces shaping geopolitical discourses and practices, therefore being core aspects on which scholars focus (Koopman et al., 2021). By retrospectively looking at the period when the discipline took off, Vasconcelos' work represents an early episode of reaction to such hegemonic order that simultaneously operated at a spatial, political, and racial level. Thus, the recent call to decentralise geopolitics (An, Sharp, and Shaw 2021) can be enriched by a 'subaltern' episode that problematises a binary approach to the study of resistance against classic geopolitics and that displays explicitly the postcolonial ambiguities on which it was articulated. As a result, Vasconcelos' early operation of subaltern geopolitics can be read through three main interrelated points.

First, as Sharp highlights, subaltern geopolitics specifically combines 'the notions of subaltern (a presence of lower-ranking order) and geopolitics (a dominant form of knowledge that has attempted to order and regulate space)' (2019, p. 76), and this tension is particularly epitomised in Vasconcelos' convoluted connection with dominant geopolitics, in which he seeks to subvert the subaltern position by reshaping the alleged scientific notions that account

for the world of international politics. Second, such a subversive geopolitical operation is built upon a reiteration of racial discourse; in doing so, he remains partly tied with some of the racial elements which defined the Porfirian regime, leaving his action trapped between traditional colonial narratives on the one side and anti-imperialist claims on the other. In this sense, Vasconcelos' operation seems to materialise the typical 'postcolonial hybrids' which characteristically involve 'practices that are entangled with forces of both domination and resistance at a variety of often interlocking scales' (Sharp, 2019, p. 76). Lastly, Vasconcelos expressed his alternative geopolitical model by reinventing the basics of Western geographical knowledge. He attempted to 'reterritorialize' human geography (Sparke, 2007, p. 118; also Sparke, 2002) by reawakening the myth of Atlantis and challenging the fundaments of the hegemonic geographical discourse. In relation to this latter point, Vasconcelos radically affirmed: 'if all nations then build theories to justify their policies or to strengthen their deeds, let us develop in Mexico our own theories' (quoted in Tenorio-Trillo, 1996, p. 212). It is precisely this explicit need of theoretical invention, which I defined above as a creative articulation of postcolonial modernity, that represents a crucial aspect of Vasconcelos' geopolitics.

To conclude, this paper has aimed to show that Vasconcelos' discourse consists in another noteworthy illustration confirming the fact that, as Jazeel and Legg aptly suggested, 'critical engagements with colonialism and its afterlives are always spatial' (2019b, p. 3). And it is probably the necessity to spatially deal with the re-articulations of colonialism that made Vasconcelos forge an imaginary geography that could destabilise the hegemonic system of geographical and geopolitical knowledge. After all, as Craib punctually reminds us, 'as space becomes a stage, history becomes teleology' (Craib, 2004, p. 5), and perhaps there could be no more fitting words that are able to explain the original essence of Vasconcelos' subaltern geopolitics.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Data sharing not applicable to this paper as no datasets were generated or analysed during the current study.

ORCID

Simone Vegliò https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8192-5122

ENDNOTES

[1] Further accounts on the emergence of the concept of Latin America are provided by Phelan (1968), Ardao (1980), Estrade (1998), Quijada (1998), Gobat (2013), and Tenorio-Trillo (2017).

[2] Of course, the ideas of the Mexican Revolution also played a crucial role, especially with respect to the intention to include the indigenous populations in the national project (as we will see in the paper). However, the literature on the topic has normally ignored the fully racialised geopolitical environment to which Vasconcelos' geographical and geo-social imagination aimed to respond. A telling observation of such a racialised conceptualisation of the region is given by Tenorio Trillo, when he pointed out that 'the idea of "Latin America" ought to have vanished with the obsolescence of racial theory' (2017, p. 1).

[3] The tragic experience of Nazi geopolitics brought about a silence around the discipline that would last until the Cold War (see Dodds, 2003).

[4] That period of alternative geopolitics in Latin America was also influenced by 1959's Cuban Revolution, which triggered a wave of revolutionary geopolitics in the region and beyond.

[5] Within the technical role of cartography in legitimating and naturalising the postcolonial state, a significant operation was carried out by the Mexican geographer Antonio García Cubas (1832–1912), when he coordinated the first *Carta General* [Atlas] of Mexico in 1850. As Craib stressed, in that atlas, 'within the graticule, García Cubas positioned Mexico for the first time in relation to the Greenwich meridian rather than the easternmost point on the cathedral in the central plaza of Mexico City, the traditional meridian for Mexican maps' (2004, p. 33). Although contradictorily – as this paper seeks to underline – Vasconcelos frequently reacts against that typical postcolonial operation of standardising the nation-state according to exclusive, and largely imperialist, Western/European geo-historical standards.

