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Cartographies of epistemic expropriation: Critical reflections on learning from the south

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ABSTRACT

There are increasing efforts within Anglophone geography to take seriously and learn from knowledges produced in the global south. Although this move is usually based on ethical and political motivations of Anglophone geographers, there are competing sets of pragmatic and parochial motivations that pose tensions. The value of learning from the south is often only implicitly made and few attempts have been made to map the evolving forms and distribution of values generated through engaging southern knowledges. Critically reflecting on my own engagements with Latin American, and particularly Argentine, knowledges, this paper argues that current enthusiasm with southern epistemologies may be paving the way for the intensification of epistemic expropriation: the extraction and valorisation of knowledge in a depoliticised context elsewhere. The paper develops the notion of epistemic expropriation to direct attention to how south-north circulations of academic knowledge may be complicit in the geographically uneven valorisation of academic labour and the depoliticisation of knowledge's concrete use-values. In the process of learning from Latin American knowledges, particularly around territory, I have generated clear value for my own career progression, and for Anglophone geographers, while it is less clear what my Argentine counterparts have gained. Moreover, in abstracting knowledges from their particular terrains of struggles, particularly the experiences of Greater Buenos Aires, I have facilitated a depoliticisation of grassroots ideas and practices. The final section argues that practices of epistemic expropriation are reinforced and sustained by Anglophone hegemony in "international" geography, posing dilemmas for those engaging with southern knowledges.

1. Introduction

I am a white, male, British geographer inspired by knowledges produced in Latin America. My research examines the relationship between territory and grassroots urban politics in the UK (London) and Argentina (Buenos Aires) and I have regularly moved between these two sites. My geographical understandings have been strongly informed by knowledges produced in Argentina and Latin America where the relationship between territory and activism has been extensively researched. As an Anglophone geographer my decision to engage and learn from Latin American knowledges has been facilitated by a broader disciplinary movement, instigated by feminist (Gibson-Graham, 1994; McDowell and Sharp, 1997; Rose, 1993) and postcolonial (McEwan, 2008; Raghuram and Madge, 2006; Slater, 1992; Townsend et al., 1995) scholars, towards the decentring of dominant (white, male) Anglo-American voices. Although the ongoing epistemological turn towards the global south is often based on explicit ethical and political motivations of Anglophone geographers (e.g. Jazeel, 2016; McFarlane, 2006; Radcliffe, 2017), there are competing sets of pragmatic and parochial motivations that pose tensions. As I have encountered in my research, the value of learning from Latin America appears self-evident and requires little justification. Yet the form and distribution of this value is unclear and demands greater scrutiny. Reflecting on my own experiences, this paper argues that current enthusiasm with southern epistemologies may, perhaps unwittingly, be paving the way for the intensification of epistemic expropriation: the extraction and valorisation of knowledge in a depoliticised context elsewhere.

This paper develops the notion of epistemic expropriation to direct attention to how south-north circulations of academic knowledge may be complicit in the geographically uneven valorisation of academic labour and the depoliticisation of knowledge's concrete use-values. While postcolonial scholars have long acknowledged, and lamented, the extractivist nature of much Anglophone research, particularly in development studies (Robbins, 2006; Townsend et al., 1995), relatively little attention has been given to mapping out the values of Anglophone engagements with southern knowledges and acknowledging the often

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contradictory outcomes. In developing the notion of epistemic expropriation I add to, on the one hand, work on the political-economy of academic knowledge production (e.g. Aalbers, 2004; Beigel and Sabea, 2014; Keim et al., 2014; Paasi, 2015) by considering the consequences of my attempts to import Latin American knowledges into Anglophone geography. In so doing I map out the exchange-values of knowledge across multi-scalar circuits of knowledge production. On the other hand, I interrogate knowledge's broader use-values thus adding to debates on the global geopolitics of knowledge (Asher, 2013; Gidwani, 2008; Grosfoguel, 2002; Rivera Cusicanqui, 2010). I reflect on the relationship between the case studies I research and the political terrain of Latin American knowledges being drawn upon, highlighting the potentially violent nature of abstraction across north-south divides.

The paper provides a personal reflection on dilemmas faced as an Anglophone geographer closely engaging Latin American knowledges. Despite having established relationships with Latin American academics and activists in recent years (particularly via regular periods living and working in Buenos Aires) I find myself reproducing the sorts of colonial practices I have strived to disrupt. The paper is thus part of an uncomfortable process of me coming to terms with my positionality and accepting the limits to what I may hope to achieve, particularly as an early career scholar facing heightened structural-institutional demands. In what follows I begin by exploring recent attempts within Anglophone geography to re-envision the global south not only as a site of empirical data collection but as a valid, perhaps privileged, site of theory and knowledge production. In so doing I examine how the value of south-north epistemological circulations are framed. The remainder of the paper explores in more depth the values of learning from the south based on personal experiences. First, I explore the value of academic knowledge production in the context of south-north circulations, considering how my epistemic practices may impact scholars in Argentina and Latin America. Second, I grapple with the broader use-values of the Latin American knowledges I engage with and consider the depoliticising effect of my removing them from particular terrains of struggles. The final section argues that practices of epistemic expropriation are reinforced and sustained by Anglophone hegemony in "international" geography, posing core dilemmas for those engaging with southern knowledges as I go on to emphasise in the conclusion.

