Mirna Carranza

THE COST OF SAFETY

Central American Young People's
Notions of Home

Latinx Studies

Collection Editor
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I would like to express my eternal gratitude to Elizabeth Griggs for her ongoing support with the completion of the book.

Abstract

This book explores the migration, identity formation, and everyday resistance of young Central American migrants, particularly from El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua, within the ongoing structures of coloniality. As they navigate transnational life in Canada, these youth are not merely adapting to new environments; they are actively creating translocal spaces that challenge dominant narratives of migration, belonging, and identity. Migration in Canada is shaped by anti-immigrant sentiments, systemic surveillance, and racialized discourses. *La vida les ha enseñado en el camino* (life has taught them on their way), forcing them to maneuver the Colonial Grid in new, resistant ways.

The act of leaving, arriving, resettlement, and developing a transnational or translocal life in Canada and Central America invites a rethinking of migratory pathways and exchanges of capital. Circular migration highlights the ongoing transnational ties that shape how young people experience culture, relationships, and language, often without physically returning to their countries of origin. The movement of knowledge, social, and economic capital is transforming the translocal landscape, creating new possibilities and challenges for youth and their communities. Once thought to acculturate and adapt more quickly than older newcomers, young Central Americans are increasingly migrating under conditions of violence, both in their home countries and

in Canada, thus redefining resettlement as a collective, nonlinear, and political process.

Framed by the concepts of modernity/coloniality and translocality, the book critically analyzes how gender, race, class, and migration intersect in the lives of Central American youth. It counters colonial narratives that depict Central America as inherently violent and culturally deficient. Instead, through *testimonios*, community research, and decolonial theory, this work centers the agency of people as they recreate identity, culture, and belonging across borders. Translocality emerges as a lived strategy for resistance, knowledge production, and transformation, redefining what it means to be at home, both here and there.

Key words

The Colonial Grid, translocal/translocality, Coloniality of Power, Coloniality of Gender and modernity

Contents

Introduction

As a gift from life, I have had the opportunity to listen to and bear witness to many personal anecdotes and life stories related to immigration and the everyday life associated with it. In this trajectory, I have been fortunate to share spaces with people who, regardless of their age, gender, social class, sexual identity, nationality, ethnicity, or location, carry with them an abundance of wisdom and knowledge. These learnings are lessons for many, particularly for policymakers, programme developers, practitioners, educators, parents, and communities. The people with whom I have conversed have taught me so much, for which I am deeply grateful. Hence, the purpose of this book is just that, to share their teachings with the broader community who may be invested in the collective work toward the reduction of barriers, increased access, and most of all contributing to the process of living life with dignity and joy for all.

This book presents the experiences, learnings, and reflections of Central American migrants in Canada. In some cases, the reflections of parents, community members, and perceptions of people who provide services to this population are also included. Some people shared their experiences navigating spaces, which at times are full of hostility and wherein the discourse of whiteness predominates. In particular, the tensions that emerged

relate to values and practices associated with such discourse, for example, individualism. Their settlement and integration experiences are discussed in the context of the geo-political-historical-socio-economic conditions of their country of origin and the context of settlement, Canada, which is vastly different from our neighbouring country the US – as these processes and dynamics significantly shape their migration experience and their meaning-making process. The discussion of such experiences, as well as their navigation processes in the settlement country, is presented in relation to the Colonial Grid. This is understood as a dynamic and multidimensional assemblage of discourses that produce various striations of identity that were cemented during colonialism. In contemporary times, such dynamics continue to be enacted on the day-to-day colonial tapestry wherein humanity operates. The Colonial Grid draws from key concepts found in the literature. The first one, Coloniality, refers to the interrelated practices of domination and exploitation that are maintained from the legacies of European colonialism (Mignolo, 2011). Within this concept, old colonial legacies have been reformulated through the advancement of modernity. Coloniality's power operates globally, and manifests regionally or locally – shaping everything from our thoughts to the ways the country we live in operates on the world stage. For Canadians, this often includes an investment in a humanitarian image. More specifically, then, the Colonial Grid refers to a process of mapping out how people's meaning-making processes of their own selves and others shape boundaries of race, gender, class, sexuality, sexual identity, dis/ability, etc. Particularly, identities that are created by colonialism – and maintained by ongoing processes of coloniality – inform how we

