

# FORUM

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## CORPORATE STORYTELLING AND THE IDEA OF LATIN AMERICA

*Histórias corporativas e a ideia da América Latina*

*Historias corporativas y la idea de América Latina*

### ABSTRACT

The aim of this article is contributing to a great variety of theoretical perspectives and empirical settings to generate cumulative evidence about the influence of historical legacies and organisational ability for managing the past. In a continuation of critical perspectives that challenges the dominance of Anglo-Saxon onto-epistemologies in management and organisation studies (MOS), we conducted an empirical study on a multinational airline company whose past successes depended on the North/South, Anglo/Latin American borderlands. We analysed the grand narratives of Pan American Airways' (PAA) corporate archival material to determine its dominant discourses about people from Latin America. Based on the three themes of politics, economics, and culture, we present three grand narratives, or official stories, that we argue summarise PAA storytelling about Latin America between 1927 and 1960. Following decolonial feminism, we aim to recontextualise the past and the hegemonic storytelling embedded in PAA's grand narratives.

**KEYWORDS** | Decolonial feminism, grand narratives, border thinking, Latin America, Pan American Airways

### RESUMO

*O objetivo deste artigo é contribuir para uma grande variedade de perspectivas teóricas e configurações empíricas para gerar evidências cumulativas sobre a influência de legados históricos e capacidade organizacional para gerenciar o passado. Continuando com a perspectiva crítica que desafia o domínio das epistemologias anglo-saxônicas nos estudos de gestão e organização, realizamos um estudo empírico sobre uma companhia aérea multinacional cujos sucessos do passado dependiam do Norte/Sul; Fronteiras anglo-latino-americanas. Analisamos o material de arquivo corporativo do Pan American Airways (PAA) em termos de grandes narrativas para estabelecer discursos dominantes sobre pessoas da América Latina. Com base em três temas, por exemplo, política, economia e cultura, nós desenvolvemos três grandes narrativas ou histórias oficiais que defendem resumir PAA contar histórias sobre a América Latina entre 1927 e 1960. Após o feminismo descolonial, pretendemos recontextualizar o passado e a narrativa hegemônica incorporada nas grandes narrativas do PAA.*

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE** | Feminismo descolonial, grandes narrativas, pensamento fronteiriço, América Latina, multinacional americana.

### RESUMEN

*El objetivo de este artículo es contribuir a una gran variedad de perspectivas teóricas y escenarios empíricos para generar evidencia acumulada sobre la influencia de los legados históricos y la capacidad organizativa para gestionar el pasado. Continuando con la perspectiva crítica que desafia el dominio de las epistemologías anglosajonas en los estudios de gestión y organizaciones, realizamos un estudio empírico sobre una aerolínea multinacional cuyos éxitos pasados dependieron de las fronteras Norte/Sur; anglo-latinoamericanas. Analizamos las grandes narrativas del material de archivo corporativo de Pan American Airways (PAA) para establecer discursos dominantes sobre las personas de América Latina. Sobre la base de tres temas: política, economía y cultura, desarrollamos tres grandes narrativas o historias oficiales que argumentamos son un resumen de la narrativa de PAA sobre América Latina entre 1927 y 1960. Utilizando el marco teórico del feminismo decolonial, nuestro objetivo es recontextualizar el pasado y la narración hegemónica incrustada en las grandes narrativas de PAA.*

**PALABRAS CLAVE** | Feminismo decolonial, grandes narrativas, pensamiento fronterizo, América Latina, multinacional estadounidense.

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## INTRODUCTION

This paper contributes to decolonial and feminist research by conducting an empirical study of a multinational company, Pan American Airways (PAA), who strategically constructed and used history to market Latin America and manage its brand, thereby influencing past, present, and future portraits of Latin Americans. In continuation with critical perspectives that challenge the dominance of Anglo-Saxon onto-epistemologies in management and organisation studies (Gantman, Yousfi, & Alcadipani, 2015; Ibarra-Colado, 2006, 2008), this study challenges the successes of an organisation that based its operation on the North/South and Anglo/Latin American borderlands.

Anzaldúa developed a feminist theory that is widely used in fields such as philosophy, race studies, cultural studies, and queer studies and that was recently acknowledged by other feminist organisational scholars (Calás & Smircich, 2013). Anzaldúa's work examines two factors that are relevant to the study of management, history, and organisations: 1) she presents a theorisation of the intersections of race, class, gender, and nation; and 2) she conducts a historical analysis in order to understand the US–Latin American relationship through time. Conversely, decolonial organisational scholars such as Alcadipani & Faria, 2014) use the work of Mignolo (2005, 2011) to incorporate a Latin American perspective into their research. Mignolo provides a critical reading of Latin America history from Spain's conquest of the land in the 15th century until the United States' gained cultural and political hegemony over the region in the 20th century.

In the following sections, we outline how PAA narrativised and represented Latin America, and we consider the internationalisation of an Anglo-Saxon multinational in Latin American geopolitics. To do so, we analysed the grand narratives (Boje, 2001) of PAA corporate archival material to establish the dominant discourses about Latinos. Based on the themes of politics, economics, and culture, we develop three grand narratives, or official stories, that we argue summarise PAA storytelling about Latin America between 1927 and 1960.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This research unites historical and archival research to examine history as a strategic resource by a multinational company. This paper brought together the study of the past, archival research, and the study of history as a strategic resource by a multinational company. This study of PAA-Latin America was conducted under

two main postpositivist assumptions: 1) the past, in archival research, remains ontologically unavailable (Mills & Helms Mills, 2017); and 2) history is the attempt to reproduce the past through narratives or chronicles (descriptions of events). In other words, the data we collected serve to interpret the past and to represent (deconstruct and reconstruct) history. Thus, we considered PAA's archive as a site to construct one plausible representation of the past. For Hedstrom (2002), there are many important factors related to memory, and it is important for researchers to consider the power of archivists in relation to historical memories. Organisational scholars who pursue archival research must acknowledge the process by which organisations and managers package knowledge for a particular audience (Foster, Coraiola, Suddaby, Kroezen, & Chandler, 2017).