2. Learning from the south in Anglophone geography

That learning from the south is a popular refrain within Anglophone geography is an extraordinary sign of the discipline's historical impoverishment and demonstrates an incapacity and/or unwillingness to take its own geography seriously. Calls to engage with southern knowledges – led by postcolonial geographers (e.g. McEwan, 2008; Raghuram and Madge, 2006; Slater, 1992; Townsend et al., 1995) alongside other Anglophone social scientists (e.g. Connell, 2007; Comaroff and Comaroff, 2011; Keim et al., 2014) and most recently gaining prominence in urban studies (e.g. Leitner and Sheppard, 2015; Robinson, 2016a, 2016b; Roy, 2009) – frequently rest on two assumptions. First, that is makes little empirical or epistemological sense to separate southern/northern experiences of the world(s) but, second, (post)colonial divides have produced unequal material conditions through which knowledges are produced and circulated. This raises a number of ethical and political challenges for scholars based in privileged institutions in the global north to reflect on how and why they engage with southern knowledges and consider potential strategies for undoing or reversing the colonial power relations that inform their epistemological practices. Anglophone disciplinary geographers are increasingly reflecting on how best to move beyond their ethnocentric and (neo)colonial tendencies and incorporate global knowledges (see Slater, 1992; Radcliffe, 2017). Despite the nuanced nature of much of this debate the value of turning to southern knowledges is often only made implicitly as authors quickly turn to the sorts of tactics and strategies needed for doing so (e.g. Jazeel, 2014, 2016; Robinson, 2003; Raghuram and Madge, 2006). This section aims to briefly elaborate on the value of south-north knowledge circulations in order to set up the subsequent discussion on epistemic expropriation.

Value is a loaded concept that contains normative assumptions over how we understand and relate to the world. These assumptions are constructed through geographically and historically specific experiences. My own use of the term builds on heterodox Marxist thought and exposes my reliance on particular sets of modern/Western epistemologies rooted in the Anglophone social sciences. With this caveat aside, I find value a useful concept for considering the material outcomes of knowledge circulation. I have been inspired by attempts to outline a global political-economy of knowledge production by geographers and social scientists (Agnew, 2007; Gidwani, 2008; Keim et al., 2014; Paasi, 2005) including work on Anglophone hegemony (Aalbers and Rossi, 2009; Kitchin, 2005) and academic dependency (Beigel and Sabea, 2014; Galassi, 2013; Gareau, 1988) alongside understandings of the "geopolitics of knowledge" (Gutiérrez Rodríguez et al., 2010; Quijano, 2000; Mignolo and Escobar, 2010) in the context of what Grosfoguel (2010) terms the "modern/colonial capitalist/patriarchical world system". The valorisation of my academic labour is not only disciplined by neoliberal practices of quantification and measurement (Castree and Sparke, 2000) but also structured by a global division of labour that is deeply entangled with racial/colonial hierarchies (Grosfoguel, 2010). An awareness of how the valorisation of my research may be complicit in the maintenance of colonial hierarchies provoked what Gidwani (2008: 237) terms an "ethicopolitical moment" that has led me to revisit the otherwise implicit value of learning from the south.

Postcolonial and feminist geographers have been grappling with the ethicopolitical implications of research for years and provide an initial guide on how to (re)asses the value of learning from the south. First, there has been a persistent argument that learning from and engaging with knowledges produced in the global south is a necessary and strategic means of re-orientating development discourse towards a grassroots agenda (McEwan, 2008). Townsend et al. (1995) provide an early argument on the importance of valuing insiders' perspectives with the case of land settlers in the Mexican rainforest, particularly those of women. Prioritising the voices of Mexican women led Townsend et al. (1995: 132) to call for 'more responsive, locally informed, participatory planning' against dominant top-down trends in international development. Indeed subsequent years saw growing critiques of the attempt by northern intellectuals to represent people and issues in the global south and a turn towards participatory and engaged approaches that prioritise subaltern agency (McEwan, 2008), often through attempts to foster solidarity with social movements and grassroots activism (see Mohanty, 2003). This was combined with reflections on postcolonial "methods" (Raghuram and Madge, 2006) or "tactics" (Robinson, 2003) for doing development geography that both reorient theory to urgent practical issues of social justice and seek to expose and confront the global political economy that structures academic labour. Despite these nuances, the value of southern knowledges as a means of re-orienting development as a participatory practice that empowers grassroots actors has come under critical scrutiny (Briggs and Sharp, 2004; Cooke and Kothari, 2001; Mohan and Stokke, 2010) while proving an insufficient challenge to colonial divides within the global political economy of knowledge production.

A second set of overlapping arguments has made the case for the intrinsic vale of southern knowledges in a relational world that questions north-south oppositions (Hart, 2018; Robinson, 2016a, 2016b; Slater, 1992). Rather than attempt to revisit modes of development and solidarity with excluded others the emphasis has been on the need to take "other" knowledges seriously in the here and now. In an early critique of the ethnocentricism implicit in critical (Anglophone) geography Slater (1992) argued that learning from the south provides a crucial vantage point for better understanding the north and its colonial relations in/with the world. The value of "provincialising" northern knowledges, to borrow Chakrabarty's (2000) influential term, is

precisely in order to take seriously global, colonial histories in which Eurocentric social sciences have developed (Gutiérrez Rodríguez et al., 2010; Wallerstein, 1997). Responses to this inter-connectedness can be seen both in attempts to disrupt rigid epistemological hierarchies and binaries (e.g. Mohanty, 2003) and develop global, topological thinking, perhaps most clearly visible in contemporary urban studies (Robinson, 2016a; Roy, 2009). Robinson (2016b) argues for the value of theorising the city "from anywhere" in search of new, uncertain and provisional ideas and concepts that are better suited to understanding and shaping the urban. Although Robinson and others are alert to the uneven global political economy that structure their research there often remains an overly optimistic expectation that flattening the global geographies of theorising will necessarily benefit marginalised sites of knowledge production.

Finally there are arguments that promoting southern knowledges is an important means of democratising academia and reducing inequalities structured around race, gender, sexuality, class, etc (see Noxolo, 2017). On the one hand there has been an increasing critical awareness of the dominance of white, male Anglophone epistemology in AngloAmerican geography and the subsequent barriers to entry for those coming from "outside" (Owen and Jones, 2000; Peake, 2011; Underhill-Sem, 2017). Creating space for marginalised voices in the global north seems to have gradually opened up the discipline beyond the white, heterosexual, male although there is still a long way to go (Desai, 2017; Tolia-Kelly, 2017). On the other hand, engaging knowledges produced in the global south, as per the second argument above, is expected to lead towards a more level playing field within international global circuits of academia. This is a core tenet of those seeking to dismantle Anglo-American/Anglophone hegemony (see Aalbers and Rossi, 2009; Berg, 2004; Kitchin, 2005). Although there are increasing attempts to monitor the linguistic and geographic biases in publication and citation practices (Boudreau and Kaika, 2013; Braun. 2003; King and Qian, 2017; Mott and Cockayne, 2017; Yeung, 2001), greater attention is needed to assess broader shifts in the uneven valorisation of global academic labour. In other words, what is the value for southern scholars of their knowledges entering northern circuits?