[6] Vasconcelos also considered England as a potential danger, a danger that he associated with whiteness. He remarked: 'if the Amazon is dominated by the English, either of the islands or of the continent, both champions of the pure White, the emergence of the fifth race [the Cosmic Race] will remain defeated' (1997 [1925], pp. 24–25).

[7] By bringing up the different modalities of colonial action among the empires, Vasconcelos blamed the English for their aggressive and exclusivist behaviour in North America, where they 'kept on mixing only with the whited and annihilated the natives. Even today they continue to annihilate them in a sordid and economic fight, more efficient yet than armed conquest. This proves their limitation and is indication of their decadence' (1997 [1925], p. 18).

[8] In a somewhat similar and more violent description, Anzaldúa famously declared that 'the U.S.–Mexican border *es una herida abierta* [is an open wound] where the Third World grates against the first and bleeds' (1987, p. 3).

REFERENCES

Akerman, J.R. (2017) Introduction. In: Akerman, J.R. (Eds.) *Decolonizing the map. Cartography from Colony to nation*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, pp. 1–9.

Almeida, A. & Almeida Farias Júnior, E. (Eds.). (2013) *Povos e comunidades tradicionais: Nova cartografia social*. Manaus, Brazil: UEA.

An, N., Sharp, J. & Shaw, I. (2021) Still a long journey to decentralize geopolitics. *Dialogues in Human Geography*, 11(2), 270–274. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1177/20438206211017739

Anzaldúa, G. (1987) *Borderlands/La Frontera: The new mestiza*. San Francisco, CA: Aunt Lute Books.

Ardao, A. (1980) *Genesis de la idea y el nombre de América Latina*. Caracas, Venezuela: Centro de Estudios Latinoamericanos Romulo Gallegos.

Atkinson, D. & Dodds, K. (Eds.). (2000) *Geopolitical traditions: Critical histories of a century of geopolitical thought*. London, UK: Routledge.

Camargo, W. (2007) El concepto de imperio en José Vasconcelos. *CUYO. Anuario de Filosofía Argentina y Americana*, 23, 209–232.

Cardoso, F.H. & Faletto, E. (1979) *Dependency and development in Latin America*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Chakrabarty, D. (2000) *Provincializing Europe: Historical thought and postcolonial difference*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Colectivo de Geografía Crítica del Ecuador. (2017) Geografiando para la resistencia. *Journal of Latin American Geography*, 16(1), 172–177. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1353/lag.2017.0006

Coronil, F. (1996) Beyond occidentalism: Toward nonimperial geohistorical categories. *Cultural Anthropology*, 11(1), 51–87. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1525/can.1996.11.1.02a00030

Craggs, R. & Wintle, C. (2016) *Cultures of decolonisation: Transnational productions and practices, 1945–70*. Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press.

Craib, R.B. (2004) *Cartographic Mexico. A history of state fixation and fugitive landscapes*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Craib, R.B. (2017) Cartography and decolonization. In: Akerman, J.R. (Ed.) *Decolonizing the map. Cartography from Colony to nation*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, pp. 11–71.

Crampton, J.W. (2006) The cartographic calculation of space: Race mapping and the Balkans at the Paris peace conference of 1919. *Social and Cultural Geography*, 7(5), 731–752. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1080/14649360600974733

Dalby, S. (1991) Critical geopolitics: Discourse, difference, and dissent. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 9(3), 261–283. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1068/d090261

Dalby, S. & Ó Tuathail, G. (Eds.). (1998) *Rethinking geopolitics*. London, UK: Routledge.

De Beer, G. (1966) *José Vasconcelos and his world*. New York, NY: Las Americas.

De Leeuw, S. & Hunt, S. (2018) Unsettling decolonizing geographies. *Geography Compass*, 12(7), e12376. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1111/gec3.12376

Díaz, S.G. (2012) Genealogía de un origen: Túbal, el falsario y la Atlántida en la Historia de los Incas de Pedro Sarmiento de Gamboa. *Revista de Indias*, 72(255), 497–526. Available from: https://doi.org/10.3989/revindias.2012.016

Dodds, K. (2003) Cold war geopolitics. In: Agnew, J.A., Mitchell, K. & Toal, G. (Eds.) *A companion to political geography*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, pp. 204–218.

