

Student Movements in Latin America: Decolonizing and Feminizing Education and Life

Sara Motta, Norma Lucia Bermudez Gomez, Katia Valenzuela Fuentes, and Ella Simone Dixon

Subject: Contentious Politics and Political Violence, Post Modern/Critical Politics, World Politics

Online Publication Date: May 2020 DOI: 10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.013.1721

Summary and Keywords

Student movements and radical education collectives across Latin America, building on traditions of radical, popular, feminist, and Indigenizing education, are seeking the democratization of the politics of knowledge and education in their regional contexts. Drawing on the cases of Chile, Colombia, and Mexico, it is possible to map and conceptualize a clear autonomous/decolonizing strand within the broader weaving of students' movements, looking at the pedagogies of emancipation that underpin and are emergent in their praxis.

The process of researching such movements and their politics of knowledge involves a decolonizing and pedagogical approach that embeds the co-creation of knowledges for transformation between researcher and movements. This builds upon work related to prefigurative epistemologies and decolonizing pedagogies of movement scholars such as Motta, Bermúdez, and Valenzuela Fuentes. It foregrounds the work of Neplanteras, of whom Gloria Anzaldúa speaks, those who bridge communities, sociabilities, epistemologies, and subjects on the margins. Nepantleras, as Anzaldúa continues, "are threshold people, those who move within and among multiple worlds and use their movements in the service of transformation."

Our collaborative research as Nepantleras has identified three broad themes emergent across these political and deeply pedagogical educational struggles and experiences. First is the practices, ethics, and experiences that foreground the prefigurative and horizontal nature of the politics of decolonizing and autonomous knowledge being co-created. Second is the feminization of resistance, involving both the emergence and centering of women and feminized subjects in movement and collective struggles, and the feminization of politics and knowledge making. Third is the key role played by affect and an embodied/enfleshed politics in the three cases, and how they foster the democratization, feminization, and decolonization of education and everyday life.

Keywords: Colombian, Chilean and Mexican student movements and collectives, radical education, feminization of resistance, decolonizing pedagogies, politics of autonomy, Latin American politics

Student Movements in Latin America: Decolonizing and Feminizing Education and Life

In this article we focus on three territorial experiences in Mexico, Chile, and Colombia of student politicization and in particular the pedagogies of decolonizing, feminizing/ist, and autonomous education projects and/as life that underpin and are emergent in their praxis. We foreground these strands of student politicization and radical pedagogical-political praxis for we believe they offer tools, maps, visions, and inspirations to guide our practice as critical educators who “know” how central is the epistemological-pedagogical in the possibilities of a transformational politics that both resists patriarchal capitalist-coloniality and does so in ways that weave an other politics in mind, body, spirit, and territory. Our intention is thus that this dialogue and systematization will itself constitute a pedagogical intervention that can facilitate and inspire experimentation, reflection, and collective learning by students, activist-scholars, and broader education collectives and communities in the struggle for a liberatory education and life.

The Movements

In the 2010s, Latin America has seen the renewal of energetic student movements that have been the seedbed of massive and vigorous student movements. These build upon heritages of student and democratic (education) struggles in which the concept of university autonomy emerged out of the Cordoba reform movements in the early 20th century, and include the radicalization and massification of student struggle in the 1960s and 1970s with the 1968 Tlatelolco massacre of Mexican students and others, an important moment in the historical genealogy of such movements.

In countries such as Chile, Mexico, and Colombia, mobilized students have become a pivotal actor in the struggle against neoliberalism, colonization, or coloniality, patriarchy, and the commodification of social life. By striking, taking over the streets, and occupying their classrooms, they are not only demanding a public and more inclusive education system, they are asking for another type of education and society, one that is not ruled by the market nor by patriarchal, colonial, or liberal values and ways of organizing life.

Mexican public university students have long played a key politicizing role in national politics, in solidarity with workers' movements and against authoritarian rule. In particular, students have defended the role of public education in equality and national self-determination and have struggled for the democratization of the university and in defense of the revolution's legacy of a free, public education. The massification of the previously elitist and conservative National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) during the 1950s and 1960s coincided with the ideological radicalization of Latin America following the 1958 Cuban Revolution (León Rosabal, 2015, p. 231; Pérez Monroy, 2012, p. 45). During the period from 1958 to the early 1970s, UNAM students were the vanguard of the whole of the Mexican Left (Rivas Ontiveros, 2004, p. 28). These processes generated an exodus of upper middle class students into Mexico's private university system, reinstating the university's class segregating function (Sillas Casillas, 2005). Against this upsurge in privately educated technocratic and neoliberal public servants (Babb, 2002), public higher education (HE) students continue to rally for democratization and social justice.

Student Movements in Latin America: Decolonizing and Feminizing Education and Life

Within this history, 2012 witnessed the unexpected emergence of an influential student movement from Mexico City's prestigious Iberoamerican University (*Ibero*).¹ #YoSoy132, or I am 132, was born out of protests against visiting Partido Revolucionario Institutional (PRI) presidential candidate Enrique Peña Nieto, and the misrepresentation of protestors' identities by PRI spokespersons and mass media collaborators.² Within weeks of the protests, thousands of students had self-organized through a system of local assemblies that converged on the General Interuniversity Assembly (AGI),³ against self-serving political elites and a monopolized and manipulative mass media. In less than two months the nascent movement transformed an otherwise predictable and monotonous electoral campaign (Fernández Poncela, 2013, p. 206). Despite its eventual disintegration and disappearance from the public eye, #YoSoy132 cultivated broad-based solidarities by adopting a loosely defined set of movement principles and experimenting with a new, inclusive political style (Dixon, 2018).

In Chile, students have become an important political actor during the post-dictatorship period (1990–present), as they have played an important role in challenging the legacy of Pinochet's dictatorship with regards to the neoliberalization of education. Chilean education was radically transformed between the mid-1970s and the 1980s during the implementation of neoliberal economic reforms inspired by the Chicago School. These reforms included administrative decentralization, a process later known as municipalization that involved transferring administration of all publicly funded schools from the Ministry of Education to municipalities or local government. A market-oriented principle of competition was introduced through the use of vouchers as "the public funding mechanism of schools" (Bellei & Cabalin, 2013, p. 110), leading to the emergence of a new private-voucher education sector (Mizala & Torche, 2012). These neoliberal reforms were completed through the 1989 Constitutional Law of Education (Ley Orgánica Constitucional de Educación [LOCE]) that "reduced the state to a subsidiary role and promoted privatization in education" (Bellei & Cabalin, 2013, p. 112) to further deepen profit-making in education while dismantling public education. With the end of Pinochet's dictatorship, and despite some amendments made by the new democratic governments, it was clear that the new ruling coalition had decided to maintain the neoliberal approach in the Chilean educative system.

In this context, the Penguins were the first significant student movement to emerge after popular protests in the 1980s against Pinochet's dictatorship. Between April and June 2006, hundreds of thousands of high school students mobilized across the country to demand that education be a right and not a privilege and that there be a radical reform to the education system. This was a new generation of young militants emerging after a 30-year period of active eradication, disarticulation, and criminalization of previous student and educational activism and militancy as part of the dictatorship's strategy of neoliberal modernization.

These were the precedents of the massive students' mobilizations in 2011 and the recent feminist student uprising in 2018 that are the focus of the analysis developed here. They are some of the most spectacular examples of the contemporary wave of politicization

Student Movements in Latin America: Decolonizing and Feminizing Education and Life

brought forward by Chilean young people. In the so-called “Chilean Winter” of 2011, students challenged the market and the government’s educative policies by mobilizing for seven months in their quest for free, non-profit, and quality education. Although the movement did not achieve all of its goals, it clearly had a significant impact on HE public policies, on the education funding plan, and, more broadly, on the Chilean sociopolitical debate. In 2018, what began as local mobilizations denouncing specific cases of harassment inside HE institutions, became a larger and vibrant national movement standing against sexism and patriarchy. The feminist wave of the student movement mobilized more than 150,000 protesters and led the occupation of more than 20 university campuses across the country. Both movements (from 2011 and 2018) publicly demanded a structural change in the country, challenging the neoliberal features of the educative system, the representative model of democracy, and, more recently, the embeddedness of patriarchal structures in most social institutions, including elementary, high school, and HE bodies.

