Abstract
The Colombian geographic imaginary has condensed into a series of representations that emphasize the tropical character of the nation and at the same time qualify it through a juxtaposition with the Andean region, which has been stripped of that character. In this article, we suggest that three axes frame the discussion of the tropics: nature, disease, and population. We analyze these axes in three different cases that are significant for being both typical and singular: descriptions of Amazonian nature; medical geographies of disease in the Magdalena river valley; and the narratives regarding the Black population of the Colombian Pacific region. In all these cases, the struggle for territorial appropriation is tied to the desire to know and define it.

Keywords
Amazonia, Black race, disease, Colombia, nation, tropics.