Dodds, K., Kuus, M. & Sharp, J. (2013) *The Ashgate research companion to critical geopolitics*. Farnham, UK: Ashgate.

Dodds, K. & Woon, C.Y. (2010) Classical geopolitics revisited. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of International Studies*. Available from: https://oxfordre.com/internationalstudies/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190846626.001.0001/acrefore-9780190846626-e-379

Dodds, K. & Woon, C.Y. (2015) Geopolitics. In: Smelser, N.J. & Baltes, P.B. (Eds.) *International encyclopedia of the social & behavioral sciences*, 2nd edition. Amsterdam, The Netherlands: Elsevier, pp. 91–96.

Donnelly, I.L. (1882) *Atlantis: The antediluvian world*. New York, NY: Harper & Brothers.

Dos Santos, T. (1970) The structure of dependence. *The American Economic Review*, 60(2), 231–236.

Dussel, E. (1995) *The invention of the Americas: Eclipse of "the other" and the myth of modernity*. New York, NY: Continuum.

Estrade, P. (1998) Del invento de 'América Latina' en París por latinoamericanos (1856–1889). In: Maurice, J. & Zimmerman, M. (Eds.) *París y el mundo ibérico e iberoamericano: Actas del XXVIII Congreso de la Sociedad de Hispanistas Franceses, Paris, 21, 22 y 23 de marzo de 1997*. Paris, France: Sociedad de Hispanistas Franceses, pp. 179–188.

Fell, C. (1989) José Vasconcelos: los años del águila (1920–1925). In: *Educación, cultura e iberoamericanismo en el México postrevolucionario*. Mexico City, Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México.

Fernández Retamar, R. (1989) *Caliban and other essays*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Ferretti, F. (2018) Geographies of internationalism: Radical development and critical geopolitics from the northeast of Brazil. *Political Geography*, 63, 10–19. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2017.11.004

Ferretti, F. (2019) Rediscovering other geographical traditions. *Geography Compass*, 13(3), 1–15. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1111/gec3.12421

Ferretti, F. (2021a) Geopolitics of decolonisation: The subaltern diplomacies of Lusophone Africa. *Political Geography*, 85, 1–11. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2020.102326

Ferretti, F. (2021b) Other radical geographies: Tropicality and decolonisation in twentieth-century French geography. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 46(3), 540–554. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1111/tran.12438

Ferretti, F. & Pedrosa, B.V. (2018) Inventing critical development: A Brazilian geographer and his northern networks. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 43, 703–717. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1111/tran.12241

Frank, A.G. (1970) *Capitalismo y subdesarrollo en América Latina [Capitalism and underdevelopment in Latin America]*. Mexico City, Mexico: Siglo XXI.