locate others and ourselves along the Colonial Grid. It is impor-
tant to note that people are not 'just' one thing; rather they are
an assemblage of many, and one axis of a person's identity can-
not exist without multiple striations. Within colonialism, othering
was part of a larger process of considering the worth of a per-
son. For example, the construct of 'race' is understood as a "set of
articulated political relations or assemblages and not a biological
or cultural descriptor"; wherein some people are constructed as
humans and others as sub-humans (Weheliye, 2014, p. 19). The
Colonial Grid grid emphasizes that histories of colonialism have
facilitated the organization of power and privilege in a way that
infiltrates our consciousness and shapes our interactions with the
world. People's everyday experiences, thus, exist on the Colonial
Grid and are made, remade, and negotiated depending on the
context – space and place they occupy. For example, we may be
perceived to belong in one place, but not another.

Given the current geo-political-socio-economic discourses
impacting the migration and resettlement of young Central
Americans, one example is young people who have signifi-
cant learnings to share – as they have had to maneuver the
Colonial Grid differently than previous generations – *la vida les
ha enseñado en el camino* [life has taught them on their way].
These experiences depart from the 'usual' integration processes
followed by previous generations, e.g., their parents. Given that
they spent time emotionally preparing for their trip, years on the
road, or ended up growing up in Canada, it means that phase(s)
of development as human beings took place in contexts with
anti-immigrant sentiments. They have been actively designing
and configuring – individually and collectively –translocal spaces

and identity. Thus, denoting their agency and positioning in relation to their country of birth and the country *el cúal les toco crecer o vivir* [they had to grow up or live]. Therefore, refusing to be erased from history.

1
Borders and the translocal

Learning objective:

Understanding the colonial grid, the translocal, and coloniality

By the end of this chapter, students will be able to analyze how the Colonial Grid and translocality shape the experiences of Central American migrants and explain how migrants resist and redefine borders, both national and conceptual, through the embodiment of translocal identities.

Introduction

This chapter sets out the thinking [or theoretical concepts and framework] for the book. It discusses the working definition of the Colonial Grid and translocality/translocal lives. This thinking and the concepts draws upon the writings of scholars of decoloniality – to articulate how the Colonial Grid came to be and is maintained throughout modern times. The **Colonial Grid** refers to the enduring systems of power and classifications established during colonialism that organizes people along hierarchies of race, gender, class, and other identities. Specifically, how these

constructions converge and their interplay. It continues to shape how we perceive human worth and difference today, influencing everyday interactions, social structures, and our internalized understanding of privilege and marginalization (Carranza, 2016). **Translocal** is the relationality of multiple places through the everyday practices, relationships, and movements of people who maintain strong ties across different geographic locations. The translocal refers to how people, families, and communities are creating new spaces – physically, symbolically, emotionally, socially, and politically to live their lives through the nurturing of connections. **Translocality** refers to how people make their homes through local-to-local linkages and the multiple places and spaces that people shape and are shaped by in their day-to-day lives as part of the ordinary. Social, religious (i.e., rituals including funerals, wakes, and praying the Rosary), economic (i.e., remittances), cultural (virtual participation in their city patron's celebration), political (i.e., virtual voting), and connections between various homes, cities, or villages communication (i.e., WhatsApp, Facebook, etc.), return visits, and community organizing, produce and sustain the flow of the translocal.

The Colonial Grid

In thinking about the construction of the Colonial Grid, Sa'ar (2005) discusses how the greatest resistance to postcolonial and decolonial feminisms is maleness and whiteness, as Western ways of being. Western ways of being sets the foundation of a "historical consciousness", common sense, or the naturalized idea of "how things are done". This consciousness is an organizer of what identities belong, where and who decides. Western logics also create

totalizing monikers such as "Latina/o/x/e", "Central American", "Latin American" and even Hispanic. One young person spoke to this: "I mean when people see me, the best I can hope for is that they see a Latina. Because we're all just from the same place, right? [sarcastic tone] Which is not here." "Here" encompasses the dominant space of belonging and includes the social, political, cultural, and epistemic that is shaped by coloniality and embedded in institutions, knowledge systems, and power relations.

In thinking about how people are positioned on the Colonial Grid, one example is how, commonsensically, 'Latin' women are thought to belong in feminized, low-paying work upon arrival. The discourse is than, with hard work and learning Canadian ways, they can advance. Yet, the claims for them to "work their way up" is intended to demean them. In social services and community spaces, that are structured around Western style hierarchies, Central American women are expected to know how to work with all newcomers, and are discouraged from applying for promotions, citing needing more Canadian experience. However, when in positions of leadership Central American and South American women, are creating new spaces and experiences by finding cracks and pushing against them. One woman explained that "We are the foundation, the threads" and it was explained that "this was leadership in a different way, building, connecting, and relating – it is supporting each other." In much of the research discussed, people were making changes in their community through representation, mentorship, and thinking/caring about the collective good.