The creation of knowledge based on the past is influenced by the contributions of decolonial and feminist theories (Anzaldúa, 2007), historiography (White, 2009), narrative analysis (Boje, 2001, 2008a), and narrative knowledge (Lyotard, 1987).

The literature on colonial studies can be divided into two major groups (Miñoso & Castelli, 2011, p. 196). This first group is comprised of the subaltern group from South Asia who critique the hegemony and domination of the West, and the postcolonial studies group, which includes Fanon, Spivak, and Mohanty, who conduct research into the French and English colonies in Africa, the Caribbean, and India. The second major group is comprised of critical scholars from Latin America, who emerged in the 1950s, such as Quijano, Amin, Dos Santos, and Dussel, and more recently decolonial scholars such as Mignolo, Fernandez Retamas, Montero, Rodriguez, Castro Gomez, Mendieta, Grosfoguel, and Rivera Cusicanuqui. Among the decolonial scholars, we chose to follow the research of Mignolo (2011), who argues for a move beyond postcolonialism that entails displacement, change, and a move from postcolonial (after colonial) to de-colonial (beyond colonial) (Mignolo & Tlostanova, 2006, p. 206). Three main ideas of Mignolo's were important for this study: 1) in the 18th century, "Latin" Americans were identified as non-Anglo and non-European; 2) the economic and political crisis that hit "Latin" America in the 1950s reinforced its sense of inferiority and extinguished, for many years, any expectation of Latin America becoming a rising region; 3) the empires that colonised the Americas influenced the process of colonisation itself. North America was colonised by two rising empires, the British and the French, while South America was colonised by the Spanish and the Portuguese, two empires that were in decline. These three ideas explain the importance of studying other ways of creating knowledge or "border thinking" (Anzaldúa, 2007), as it is important to debunk the legitimisation

of Western knowledge above all other roots of knowledge. The concept of border thinking, first introduced by Gloria Anzaldúa in *Borderlands/La Frontera* (2007), is important to the study of decoloniality (Mignolo, 2000, 2002, 2007). For Mignolo, border thinking is needed to crack the superiority/hegemony of Western knowledge and eliminate the idea of a center and a periphery. Through border thinking, we go beyond the postcolonial critique and move toward the decoloniality of knowledge that eliminates the colonial legacy. Thus, “border thinking is the epistemology of the exteriority; that is, of the outside created from the inside” (Mignolo & Tlostanova, 2006, p. 206).

Decolonial feminist perspectives (Anzaldúa, 2007; Mohanty, 1984, 1991, 2003, 2008) have developed ways of examining several dualities created by European and US societies and the hierarchical system that is formed when multiple dyads—race and gender and class and nation, instead of race or gender or class or nation—are brought together for analysis. This type of work explores what Lugones (2015) calls *epistemologías de fronteras* (border epistemologies) or what Anzaldúa (2007) refers to as *borderlands/fronteras*. Both scholars analyse the distinction among modern/non-modern, colonial/decolonial, and us/them. Anzaldúa (2007) refers to border thinking as a new (female) consciousness that occurs in seven stages: 1) conscious rupture with all oppressive traditions of all cultures and religions; 2) documentation of the rupture; 3) reinterpret history using new symbols and form new perspectives around dark-skinned people, women, and queer people; 4) develop tolerance for ambiguity; 5) develop openness to share and new ways of thinking, surrender to notions of safety/familiar; 6) deconstruct/construct history; and 7) become a Nahuatl; that is, transform oneself into another person or animal.

A border thinking approach enhances one’s critical thinking, historical contextualisation, understanding for ambiguity, and ability to transform the *status quo*. This transformation reminds us that we speak from a particular location within a power structure that, for Anzaldúa (2007), is intersected by class, race, and gender. This intrinsic intersectionality makes visible the many oppressions that women of color have faced throughout history (Erel, Haritaworn, Rodríguez, & Klesse, 2011). The experiences of the subject generate the need for a border thinking approach (Mignolo, 2011) that can break the Western code and bring the locus of enunciation “I am where I do and think” (Mignolo, 2011, xvi). Using a decolonial feminist framework gives voice to “the silence of the archives” (Decker, 2013) by focusing on the creation of a masculine image in Latin American past that has been largely forgotten in management and organisational knowledge.

## METHODOLOGY

The theoretical framework of *decolonial feminism* highlights the material and symbolic imbalance of power between Western and non-Western women throughout Western history and how this difference configured a hierarchy in which the latter are in many ways disadvantaged as women and non-Western people (Latinas, Asian, Indians, etc.). As outlined in Figure 1 below, we combined three concepts of the decolonial feminist framework to complete this work: 1) historical revisionism; 2) an examination of hierarchical relations, power, and coloniality; and 3) an examination of how gender, race, and nation develop through history. A *grand narrative* analysis was used to explore how PAA produced dominant stories about Latin America. An *antenarrative* analysis deconstructs those stories and shows the contradictions, gaps, and untold stories in the narrative. The analysis required examinations of PAA’s material and the historical events that occurred between their initial flight in 1927 and when US international affairs toward Latin America shifted and John F. Kennedy became president of the US in 1960.

The use of Boje’s (2001) grand narrative analysis dismantles the single-voiced narration of Latin America in PAA magazines, booklets, and newsletters. Grand narratives clearly illustrate PAA’s one-sided discourse and show how it legitimated knowledge from the past (Lyotard, 1987). Using Boje (2001, 2008a, 2008b) and thematic analysis, we describe three grand narratives about Latin America that were recurrent in the material studied between the years of 1927 and 1960. We show that these grand narratives overlap over time, and we present them according to a chronology of socio-political events (Mills, 2010) that have influenced US–Latin America relations (Figure 2).