Students emerged as a movement and national political actor in the 20th century, and in particular in 1929 when there were national mobilizations for university autonomy and demands for public financing. During these protests a student, Gonzalo Bravo Perez, was murdered by security forces, becoming the movement’s first symbolic hero. Students continued as active political actors in 1957 when they played a pivotal role in the downfall of the military authoritarian regime of Gustavo Rojas Pinilla. They were definitive in his downfall as they were the groups who were prepared to be at the front lines of public manifestations, risking state violence and assassination.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s student movements again appeared on the national political scene, mobilizing against the recipes of institutions such as the Rockefeller Foundation and the U.S. government who sought to force Colombian public education into a technical route so that Colombia would be inserted into the global division of labor to provide technical works prepared for international production. The huge movements that emerged were influenced by regional popular struggles such as the Cuban Revolution and by national figures such as Camillo Torres Restrepo, a socialist Roman Catholic priest, a predecessor of liberation theology, the co-founder of the first Sociology Faculty in Latin America in the Universidad Nacional de Colombia (National University of Colombia), and member of the guerrilla group Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN).

Student movements in Colombia have a rich history and genealogy as a political and social force who have been at the forefront of the struggle for university autonomy and the right to public education. They have also been key in struggles for democratization and against state violence and repression. It is important, however, to foreground the epistemological nature of their movements and struggles in that there has always been radical education and popular education underpinning much of their practice, in particular from the 1960s with the influence of Paolo Freire and liberation theology. Thus movements have not only been actors mobilizing in the public space but have been key agents in radical education work with urban popular class communities and rural peasant communities. This political praxis is also tied to traditions of sociology, such as the work of Fals Borda,

Student Movements in Latin America: Decolonizing and Feminizing Education and Life

a Colombian sociologist who developed *investigación acción participation* (participatory action research). These linages obviously influenced the political and epistemological orientation of the movements that appeared in the 21st century—with a clear connection with popular class communities and against practices and projects of privatization, U.S. interventionism, and further transnationalization.

The period since the late 1980s has witnessed a program of neoliberal reform of university education that has resulted in the intensification of the internal inequalities of access to education, through a system that fragments poor communities and inserts them into the hands of financial capital through the development of educational credit. As Campo and Giraldo (2009, p. 115) argue,

In this way the poor student, with poor quality basic education, as opposed to having better opportunities to public education, is obliged to finance their private education through educative credit, which creates a situation of extreme inequity; they are unable to compete for the few places at public universities ... Access is a mechanism to privatise the costs of HE on the shoulders of the poorest students.

However, critical teachers and students have been at the forefront of struggles for social justice and democracy in education, developing (2010, p. 272) “popular education, education for democracy and human right, justice in education, raising awareness of processes of marginalization and non-violent activism.” This has led them to be the targets of the government, which actively vilified all opposition as terrorist guerrillas threatening the democratic stability agenda, and therefore Colombia’s entrance into the globalized world.

In 2010 then President Santos proposed to reform Law 30 to continue the definancing of public education and open the educational market to private institutions (thus enabling the realization of the statutes of the free trade agreement with the United States) through permitting private investment via public-private alliances in the creation of profit-making HE institutions. As Marrero and Hernandez (2005, p. 2) argue, this deepens a change in the logics of HE to

an individualistic and differentiated model, orientated to the formation of worker-producers and centred on the role of the market as the guarantor of the freedom of choice for consumers of educational services.

It is from within this conjuncture of the increasing assault on public education, repression against critical educators and students, increasing inequities in access to education, and multiple histories of critical educator and student resistance and struggle that the student movement, Mesa Amplia Nacional Estudiantil (MANE), appeared on the national political stage in March 2011 in protest against the proposed reform of Law 30. MANE’s Programa Mínima (Minimum Program) made six key demands in relation to: finance; democracy and autonomy; well-being; academic quality; democratic freedoms; and the relationship between university and society, opposing private financing of HE, articulating education as a right that should be provided for free (MANE, 2011A). Through their mobilizations and broader strategy, they were able to force the government to withdraw the

Student Movements in Latin America: Decolonizing and Feminizing Education and Life

reform proposal and commit to its revision. They also won the social and political legitimacy to develop an alternative educational reform that opened the space for an unprecedented national pedagogical-political practice (Rodriguez, 2013). Interestingly, the Colombian student movement again emerged visibly in 2018 with the calling of a national protest for free, autonomous, and democratic public education on October 10, 2018.

In these cases, although most of the mobilized and visible national student movements reached a degree of consensus regarding the movements' goals, demands, and opponents, it would be remiss to analyze them as homogeneous collectives. On the contrary, the experience of the recent Chilean, Mexican, and Colombian students' movements has shown a heterogeneous composition, where multiple student organizations, collectives, and affinity groups with divergent political repertoires coexist. While some engage in traditional representative politics, remain confident in the mediation of conventional politicians and political parties as a way to seek institutional reforms, seek to recover, protect, and/or create a public university, and embody traditional hegemonic modalities and repertoires of student protest, others wish to go beyond the hegemonic terms of the political and epistemological debate, engaging with a new set of political practices that embody an alternative politics of knowledge that seeks to prefigure alternative social relations in the here and now.

Among this diversity, we are particularly interested in the latter, exploring how a more autonomous decolonizing strand is forging an emancipatory pedagogical praxis, where the politics of affects, horizontality, and prefiguration,⁴ and the feminization of resistance (Motta, 2013), play an essential role. To explore this strand in the broader weaving of students' movements and politics more broadly, we need to move with, beyond, and below the visible public politics and repertoires of national student movements, and also include exploration of the micropolitical praxis of everyday student movement life in which the political is pedagogized and pedagogies are politicized. We also need to stretch our conceptual lens, as these movements and collectives do, to move against the binaries that reproduce political and epistemological hierarchical differences between students and workers, including academic staff in the academy, and the separations between mind and body, word and world, and education and life upon which the politics of knowledge of patriarchal capitalist-coloniality are premised.

In the following section we outline the broader theoretical and conceptual framework with which we will embed this exploration, dialogue, and initial systematization of the three movements/experiences.

Towards Decolonizing, Feminized/ist, and Autonomous Educational Projects of/as Life and Pedagogies of Healing Liberation

Pedagogy in our dialogue is not understood as or reducible to a method of learning but rather part of popular political-pedagogical projects in which practices of learning, un-learning, and relearning are embedded as ways to co-create social relationships, political subjectivities, and politics of knowledge that center othered onto-epistemological bodies and ways of knowing and be-ing in the world (Motta, 2017; Motta & Esteves, 2014). We do not therefore confine the pedagogical to hegemonic understandings and practices of formal education, which Freire terms “banking education.” Banking education embeds and is embedded within hierarchical and separating violent relationships between teachers and those taught, knowledge and practice, and education and struggle. This tends toward the reproduction and naturalization of the limits, logics, representations, and rationalities of the status quo (Motta & Cole, 2014). Rather, we understand pedagogical practice and radical education as intimately tied to the political and epistemological struggle over differing societal projects of life and social organization. Our ethical-epistemological-political commitment in this article and our broader scholarly practice is twofold. Firstly, it critiques and makes visible the violence of banking education and hegemonic pedagogies. Secondly, and significantly, it foregrounds and centers the politics of knowledge, practices, and subjectivities of decolonizing, feminizing, and autonomous educational struggles and emergent societal projects that center a politics of life, liberation, and onto-epistemological and corporeal collective self-determination.

We focus on decolonizing, feminizing, and autonomous education struggles and emergent pedagogical-political projects of life because of our own political histories as critical scholars, radical educators, and community organizers/activists. Together, we have decades of experience co-creating with others pedagogical practices, experiments, and processes in and outside of the formal university space. Our praxis seeks to challenge hegemonic educational projects and what Rita Segato has termed the pedagogies of cruelty that they reproduce and are embedded within. These are the forms of representation and material practices that justify and embody onto-epistemological and corporeal violences and negations towards the raced and feminist other. They are the co-constitutive underside of the emergence and reproduction of patriarchal capitalist-coloniality in thought, word, and flesh. Our praxis also seeks to visibilize and transgress the ways in which purportedly radical pedagogies and education projects can reproduce patriarchal and colonial understandings of education, social change, and political subjectivity. In particular we have forged practices and processes of mass intellectuality in which the word is returned to the world, and we re-turn to and re-member our capacity to co-produce knowledges for transformation. The how of these pedagogical practices centers prefigurative and horizontal theory making that breaks down the divisions of labor between thinker and doer, knower and known, theory and practice, and mind and body (Bermúdez, 2013; Motta, 2011, 2017; Valenzuela, 2015).