The above arguments highlight a number of generic values of learning from the south. On the whole, there is a tendency to start and end from a position that learning from and with the south is of inherent value, despite acknowledgments of "pitfalls" (Robinson, 2003) and a sensitivity towards ethicopolitical challenges (e.g. Jazeel, 2016). Fewer attempts have been made to explicitly map the evolving forms and distribution of values generated through engaging southern knowledges in Anglophone disciplinary geography. Doing so may challenge underlying assumptions that such a move is beneficial and heighten awareness of the potentially unjust and neo-colonial effects of such a move, issues brought to the fore under an analysis of epistemic expropriation. Before I outline this concept in more detail I first return to the context of my own epistemic practices that provide the basis for the reflections in this paper.

3. Research context

Although usually based in the UK I have made frequent trips of between one month and two years to Latin America, particularly Argentina. Argentina has become a home; somewhere I have lived and worked, built family ties and frequently engaged politically. When I returned to academia for (post)graduate studies in 2010 these experiences were inevitably going to shape my understandings of the world. Empirically, my postgraduate research focused on social movements in London, specifically the Occupy movement of 2011. In order to make sense of how and why activists were occupying space and holding public assemblies I looked towards (as did other activists) similar experiences from Latin America and increasingly engaged with region-wide literatures on territory and grassroots politics. At that moment I saw an obvious value in learning from Latin American knowledges in order to better interpret events happing in London (and indeed in hundreds of cities worldwide). I understood this value as partly my building an academic career, initially in the form of a PhD, but also through the strategic insights that could feed into my analysis of Occupy as a committed activist. I framed this as a moment of "militant research", 'a committed and intense process of internal reflection from within particular struggle(s) that seeks to map out and discuss underlying antagonisms while pushing the movement forward' (Halvorsen, 2015a: 469). As the formal period of my empirical research in London came to an end I began working, as an obvious next step, on ideas for new research in Buenos Aires on the relationship between territory and grassroots politics.

Since late 2014 Buenos Aires has been the main site of my research while Latin American activist and academic debates on territory continue to guide the more theoretical ambitions of my work. My relationship to grassroots political actors has also shifted, away from an explicitly "militant" approach and towards an engaged relationship that attempts to acknowledge my partial distance from the movements I study. This shift was in part informed by my own critical reflections on doing militant research in which I lamented the creeping romanticisation of social movements and sometimes failure to acknowledge the severity of internal power relations of dominant and exclusion (particularly around gender and class) that such an approach can entail. Moreover, while my entry point to Occupy was as an already committed activist my entry to political organisations as Buenos Aires in the context of my post-2014 research was as a politically sympathetic researcher. Although I developed close personal and political ties with the organisation that has become most central to my research – a centre-left political party with strong roots in Buenos Aires – my researcher hat was always present as was the fact that, despite being a visiting researcher at the University of Buenos Aires, I was employed by UK-based institutions. Nevertheless my broader ambition of providing critical insights that are useful to grassroots political organisations in Argentina and elsewhere remains intact, as does my commitment to struggles for social change.

This provides the context for my critical reflections on epistemic expropriation, which became particularly clear to me in the inter-section of two challenges to my academic practices. First, there is a remarkable absence of Latin American knowledges in Anglophone disciplinary geography, particularly from an academic perspective where only a minority of the region's scholars, largely those who established their careers in North America, are cited or otherwise engaged. Given my disciplinary formation, it is notable to me that the huge volume of contemporary Latin American geographical work, particularly on the relationship between territory and grassroots politics so central to my research, is almost entirely absent in Anglophone geography. Facilitating the circulation of geographical knowledges from Latin America seemed (and remains) an important ethical and political response to their systemic marginalisation (no doubt fuelled by ignorance) in Anglophone scholarship. Yet it quickly became clear to me that this move provided a productive means of (re)presenting "new" ideas to an Anglophone audience for which I have much to gain. Second, and following on from this, my position as an early-career scholar in a viciously competitive market in which my publications, grant funding and other academic achievements are regularly quantified and measured against others has facilitated my willingness to engage Latin American knowledges in the broader context of my career development. Despite (or perhaps because of) my commitment to activist and politically engaged research and my already existing relationship to Argentine and Latin American knowledges, the contradictions of my empirical practices became increasingly evident and I was drawn into a deeper analysis of epistemic expropriation.

4. Epistemic expropriation

Although Anglophone geographers have long been sensitive to the

peril of epistemic expropriation, particularly when working in the global south (Robbins, 2006; Robinson, 2003; Townsend et al., 1995), there has been relatively little attempt to elaborate on the mechanisms of this process and, as such, the ways our epistemic practices may unwittingly re-enforce it. Acts of epistemic expropriation, extracting ideas and valorising them in a decontextualised context elsewhere, have received sustained criticism and reflections by scholars working in the context of so-called peripheral regions including Latin America (Grosfoguel, 2016; Rivera Cusicanqui et al., 2016; Svampa, 2016). These insights highlight the racialised and gendered axes of expropriation (Rivera Cusicanqui, 2010) that are structured across a global north/south division rooted in Western-centric thought (Grosfoguel, 2015). Building on Grosfoguel's (2015, 2016) recent reflections, alongside Gidwani's (2008) helpful "afterword", I find it useful to understand epistemic expropriation as a two-sided process involving the uneven realisation of academic/intellectual capital (largely the realm of exchange-value) alongside the decontexualisation/depoliticisation of knowledge when abstracted and removed from its political/geographical context (largely the realm of use-value).