The creation of grand narratives involved revising and questioning “the truth” and its meaning within world history and acknowledging that we currently know only “half of the story” (Mignolo, 2011, p. 182). Using a grand narrative analysis, we were able to revise and capture the dominant discourses that created “the truth” about Latin America. Due to PAA’s skillful development of historical narratives, this research required a certain degree of skepticism and a search for antenarratives within texts, images, and historical events in order to explore the other half of the story. Antenarratives challenge the grand narrative or organizational storytelling that controls organizational events and their meaning (Vaara & Tienari, 2011) by introducing new actors (e.g., Argentina), fragmented stories (e.g., the democratisation of Latin American politics), and plausible storylines (e.g., cosmopolitanism in South America).

Figure 1. Theoretical framework and methods of analysis in PAA's case study

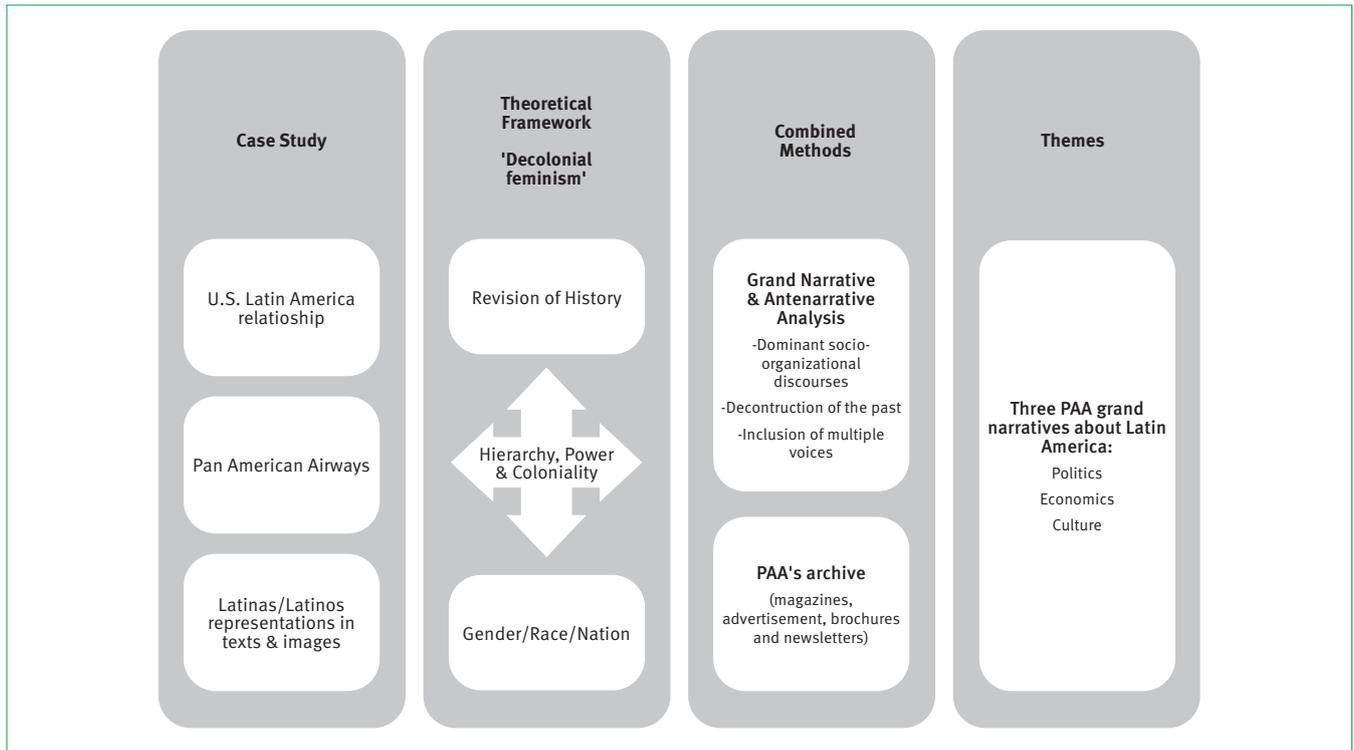
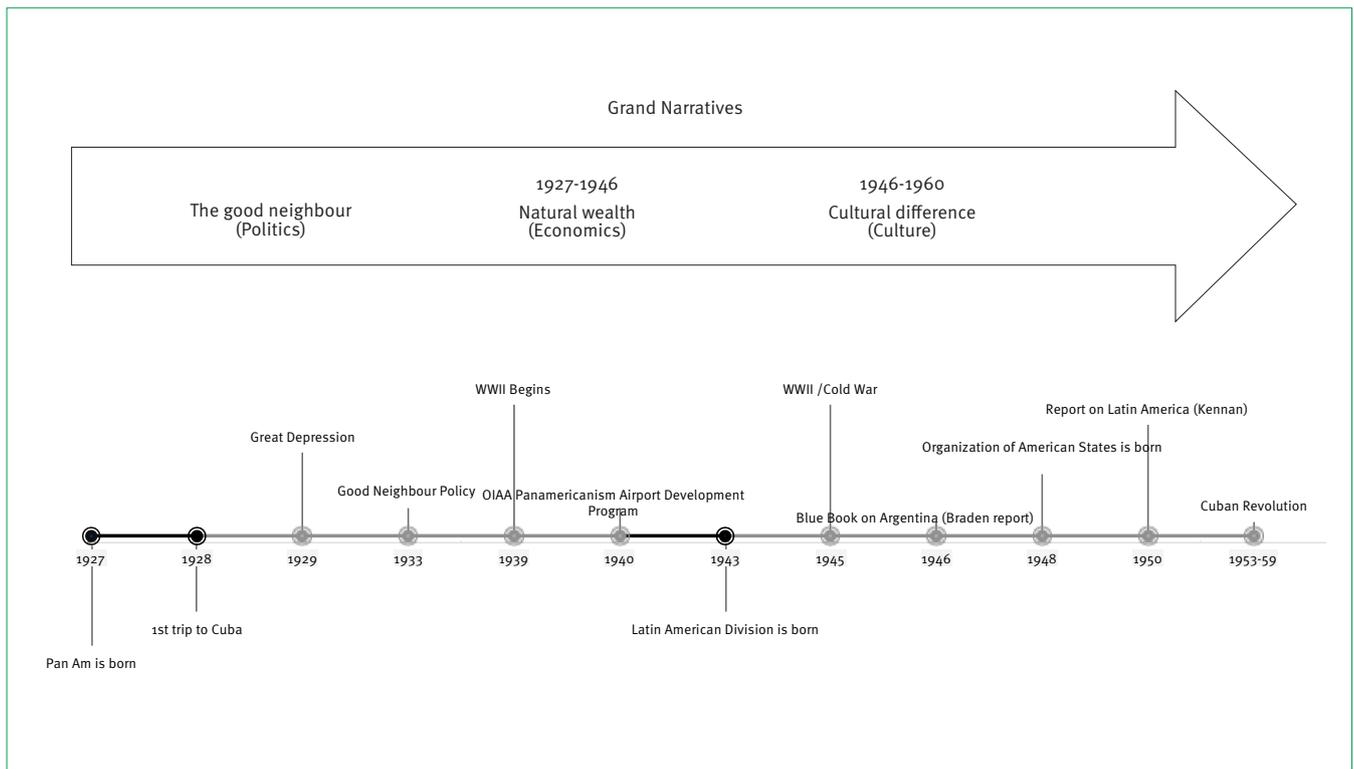