Student Movements in Latin America: Decolonizing and Feminizing Education and Life

In many ways we are neplanteras of whom Gloria Anzaldúa speaks, those who bridge communities, sociabilities, epistemologies, and subjects on the margins (Anzaldúa, 2002, 2015). Nepantleras, as Anzaldúa (2015, p. xxxv) continues, “are threshold people, those who move within and among multiple worlds and use their movements in the service of transformation.” We are shapeshifters on the margins of the margins, the others of the othered who speak back to Power but who also work tirelessly to speak back to Power as it re-emerges in “our” movements. We chose to remain in the margins as a political-epistemological act, which as bell hooks describes:

[as] a space of radical openness a margin—a profound edge ... not speaking of [a] marginality one wishes to lose—to give up or surrender as part of moving into the centre—but rather as a site one stays in, clings to even, because it nourishes one's capacity to resist. It offers to one the possibility of radical perspective from which to see and create, to imagine alternatives, new worlds. (1990, p. 149)

We co-weave our own tongues and multiple literacies of the pedagogical and/as the political such as storytelling, dance, ritual, poetry, and song with which to create an other decolonizing and feminizing/ist politics of (everyday) life (Bermúdez, 2013; Motta, 2017, 2018A). We thus intentionally foreground the voices of feminized and racialized subjects, bodies, and epistemologies, as Hill Collins (1990, p. 206) names “the dark wisdoms” in these struggles.

We also bring to visibility the marked (yet often elided) feminized nature of resistances (Motta, 2013; Motta & Seppälä, 2016), which is emergent across the political terrain but also viscerally present in the struggles we explore around education and pedagogical-political projects. Feminized resistances and/of the political involve not only the occupation of the political terrain by women and feminized subjects and bodies but also the emergence of a politics that centers all that has been elided and viewed as empty space in hegemonic pedagogies of patriarchal capitalist coloniality; the knowledges of the body, the emotions, the ancestors, deep time and dreaming, and our capacity to co-create and re-member other rationalities and modes of knowing-becoming (Motta & Bermúdez, 2019).

As a means to contribute to our struggles for decolonizing, feminizing, and autonomous educational projects of life and emergent pedagogies of healing liberation, in what follows we offer an initial comparative mapping and systematization of elements of these in student movements and radical education collectives in Chile, Colombia, and Mexico. We focus in particular on three broad themes that we see emergent across these experiences. First is the practices, ethics, and experiences that foreground the prefigurative and horizontal nature of the politics of decolonizing and autonomous knowledge being co-created. Second is the feminization of resistance (Motta, 2013) and emergence of a feminization of pedagogical and political struggle and subjectivity (Gutiérrez , 2014; Motta & Seppälä, 2016). This involves both the emergence and centering of women and feminized subjects in movement and collective struggles, and the feminization of politics and knowledge making. This leads to our final theme, the centrality of the role of affect, the embod-

Student Movements in Latin America: Decolonizing and Feminizing Education and Life

ied/enfleshed and the spiritual-ancestral in opening space-times of pedagogical and political possibility to become otherwise in theory and practice and re-occupy and decolonize education and everyday life.

Prefigurative and Horizontal Politics (of Knowledge)

Mexico: Breaking Down Barriers in Higher Education

The neoliberalization of HE in Mexico has reinforced a classed and ideological segregation within the student body whereby elite private graduates are increasingly and disproportionately represented across all levels of public and political life (Acosta Silva, 2012, p. 18; Babb, 2002; Camp, 2013, pp. 119–120); are favored in the job market (Noriega Chávez, 2010); and, on average, earn more and are less precarious than their public university counterparts (Vries & Navarro, 2011, p. 14). Overall, elite private universities block social mobility, perpetuating and strengthening minority elites (Olivier Téllez, 2007, p. 168). Anti-neoliberal student movements explicitly politicize the pedagogical and pedagogize the political (Motta & Cole, 2014), denouncing the anti-democratic effects of neoliberal politics on public education.

The unexpected display of discontent from *Ibero* created a unique political opportunity at a key moment, less than two months from election day. In a context of widespread social and political discontent, particularly among Mexican youth, #YoSoy132 gained significant visibility and widespread public support. For the first time since 1968, students from public and private institutions banded together against a common enemy: the PRI.

The numeric and symbolic presence of public university students in the nascent movement was evidenced by the almost immediate adoption of assembly democracy traditions, last practiced en masse in 1999 during the nine-month-long UNAM strike against fee hikes and the imposition of the neoliberal education model (Pérez Monroy, 2012). The institution of local, autonomous, and decentralized assemblies, including rotating and revocable spokespersons directly accountable to the student bases, provided a structured environment for the horizontal co-construction of an outwardly unified student movement. This model drew on Zapatista principles of autonomy and horizontality, and the lessons and experiences of the National Strike Committee (CNH) of 1968 and the General Strike Committee (CGH) of 1999. Although internal struggles caused the eventual disintegration of the AGI amid accusations of centralism by the provinces, the assembly model provided spaces for ongoing encounters between a broad and heterogeneous group of students in which public and private university students met face to face to dialogue and debate for the first time since 1968 (Dixon, 2018).

The urgency of the electoral conjuncture demanded cross-class collaboration, a political necessity that catalyzed conscious and unconscious processes of learning and unlearning, processes that would otherwise have been unthinkable (Dixon, 2018). Democratic encoun-

Student Movements in Latin America: Decolonizing and Feminizing Education and Life

ters facilitated the temporary transcendence of barriers to interaction between students with competing worldviews, while debate rendered social, cultural, and ideological differences visible and open to discussion and critique. Experiences in horizontal self-organization gave students firsthand experience of the potency and potentiality of their collective agency in action, producing politicized subjects more conscious of their social situatedness as well as that of the “other.” Diego, a sociology student from UNAM, described the affective experience of embarking on a shared political venture as the transformation of prejudice into affection and respect: “as the *convivencia* and the discussion advanced, we started to feel affection for one another, we started to respect one another and I think it was a very good thing.”⁵ Cooperation nourished an affective political process that transformed how individuals perceive themselves and others, planting the seed for future cooperative efforts. Irrespective of the outcomes of the movement at large, these encounters are significant in a scenario in which elite, privately educated political and business leaders are disconnected from the masses and insensitive to their needs and interests (Meyer, 2013, p. 151).

Active, horizontal collaboration based on recognition of a diversity of perspectives also contributed to the rich co-creation of new knowledge and understandings. Diverse experiences, talents, interests, and ideals combined to deepen and amplify critiques of Mexican democracy. For instance, the movement produced a 288-page collaborative *Contrainforme* to refute the stated achievements of the outgoing Calderón administration. The document systematized the students’ critiques and presented alternative visions along six major axes: education, science, and technology; economy; health; the media; national security; and political transformation and ties with other movements. Through their participation students learned to face their prejudices, to work together and dialogue across differences. Through assemblies, working groups, and commissions, students grasped the multiplicity of perspectives as a reflection of the actually existing social diversity, an experience that affirmed that democratic social change would necessarily be plural and collective in nature. Within the multiple democratic and horizontal spaces of #YoSoy132 participants experienced firsthand the innate mutuality of pedagogy and politics driving collective emancipatory struggles (Motta & Esteves, 2014).