How do we understand common sense and this consciousness in ourselves and the structures that we operate within? The

Colonial Grid exemplifies how people in specific geographies navigate their lived reality, from how gender intersects with resettlement which shapes classism and labour market in/exclusion. The Colonial Grid (Carranza, 2016):

> is understood as a dynamic and multidimensional assemblage of various pieces of identity that were cemented during colonialism. In contemporary times, these continue to be enacted on the day-to-day colonial tapestry wherein humanity operates. It refers to the direct and subtle, covert and overt ways people are organized along the lines of power and privilege that exists in our psyches. Difference, from whiteness or maleness as an example, is originally structured on the boundaries between the colonizer/colonized … It speaks to our common sense, meaning-making process and people's worth or lack thereof, shaping how we … perceive the intersections of race, gender, ethnicity, class, ability, and sexuality.

The **Colonial Grid** is produced by the interplay of context – both formal and informal structures in a society – and is an outcome of the colonial difference and colonial conditioning. The lines of the Colonial Grid and the axis points, where more than one meets, are power, privilege, and the colonial difference **in action**. Due to the constant exposure and ways that coloniality seeps into epistemology [knowledge, and what we know] and ontology [how we know it] – the colonial difference is incorporated into thoughts and meaning-making processes enacted in the day-to-day. What emerges is our 'common sense' and people's 'assigned' worth or lack thereof (Carranza, 2016). Thus, it informs

what is constructed and understood as 'normal'. Colonial differ-ence(s) are aspects of identity that are deliberately marginalized or marked as inferior by those in positions of power and privi-lege, who belong and are seen as the norm within a society.

The Colonial Grid shapes how people should act, particularly in the expectation of gratitude towards Canada. An example from a young person from Central America was around needing hear-ing aids upon his arrival in Canada with his mother. He recounted how his mother had to produce additional documentation to prove that he could 'function' at a normal grade level once his hearing was "fixed". There was a range of perceptions enveloped in these requirements, as this young person explained it was not just about their race, country of origin, or his hearing – look-ing back, he thinks it was about not costing extra money to the health care or education system. The system wanted to ensure a return on the investment, he could eventually be a productive citizen if given 'help'. Very clearly, he remembered the expecta-tions of all of the service providers for his mom to be grateful as they believed, they would not have received this 'help' in their country of origin.

Translocal lives

Localities are the geographies that shape senses of self within a social existence. It is the buildings, communities, cultures, and people that exist within a defined space and their interactions with each other and histories that create localities (Conradson and McKay, 2007). Building on Appadurai's (1996) notions of translocality, the approach here will be to explore how commu-nities extend beyond their physical geographies through the

movement of people, knowledge, ideas, cultures, and ways of being. A translocal space is where social architecture, knowledge, and assemblages of identities are built relationally across spaces and are not limited by nation state borders. Colonization created borders, which are now a critical structure of coloniality and in Eurocentric thinking, created national identities. Borders continue to shape localities and have physical and legal symbolic importance, especially when analyzing citizenship. Nation-states and the associated policies, are distinctive, and influence the development of people, including the resettlement of immigrants and refugees. Social membership and the desire for national belonging, have also been historically bound to a nation-state (Nail, 2015). The translocal expands this constellation to think about all the places, people, and communities that contribute, change, and produce localities. These relationships are enduring, open, and non-linear processes that produce close interrelations in and between different places and people (Peth, 2020). These interrelations and exchanges rework belonging, identity, and knowledge in all the spaces that they touch.

Background

The physical movement of people is part of the history of humanity. Movement has been due to many reasons, such as fishing, hunting, desires, and pleasure (Castles, 2010). It was not until the creation and implementation of borders that the movement of people became migration. Migration began the process of regulating who can move where, and in more recent times – criminalizing certain bodies on the move (Weber, 2014). During the formal colonial era (early 1490s to mid-1825), European powers