Figure 2. Socio-historical context that influenced PAA Grand Narratives between 1927 and 1960



## GRAND NARRATIVE ANALYSIS OF PAN AMERICAN AIRWAYS

### The good neighbor grand narrative

The first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century brought worldwide turmoil. The economic crisis of the Great Depression and two world wars reshaped the world map. The US became the dominant geopolitical power (alongside the USSR) in the post-WWII era, implementing major political and economic changes.

The US exercised a dominant role in international politics using several political instruments that, directly and indirectly, involved Latin American nations.

PAA began promoting *good neighborism* in the early 1930s, before Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR) created the US government's Good Neighbor policy. The *good neighbor grand narrative* was implemented to encourage air transport and connect the nations of the Western hemisphere while growing US political and economic influence in Latin America (Van Vleck, 2013). The Good Neighbor policy, launched by the US government in 1933, declared that the US would not implement military intervention in Latin American territory; it would instead enhance friendship among the nations in the region. The narrative of establishing and maintaining good relationships with neighboring nations later influenced the romantic view of Latin Americans, and it is linked to political distrust between the US and Latin America, and can be traced back to the Monroe Doctrine of 1823. The Monroe Doctrine was meant to prevent European efforts to colonise the US and the rest of the American continent. However, a Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine was created in 1904, during Theodore Roosevelt's presidency, that was hailed as *the big stick* policy from the US. This corollary gave the US the right to protect US citizens through military intervention, even in cases where such dangers were only anticipated (i.e., as opposed to real activities of European powers). In practice, Washington intervened militarily in Latin America a dozen times during the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (military interventions in Haiti from 1915–1930, and the Dominican Republic from 1916–1924, etc.) (Patel, 2016).

FDR's program marked the transition from a military interventionist policy (the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine) to that of the good neighbor policy: "All that this country [the US] desires is to see the neighboring countries stable, orderly, and prosperous" and "Any country whose people conduct themselves well can count upon our hearty friendship" (Holden & Zolov, 2011, p. 97).

After 1933, the Good Neighbor policy was referenced directly in PAA corporate advertising. The policy was stressed during the interwar years and then strategically during WWII; the US suspected much of Latin America was pro-Axis or at least susceptible to such influence (Bethell & Roxborough, 1988). As seen in one advertisement (Figure 3), PAA identified itself as "The Good Neighbor Who Calls Every Day" and tells the reader that the security of the US not only "depends upon guns and ships and planes" but also "how we (US) rate in friends." In addition, in the eyes of Latin Americans, PAA "not only reflects Uncle Sam; it is Uncle Sam—the chief contact that many of them ever have with this nation." PAA concludes the ad by sharing antenarratives (fragmented stories) that explain how the good neighbor grand narrative accommodates the WWII political plan against the Axis; meanwhile, it also depicts Latin America as backward, in need, and inferior to their Anglo/North/West/US/PAA counterparts. According to the advertisement text,

Hurdling Latin America's ancient barriers of time, distance, and primitive transportation, PAA has done one thing more. It has turned back the challenge of competing Axis airlines there; it has made thousands of miles of air routes safe for the democratic principles represented by the Stars and Stripes.

During the 1940s, the US government mobilised the good neighbor grand narrative by creating programs, legislations, and educational programs that fostered friendship and collaboration and offered economic help and expert advice to the Latin American republics (Interdepartmental Committee on Cooperation with the *American Republics* [ICCAR], 1940).

A tourist guide, "A World of Neighbors," presents several images of the region using a multi-styled illustration of cultural artifacts, collapsed in half a page, with the legend: "A portrait of Latin America, the West Indies, and Bermuda, part of A World of Neighbors." (Pan American Airways, 1946d) (Figure 4).

This portrait illustrates a pastiche of symbolic artifacts in an attempt to represent the cultural diversity of an unknown region for Anglo-American tourists. Central in this image are the leaders of the independence from Spain and Portugal, which shows a trace of colonialism. The masculine portrait of Latin America shows three women and eleven men. PAA postcoloniality is gendered, as Latinas are repeatedly depicted in two ways: they are shown as domestic (submissive) and as entertainers, performing sensuality through dance.