On the one hand, epistemic expropriation unfolds when knowledges produced in particular epistemic communities are abstracted and valorised elsewhere in academic (or other professional) circuits of knowledge production. The neoliberalisation of AngloAmerican academia in recent decades, which has disciplined our research through an array of indices and checks (funding bodies, research excellence frameworks, journal indices and impact factors, pay-walls, etc.), has greatly facilitated the abstraction of knowledge practices with the aim of generating quantifiable values (for further discussion see: Autonomous Geographies Collective, 2010; Castree and Sparke, 2000; Pickerill, 2008; Smith, 2000; The Edu-Factory Collective, 2009). While there is little doubt that modern academic practices across both the global north and south are complicit in epistemic expropriation it is important to acknowledge that there are highly uneven divisions of labour and distributions of (exchange) values within and across global circuits of academic knowledge production (Alatas, 2003). Of most concern is that epistemic moves to learn from the south exacerbate and deepen the uneven valorisation of academic labour across (post)colonial divides. At the same time, recent work on global knowledge production/circulation argues against generalising on the outcome of south-north circulations and for paying greater attention to the geographically specific political economy of academic knowledge production (Beigel, 2013a; Keim et al., 2014).

On the other hand, epistemic expropriation unfolds through the decontextualisation of knowledge and the erasure of its "social use values" (Gidwani, 2008: 236). In a discussion on the shift of extractivism in Latin America from economic to epistemic practices, Gosfoguel (2015: 38) argues that there are concerted efforts to decontextualise knowledges so as to remove their 'radical content' and facilitate the marketisation of ideas as they are appropriated in 'the western academic machinery'. While this process may be characteristic of modern academia everywhere, there is a need to acknowledge how it can be facilitated and deepened when knowledge circulates into regions and languages dislocated from the concrete struggles in which it was produced, particularly when transported from south to north (Gidwani, 2008). Doing so requires an appreciation of the geographical and political contexts in which knowledge is generated, extracted and circulated. At worst, then, "learning from the south" can result in the dual movement of uneven valorisation of academic labour and violent abstraction of knowledge's social use values.

5. The value of academic knowledges from the south

The hegemony of Anglophone and AngloAmerican scholarship is an alarming yet routine practice in (Anglophone) geography. I remain astonished at how it remains possible (even encouraged, e.g. by journal reviewers) for Anglophone geographers to publish research on Latin American topics with little or no engagement with local scholars and literatures. Turning to southern academia seems an intellectually obvious, even essential move: how on earth could I begin to research politics in Buenos Aires without engaging Argentine knowledges that account for the large majority of the literature? Herein lies the problem: southern (academic knowledge) has a clear and urgent value to an Anglophone researcher such as myself, yet it is far from clear whether the reverse is true. Part of the issue with regards to arguing for (or against) giving greater weight to southern knowledge in an Anglophone discipline such as geography seems to be, as Keim et al (2014) have argued, the lack of context and concrete discussion into particular examples/forms of south-north relations and circulations. As such this section aims to outline in more detail some of the ethicopolitical opportunities and concerns of working with Latin American, in particular Argentine, knowledges and scholars.

The starting point for deepening my engagement with Latin American academic knowledges was the initiation of a new research project in the wake of my PhD, shifting my focus of scholarly attention from grassroots politics in London to Buenos Aires. As with most postdoctoral scholars, I entered a period of precarious labour consisting of hourly-paid work followed by fixed-term contracts. Alongside my ongoing commitment to politically engaged research I also accepted the need to establish myself on the job market by demonstrating my capacity to publish high quality research, attract funding and other "essential job criteria". I thus dedicated much effort to gaining funding to cover fieldtrip expenses and, ideally, to buy me time to dedicate to research (rather than simply teaching) alongside working on "high impact" publications. This work depended heavily on the generosity and intellectual excellence of Argentine scholars. Letters of support, introductions to relevant scholars, invitations to local seminars and conferences, sharing of papers and books and assistance navigating the last three decades of literature in my field of interest (grassroots territorial politics in Buenos Aires) provided the foundations for my ongoing research in Argentina. For scholars such as myself, educated and working in the global north, these intellectual acts of integration are particularly necessary and helpful for finding one's ground. They set me up for successful grant applications, including a major postdoctoral fellowship, as well as a string of future publications. In this context working in/from Argentina was particularly important to realising the academic value (successful grants or publications) of my research and helped facilitate epistemic expropriation in at least three ways.

First, Argentina has a rich tradition of research, especailly since the foundation of its National Scientific and Technical Research Council (CONICET) in 1958 and its subsequent professionalisation of academia (Beigel, 2013a, 2014; Beigel and Sabea, 2014), yet its scholarship remains highly peripheral in the Anglophone social sciences (Beigel, 2013b). Argentina contains a wealth of academic work that, of particular interest to me, has generated original and important insights with regards to the role of territory in state and society (see Tobío, 2012). This research emerged in the local context of post-industrialisation and the return to democracy since the 1980s yet its findings have a relevance that speaks to broader transformations occurring in the world. My experience has been that once effort has been made to engage with (and translate) this scholarship Anglophone academics are highly receptive to these original and innovative ideas. Hence, when seeking funding for a research project that drew heavily on Argentine (and Latin American) debates it was notable that I was successful in the UK and not in Argentina. As a senior Argentine colleague told me, it was unclear what my project would add to recent work on territory and social movements and that my ideas might be better suited to Anglophone debates (where they are still relatively new and innovative). Indeed, in a highly competitive context of around 5–10% success rates for postdoctoral grants/fellowships "learning from" Argentine debates provided me with a kind of epistemic-spatial fix by opening up a new area for the extraction, relocation and valorisation of knowledge within Anglophone circuits.