Garrido, L. (1963) *José Vasconcelos*. Mexico City, Mexico: Instituto de Investigaciones Sociales UNAM.
Gobat, M. (2013) The invention of Latin America: A transnational history of anti-imperialism, democracy, and race. *The American Historical Review*, 118(5), 1345–1375.
Gregory, D. (1994) *Geographical imaginations*. Cambridge, UK: Blackwell.
Grijalva, J. (2004) Vasconcelos o la búsqueda de la Atlántida. Exotismo, arqueología y utopía del mestizaje en "La raza cósmica". *Revista de Crítica Literaria Latinoamericana*, 30(60), 333–349. Available from: https://doi.org/10.2307/4531351
Guerrero, J.O. (2016) La Atlántida de Platón: Aproximación a la historia del relato, desde el Renacimiento hasta nuestros días. *Erebea. Revista de Humanidades y Ciencias Sociales*, 6, 253–272. Available from: https://doi.org/10.33776/erebea.v6i0.2969
Halvorsen, S. (2019) Decolonising territory: Dialogues with Latin American knowledges and grassroots strategies. *Progress in Human Geography*, 43(5), 790–814. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132518777623
Harley, J.B. (1988) Maps, knowledge, and power. In: Cosgrove, D. & Daniels, S. (Eds.) *The iconography of landscape*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, pp. 277–312.
Harris, L.M. & Hazen, H.D. (2005) Power of maps: (Counter) mapping for conservation. *ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies*, 4(1), 99–130. Available from: https://doi.org/10.14288/1.0357973
Jazeel, T. (2017) Mainstreaming geography's decolonial imperative. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 42(3), 334–337. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1111/tran.12200
Jazeel, T. & Legg, S. (Eds.). (2019a) *Subaltern geographies*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press.
Jazeel, T. & Legg, S. (2019b) Subaltern studies, space, and the geographical imagination. In: Jazeel, T. & Legg, S. (Eds.) *Subaltern geographies*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, pp. 1–35.
Knight, A. (1990) Racism, revolution, and Indigenismo: Mexico, 1910–1940. In: Graham, R. (Ed.) *The idea of race in Latin America, 1870–1940*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, pp. 71–113.
Koopman, S. (2011) Alter-geopolitics: Other securities are happening. *Geoforum*, 42(3), 274–284. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2011.01.007
Koopman, S., Dalby, S., Megoran, N., Sharp, J., Kearns, G., Squire, R. et al. (2021) Critical geopolitics/critical geopolitics 25 years on. *Political Geography*, 90, 102421. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2021.102421
Livingstone, D.N. (1992) *The geographical tradition*. Cambridge, UK: Blackwell.
Manrique, L. (2016) Dreaming of a cosmic race: José Vasconcelos and the politics of race in Mexico, 1920s–1930s. *Cogent Arts & Humanities*, 3(1), 1218316. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1080/23311983.2016.1218316
McClintock, A. (1995) *Imperial leather: Race, gender and sexuality in the colonial context*. New York, NY: Routledge.
McCormack, K. (2022) The US military's malaria research in Kenya and the geopolitics of global health. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 47(3), 756–769. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1111/tran.12533
McFarlane, C. (2021) Geography in the world. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 47(1), 1–7. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1111/tran.12497
McGuinness, A. (2003) Searching for "Latin America": Race and sovereignty in the Americas in the 1850s. In: Appelbaum, N.P., Macpherson, A.S. & Rossemblat, K.A. (Eds.) *Race and nation in modern Latin America*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, pp. 87–107.
Mezzadra, S. & Neilson, B. (2013) *Border as method, or, the multiplication of labor*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
Mezzadra, S. & Rahola, F. (2006) The postcolonial condition: A few notes on the quality of historical time in the global present. *Postcolonial Text*, 2(1). Available from: https://postcolonial.org/index.php/pct/article/view/393/139 [Accessed 25th July 2022]
Mignolo, W. (1995) *The darker side of the renaissance. Literacy, territoriality, and colonization*. Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press.
Mignolo, W. (2005) *The idea of Latin America*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
Mignolo, W. (2014) The north of the south and the west of the east. A provocation to the question. *Ibraaz contemporary visual culture in North Africa and the Middle East*. 8. Available from: https://www.ibraaz.org/essays/108 Last [Accessed 25th July 2022]
Miller, M.G. (2004) *Rise and fall of the cosmic race: The cult of mestizaje in Latin America*. Austin, TX: University of Texas press.
Miranda, F.L. (2009) José Vasconcelos. Apóstol de la educación. *Casa del Tiempo*, 3(25), 11–14.
Müller, M. (2021) Worlding geography: From linguistic privilege to decolonial anywheres. *Progress in Human Geography*, 45(6), 1440–1466.
Naylor, L. & Thayer, N. (2022) Between paranoia and possibility: Diverse economies and the decolonial imperative. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 47(3), 791–805. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1111/tran.12534
Nishiyama, H. (2022) Decolonial encounter with neo-nationalism: The politics of indigeneity and land rights struggles in Okinawa. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 1–14. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1111/tran.12582
Noxolo, P. (2017) Decolonial theory in a time of the re-colonisation of UK research. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 42(3), 342–344. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1111/tran.12202
O'Gorman, E. (1972) *The invention of America: An inquiry into the historical nature of the New World and the meaning of its history*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing.
Oslender, U. (2021) Decolonizing cartography and ontological conflict: Counter-mapping in Colombia and "cartographies otherwise". *Political Geography*, 89, 102444. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2021.102444
Pacheco Finella, M. (1967) *El mexicano según José Vasconcelos*. Mexico City, Mexico: Centro de Estudios Educativos.
Phelan, J.L. (1968) Pan-Latinism, French intervention in Mexico (1861–1867) and the genesis of the idea of Latin America. In: Ortega y Medina, J.A. (Ed.) *Conciencia y autenticidad históricas: Escritos en homenaje a Edmundo O'Gorman*. Mexico City, Mexico: UNAM, pp. 279–298.