Figure 3. The Latin Neighbors in PAA's Grand Narrative



Source: Pan American Airways advertisement (1941).

Figure 4. A portrait of Latin America and its people



Source: Pan American Airways (1946d).

US cultural superiority is embedded in the PAA narrative; “routes of Pan American World Airways System can spread out below him [the tourist] the whole panorama of the past, present and indications of the future of these lands” (Pan American Airways, 1946d, p. 20). In this narrative, postcoloniality emerges as follows: the air traveler is assumed to be a white/Anglo man

(him). Latin America is below him, thus inferior to the Anglo man. Furthermore, there is a representation of the past and a plausible future, where the idea that PAA is the future in the present appears implicit, as PAA are pioneers in technology, commercial aviation, and networking routes across Latin America:

Caribbean islands, where Columbus’s caravels rode the waves and Morgan and Captain Kidd haunt the coral sands. Latin America had been touched by European explorers and treasure-seekers... Much of Latin America had colonies nearly a century before the first permanent English settlers landed at Plymouth Rock in 1620. (Pan American Airways, 1946d, p. 20)

PAA punctuated the Latin American past with European conquest, amicably calling Europeans “explorers.” The European narrative of the “discovery” of America by Columbus becomes PAA’s narrative. However, the invention of America (Mignolo, 2005) is a reminder of the existence of pre-Columbian cultures that preceded European explorers. In an effort to seduce the Anglo-Saxon and European traveler, PAA crafted several narratives of Latin Americans as good neighbors and thereby exploited certain images, ideas, and themes, including nature, culture, the colonial past, and urban-versus-rural life (Pan American Airways, 1946d).

Latin America was depicted as a land of gauchos, a transplantation of European cities, like Madrid in the new world, and a land of empires (such as the Inca) that no longer exist. These representations were elements in the narration of Latin America, which PAA crafted by juggling a sense of time (pre-colonial and colonial past), geography (Madrid/Europe), and the binary of similar-different (folk/gauchos). European colonisation was important for construction of the good neighbor grand narrative as it provided the US a sense of entitlement to the South American nations whose citizens had more white ancestry than Caribbean or who had more Afro descendent.

One PAA booklet, which tells the story of PAA’s 17 years of experience flying with the Clippers during the WWII years, is permeated by the good neighbor grand narrative and perpetuates a subtle sense of entitlement by PAA. In a headline, “Our good neighbors to the south,” PAA congratulates its associated airlines in Latin America:

From the very beginning of the company—in 1927—Pan American has sought not to control the air... but rather to aid and advise our “Good Neighbors” in the formation of their own national airlines. (Pan American Airways, 1945c, p. 13)

The US tradition of paternalism toward Latin American countries (Patel, 2016) underpins their role as advisors and aid providers. The history of the Mexican–Anglo American war of 1845–48 seemed long forgotten by the US in a PAA description of Mexico:

“The Queen of Cities” A plaza in Mexico City from the air... The capital city of our nearest “Good Neighbors” to the South has two million inhabitants, beautiful boulevards, a truly international atmosphere. (Pan American Airways, 1945c, p. 15)

During the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, through the ideology of Pan-Americanism, the production of representations of South America was increased (Salvatore, 1998) and went through several iterations: they moved from threats of danger to the US (Durepos, Helms Mills, & Mills, 2008) to good neighbors.

Counter-narratives later emerged as alternative stories to PAA’s grand narrative. One first emerged that revealed Latin America to be good business for PAA: “a vast area two and a half times the size of the continental US and the home of 130,000,000 Good Neighbors” (Pan American Airways, 1946b). According to an article in PAA’s magazine, “How ‘friendly commerce’ with neighbors helps save US taxpayers money,” Latin America represented a market that offered economic benefit for US citizens after WWII (Pan American Airways, 1958). Another counter-narrative is hidden behind PAA’s need to “make true neighbors” of countries from South America, such as Argentina, who had a history of confrontations with the US. This goodwill narrative was intended to mask previous military interventions in Latin American territory and the diplomatic tensions between the US and several Latin American nations.

## The natural wealth grand narrative

After WWII, the expansion of PAA toward the Latin American region reflected two things: new technological advancements (e.g., the jet airplane) and a shift in commercial trade with Latin America in which Europe lost commercial power and influence against the US. The *natural wealth grand narrative* saw Latin America as a supplier of natural resources for a post-WWII growing North American market. The other side of this grand narrative was PAA’s self-representation as technologically superior to Latin Americans. The good neighbor grand narrative, which still promoted a political friendship between the US and Latin Americans, overlapped and coexisted with stories about Latin America as the source

of natural wealth and unlimited resources that would fulfill the needs of North American buyers. In fact, good neighborism helped the American continent recover from the economic crisis thanks to the 1934 Reciprocal Trade Agreement Act (Argentina, among other nations, stayed out); the dollar value of US trade with Latin America tripled between 1934 and 1941 (Patel, 2016).

Several magazines described the importance of deepening commercial ties with Latin nations. For example, a promotional calendar, “The Wealth of the Other Americas” (Pan American Airways, 1945b), foresaw the opening of trade between the US and Latin America, a region that was a “major factor in the expansion of US foreign trade after the war” (Pan American Airways, 1945b, p. 4). US trade expansion was challenged by European competition and the fact that Latin America was the only open market in 1946. Therefore, PAA executed a plan to become the main trader among the Latin American countries, creating faster and cheaper flights between New York and the South American cities to compete with European cities’ routes (Pan American Airways, 1946a). For example, PAA launched 38-hour service between New York and Buenos Aires, which became a milestone for international business. This new service aligned with the US narrative of Pan-Americanism that dominated the interwar years (Schoultz, 1998, p. 318) and was the moment the US restructured the worldwide economy (Pan American Airways, 1946c) by cracking Argentina’s dependency on European trade.