Second, most Argentine researchers are excluded from Anglophone/AngloAmerican circuits and have limited capacity to recuperate much value from the south-north circulation of knowledges instigated by my move (Beigel, 2014). Even if more resources were made available, e.g. for translation or conference attendance, Argentine and other non-Anglophone academic communities are likely to find the parochial nature of "our" debates to be limiting, particularly when it comes to Latin American experiences (see also Bański and Ferenc, 2013). Shifting the geography of citation may be symbolically significant for Anglophone scholars but is unlikely to make any material difference to "peripheral" scholars by itself (Beigel, 2013b), particularly as authors such as myself continue to reap most of the academic value through our "authorship" or "principal investigator" designation. Most damningly, moves to import southern theory often rest on AngloAmerican assumptions of core-periphery relations of dependency. Argentina, alongside other Latin American countries, developed relative autonomy from the Euro-American core since the mid 20th Century (Beigel, 2013a; Beigel and Sabea, 2014) while most researchers publish in regional Latin American circuits that allow them to work in CONICET and establish themselves as academics, bypassing "mainstream" Anglophone circuits altogether (Beigel, 2014; Beigel and Salatino, 2015). Although publishing in Anglophone circuits does bring intellectual capital to Argentine researchers and prestige in CONICET, this does not equate to a one-way centre-periphery relationship and any suggestion of academic "dependency" would need to be nuanced and reworked in the specific Argentine context (Beigel, 2014, 2016). Indeed, it may be increasingly the case that Anglophone researchers such as myself are dependent on academic production in the so-called periphery.

Third, the ongoing popularity of "learning from the south" in human geography is creating demand for greater south-north circulations of knowledge that in turn generates new opportunities for practices of epistemic expropriation. Although much of the impetus for turning to southern theory is founded on strong ethicopolitical justifications (e.g. Connell, 2007; Santos, 2014) this may be insufficient to prevent the uneven valorisation of academic labour across south-north divides, valorising Anglophone researchers' labour at the expense, or marginalisation, of southern academics. Across the expanding literatures on Anglophone hegemony and the Eurocentric nature of northern research (e.g. citation practices, case studies) (Boudreau and Kaika, 2013; Braun, 2003; Kanai et al., 2017; King and Qian, 2017; Mott and Cockayne, 2017) there is an underlying assumption that greater engagement with the global south is inherently positive, leading to a more democratic and relevant field of knowledge enquiry. Less attention is given to how this shift may be (re)enforcing an international division of labour based on the expropriation of southern debates for the benefit of northern academics. This exemplifies the scalar politics of AngloAmerican hegemony discussed by Berg (2004) by supporting and providing substance to disciplinary accumulation strategies. In sum, moves to learn from the south may help pave the way for more extensive epistemic expropriation led by well-meaning northern scholars who develop their careers on the back of scholarly labour from elsewhere.

Greater attention should thus be given to the multi-scalar political economy of academia, considering the value of south-north circulations from the vantage point of differentially positioned researchers. A fruitful line of enquiry might be to explore how deliberate south-north circulations may impact the relationship of core-periphery, or academic dependency, that is often presented as the starting point for analyses of global knowledge production (Alatas, 2003; Bhambra, 2014; Galassi, 2013; Gareau, 1988). Argentina is an interesting case here because although it is dominant at a regional scale in Latin America in terms of publications, etc. it is peripheral from the perspective of mainstream (Anglophone) circuits (Beigel, 2014). Anglophone academic circuits can, at times, provide a useful source of prestige and/or funding for Argentine researchers. In most cases, however, integration into Anglophone circuits is accompanied with academic exile as scholars relocate both physically and intellectually to AngloAmerica (Beigel, 2018; Cabreros, 2015). Indeed the intellectual dislocation of Latin American scholars who have promoted and ridden the wave of southern theory in Anglophone circuits is both ironic and damaging to regional academia, particularly when it is done in the name of "decolonising" knowledge (Grosfoguel, 2015; Rivera Cusicanqui, 2010; Svampa, 2016). By itself there is little to celebrate in academic learning from the south from a "peripheral" perspective while there is much to gain for northern scholars and their discipline(s). However, to explore this issue solely from the perspective of academic knowledge production is limiting and may reinforce wider practices of epistemic expropriation. It is thus essential to turn our attention more explicitly to the sorts of political and social use-values that form the bases of knowledge production in the first place.

6. The geopolitics of southern knowledges

All knowledge is "situated" (Haraway, 1988), a product of its particular geographical context (see Agnew, 2007) which is inevitably structured by its position within the "modern/colonial capitalist/patriarchical world system" (Grosfoguel, 2010). Grappling with the value of southern knowledges necessitates a clear sense of the geopolitics of knowledge production: the intersection of epistemic and social location of knowledge (Grosfoguel, 2010). Acknowledging the geopolitics of knowledge highlights the inextricable relationship between epistemology and particular terrains of struggle (see Routledge, 1996), particular sites of contestation through which new knowledges are produced. In this sense the violence of abstraction, to borrow Sayer's (1987) phrase, is not simply in moving from concrete ideas to more general concepts, it is also in the erasure of particular geopolitical contexts that make knowledge possible in the first place. Violent abstractions are endemic to academic labour yet take on particular weight in the context of knowledge that is removed from the subaltern to the dominant side of the modern/colonial capitalist/patriarchical world system (Gidwani, 2008; Grosfoguel, 2010; Jazeel and McFarlane, 2009). Epistemic expropriation facilitates the emptying of knowledge's concrete use-value – produced in the geopolitical context of struggle – in the course of generating the abstract exchange values of academic labour. In short, by dislocating knowledge from its geopolitical context in the process of "learning from the south" academics may be complicit in its depoliticisation as it is put into circulation within (socially and epistemologically) distanced academic debates. Let me explore this process in the context of my engagement with South American knowledges of territory in relation to grassroots politics.

Territory has taken on particular significance across Latin America in the last three decades via a range of social movements that mobilised and "re-invented" it as knowledge and practice (Porto-Gonçalves, 2012). Although Anglophone geographers have an ironic habit of universalising the categories we use – presuming that meanings of "territory" exceed geographical difference – the experiences of Latin America highlight the inseparability of social and epistemic location. It is essential to understand territory in relation to specific terrains of struggle. Across Latin America social movements have been key protagonists in the production of new knowledges over recent decades (Escobar, 2008; Valdés, 2014) and territory has been a core component (Porto-Gonçalves, 2009). Territory emerged as a key category of social movements in Buenos Aires, the site that has been central for informing both my theoretical (including on Occupy London) and empirical (ongoing research to this day) work (Halvorsen, 2015b; Halvorsen, 2018). It is important to highlight the centrality of geographical context for how and why knowledges (of territory in this case) are produced.