Pineda Buitrago, S. (2013) Entre el desprecio y la admiración: visión de Estados Unidos en Ulises criollo de José Vasconcelos. *Latinoamérica. Revista de Estudios Latinoamericanos*, 57, 125–151. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1016/S1665-8574(13)71714-9

Quijada, M. (1998) Sobre el origen y difusión del nombre América Latina: O una variación heterodoxa en torno al tema de la construcción social de la verdad. *Revista de Indias*, 58(214), 595–616. Available from: https://doi.org/10.3989/revindias.1998.i214.749

Quijano, A. (2000) Coloniality of power and eurocentrism in Latin America. *Nepantla*, 1(3), 533–580. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1177/0268580900015002005

Quijano, A. & Wallerstein, I. (1992) Americanity as a concept, or the Americas in the modern world-system. *International Social Science Journal*, 44(4), 549–557.

Routledge, P. (2003) Anti-geopolitics. In: Agnew, J.A., Mitchell, K. & Toal, G. (Eds.) *A companion to political geography*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, pp. 236–248.

Said, E. (1978) *Orientalism: Western representations of the orient*. New York, NY: Pantheon.

Secretaría de Educación Pública. (1923) *Boletín de la Secretaría de Educación Pública. Tomo 1, Núm. 3*. Mexico City, Mexico: Dirección de Talleres Gráficos.

Sharp, J. (1993) Publishing American identity: Popular geopolitics, myth and the Reader's digest. *Political Geography*, 12(6), 491–503. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1016/0962-6298(93)90001-N

Sharp, J. (2011) Subaltern geopolitics: Introduction. *Geoforum*, 42(3), 271–273. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2011.04.006

Sharp, J. (2013) Geopolitics at the margins? Reconsidering genealogies of critical geopolitics. *Political Geography*, 37, 20–29. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2013.04.006

Sharp, J. (2019) Practicing subalternity? Nyerere's Tanzania, the Dar school, and postcolonial geopolitical imaginations. In: Jazeel, T. & Legg, S. (Eds.) *Subaltern geographies*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, pp. 74–93.

Slater, D. (1993) The geopolitical imagination and the enframing of development theory. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 18(4), 419–437. Available from: https://doi.org/10.2307/622559

Sparke, M. (2002) Between post-colonialism and cross-border regionalism. *Space and Polity*, 6(2), 203–213. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1080/1356257022000003635

Sparke, M. (2007) Everywhere but always somewhere: Critical geographies of the global south. *The Global South*, 1(1), 117–126.

Sparke, M., Sidaway, J.D., Bunnell, T. & Grundy-Warr, C. (2004) Triangulating the borderless world: Geographies of power in the Indonesia–Malaysia–Singapore growth triangle. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 29(4), 485–498. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0020-2754.2004.00143.x

Stavans, I. (2011) *José Vasconcelos: The prophet of race*. Ithaca, NY: Rutgers University Press.

Taracena, A. (1982) *José Vasconcelos*. Mexico City, Mexico: Editorial Porrúa.

Tenorio-Trillo, M. (1996) *Mexico at the World's fairs: Crafting a modern nation*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Tenorio-Trillo, M. (2017) *Latin America: The allure and power of an idea*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Tuathail, G.Ó. & Agnew, J. (1992) Geopolitics and discourse: Practical geopolitical reasoning in American foreign policy. *Political Geography*, 11(2), 190–204. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1016/0962-6298(92)90048-X

Vasconcelos, J. (1934) *Hispanoamérica frente a los nacionalismos agresivos de Europa y Norteamérica. Conferencias pronunciadas en la Facultad de Ciencias Jurídicas y Sociales de la Universidad Nacional de La Plata por José Vasconcelos en Agosto-Octubre de 1933*. La Plata, Argentina: Universidad de La Plata, Facultad de Ciencias Jurídicas y Sociales.

Vasconcelos, J. (1997 [1925]) *The cosmic race: A bilingual edition*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Winichakul, T. (1997) *Siam mapped: A history of the geo-body of a nation*. Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press.

Wood, D. (1993) *The power of maps*. London, UK: Routledge.

How to cite this article: Vegliò, S. (2022) Subverting geopolitics: The reinvention of geography in post-revolutionary Mexico. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 00, 1–12. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1111/tran.12596