Chile: Prefiguring Another Education, Prefiguring Another Politics

Throughout recent Chilean history, university and secondary students have become important political actors, as they have massively taken over the streets demanding structural transformations to the educative system and the end of market-led education. The wave of protests in 2006 and 2011 mobilized thousands of students, who challenged neoliberal educational policies and called for non-profit, free, public, democratic, and pluralist education. Although both movements were heterogeneous in their composition, it was in 2011 when a more autonomous trend gained prominence. Through local students’ assemblies and grassroots students’ groups, this trend questioned party mediation and institutional reforms as the exclusive goal of the movement. Conversely, they called for a more systemic change, broadening the movement’s political demands and radicalizing its agenda. The influence of the “autonomous strand” of the Chilean student movement

Student Movements in Latin America: Decolonizing and Feminizing Education and Life

(Valenzuela-Fuentes, 2015) was also observed in the movement's repertoires of action, where traditional formats of political organizing, usually hierarchical, party-driven, and vanguard-oriented, were replaced by an inclusive and horizontal approach. By embracing horizontality, some students' sectors forged, both discursively and practically, a deeply anti-authoritarian and radically democratic politics. They defended a political praxis for and from the grassroots and did not wait for a revolutionary vanguard to implement changes from above. The emphasis on the role of the spokespersons, as opposed to movements' authorities, was precisely a key strategy seeking to prevent fixed leadership and the exclusive direction of some revolutionary leaders who will try to "win the people over to their side" (Freire, 2005, p. 95). In line with their rejection of vanguard-based approaches and normative visions of politics and social change, important sectors of the students' movement questioned the politics of party-type organizations that tend to subsume other actors to their own ideologies and agendas. As one activist involved in a student collective remarked:

It's ridiculous to think that we are going to "lead" the revolutionary process; the revolution is not going to be achieved by some type of party and its national plan, but by the organized students. As militants we need to be humble, respectful, we need to engage in solidarity with other organizations and not wanting to dominate them, we don't have any right to hasten the processes ... (Nico, Student Collective, Santiago)

As a way to prevent parties or other political organizations from subsuming the student struggle,⁶ the movement strengthened its organizational structures, giving all the power of decision to the student bodies and clearly delineating the role of the spokespersons, understood as messengers of the assembly's voice. Here, the assembly constituted a democratic collective strategy and the preferred social space in which the decision-making and other organizational processes took place. By placing the assembly at the core of their politics, the students recognized in everyone the same rights and capacities to decide the movement's goals and actions, fostering active participation as well as the creation of empowered and democratic subjects (Motta, 2009).

By developing new democratic structures and strategies, several students embarked on the task of creating the desired new education and social relations in their everyday lives. They engaged with a prefigurative politics, believing that it was possible to plant the seeds of the desired society "within the shell of the old" (King, 2016). Following this rationale, the "occupations" of universities and high schools did not only serve as a strategy to put pressure on the authorities. They also operated as autonomous spaces where the students discussed together the legal foundations of the Chilean educative system and how to tackle it, where they collectively learned how to organize, how to deliberate, how to implement consensus-based decision-making, how to cook for big groups, and how to paint banners, among many other practices.

The occupations became the spaces where prefiguration took place and where attempts were made to build the utopias in the present. The development of self-education work-

Student Movements in Latin America: Decolonizing and Feminizing Education and Life

shops and student-led classes are good examples of the movement's efforts to prefigure creative and non-hierarchical forms of education. It is important to clarify, though, that these prefigurative practices coexisted with a formal process of negotiation, where the students' spokespersons and the government's representatives discussed education reforms and potential alternatives to put an end to the conflict. The prolonged character of the mobilizations, the government's decision to delegate the conflict into the parliament's hands, and the threat of losing the academic year and the students' scholarships, ended up diminishing the strength of the struggle and, as a consequence, led to a gradual decline of the movement (Valenzuela-Fuentes, 2015). This decline, however, did not stop a number of autonomous initiatives led by student organizations and collectives, which decided to continue their struggle even if the national mobilizations came to an end. Accordingly, since 2011 multiple groups have taken education into their own hands, setting up self-managed and community-based educative projects,⁷ prefiguring a politics of emancipatory knowledge that is rooted in the neighborhoods and not in the ivory tower of the universities.

Colombia: The Multiple Voices of Mass Intellectuality

The visible ruptures onto the public stage of politics and democracy of a national student movement in 2011 and again in 2018 against the pedagogies of cruelty of Uribe, Santos, and Iván Duque Márquez (right-wing presidents who presided over the final phase of the longest-running internal armed conflict in Latin America, and the beginning of the neoliberal "peace" after 2016) was made possible by the collectives and organizations working in the interstices of everyday life of the contemporary neoliberalized university. These subjects and collectives embed and embody processes that democratize the university through a politics of knowledge in which heritages of radical and popular education sit at the center. Such heritages work in, against, and sometimes beyond representational practices of politics and epistemology. This means that they work in tension with the knowing-subject of coloniality and embrace collective and participatory forms of knowledge creation and political organizing.

Despite the diversities and tensions within this critique of representation in politics and epistemology this post-representational thread was evident from their initial emergence in the early 2000s as students began organizing in private and public universities, including workshops and assemblies to discuss and reflect upon educational reforms and their impact on access, quality, and opportunity (Garcia, 2012, p. 451). These spaces were pedagogical as they created the possibility of "other" logics, practices, and relationships, in contrast to that of the consumer, competitive, and individualized student with an instrumental relationship to education and the university community (Motta & Cole, 2014, pp. 151–153).

Here students shared and reflected on stories and experiences to co-create other readings and practices of student subjectivity and the meaning of education, pedagogy, and democracy (Rodriguez, 2013, pp. 5–6). These experiences began to overcome the isolation, separation, and fear of the pedagogies of cruelty of militarized neoliberalism and to

Student Movements in Latin America: Decolonizing and Feminizing Education and Life

foster relationships of trust, solidarity, and commitment. This clearly built upon the heritages of pedagogical-political projects that emerged in the 1980s, motivated to move beyond militarized and authoritarian politics of knowledge and toward a culture and pedagogical practices of dialogue, multiplicity, and difference.

These pedagogies of construction were the basis from which plural and creative repertoires of resistance were created, developed, and enacted by MANE throughout 2011. Such repertoires of resistance included occupations of public space (physical and virtual) and their construction—albeit temporarily—of alternative spatialities in terms of relationships, meanings, and practices. Through reoccupations of public space and their creation in other ways, students began to deepen processes of creating themselves and their relationships with others and Colombian society differently. The process and the ends of educational struggle were inseparable from democratic participation, which fostered and nurtured multiplicity. This deepened a political-pedagogical project around the reconstruction of the idea of the right to education. It demonstrated elements of this educational project in practice—through practices and dynamics of protest that encompassed the cultural, intellectual, and embodied. Protest was not only oppositional but contained seeds of the constructive through an immanent practice of producing alternative forms of democratic and decolonizing life and relationships.

Throughout 2012 and into 2013, MANE facilitated unprecedented processes of participatory creation of an alternative educational reform proposal. The pedagogies of these processes enabled the politicization of educational practice and pedagogization of the political at multiple spatialities, fostering the unlearning of neoliberalized conceptions of self, social relationships, and society and the immanent construction of new ones. A participatory methodology of co-construction at multiple scales was developed through *mesas amplias locales* (local participatory working groups [MALES]). Here particular groupings and university organizations had autonomy in the methodology chosen to create the generative principles and problematics around which the new reform proposal would be developed (MANE, 2011B).

The next stage involved the organization of a national student meeting in which participants debated the different proposals and problematics of the local assemblies to agree by consensus a general set of principles from which to deepen the development of the alternative proposal. This was then followed by a meeting to which other social and political actors, including teachers and university workers, were invited to participate in the proposals' discussion and initial development (MANE, 2011B). As a member described of these national meetings (MANE, 2011C),

[they] reflected the intense desire for change, of ideas for the construction of the country, of collective, critical, thoughtful, romantic consciousness ... it is romanticism that makes possible the existence of dreams, desires and utopias. Dreams such as these of a space where all students, university, technical, technological, secondary, can come together flow and create.

Student Movements in Latin America: Decolonizing and Feminizing Education and Life

The process of co-construction built on the heritages, experiences, and knowledges of movement members, developed their capabilities, and was transformative. Subjectivities of the educator as isolated, deprofessionalized, and deintellectualized were transgressed into subjectivities of critical facilitators in the development of a pedagogical-political project for society. Subjectivities of the student as commodified, competitive, and docile were transgressed into subjectivities at the heart of the formation of communities of resistance, cultures of solidarity, and practices of co-construction of knowledge for transformation.

However, within this diversity and the underlying embrace of heritages of radical and critical education there remained dominant a student militant and knowing-subjectivity that prioritized the cognitive as the site of knowledge production and the capacity to win debates as the pinnacle of political intervention, and tended to give predominant value to a deeply masculinized subject of resistance symbolized by a fist in the air, a mask, and confrontation with the Escuadrones Móviles Antidisturbios de la Policía Nacional (ES-MAD, the Colombian riot police) and state police and military forces.