In many ways, the capitalist system translated into PAA’s narrative of natural wealth. For example, Clipper cargo helped local businesses sell products, ranging from baby chicks to deep freeze units, outside of North America (Pan American Airways, 1957b). The commercialization of diamonds from Brazil, the largest producer of diamonds next to South Africa, reflects the involvement of Latin American elites in the construction of the capitalist narrative. Indeed, the Brazilian government sponsored Panair do Brazil (associated with PAA) to “speed the traffic” of the diamond business (Pan American Airways, 1945a, p. 26). In the meantime, the natural wealth grand narrative describes a) Latin America as a provider of exotic, native fruits, and raw materials (diamonds) and b) North America as an exporter of mostly industrialized products.

The good neighbor grand narrative complemented the natural wealth grand narrative in enhancing trade between the US and Latin America, thereby transforming the global economy in such a way that Brazil became more important to the United States than France, and Cuba became more relevant than the Netherlands (Patel, 2016). Through the gaze of postcolonial dualities, Latin America was the colonised, representing the natural world and home to native peoples. In contrast, North

America was the industrious coloniser, a region with citizens instead of natives. One of PAA's booklets explains to PAA clients how critical it was to trade with Brazil as a rubber provider:

*Everybody* knows what happened to our rubber supply when the Japs took the East Indies and the Malay Peninsula. *Some* people know that the best synthetic rubber tires cannot be made without adding *some* natural rubber. But few people realise that Pan American has been *flying* latex (natural rubber) from Brazil to the United States. (Pan American Airways, 1945C, p. 17)

PAA expansion also responded to political arrangements between the US, Latin America, and Europe. For example, the incorporation of Barbados into PAA's Latin American Division required the permission of the United States Civil Aeronautics Board (1948) and approval by the United Kingdom, as Barbados was a colony of the British Empire until 1966 (Pan American Airways, 1957b). In the pre-war period, PAA was able to avoid government interference by negotiating "its own landing contracts in South America" (Pan American Airways, 1946a). During the war years, PAA was directly involved in the construction of airports in the Latin American region. PAA was able to build military airports in the Brazilian jungle due to secret government contracts, and "by the end of the war, PAA had built fifty airports in fifteen countries" (Pan American Airways, 1996, p. 167).

In the 37-page booklet, "The wealth of the other America," PAA discloses the impact of air travel on commerce and trade with twenty Latin American nations, as well as with the US. Latin American markets are described as underdeveloped and raw providers, but they are also described as wealthy:

[seaport cities] are separated from each other by great distances of under developed, and in some cases unexplored, areas; they have served simply as hubs of commerce where raw materials from the adjoining agricultural and mining districts could be shipped abroad in exchange for manufactured articles.

When World War II severed the United Nations from their usual sources of raw materials, they looked toward Latin America with its wealth of food, hides, wool and cotton, and its minerals such as copper, oil, chrome, antimony and manganese. (Pan American Airways, 1943, p. 4)

A commercial co-dependence in the US–Latin America relationship after WWII and the fundamental role of PAA in their commercial air travel breakthrough helped the natural wealth grand narrative come to life.

PAA has helped "break the trail" into this new era in Latin America. With its associated airlines, it has succeeded in surmounting the natural barriers hiding the wealth of the countries. (Pan American Airways, 1943, p. 5)

## The cultural difference grand narrative

PAA business in Latin America was tied to the contemporary political consequences of WWII, a world divided between two groups of super alliances: the Axis (Germany, Italy, Japan, Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria) and the Allies (the US, Britain, France, the USSR, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, Denmark, Greece, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, South Africa, and Yugoslavia). The Allies portrayed themselves as those countries with freedom of speech, press, and association. In opposition, the Axis powers were carriers of Nazi and fascist ideologies. Because PAA was a US-based company flying worldwide, it became an ally of US foreign affairs during WWII: "The war was a business especially for Pan Am who had half of the contract with the military in the US and where revenues during the four war years rose by 75%" (Bender & Altschul, 1982, p. 366).

A PAA monopoly in Latin America had implications in different industries. One of these industries was transportation, where land and sea were replaced by air transport, and another was trade and commercial activities, which experienced tremendous changes due to the more rapid transport of goods made possible by the jet airplane. Furthermore, air travel revolutionised the travel industry by creating a new travel identity: the air tourist. However, the demand for air travel was not a given, and PAA had to create a market for Latin America. PAA was the only airline flying out of the US before WWII, and it thus became a knowledgeable resource and source of information regarding Latin American geography and people. The process that PAA undertook to understand the historical events and cultural characteristics of Latin American countries is reflected in documentation such as "Observations on U.S. Policy toward Latin America," from PAA's Latin American Division (Pan American Airways, 1961).

During WWII, the US supported Latin American dictators both financially and legally (Schultz, 1998), but the situation changed with the US's discourse on democratisation. The previous good neighbor grand narrative toward Latin American nations became a discourse of the democratisation of the Latin

republics and zero tolerance to dictators (e.g., Getulio Vargas in Brazil, or Rafael Trujillo in the Dominican Republic) (Schoultz, 1998). By the 1950s, US representations of Latin Americans as good neighbors overlapped with representations of them as anti-democratic, chaotic, grandiloquent, and strongly masculine. The good neighbor grand narrative was transforming because, since 1957, the United States had developed a conflicted relationship with dictators like Trujillo in the Dominican Republic. Nonetheless, PAA continued working with Trujillo and his regime until his assassination (1961). Moreover, it was clear by 1961 that the Monroe Doctrine remained in effect by the Organization of the American State (OAS), whose creation after WWII enhanced the US government's continual pursuit of US domination across Latin American nations. This can be seen in the OAS' unprecedented imposition of sanctions over Trujillo's regime (Roorda, 1998).