Territory took on weight as a key practice of popular, grassroots sectors in the working class peripheries of Greater Buenos Aires during the transition to democracy in Argentina in the 1980s with the reconstruction of practices of citizenship (Delamata, 2005), summarised by Merklen (2005) as the "territorial inscription" of the popular classes. This occurred in the dual context of the neoliberalisation of Argentine

urban society, which took on force during the 1990s (Grimson et al., 2009) leading to high unemployment, and the fracturing of the political organisation of the popular classes, particularly in the form of trade unions that became increasingly irrelevant to the un- and under-employed masses. Territory, in the form of the *barrio* (neighborhood) and small towns in the provinces, provided a new means of political existence: a strategy for surviving poverty (e.g. solidarity economies), a repertoire of collective action (e.g. land occupations), and a new subjectivity based on organising in and through urban communities (Merklen, 2005). During the second half of the 1990s, with unemployment soaring and the Argentine state falling into fiscal and political crisis, territory provided the basis for the mobilisation of a new and massive wave of urban social movements that (re)produced territory in the confluence of the working class *barrios* where they organised and the *piquetes* (road-blocks) that became their signature repertoire of contention (Svampa and Pererya, 2003).

Knowledges of territory emerged first and foremost through these social movements who, during the late 1990s and early 2000s, developed a new language of struggle to make sense of their political context and political subjectivities. In this way the notion of territory became closely associated with concepts such as poder popular (poplar power) and *trabajo territorial* (the work, or militancy, of orgnaising in and through territory) (MTD Almirante Brown, 2002; Mazzeo et al., 2007; Stratta and Barrera, 2009; Vommaro and MTD de Solano, 2004). Some of these political actors identified themselves as working within the tradition of militant research (see Colectivo Situaciones, 2003) and, in the 2000s, there was fertile cross-over between militancy and academia and much research into social movements sought to elaborate and extend the significance of territory for grassroots politics from sociological and anthropological perspectives (see Tobío, 2012). Relying heavily on ethnographical methods, this research demonstrated a strong appreciation of the social site of knowledge production (e.g. Frederic, 2004; Manzano, 2013). The incorporation of grassroots territory within academia did, however, generate a separation from the social location of knowledge, with many scholars coming from white, middle class backgrounds, although it should be noted that class and other (e.g. gender, ethnic) divisions are also pronounced within social movements themselves. Nevertheless, Argentine academic knowledge production of territory is deeply rooted in the local experiences of political struggle and the boundary between activism and scholarship is fluid with an ongoing tradition of co-producing and orientating knowledge towards the needs and experiences of social movements.

Argentina has thus produced a rich set of knowledges around the concept of territory that I have seen as highly generative for intervening in debates in Anglophone geography over social movements and the political significance of territory (see Halvorsen, 2018) at a time when there appears to have been a territorial turn in grassroots politics in Western Europe and North America (e.g. Occupy, rise of neighbourhood organising/assemblies) (see Sitrin and Azzellini, 2014). On the one hand, "learning from the south" is here an acknowledgment of how far behind Anglophone scholarship is in terms of our understanding of territory as a grassroots category compared to the years of activist and academic discussions over its significance in Argentina (and Latin America). In line with open and relational approaches to comparative analyses (Hart, 2018; Robinson, 2016a, 2016b), there is much scope in drawing lines between the political-epistemic experiences of Argentina and the contemporary realities of AngloAmerica. On the other hand, however, "learning from the south" is a means of expropriating the intellectual and activist knowledges of Argentines built over many years in order to generate quick responses to "cutting edge" Anglophone debates. Rather than reinventing the wheel, I have found already existing theoretical answers to the question of why territory matters to grassroots politics (in the UK or elsewhere) in Argentine knowledges. Although I have sought to use this knowledge in dialogue with movements such as Occupy (through blogs posts, meetings, etc) this move presents a visible moment of epistemic expropriation.

Epistemic expropriation here takes place as knowledge is dislocated from its particular terrain of struggle and is valorised in academic circuits of knowledge production. The first step in this process is the capture of grassroots knowledges of territory by scholars working in Argentine universities. As I have indicated, this step is complex and has involved attempts by academics to maintain a strong commitment to those social movements they engage with. As the Colectivo Situaciones (2003) has argued, however, the institutional detachment of the university poses an unavoidable tension with the researcher's capacity to fully commit themselves to any political struggle. Nevertheless, the overlapping circuits of academic and activist knowledge production in the local context of Buenos Aires (e.g. through institutions such as the Cultural Centre of Cooperation downtown or the regular invitation of scholars to activist hubs) allows for certain (inevitably limited) checks (e.g. calling out academics who "sell out") and reciprocality (a relatively fluid circulation of ideas) to remain. It is the second step, when grassroots knowledges are relocated away from circuits of knowledge production in Buenos Aires to AngloAmerican circuits of disciplinary geography, which is of most concern.

Expropriating knowledge from its terrain of struggle, in this case the social movements of Greater Buenos Aires, and transporting it to dominant circuits in the Global North has the tendency to not only sustain an uneven global spatial division of labour (Gidwani, 2008: 236) but also to depoliticise and remove the political use-value of knowledge (see also Jazeel and McFarlane, 2009). Despite any attempts I make to contextualise where "my" understandings of territory come from, once they enter Anglophone circuits (publications, conferences, etc) it is likely that this political content will dissipate within broader (Anglophone) geographical debates. Even when southern knowledges are taken up in the context of "postcolonial" or "decolonial" studies in the north, there is a clear academic tendency to first empty knowledge of the political content that generated it. As Rivera Cusicanqui (2012: 98) notes, many North American scholars, including "Walter Mignolo and company" have created 'a jargon, a conceptual apparatus, and forms of reference and counterreference that have isolated academic treatises from any obligation to or dialogue with insurgent social forces'. Indeed, following Grosfoguel (2015; 2016), the depoliticisation of knowledge is a necessary prerequisite for it being accepted and "marketeable" in academic circuits and in order to appear as new and "original" in the global north. This move both robs those involved in the production of knowledge in the global south and creates an artificial divide between theory and practice in northern academic circuits.