The Feminization/Decolonization of Pedagogies of Resistance

Mexico: Feminist Resistance

The return of the ex-hegemonic PRI to presidency witnessed a visceral upsurge in feminist consciousness and mobilizations against gendered violence that are giving renewed visibility to feminist critiques. Ongoing instances of sexual harassment by UNAM students and staff reinvigorate demands for campus security on campus and denounce an institutionalized culture of misogyny and impunity. Official misrepresentations of Lesvy Berlin's asphyxiation by telephone cord in a phone booth at UNAM on May 3, 2017, as suicide carried an explicitly gendered connotation: in Mexico women can be killed with impunity. The Attorney General's hasty and reckless remarks averted the systemic nature of gendered violence in Mexico.⁸ The effect was to revictimize the victim, warranting her tragic death. Condemnation of the government's response told another story: the systemic threat to the lives and safety of Mexican women for the simple fact of their gender.

The collective response to these aggravations included the usual response of denunciations, mass mobilization, assemblies, stoppages, and demands, as well as symbolic gestures that redefined Lesvy's murder as femicide. Her mother Aracely Osorio's testimony combined with photography, drawings, and symbolic representations that etched the face of the victim into the collective imaginary. Protest actions reframed the incident through a feminist lens, recovering the identity of the misnamed victim, reiterating the structural nature of her death, and demanding justice and safety. The hashtag #SiMeMatan, #IfTheyKillMe, condensed a critique of the gendered biases that are used to justify femi-

Student Movements in Latin America: Decolonizing and Feminizing Education and Life

cide. Denunciations expressed a gendered cultural critique, renewing indignation at cynical and manipulative political elites.

The re-emergence and strengthening of feminist consciousness in and after #YoSoy132 highlights the cultural reproduction of colonial and patriarchal hierarchies in blocking democracy and social justice. A resurgent anti-authoritarian critique provided fertile terrain for the planting of a feminizing and decolonizing politics in the spaces of #YoSoy132, one that also appealed to the transformation of student politics from within the movement. As an active participant, scholar, and proponent of an anti-hegemonic, autonomous, and decentralized politics, Mariana Favela argues for multiplicity in form, content, and representation as a strategic necessity for avoiding divisive, exclusionary, and hegemonizing practices and subverting “the rhetoric of power that is announced in masculine and singular.” Against a homogenizing unity, proponents emphasized emotional, embodied, and affective qualities rooted in an ethical commitment to the consolidation of an other politics. In actively seeking to undo these hegemonic political subjectivities, sectors of #YoSoy132 turned to the power of affect and aesthetics to re-envision democracy along decolonizing, feminizing lines.

Chile: The Streets Are Ours, the Streets Are Violet

Seven years after the massive student uprising, Chile again became the epicenter of an unprecedented wave of mobilizations. In 2018, and drawing on the political legacy of the 2011 movement, thousands of female students across the country went on strike and occupied their campuses, challenging sexist education and the patriarchal culture rooted in the HE system. If previous strikes were mostly focused around the critique of neoliberalism, the latest mobilizations targeted patriarchal-capitalist structures and joined the feminist call of politicizing everyday life. Following the tradition of past strikes, the protesters took over their schools and faculties, but, unlike previous occupations, this time many of them were restricted to women. Through the creation of women-only occupations, they sought to guarantee safe and horizontal spaces, where women could feel comfortable sharing their own experiences of violence and discrimination and could organize against the multiple oppressions to which they are systematically exposed.

One of the most interesting features of the Chilean feminist strike was its horizontal and assembly-based politics. Although this format of political organizing was already present in the 2011 movement and it played a pivotal role within the “autonomous strand,” it co-existed (sometimes in an antagonistic position) with more traditional and vertical structures of student representation. What is new from the latest wave of students’ mobilizations is that most of the protesters refused to be represented by traditional students’ organizations, creating, instead, alternative women-only assemblies with rotative spokespersons and no-fixed leaders. Hundreds of feminist assemblies were formed in universities and high schools across the country, and no national leaders were chosen, as some of the key petitions were directed towards the university authorities while the sys-

Student Movements in Latin America: Decolonizing and Feminizing Education and Life

temic demands were directed at the entire Chilean society and not necessarily the government.

The feminist occupations and assemblies became the preferred spaces for the creation of collective processes of education, knowledge production, and political organizing. In each occupied campus, mobilized women arranged several meetings, workshops, and events on a daily basis, with the purpose of encouraging the identification of their own conditions of oppression and developing concrete proposals for resisting it. The movement, thus, became an educational subject (Zibechi, 2012), as most of its activities served a pedagogical purpose and contributed to the formation of a counter-hegemonic politics of knowledge (Motta & Esteves, 2014). The pedagogization of the political is inextricably interrelated with the horizontal approach embraced by the movement. This linkage could be observed in the students' rejection of the hierarchical and banking model of education (Freire, 2005) and their engagement with popular education methods for running a number of activities inside the occupations.

By sharing their knowledge in workshops, encounters, and other informal spaces, women were able to learn from each other and to develop a dialogical pedagogical praxis. In these events, they addressed different topics such as female oppressions, types of feminism, links between patriarchy and capitalism, strategies for non-sexist education, critiques of romantic love, natural gynecology, abortion and contraception, and knowing the female body, among others. Additionally, regular dancing, writing, and self-defense classes were part of the daily activities. As most of the workshops were experiential, they usually began with dynamics for sharing women's experiences and opinions before introducing any analytical or conceptual framework. In many of the sessions, the students reflected about their experiences of oppression and what could be done collectively to challenge patriarchal, colonial, and capitalist structures of domination. Through these exercises, they were able to critically analyze their own conditions of privilege and subjugation, encouraging a sense of responsibility for a long-lasting struggle against deeply embodied structures of domination.

Colombia: On the Power of Fragility and (In)Visibility

Questions of the feminization and decolonization of subjectivity, epistemologies, and politics of the general movement still remain(ed) on the margins of this visible politics and subjectivity of MANE. However, it is arguably in these spaces and among these collectives that pedagogization of the political and a politicization of the pedagogical that developed an emancipatory politics of education were/are developing, which transgress the pedagogy of cruelty through which contemporary patriarchal capitalist-coloniality articulates itself against the bodies, minds, and spirits of the subaltern.

An example of this is a collective of precarious women based in Cali who exist in the margins of the formal university as casual workers and students, as organizers, educators, and participants in community movements, and often as carers of others, most predominantly children. For them the problematic of the public university is about creating the

Student Movements in Latin America: Decolonizing and Feminizing Education and Life

conditions both for its re-emergence as a liberatory, feminist, and decolonized space/place and for their own survival and flourishing as feminized and racialized women on the margins.⁹ Thus, their praxis combines traditions of feminism with popular education, and their work involves the co-creation of autonomous political education projects outside and inside the university, as shapeshifters transgressing its violent separations and borders between knowers and known, education and life, and university and community (Bermúdez, 2013; Motta & Bermúdez, 2019).

Part of their visioning and political practice inside of the university, in this case Univalle, has involved the setting up of feminist collectives and the struggle for the acceptance and accreditation of a Master's in Popular Education and Gender that can embed and embody the kinds of pedagogical practices that decolonize and feminize the project of the neoliberal lettered city (Motta, 2018A). This has involved the co-creation of a dialogue of knowledges in which their knowledges, while often without "official" accreditation, have been valued and embraced as the site of wisdoms from which to co-create individual and collective transformations. This has enabled a becoming visible on their own terms, without the need for internalization of the shame, devaluation, and negation that they have experienced from the official university. This has involved sharing their stories of discrimination, violence, and exclusion as well as those of resistance, resilience, and survival as a means of creating a

box of tools, a collective vision, the strengths of one is combined with that of others, and we emerge as a Collective that is absolutely fragile and marginal but we have learnt the power of fragility.