A shocking report was published in 1950, during H.S. Truman's presidency. The judgmental and opinionated report from George Kennan became the narrative that described the dictatorships and populist governments of Latin American nations. His character-based explanation of people's behavior described Latinos as self-centered egoists with "a pathetic urge to create the illusion of desperate courage, supreme cleverness, and a limitless virility where the most constructive virtues are so conspicuously lacking" (Schoultz, 1998, p. 330).

One fundamental distinction of the Latin and Anglo dislocation, besides national character, language, and European heritage, has been skin color. Europeans were the first to systematically categorise the world and its people according to skin color and to create a continuum of superior to inferior, from whiteness to blackness, and the rest of the Western world were quick to do the same. Official PAA materials mainly depict race through their use of language, in particular by using *native* to refer to Latin Americans, and images of dark-skinned women and men. PAA narratives resemble tales from the first European conquerors; that is, the tales of discovery, fascination, racial difference, and extraneous cultures. PAA's first trips outside of the US solidified North American narratives of Latin American ethnicity, establishing the image of brown Latinos.

The *cultural difference grand narrative* strengthens two ideas developed by Mignolo (2005): the idea that a new continent was born and the reconfiguration of the process of decolonization from Europe in the Americas.

This grand narrative was solidified as a corporate strategy to diversify the Latin American market to the Anglo audience, and a PAA tourist guide illustrates a clear link to the Americas' British and Spanish colonial past. The division of Americas between the Spanish and English also created a division between Latin and

Anglo cultures. By comparing how PAA describes the British and the Spanish, and then by examining how they do the same with their colonised territories, we are able to pinpoint how colonial language, such as the use of the term *native* in reference to the people, music, and products from such nations as Mexico and Peru, connect with different nations within Latin America (Exhibit 1). The representation of native dancers, calypso singers, and Aztecs ruins appear as counter-narratives that reveal the suppression of Indigenous and Afro-descendants on the continent.

The legacy of the *Black Legend* (Juderías, 1914) and the stereotypes of a backward, cruel, and irresponsible Spanish Empire, which were originally created by the British Empire, were carried to the Americas and later integrated into the grand narrative of PAA. Depictions of bullfights in Mexico carry the old stereotypes used against the Spanish (i.e., bravery, cruelty, and violence) while ignoring stories such as the US–Mexican war and the border conflicts that show the US held similar characteristics.

A distinction between the British Islands and the Caribbean (Latin American) is depicted through the language used to compare the lifestyles of each group of islands. Depictions of the Caribbean refer to the island's laziness, mystery (e.g., Voodoo, Black magic), adventure, and excitement. Meanwhile, Bermuda and the Bahamas were described as quiet, unhurried, peaceful sanctuaries. This comparison should be viewed through the binary of emotional–rational, which has long been part of modern, European, and Western ideology. The Caribbean is emotional, passionate, and romantic, much like Latin Americans are romantic; however, Bahamians are calm, rational, and centered, much like Anglo Saxons. PAA presents a romantic view of "them," the others, the Latin Americans. The article on Air Express Shipments from Miami to Caracas provides an example of this. A shipment of guitar strings is portrayed as part of the "romantic stringed music so dear to the Latin Americans." The following narrative expands the dualist view between us–them, North (Anglo)–South (Latin) America:

Little will the gay caballero dream, as his fingers strum out the first notes of his beloved national dance or some tender serenade, that the strings he touches have been flown to him from the prosaic life of the ice-bound metropolis of the North to become a part of his romantic music under a tropic moon. (Pan American Airways, 1945a, p. 21)

This description combines the masculine Latin American identity (e.g., caballeros) with a narrative about romance and the tropical exotic (prosaic) south in contrast to the workaday, cold, city life of the North.

**Exhibit 1. National Differences: Anglo- versus Latin Americans**

Ethnicity–Nation	Representation
Anglo-America	
Britain	“England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales...historic lands of pageantry that will delight you with greenness, graciousness, and age-old traditions”
The United States and Alaska	“Alaska stands astride the Arctic circle like a great vigorous Northern giant. Rugged, majestic, unspoiled...its’s a sportsman’s paradise in any season”
Bermuda & The Bahamas	“Far from home, but reverently loyal to their British heritage, Bermuda and the Bahamas offer peaceful sanctuary from the cares or the everyday world...quiet, unhurried Atlantic islands”
“Latin” America	
Spain	“The music and laughter, the color and gaiety that spice the life in Madrid are typical of Spain...you will be thrilled beyond measures by Madrid’s bullfights”
Mexico	<p>“There’s much of old Spain in Mexico, yet its charm and color are strictly a native product. It’s a land of Aztec ruins and gay fiestas...tamales and tequila...mountains, deserts and balmy beaches. You’ll know sun and fun at every turn in Mexico.”</p> <p>“True to old Spanish tradition, Mexicans love the thrill of watching the daring movements of a toreador”</p> <p>“Dancing the rhumba to native music”</p> <p>“The pyramid of the Sun, in the pre-Aztec city of Teotihuacan, is just one evidence of Mexico’s violent history”</p>
Caribbean	<p>“The romantic islands of the Caribbean sprawl comfortably in a long, lazy semi-circle...”</p> <p>“Cuba is the largest, and its capital city of Havana is one of the gayest. Haiti land of Voodoo”</p> <p>“Trinidad with its calypso singers and ring-nose women” “There are mystery and adventure of every sort in the Caribbean and you’ll find excitement everywhere”</p>
Buenos Aires	<p>“When you’re not eating steak, you’ll be doing the Tango or going to the races in busy Buenos Aires. A modern, jubilant, sophisticated city, “B.A.” is monumental proof of Argentine progress and if you’re a true cosmopolite you won’t dare pass it by.”</p> <p>“A group of Buenos Aire’s folk dancers demonstrate that Argentina is a land of true Spanish music and gaiety”</p>
Peru	“Native dancers...in costumes as weird and colorful as the dancers themselves...rest among the ruins of the Incas at Sacsayhuaman, Peru”

Source: “It’s a Pan American World” (Pan American Airways, 1952).