drew arbitrary borders around their colonies. The idea of modern borders, or imagined boundaries, separating sovereign countries began to take shape in 1648 with the Treaty of Westphalia (Bauder and Mueller, 2023). The border system became widespread from the seventeenth century onward, replacing earlier systems based more on influence and control than on exact geographic boundaries (Bauder and Mueller, 2023). According to Bauder and Mueller (2023), the Treaty of Westphalia, signed after years of war in Europe, introduced the concept of nation-states with full control over their *own* territories. It marked a shift from fluid and overlapping zones of power to clearly defined borders. Bordered spaces meant the subjugation of Indigenous populations and the creation of slavery for nation-building (Tuck and Yang, 2014). After World War I (1914–1918) and II (1939–1945), national borders were redrawn again to reflect political, ethnic, or economic priorities, and institutions, e.g., the United Nations, began to play a role in recognizing and enforcing them. In the twenty-first century, borders are more strictly regulated than ever, with surveillance, immigration controls, and security measures tying borders closely to citizenship and national identity (Walia, 2013).

The securitization of the border system added a new layer for national and international rules about who could go where. Over time, this natural human activity of moving from one place to another became something that was monitored, controlled, and even punished for those from the Global South (Carranza, 2024). Today, what we call "migration" is heavily regulated, and the securitization of borders allows for the enforcement and criminalization to keep those from the Global South out of the Global North (Weber, 2014). Yet, everyone has the right to freely move

and migrate, according to Article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. However, nation-states, particularly Canada and the Global North, weaponize borders to slow and prevent arrival. As borders seep into our minds and shape the Colonial Grid, nation-states are not just defined by lines on a map. States are rooted in colonial histories and have come to enforce global hierarchies of belonging based on ethnicity and race to play a powerful role in shaping societies (Mignolo and Walsh, 2018). Governments use borders for political control, to protect economies, and to promote national identities. Borders are thought to create a kind of membership based on location, deciding who "belongs" to a nation and who does not, simply based on where they are born or where they live. In doing so, borders also limit who has the freedom to move and who is forced to stay in places. However, as this book will explore, borders are a colonial inheritance, a function of coloniality, and continue to shape the Colonial Grid. The edges or striations of the Colonial Grid are ideological in people's minds and material; that is, there are real-life consequences. The axis of the Colonial Grid shapes ideas of who belongs where based on identities of race, gender, class, ethnicity, and sexualities and more, which are defined through the mental borders that live in people's minds and the realities that these constructs create.

The Colonial Grid serves many political, social, and economic purposes, solidifying a place-based membership that is bound to the nation-state, hence allowing nations such as Canada to codify in policy who can move freely and when (e.g., Temporary Foreign Workers or seasonal workers). But borders are more than just physical barriers; they keep privilege "in" and keep "out"

deeper social and global inequalities. Borders have been used to divide the world into the Global North and the Global South. These divisions reflect power imbalances, with the Global North often controlling the movement of people and resources from the Global South. An example of this can be seen at the United States/Mexico border. Scholar and activist Gloria Anzaldúa described this border as a "thin edge of barbed wire," a place patrolled by immigration officers known as *la migra* (a colloquial term in Spanish referring to immigration enforcement authorities) (Anzaldúa, 2004, p. 19). This border is imagined by the Global North as separating two distinct ways of life, one modern and the other backwards, two sets of opportunities, and two sides of a global power divide – one dominant and one subordinate – thus keeping bodies from previously colonized spaces in their place. This discourse is what drives the dominant space to create a narrative for women from Central America as in search of a "better life" and funneling them into low-wage work, and expecting gratitude. It is where the Global North and South meet, both physically and symbolically, in the Western Hemisphere.

Migration shows how modernity/coloniality permeate the lives of Central American migrants, and how as agents they are negotiating the **Colonial Grid** in the current moment, through a complex, situated, active **translocal life**. As Saldaña-Portíllo (2017) writes, those on the move are resisting borders through decolonial migration, a refusal to remain confined within nation-states. Further, people in Central America and the diaspora are shifting the Colonial Grid and how it frames their lives by creating transnational narratives, caring for their communities, and pushing

back against the systems that enforce assimilation. Pushing back on these systems shows up as engaging in activism beyond borders, journalism outside of mainstream media, maintaining traditions, foodways, and memory. This is done with people living their lives in ways that span multiple locations, renegotiating belonging, and engaging in social, economic, and political participation. Translocal spaces stretch and expand identity, culture, and belonging for the emergence of a shared collective. The translocal disrupts a Eurocentric ideal of place-based identity, and moves towards a relational way of being that is grounded in community and relationships. Translocal spaces inhabited by Central Americans, both at home and the diaspora, have emerged for social, emotional and economic reproduction, where intimacies and exchanges of knowledge, information and relationships are not contained within or by a border. Central American translocality co-exists within the Borderlands/*La Frontera* as a continuous status of reiteration of non-belonging, of difference, and of alienation (Anzaldúa, 2004). In this nuanced space of contradiction, violence, and exploitation, Central Americans are bringing in knowledge outside of the West and opening new ways of being within belonging. Border thinking, then, is thinking from the outside, using alternative knowledge traditions and alternative languages of expression in the bordered spaces where people are constructed as non-belonging (Anzaldúa, 2004).