This has meant recognition that each subject arrives with a knowing-body of "dark wisdoms" (Hill Collins, 1990, p. 206), with desires, and embraces the aesthetic, affective, and emotional dimensions of knowing-being that academia leaves aside and negates. This involves weaving the dimensions of spirituality, of motherhood, of care for life, of music and ritual, into their practices of co-construction of narratives of themselves and others, and of the possibilities of their lives, which transgress the logics of invisibility and hypervisibility to which they have been subject in the dehumanization of the pedagogies of cruelty of Colombian society and politics. As they describe (author correspondence with Collective, October 10-12, 2018):

We cry together, share stories, celebrate life, dance together, arrive together to formal classroom space, the rest of the university and the city. We believe that accompanying each other in both our sadness and our joy generates another type of knowledge that ruptures and transgresses the project of the patriarchal capitalist colonial lettered city.

Politica Afectiva and the Enfleshed

Mexico: Politica Afectiva

From the outset, #YoSoy132 manifested a shared sense of responsibility and an ethical reimagining of politics through the affective embodiment of democratic social relations encompassed in a core set of principles, including horizontality, autonomy, non-violence, and non-partisanship. The practical implications of horizontal, collective democratic organization were deeply affective and innately pedagogical: affective, because they entailed a strong, embodied and ethical sense of collective responsibility that nourished transversal solidarities; and pedagogical, whereby a series of encounters enabled, encouraged, and indeed obliged critical reflection in the process of democratically constructing a response to an urgent political conjuncture. Nascent bonds of solidarity experienced by active participants were symbolically nourished by the discursive and aesthetic renewal of protest imaginaries. Affect and aesthetics were key to overcoming disaffection, disillusionment, cynicism, and fatalism, and in reasserting the collective power of free individuals coming together to do politics democratically, without ideologies or leaders.

Affect opened up the possibility for the reconstitution of social relations in a more egalitarian manner, while an aesthetic renewal of the image of protest helped to regenerate public debates in an atmosphere of widespread youth disaffection with “politics as usual.” Strategically, an aesthetic reimagining of the image of politics sought to overcome the stigmatization and criminalization of protest; prevent barriers to identification, integration, and cooperation; and engender broad public support for the cause. Through critical aesthetic innovations, #YoSoy132 emphasized openness and diversity, nourishing a decolonizing and feminizing politics that seeks to close the gap between the rational and the emotional and to make politics fun and attractive.

#YoSoy132 discursively and artistically contested the imposition of prejudicial stereotypes, negated the apathy of youth and the violence and radicalism of student politics, and refuted the impossibility of cross-class solidarity across the student body. Instead it promoted student unity, rejected institutional differences, and reclaimed the just place of student movements in a history of democratizing collective struggles from below. By shifting the political terrain from the ideological to the affective, #YoSoy132 hoped to overcome deep sociopolitical divisions and avoid sectarianism, co-optation, and repression, reaffirming the politicizing qualities of emotion and the transformative effects of affect in the prefiguration of an authentically democratic, decolonizing, and feminizing politics. Ultimately, the politicization of a generation of disaffected students through the co-construction of a unified yet diverse student movement brought to the fore, once again, the transformative potential of collective struggle.

Student Movements in Latin America: Decolonizing and Feminizing Education and Life

Chile: “My Body, My Territory”: For an Embodied Politics of Everyday Life

One of the most interesting features of the recent student movement in Chile was the street iconography created throughout the feminist mobilizations. Naked torsos, bloody panties, women's backs as colorful canvas, drums, music, and dance defined the massive demonstrations that took place across the country. By staging their bodies on the streets and exposing body parts that have been constantly repressed by the patriarchal order, women and feminists demanded an embodied politics (Oyarzún, 2018) and resituated sexuality and the so-called “private sphere” as pivotal dimensions of the struggle. This performance of resistance had a clear message: female bodies are no longer commodities, shameful flesh, or sexualized objects over which men can exert their power. By challenging the roots of capitalist-patriarchy (Mies, 2014), feminist students reclaimed the streets as a place of freedom and their own bodies as a space for enacting autonomy.

Furthermore, the intimate experience of participating in women-only occupations enabled the students to connect with their bodies, emotions, and affects and to realize that their experiences of oppression were similar to those lived by other women. An interesting example of these practices is the workshop called: “Mapping our Bodies-Territories,” organized by students from Universidad de Chile and the self-training feminist group *Prudencia Ayala*. Seated in a circle, women drew what they understood and felt as their bodies, identifying emotions in the different parts of the drawing. When they showed their sketches to the group and reflected about the experience, they realized that they all shared tensions, concerns, frustrations, and that these emotions were usually located in women's necks, hearts, heads, backs, and stomachs. From the collective discussion, the students concluded that many of these pains and emotions were triggered by a sexist, competitive, macho-centered, and neoliberal education. As Magalhaes (2018), one of the workshop's facilitators, asserts:

From the workshop, we realized that ... this is an education that invades, violates and brands our bodies; a violent education that subordinates, disciplines and tries to silence us. An education producing anguished, physically ill and depressed bodies. However, through the same battered body that mirrors our violent social reality, we have managed to build a territory of rebellion and protest; a territory of resistance.

(Magalhaes, 2018, para. 4)

The feminist occupations, thus, encouraged the celebration of women's solidarity, inspiring a strong sense of community among the students. Interestingly, these powerful pedagogical exercises observed in the Chilean feminist occupations resemble the work of the Colombian women's group Escuela Política de Mujeres Pazíficas, analyzed by both Bermúdez (2013) and Motta (2013). In both spaces, the ritual, dancing, senses, and singing practices amalgamate with more conventional forms of knowledge, giving birth to affective and embodied pedagogies that have proven to be more fertile and creative than traditional approaches to knowledge production. The hugs and caresses so beautifully

Student Movements in Latin America: Decolonizing and Feminizing Education and Life

present in the activities undertaken by the Chilean feminist students resonate with a feminist ethics of *acompañamiento* (Pañuelos en Rebeldía, 2007),¹⁰ where women share their desires and sorrows, walk side by side, and compassionately support each other.

Colombia: Reoccupying the University, Reoccupying the Self

An outcome of the Collective's processes of co-construction with students and precarious staff was the decision to undertake a collective research project on the university grounds. The objective was to identify the mechanisms of the symbolic order of patriarchal capitalist-coloniality as materialized in the one of main university campus, Meléndez in Cali. Their initial investigation involved a group of mainly women walking around the campus to identify this order. In their pedagogies of walking they found spaces where women were unable to go, places in which sexual diversity was violently rejected and violated, but the most impactful for the collective was that the university of 60 years appeared as though it had only been inhabited by men. This was because all the buildings were named after men, and the few monuments that existed were dedicated to, or of, men.

Out of this first step of collecting information, the group decided to deepen their investigation of women in Cali, Colombia and other places that could be important symbolic figures with which to rename the university and give visibility to women as knowers and legitimate subjects of the Academy. After the collective investigation they chose a number of important women from both historical and present struggles, including the first woman to graduate from university in Colombia, a female student movement leader who was executed by the army in the 1990s, women academic activists working at the Centre of Gender in Univalle, and popular educators embedded in regional and local movements, among others. All were women and feminized subjects that had been negated and denied validity in both the geopolitics of knowledge of capitalist coloniality and in the present realities of the intensification of the pedagogy of cruelty in militarized neoliberal Colombia. They mapped and agreed which female figure they would rename each and every building on the campus after.

When this was decided, the question that remained for them was how to rename the university to position and bring visibility not only to women, and marginal women, but also to the feminine and the language of the feminine that the university excludes and delegitimizes. From this an idea arose that was to enact such a renaming through the means of carnival, and with the languages of song, dance, drum, and the symbols of healing. The reoccupation and renaming of the university became a healing journey of and through the university where, as one participant recounts (Author correspondence with Collective, October 10–12, 2018):

We were singing, dancing, and when we arrived at each place we enacted a ritual, which was beautiful because the men and women undertook a Sahumeiro, or smoking ceremony in which through smoke the pains and wounding of a place and its history can be healed.

Student Movements in Latin America: Decolonizing and Feminizing Education and Life

In this way the participants in the Collective reoccupied the university through its symbolic renaming and physical embodied reclaiming. All the feminized dimensions of our knowing being that are negated from both the historic Academy and its hyper-neoliberal form were visibilized and enfleshed, while the normal repertoires of student protest were also transgressed. Rupturing the hegemonic order of the university and registers of visibility of student resistant subjectivity made visible all that is lost from a politics and epistemology that elides or devalues the feminine. It centered the absent-presence of subaltern and precarious subjects normally either excluded from university life or, if included, included at the bottom of the pyramid of rankings of expertise and knowledge on the conditions that they assimilate to the knowing-subjectivity and being of patriarchal capitalist-coloniality.