Lastly, urban life in Latin America is represented in a portrait of the city of Buenos Aires that emphasises its sophistication and cosmopolitan lifestyle. Antenarratives emerge as alternative stories, as Buenos Aires, together with other cities in Latin America, was part of a narrative that described the urbanization and modernity of some nations. In this context, South American nations were seen as more progressive and industrious than Central American nations.

The turning point of the cultural difference grand narrative occurred during the Cuban Revolution (1953–1959), during which the United States' dominant position after WWII entitled the US government to conduct a crusade to stop Latin American nations from embracing communism. This shift was evidenced in Betty Trippe's diary (*Pan American Airways, 1996, p. 345*):

There was much talk at the party about the shocking current corruption of the dictator, President Batista, and the growing unrest of the people. Not many months later, some say through the influence of a New York Times reporter, Mr. Matthews, Fidel Castro started slowly, in the east, to form a Communist Party.

## DISCUSSION

Following Boje (2001, 2008a, 2008b) allows us to structure PAA material into three grand narratives about Latin America: political, economic, and cultural. Although outlined as progressing from one to another, these narratives overlap over time. Reading PAA material through a decolonial lens shows that the historical context (1927 to 1960), such as the introduction of the good neighbor grand narrative, influenced the airline company to orchestrate a modern narrative about neighborhood and friendship. The good neighbor was part of PAA's patriarchal and masculine discourse that patronised Latin American nations. Gender stereotypes were also common, as PAA displayed masculinity through the gaucho and the brown peasant and femininity through the brown Caribbean dancer. Greater interest in Latin America's natural wealth, and less interest in friendship, is revealed through the natural wealth grand narrative and how technology was a great motivator for PAA expansion. Meanwhile, travel maps and other documents show coloniality through the way Latin American women and men were depicted. The cultural difference grand narrative unfolds into two antenarratives in which the racialised images and descriptions of Latin Americans, together with South American urbanisation, reinforce the differences and similarities between Anglo and Latin America.

Working with archives required an iterative process of alternating between analysing the organisation's materials and the socio-historical context in which they were created (Mills & Helms Mills, 2011). PAA narratives about Latin America were co-created (Boje, 2008b) with the US government. Events such as FDR's Good Neighbor policy attempted to improve relations with Latin America, while the creation of a 'German Threat' inside South American airlines in the 1930s and into WWII, the Cold War, and popular revolts in Mexico and Cuba (Holden & Zolov, 2011) demonstrate the deepening of US and Latin America affairs. Meanwhile, PAA's expansion into the southern portion of North America (i.e., first Mexico, Cuba, and Colombia), by establishing offices, agencies, and investing in infrastructure, supported the US government's presence in Latin American nations (Bender & Altschul, 1982). In parallel, the discourse around Pan-Americanism, relative to US regional unification vis-à-vis Latin America, resulted in the increased production of cultural representations of Latin American people in different enclaves. An example of its impression includes the US initiative that created the Office for Coordination of Commercial and Cultural Relations (OCCIA) among the Americas. By choosing 1927 as the starting point for this study, we were able to illustrate how the company gained a foothold in Latin America in its first three years of operation; we ended the study with the 1960s because of the United States' lesser interest in the region after this period (Schultz, 1998) and due to Latin American republics' regaining control of many of their airlines, which were once given to PAA to be managed.

This study contributes to the study of management, organisations, and history by engaging with a new historical consciousness (Suddaby, 2016), understanding and engaging organisations with their past (Lasewicz, 2015; Taylor, Bell, & Cooke, 2009), and using history as a strategic resource (Foster et al., 2017). Our approach to the past and history uses decolonial feminist theories to analyse PAA storytelling.

By using decolonial feminist theory, we contribute to the study of management, history, and organisations in three ways. First, decolonial feminism enhances our understanding of the present recontextualising the historical past. Thus, the study of decolonial feminism in organisations requires knowledge of historical events to see the influence of the colonisation process today. We were able to study how geo-historical relationships between Latin America and the US (Anglo-America) were reflected in PAA's documents and advertising materials for Latin America. The racial stereotypes of Latinos and Latinas illustrate the colonial legacy of Spanish and Portuguese settlers in Latin American versus British settlers in North America; the former of whom were

viewed negatively and seen as cruel and irresponsible. In line with the ‘historic turn’ in management and organisation theory (Booth & Rowlinson, 2006), this work offers a plausible explanation for how organisations become (re)producers of coloniality in the present by representing images, texts, and identities of the Latin American other as a second class American (viz. Latin). Second, we explore different social identities such as nation, class, and gender through the patriarchal narrative embedded in the colonial past and the postcolonial present. Decolonial feminism assumes that illusive borders allow those in power to create social identities, and organisations’ grand narratives reflect notions of gender and race that show which and how different social identities have been excluded or legitimised. Third, decolonial feminism looks to enact a change in management, history, and organisations by recontextualising decontextualizing the past and the hegemonic storytelling embedded in organizations’ grand narratives.

Finally, this paper is a political piece that contributes to decolonial and feminist literatures that critically address historical representations of Latin America. We felt inspired by Anzaldúa (2007) and her approach to feminism and colonialism, and it guided this research along the path of decolonial consciousness. This work is decolonial in the field of MOS, as it raises critical issues about race and gender while allowing the voice of one of its authors, a woman from South America, a mestiza, to be included as one of the narrators. Border thinking (Anzaldúa, 2007; Mignolo, 2000) is a powerful tool to rethink organisational histories in qualitative research.

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## AUTHOR'S CONTRIBUTIONS

The authors declare that they participated in all stages of development of the manuscript. From the conceptualization and theoretical-methodological approach, the theoretical review (literature survey), data collection, as well as data analysis, and finally, writing and final review the article.