Most recently, I have been carrying out research with a small political party in Buenos Aires and also spent 6 months as a visiting research fellow at the University of Buenos Aires, providing a potential counter point to my expropriation to northern academic circuits. First, conducting empirical research with a specific organisation provides the enormous benefit of being able to feedback research, both formally through reports/blogs/presentations and informally through online/offline discussions. From the outset I have sought to make explicit my ethical commitment to sharing any findings I generate and make myself available for the party in any way we see appropriate. This has included, for example, supporting an NGO affiliated to the party (through academic work and potential grant applications) and doing small pieces of research for party politicians working in the city government. I have also committed to co-writing a paper with a party member in order to facilitate its publication in Spanish to a local audience. Second, working at a local university made my work more accessible to local social movements and scholars. I gave regular talks in Buenos Aires – free and open to all – including public institutions such as a science park created by the previous Kirchner government. Given the saturation of interest on territory and activism in grassroots organisation over the years it was still hard to demonstrate the value of my research to social movement actors as opposed to academics who had an inherent interest in how an Anglophone academic was engaging with local debates. Despite these extended encounters with circuits of knowledge

production in Buenos Aires, however, I remained based at a British institution and, as an Anglophone scholar climbing the academic ladder, I continued to reap value from southern knowledges as they enter into northern academic circuits depoliticised and dislocated from their terrains of struggle. Is epistemic expropriation, then, a price that one must necessarily pay as an Anglophone scholar working in the global south?

Calls by Anglophone geographers to learn from the south often rest on an optimistic assumption that learning from the south is both necessary and urgent and argue that the ethicopolitical orientations of postcolonial scholars will be able to work against "pitfalls" such as epistemic expropriation (Jazeel, 2016; Robinson, 2003). This paper has started from a different position. While I share some of the underlying values of learning from/with the south (e.g. Connell, 2007; Santos, 2014) it seems that, in the context of disciplinary geography, this move is more directly and obviously of value to northern scholars than it is to producers of knowledge in the global south, at least in the case of Argentina. Epistemic expropriation thus appears endemic and perhaps inevitable for the Anglophone geographer learning from the global south. Central to this condition is the ongoing hegemony of English as lingua franca in disciplinary "international" geography, which both necessitates an Anglophone translator of southern knowledges and poses insurmountable barriers for the re-valorisation of northern knowledge in the global south. In the final section I highlight how Anglophone hegemony re-enforces epistemic expropriation from the global south posing a significant dilemma for AngloAmerican geographers.

7. Anglophone hegemony and epistemic expropriation

International geography (like most of the social sciences), as defined from my positionality in the UK, is overwhelming conducted in English with a strong hegemony of scholars/institutions based in Anglophone countries, particularly the UK/USA (Aalbers and Rossi, 2009). Over the last two decades a number of papers and critical editorials have highlighted Anglophone hegemony in publication and citation practices in geographical journals such as this (e.g. Bański and Ferenc, 2013; Berg and Kearns, 1998; Boudreau and Kaika, 2013; Minca, 2003; Peake, 2011; Raju, 2006; Yeung, 2001). Despite growing attention to the issue, Anglophone hegemony seems very difficult to disrupt (Hassink et al., 2018; King, and Qian, 2017). If anything, turns towards non-Anglophone scholarship seems to be generating a more diverse range of global case studies, particularly in urban studies (Kanai et al., 2017; King, and Qian, 2017). A postcolonial response to AngloAmerican geographers conducting research overseas has been to highlight and confront the hierarchical distinction between empirics (located in the global south) and theory (located in the north) by arguing for the need to "provincialise" (Chakrabarty, 2000) AngloAmerican theoretical knowledges (Pollard et al., 2009; Raghuram and Madge, 2006). While I support this move – "theories" of territory cannot be understood without their "empirical" context in Latin America – from the perspective of Anglophone hegemony it is not only overly optimistic but it fails to directly acknowledge the re-enforcement of epistemic expropriation that it may lead to.

Anglophone/AngloAmerican hegemony provides a two-way barrier to the circulation of theoretical and empirical knowledges to/from the global south. On the one hand, Anglophone journals exclude those for whom English is a foreign language and potentially imposes very expensive translation costs. Equally problematic as a barrier for non-AngloAmerican geographers is the extraordinarily parochial nature of much "international" debate that demands a proficiency in the latest developments generated in English in select disciplinary journals (Bański and Ferenc, 2013). Moreover, there is an AngloAmerican assumption that scholars based in the "margins" need and/or want to circulate in "dominant" academic circuits when, as Beigel (2014) argues for Argentina, this is not necessarily the case. On the other hand, there are clear barriers for AngloAmerican scholars who are unable or unwilling to read academic knowledges produced in other regions and languages. In this context an Anglophone scholar that also has an interest in engaging with theory produced in global south has a unique opportunity to translate and re-locate knowledge, as my own experience well exemplifies. The value of such labour of translation/relocation tends to sit unevenly with the Anglophone academic (and also publisher, as Barnett and Low (1996) discuss). Anglophone hegemony thus works against the optimism prevalent in attempts to learn from the south by re-enforcing practices of epistemic expropriation.