It also centered spatially through the disruption of the symbolic material order, and relationally through the relationships formed in the process of the collective investigation and the carnival of renaming, other ways of co-producing knowledge for transformation.

These ways prefiguratively produced a return of the word to the world, through centering the equal capacity of all to contribute to analysis and action, as well as embracing the affective, embodied, and spiritual knowledges otherwise rendered absent in the hegemonic politics of knowledge of the university but also often reproduced in the student movement. This is not only a healing of the buildings and territories (symbolic and physical) of the university, it is a healing of subjects who otherwise feel out of place, unwelcome, and unworthy. Such decolonizing in thought, practice, spirit, and flesh enabled a reoccupation/decolonization of self. As the students remarked when they reflected on the experience (Author correspondence with Collective, October 10–12, 2018):

For the first time we circulated in the university in a different key and with a different rhythm, in which we didn't feel like outsiders, others, strangers in the university, but rather that with each collective step we transformed ourselves as opposed to reproducing and repeating the "normal."

And of course, encounters and co-creations such as these are but a beginning of an other politics (of knowledge). The process of which it is a part and the experience tended the seeds of deep and fascinating transformations; transformation in their understanding of self, in their relationships with others, in the nurturing of optimism and possibility with which to approach life, in the finding of new allies with whom to confront challenges, possibilities to laugh at Power and its attempts to exercise power on them and their bodies. While many of these transformations are invisible to the gaze of Power, and purposely so, they continue shaping and creating the enfleshed prefigurations of a decolonizing and feminizing/feminist democratic politics of education and life.

Conclusion: Student Movements; Planting the Seeds and Tending the Saplings of an Emancipatory Education and/as Life

Our dialogue has occurred across spaces, lands, and times. We have shaped it as a way to share and systematize some experiences of student–university movements and collectives in Mexico, Chile, and Colombia and engage with the rich praxis already present and co-created by students and those on the margins in the struggle for a prefigurative, at times decolonizing, and palpably feminizing/feminist politics of knowledge, education, and democratic life.

Across the national movements in their visible decision-making processes, and their formal and informal knowledge-making practices, including a vast array of repertoires of protest, there is a clear prefigurative and horizontal push towards a politics of mass intellectuality. Within this, and to varying degrees, is an embrace of the placed knowledges of participants, and of the ways in which dialogue and diversity are the ground rock of both an other democratic politics, and a democratizing politics of knowledge and education. Here, theory and collective practice are reconnected in diverse ways, collective reflection on practice is fostered, and struggle and intellectuality are placed on mutually reinforcing terrains. However, as we have seen, there remains often a focus on the cognitive as the epitome of knowledge and an unthought reification of a masculinized and self-sacrificing political subjectivity.

Delving into the margins and less visible practices, movements, and collectives within and beneath the national movements, we have also found strong tendencies towards the emergence of a feminist politics of knowledge and feminizing of the pedagogical (or the processes through which we create learning/unlearning/relearning) and political subjectivity. This has involved both the emergence and consolidation of women and feminized subjects in this praxis as leaders and weavers of collectivity and critique, and the embrace of an ethics and practice of care, fragility, and intimacy in which the knowledges of the body, the spiritual, and the cultural take center stage.

Linked to this feminization of the pedagogies and politics of student movements and collectives on and of the margins is the centrality of the role of affect and the enfleshed in the reoccupation and decolonization of education, the university, and the self. Emotions are here put to work in liberatory and experimental ways to, for example, “laugh” at Power and in this way reduce its capacity to silence and intimidate, and equally to weep together (and no longer in that shamed emptiness of isolation) at the indignities done to our bodies, hearts, and minds that are the ongoing result of the raced, gendered, and classed logics of violent negation in the project of the Lettered City and intensified in pernicious ways during its neoliberalization.

It is our hope that our dialogues may be of use for other students and subjects on the margins of the university as project and institution in their struggle for the co-creation of

Student Movements in Latin America: Decolonizing and Feminizing Education and Life

a politics of knowledge and pedagogical praxis through which to forge our collective self-liberation.

References

- Acosta Silva, Adrián. (2012). ¿Tiempos líquidos? Democracia, universidad y desarrollo en México. *Cuestiones de Sociología*, 8, 1–21.
- Alonso, Jorge. (2013). Cómo escapar de la cárcel de lo electoral: El movimiento #YoSoy132. *Desacatos*, 42, 17–40.
- Anzaldúa, Gloria. (2002). Now let us shift . . . the path of conocimiento . . . inner works, public acts. In G. Anzaldúa & A. Keating (Eds.), *This bridge we call home*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Anzaldúa, Gloria. (2015). Let us be the healing of the wound: The Coyolxauhqui imperative—la sombra y el sueno. In A. L. Keating (Ed.), *Light in the Dark/Luz en lo Oscuro*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Anzaldúa, Gloria. (2007). *Borderlands/La Frontera: The new Mestiza*. San Francisco, CA: Aunt Lute Books.
- Babb, Sarah. (2002). *Managing Mexico: Economists from nationalism to neoliberalism*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Bellei, Cristián, & Cabalin, Cristian. (2013). Chilean student movements sustained struggle to transform a market-oriented educational system. *Current Issues in Comparative Education*, 15(2), 108–123.
- Bermúdez, Norma Lucia. (2013). Cali's women in collective crossing for three worlds: Popular education, feminisms and nonviolence for the expansion of the present, memory and for nurturing life. In S. Motta & M. Cole (Eds.), *Education and social change in Latin America* (pp. 239–260). New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Breines, Winifred. (1988). Whose new left? *Journal of American History*, 75(2), 528–545.
- Calderón, Alba. (2017). **Observatorio del Feminicidio reconstruye la muerte de Lesvy para refutar versión de suicidio**. *Animal Político*, August 4.
- Camp, Roderic Ai. (2013). *Politics in Mexico: Democratic consolidation or decline?* (6th ed.). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Campo, Víctor Manuel Gómez, & Giraldo, Jorge Enrique Celis. (2009). Redito educativo, acciones afirmativas y equidad social en la educación superior en Colombia. *Revista de Estudios Sociales*, 33, 106–117.
- Cusicanqui, Silvia. Rivera. (2018). CH'IXINAKAT UTXIWA. Buenos Aires: Tinta y Limón.

Student Movements in Latin America: Decolonizing and Feminizing Education and Life

de Vries, Wietse, & Navarro, Yadira. (2011). ¿Profesionistas del futuro o futuros taxistas? Los egresados universitarios y el mercado laboral en México. *Revista Iberoamericana de Educación Superior*, 2, 3-27.

Dixon, Ella, & Macquarie University Department of Sociology. (2018). "For an authentic democracy, #IAm132": Contested democratic imaginaries in the Mexican student movement, #YoSoy132.

Favela, Mariana. (2015). La diversidad como horizonte de organización política. In R. Romero & O. Solís (Eds.), *Resistencias locales, utopías globales* (vol. 102, pp. 155-167). Distrito Fedeal, México: STUNAM.

Fernández Poncela, Anna María. (2013). Cuando las emociones y la tecnología nos alcancen: #YoSoy132. *Revista Tramas*, 40, 177-213.

Freire, Paulo. (2005). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York, NY: Continuum.

Garcia, Martha. (2012). Movilizacion estudiantil por la defensa de la educacion superior en Colombia. *Anuari del Conflicte Social*, 1, 449-466.

Gutierrez, Gustavo. (2003). *We drink from our own wells: The spiritual journey of a people*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books.

Gutiérrez, Raquel A. (2014). *Rhythms of the Pachakuti: Indigenous Uprising and State Power in Bolivia* (Skar, Stacey Alba D, Trans.). Durham, NC: Duke University Press

Hill Collins, Patricia. (1990). *Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment*. New York: Routledge.

King, Natasha. (2016). *No borders: The politics of immigration control and resistance*. London: Zed Books.

León Rosabal, Blanca Mar. (2015). El espacio de la utopía: Los unamitas y la Revolución Cubana. In A. Kozel, F. Grossi, & D. Moroni (Eds.), *El imaginario antiimperialista en América Latina* (pp. 221-234). Buenos Aires, Argentina: CLASCO.