The borders of the colonial migrant

Borders can be flexible for some – often those coming from the Global North, White and financially stable, and militarized for

the colonial migrant, depending how each is impacted by the Colonial Grid and systems of belonging (Carranza, 2016). The figure of the colonial migrant is the citizen of the Global South in search of a "better life". Carranza (2019) notes that dominant spaces, such as Canada and countries of the Global North create significant challenges for those arriving from colonized territories. These challenges are due to racial differences, perceived conflicts in beliefs, and language barriers that mark them as "other" – the colonial immigrant. In thinking about this, one young person from Central America detailed her experience, explaining how people in Canada perceived her migration. She recounted the ever present mindset of some Canadians that , "coming to Canada has somehow made it that I am "becoming" something better … I've been **given** this opportunity". This experience represents a key understanding of migration, that people are "lucky" to have the gift of coming to Canada. Suggesting, that their movement is a passive receiving of an opportunity for a "better life".

However, in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua, due to the deepening of the distribution of wealth between the Global South and the Global North, the right of migration has symbolically become a rite of passage – seen as an act of agency. This rite of passage affirms mobility as resistance to systems of exclusion, including capitalism, imperialism, racism and violence. Women from Central America are increasingly becoming the largest number of applicants across citizenship categories and ages (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 2023). In Canada, the policies, and practices of receiving immigrants from the Global South, specifically Central America, are based on enforcing degrees of assimilation across the social, political, religious,

economic and sexual lives of people arriving. Assimilation compels people often through coercive, systemic, or subtle means to adopt the language, values, norms, and identities of the dominant society. Rather than being a neutral or integrative process, assimilation is a form of epistemic and cultural violence. The goal of this violence is not inclusion, but the erasure or subordination of identities, ways of being, knowing, and relating that are not accepted in the dominant space. Therefore, assimilation is a mechanism of control that upholds the Colonial Grid. It sustains the hierarchy where the dominant worldview that is reflective of coloniality/modernity is positioned as universal and superior, while everything outside of it is seen as backward, primitive, or threatening. To "assimilate" is promoted as the possibility of acceptance, however, is precarious and dependent on proximity to Whiteness, Western modernity, or capitalist productivity. In education, law, language, and culture, assimilation becomes a tool to reshape people on the move, often forced, into manageable subjects who will not disrupt the political, economic, and social order inherited from colonial rule. *Immigrants* are expected to embody a *tabula rasa*, ready to be shaped by Canadian ways of being and knowing (Carranza, 2019).

According to Nail (2015), the terms "emigrant" and "immigrant" are not neutral or or purely descriptive words, they are political and legal terms that signal where a person fits (or does not fit) within the systems of citizenship and belonging. *Emigrant* marks a person in relation to their place of departure, emphasizing their particular national, legal and social order and the construction of citizenship that the person has left. *Immigrant* symbolizes the place of receiving. As a term used to deploy the legal status of

citizenship and social belonging, *emigrant* and *immigrant* indicate that both places existed before departure and arrival. This reinforces the idea that nations are stable containers of belonging, and that migration is a movement between two pre-existing, fully formed entities. For *immigrants*, Canada determines based on the assemblages of their identities the legality, the validity and the possibilities of their belonging. Migration is not two or more mutually exclusive identities framed by leaving and loss versus arrival and gain. Meaning, people from Central America do not lose or leave who they are behind in order to become Canadian. The translocal sees maintenance of who a person is, hybrid identities or fluidity. People may continue speaking Spanish across generations in Canada, whereas systems may force them to speak English. As migration changes, we can no longer define people as static categories of the emigrant or immigrant. People are in motion, and the translocal is in a state of emergence. There are constant exchanges of social, emotional, and economic capital that are shifting all the local and transnational landscapes. Migration is a circular phenomenon. It is about the physical movement between geographies and the place-making that happens circularly and in between, the translocal.