Anglophone hegemony also re-produces an uneven global political economy of knowledge production. A global division of academic labour, based on an understanding of a theoretically impoverished periphery dependent on a Eurocentric core, has long been highlighted in the social sciences (Alatas, 2003; Gareau, 1988). "International" human geography has been criticised as having a particularly strong bias towards Anglophone/AngloAmerican knowledges, as Paasi (2005) notes in his review of the Institute of Scientific Information's (ISI) database. In this context, the turn towards southern knowledge is often held as an attempt to counter this division and reverse the dominant circulation of knowledge from core-periphery (north-south) to periphery-core (south-north). Yet it is imperative to assess *how* such knowledge travels and for whom (and where) it is valorised. The dislocation between the intellectual value of "my" knowledge in Anglophone circuits and the knowledges grounded in terrains of struggle in Buenos Aires is created through an academic form of accumulation by dispossession whereby I benefit directly from the labour of others while simultaneously undermining the (radical) use-values of knowledge. To a certain extent I am sabotaging and subverting ideas and practices generated through grassroots activism by putting them into circulation in a way that props up and is valorised by (neoliberal) Anglophone academia which in turn lays claim to and rigorously protects "its" new knowledge through journal pay-walls, conference fees, etc. In this way I put southern knowledges into circulation through the act of epistemic expropriation.

Anglophone hegemony tends to be self-sustaining and encourages ongoing epistemic expropriation from the global south. From the perspective of Argentina, there seems little incentive for scholars to challenge or disrupt it, given the amount of resources required to do so. More common, at least in the case of Argentina, is the relocation of southern intellectuals to northern academic circuits, both through physically moving to northern institutions and/or writing for an "international" Anglophone audience. Although a small number of Argentine and other Latin American emigrants have managed to maintain close contacts with the terrains of struggle and local academic debates, in most cases this repositioning within Anglophone circuits leads to a dislocation from regional circuits of knowledge production in both academia and social movements (Beigel, 2018; Cabreros, 2015; Rivera Cusicanqui, 2010). This tends to reinforce epistemic expropriation as the value of knowledge is realised in external, academic circuits with heavy rewards for the internationally "leading" scholars on top. From the perspective of academics in the global north there seems to be little means of closing the gap between Anglophone disciplinary circuits and terrains of struggle from which knowledge is produced (cf Jazeel, 2016) and my experience has been that we are forced to live contradictory and dislocated existences as producers of knowledge. While contradictions are inherent to any critical academic based in the UK or similar setting, where we necessarily have to produce knowledge in-against-and-beyond the neoliberal university (Halvorsen, 2015a), they have the tendency to take the form of epistemic expropriation in the context of working with southern knowledge and as such require ongoing critical reflection.

8. Conclusion

Epistemic expropriation poses a core contradiction for many Anglophone scholars working from and with southern epistemologies,

as I have come to terms with in my research with Argentine and Latin American knowledges. Facilitating greater south-north (alongside south-south, north-south and north-north) circulations of knowledge remains an urgent task in a world (or world of worlds) that faces multiple social, political, economic, ecological crises (Santos, 2014). We simply cannot afford not to open up greater epistemological dialogue across geographical difference. Yet we also cannot be blind to the political-economic conditions that structure these circulations and determine the valorisation of knowledge. In the context of Anglophone academia, at least in the context of geography that I am more familiar with, epistemic expropriation seems difficult to avoid, posing a perennial ethicopolitical dilemma, a moment of blockage that Gidwani (2008) terms *aporia*, which has no guarantee of a safe passage for the critically minded scholar. As Gidwani argues, such moments may well lead to the decision to halt a research project or at least radically question its proposed methodology. There have been several attempts to describe ways-out, or "tactics", to move through moments of ethicopolitical crises (Jazeel, 2016; Robinson, 2003), yet there is no easy way forward for the northern, Anglophone scholar engaging southern knowledges.

If learning from the south is to be taken seriously then there is an urgent need for greater acknowledgement of the inherent contradiction of our academic labour and more exposure of the dangers of working in modern universities. In highlighting epistemic expropriation my aim has not been to somehow argue against global circulations of knowledges or for Anglophone scholars to retreat back to an insular and introvert positionality. Practically, such a move would be meaningless as the production of knowledge tends to already have a relational geography that stretches well beyond its terrain of struggle (Escobar, 2006; Keim et al., 2014; Agnew, 2007). Understandings of territory in Buenos Aires, for example, have relied on political experiences and knowledges from across Latin America (see Zibechi, 2012) as well as academic debates with elsewhere, particularly with Eurocentric work on social movements (see Rossi and Bülow, 2015). Rather, we need to be more attuned to how academia structures and distributes the values of knowledge produced in areas that are marginalised by Anglophone/AngloAmerican hegemony. One obvious "solution" is to radically reimagine our modes of engaging southern knowledges outside the logics of modern academia, pushing towards what Santos (2014: 190) terms the "ecology of knowledge" that 'challenges universal and abstract hierarchies and the power that, through them, have been naturalized through history'. Indeed a core decolonial critique has been on 'the complicity of the social sciences with the coloniality of power' that radically doubts the potential of any modern institution to reverse colonial epistemic practices (Castro-Gómez and Grosfoguel, 2007: 21). In this regards projects such as the attempt to create a deocolonial university in northern Nicaragua (Cupples and Glynn, 2014) are bold and inspiring. Yet for those of us still working in an AngloAmerican university such experiences can feel remote and do little to disrupt the epistemic expropriations maintained through our academic labour.

In closing it appears that, in my capacity as an Anglophone scholar based at a British university, I remain blocked in Gidwani's (2008) aporia. I can see various possible ways out, including: a dedication to activism and other ways of "giving back" some of the value I have accumulated; a greater commitment to projects such as the multi-lingual open access ACME journal (to take a leading example in geography); ongoing efforts to work against the neoliberalising tendencies of academia (see PyGyRG, 2012); and greater collaborative efforts with scholars from Latin America. While I have and will continue to pursue many of these "tactics" none of them resolve the contradiction of the epistemic expropriations in my labour. In the long term I remain optimistic that structural transformations may ensue and that the accumulation of southern knowledges may reach a tipping point in which Anglophone "international" knowledge loses its hegemony. In the meantime I reiterate that we, in the Anglophone scholarly community, must take care to not overly romanticise the embrace of southern knowledges as an inherently progressive move and remain alert to the deep and ongoing practices of epistemic expropriation that sustain and reproduce colonial hierarchies through our academic labour.

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