Lugones, Maria. (2010) Towards a decolonial feminism. *Hypatia*, 25, 4, 742-759.

Magalhaes, Lina. (2018). **Cuerpos femeninos como territorios de protesta y resistencia en Chile**. May 28.

MANE. (2011a). **Programa Mínimo del Movimiento Estudiantil Universitario Colombiano**.

MANE (2011b). **Mesa Amplia Nacional Estudiantil—Jan Farid Chen Lugo**.

MANE. (2011c). **Convocatoria Encuentro Programático Nacional Estudiantil 13 y 14 de Noviembre**.

Student Movements in Latin America: Decolonizing and Feminizing Education and Life

Marrero, Adriana, & Hernandez, J. Hernández. (2005). **Las reformas educativas de las ultimas decadas: privatizacion y privacion.** *Anuario de Servicios Publicos*, 1-10.

Mizala, Alejandra, & Torche, Florencia. (2012). Bringing the schools back in: The stratification of educational achievement in the Chilean voucher system. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 32, 132-144

Mélendez Preciado, J. (2012). El cambio está en los jóvenes [Change is in the youth]. In L. Figueiras Tapia (Ed.), *Del 131 al #YoSoy132. Elección 2012* (pp. 11-22). DF, México: Comunicación y Política.

Meyer, Lorenzo. (2013). *Nuestra tragedia persistente: La democracia autoritaria en México* (1st ed). Distrito Federal, México: Debate.

Mies, Maria. (2014). *Patriarchy and accumulation on a world scale: Women in the international division of labour*. London: Zed Books.

Motta, Sara Catherine. (2009). Old tools and new movements in Latin America: Political science as gatekeeper or intellectual illuminator? *Latin American Politics and Society*, 51(1), 31-56.

Motta, Sara Catherine. (2011). Notes towards prefigurative epistemologies. In S. C. Motta & A. G. Nilsen (Eds.), *Social movements in the global South: Development, dispossession and resistance*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Motta, Sara Catherine. (2013). On the pedagogical turn in Latin American social movements. In Sara Catherine Motta & Mike Cole (Eds.), *Education and social change in Latin America* (pp. 5-70). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Motta, Sara Catherine. (2017). Decolonising critique. In A. C. Dinerstein (Ed.), *Social sciences for an other politics: Women theorising without parachutes* (pp. 33-44). New York, NY: Routledge.

Motta, Sara Catherine. (2018a). Feminising and decolonising higher education: Pedagogies of dignity in Colombia and Australia. In De Jong, S. Icaza, & O. Rutazibwa O (Eds.), *Decolonization and feminisms in global teaching and learning*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Motta, Sara Catherine. (2018b). *Liminal subjects: Weaving (our) liberation*. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield.

Motta, Sara Catherine, & Bermúdez, Norma Lucia. (2019). Enfleshing temporal insurgencies and decolonial times. *Globalisations*, 16(4), 424-440.

Motta, Sara Catherine, & Cole, Mike. (2014). *Constructing twenty-first century socialism in Latin America*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Student Movements in Latin America: Decolonizing and Feminizing Education and Life

Motta, Sara Catherine, & Esteves, Ana Margarida. (2014). Reinventing emancipation in the 21st century: The pedagogical practices of social movements. *Interface*, 6(1), 1-24.

Motta, Sara Catherine, & Seppälä, Tiina. (2016). **Feminized resistances**. *Journal of Resistance Studies*, 2(2), 1-28.

Noriega Chávez, Margarita. (2010). Sistema educativo mexicano y organismos internacionales: Banco Mundial, Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo y Organización para la Cooperación y el Desarrollo Económico. In A. Arnaut & S. Giorguli (Eds.), *Los grandes problemas de México* (vol. 7, pp. 659-684). Distrito Federal, México: Colegio de México.

Olivier Téllez, Guadalupe. (2007). *Educación superior privada en México. Veinte años de expansión: 1982-2002*. Distrito Federal, México: UPN

Oyarzún, Kemy Vaccaro. (2018). **Feminismos chilenos: una democratización encarnada**. *Anales de la Universidad de Chile*, 14(7), 31-50.

Pañuelos-en-Rebeldía. (2007). Hacia una pedagogía feminista Géneros y educación popular. Buenos Aires: América Libre-Editorial El Colectivo.

Pérez Monroy, Nahúm. (2012). **El movimiento estudiantil del CGH (1999-2000): Lucha de tendencias y defensa de la universidad pública**. Bachelor's thesis, UNAM, Distrito Federal, México.

R3CR3O. (2012). **131 alumnos de la Ibero responden**. Video file, May 14.

Ramírez, Felipe. (2018). **Danza: vehículo de la autonomía y la lucha feminista: Entrevista con Lorena Hurtado y Kemy Oyarzún**. June 13.

Rivas Ontiveros, José René. (2004). *El proceso de politización y formación de liderazgos estudiantiles de izquierda en la UNAM (1958-1972)*. Doctoral dissertation, Facultad de Ciencias Políticas y Sociales, UNAM, Distrito Federal, México.

Rodriguez, Edwin Cruz. (2013). La reforma de la educación superior y las protestas estudiantiles en Colombia. *Postdata*, 18(1), 1-12.

Sillas Casillas, J. C. (2005). Realidades y tendencias en la educación superior privada mexicana. *Perfiles Educativos*, 27(109/110), 7-37.

Valenzuela-Fuentes, Katia. (2015). La primavera de Chile: autonomía y antagonismo en el movimiento estudiantil. In M. Modonesi (Ed.), *Movimientos subalternos, antagonistas y autónomos en México y América Latina*. Mexico City: UNAM.

Valenzuela-Fuentes, Katia. (2017). *Towards new emancipatory horizons: Autonomous politics in urban groups of Mexico and Chile*. Doctoral dissertation, University of Nottingham.

Zibechi, Raul. (2012). *Territories in resistance: A cartography of Latin American social movements*. Oakland, CA: Ak Press.

Student Movements in Latin America: Decolonizing and Feminizing Education and Life

Notes:

- (1.) A Jesuit institution with a tradition of defending human rights and indigenous communities (Meléndez Preciado, 2012, p. 12), as well as a sizable support basis for the right-wing National Action Party (PAN) (Dixon, 2018, p. 88).
- (2.) In an 11-minute video montage uploaded on YouTube, 131 students testified that their protest against Enrique Peña Nieto was genuine and that they were not pseudo students, as the authorities claimed and the media faithfully reproduced (R3CR3O, 2012).
- (3.) At its peak, the AGI convened 108 local assemblies nationwide (Alonso, 2013, p. 24).
- (4.) Horizontality refers to a process of collective thinking and doing that stimulates the agency and participation of communities as part of a non-hierarchical and non-authoritarian approach (Valenzuela-Fuentes, 2017). Prefiguration refers to a political approach aimed at creating and prefiguring “in lived action and behaviour the desired society” (Breines, 1988, p. 542).
- (5.) “conforme avanzaba la convivencia y la discusión, nos fuimos encariñando, nos fuimos tomando respeto y creo que sí fue algo bastante bueno” (Dixon, 2018, p. 214).
- (6.) For example, although Camila Vallejo was a member of the Communist Party and one of the most well-known spokespersons, the students insisted on the role of the public figures: they were the messengers of the assembly’s voice and should not impose their own political agendas. However, despite these efforts, it is important to mention that the popularity achieved by some of the students’ spokespersons helped them to shape their own political careers. As of 2019, four of them are members of the Chilean Parliament.
- (7.) See, for example, the experience of “Escuela Pública Comunitaria” in Santiago, Chile.
- (8.) Before an investigation could take place, the Attorney General of Mexico City released a statement in which he suggested that the victim had been failing in her studies and had ingested drugs and alcohol prior to her death, treating the case as suicide (Calderón, 2017).
- (9.) Author correspondence with members of the Collective, October 2018.
- (10.) Action of joining others, of being with them and spending meaningful time together.

Sara Motta

Department of Politics, University of Newcastle

Norma Lucia Bermudez Gomez

Center for Research and Studies of Gender, Women and Society, Universidad del Valle

Katia Valenzuela Fuentes

Student Movements in Latin America: Decolonizing and Feminizing Education and Life

Department of Territorial Planning, Universidad de Concepción

Ella Simone Dixon

Department of Sociology, Macquarie University