Theoretical Frameworks

The coloniality of power

To build the global system of capitalism, European powers needed to justify the violence they used during colonization. They did this by creating moral and knowledge systems that positioned themselves as the most advanced form of humanity. Peruvian

sociologist Aníbal Quijano, who developed the concept of the **Coloniality of Power** (CoP), explains how European colonizers invented categories, such as Black and Indigenous, to create a hierarchy of people defined by their race. This racial classification allowed colonizers to justify their perceived moral and knowledge superiority. In their belief of superiority, Europeans placed themselves at the top of the hierarchy to control people, knowledge and the building of what would become the Global North and exploitation of the Global South. According to Quijano (2000), colonialism divided people into "conquerors" and "conquered," to assign social roles based on race. In doing so, colonizers also created the idea of Whiteness, but unlike other racial categories, it was left unnamed and invisible. By making Whiteness the "default" and not calling it a race, it appeared natural or neutral, which helped hide its role in systems of power. By creating 'race' as a visible category in coding people as Black or Indigenous – Europeans attempted to make Whiteness and its privileges, invisible. These categories legitimized domination and oppression. Race became a symbolic expression of the hierarchy of who is considered fully human, thus constructing a category of inferior or sub-human.

It is important to note that people are not 'just' one thing; rather, each is an assemblage of many; one axis of a person's identity cannot exist without multiple striations of the Colonial Grid. Within colonialism, othering is a part of a large process to construct the perceived worth of a person. Identity is complex, made up of many of the overlapping parts like race, gender, class, and more. Colonialism used Othering, as a process, to reduce people to single categories and determine their economic and social worth. Othering refers to the process by which colonial power structures

construct non-Western peoples and knowledges as inferior, primitive, or deviant "Others" in order to legitimize domination, exploitation, and the universalization of Eurocentric worldviews. For example, the construct of 'race' is understood as a "set of artic- ulated political relations or assemblages and not a biological or cultural descriptor" (Weheliye, 2014, p. 19). Meaning, race should not be seen as a biological or cultural fact, but as a set of political relationships that define who is treated as human and who is not. In the context of the CoP, race should be understood as a sys- tem of political control and social hierarchy created during colo- nialism, not as something natural or based on biology or culture; meaning some people are constructed as humans and others as sub-humans. These roles still influence the way global systems work today. By positioning the Global South as racially and cultur- ally inferior, Europe gave reason for the plunder of its territories. The goal of such plundering was to transform the Global South into the material base for the accumulation of wealth in the Global North. This asymmetrical relationship continues to struc- ture global power and economic inequality today (Dussel, 1998).

Race was/is not just a label or a marker of who was/is fully human and who was not. Indigenous people were tied to the land, an considered objects that were wild and needed to be tamed . Taming was seen through the colonial fantasies of frontering, conquering the people and lands, and civilizing missions (Tuck and Yang, 2014). History, through a lens of coloniality, challenges the myth that colonizers and Indigenous peoples met as equals. Instead, the system was unequal from the beginning. The idea of who is human and who is not has morphed to whom has access to resources, including knowledge. Over time, race has been

shaped by changing ideologies, including false scientific claims, but has always served the same purpose: to justify exploitation and inequality. These ideas about race were built into global systems and still influence the unequal relationships between the Global North and the Global South (Salázar, 2012).

As Western capitalism spread, it imposed its own way of thinking as the only valid truth, pushing aside other knowledge systems and worldviews (Mignolo, 2002). Examples of this are: replacing oral traditions with the written word and documentation, Western sciences and rationalism (proving a point), the binary of right/wrong, and the standardization of curriculum for education (Mignolo, 2002). This legacy continues today, often used to justify the appropriation of Indigenous lands and the destruction of traditional ways of life. For example, the Canadian company Pacific Rim Corporation sought to mine three trillion dollars in El Salvador (Lawlor, 2023). This can also be seen across Canada with fracking and the oil and gas industry, where the tar sands are one of the largest employers – exploiting lands for profit. The concept of mineral rights and access to resources is rooted in settler colonial ideologies of ownership and commodity, where land is taken and its wealth transported elsewhere to benefit settlers (Preston, 2019).

Colonialism has simply been "reworked" in a way that maintains power and privilege for Whiteness and between nations of the Global North and South – based on the intertwining of geopolitical space and race (Quijano, 2000). This means that global inequalities and power dynamics today are shaped by the historical intersection of where people are from (geopolitical space) and how they were racially categorized (race) during and after colonialism. Part of this system of coloniality created the belief