

See discussions, stats, and author profiles for this publication at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/305626408>

Emancipation in Latin America: On the Pedagogical Turn: Emancipation in Latin America

Article in *Bulletin of Latin American Research* · July 2016

DOI: 10.1111/blr.12526

CITATIONS

0

READS

6

1 author:



Sara C. Motta

University of Newcastle

34 PUBLICATIONS 110 CITATIONS

SEE PROFILE

Some of the authors of this publication are also working on these related projects:



Special Section Reinventing Emancipation Bulletin of Latin American Research [View project](#)

All content following this page was uploaded by [Sara C. Motta](#) on 15 April 2017.

The user has requested enhancement of the downloaded file. All in-text references [underlined in blue](#) are added to the original document and are linked to publications on ResearchGate, letting you access and read them immediately.

Emancipation in Latin America: On the Pedagogical Turn

SARA C. MOTTA

The University of Newcastle, Australia

Latin American social movements are reinventing emancipatory politics, in which those invisibilised and excluded by capitalist-coloniality are emerging as the emancipatory subjects of our times. Rather than a method of learning, pedagogy is understood as a radical educational project of subaltern transformation and politics. Emancipatory pedagogical praxis occurs in multiple spatialities and embraces multiple knowledges and subaltern subjects. These knowing-subjects become creators of political agency, movement practices and imaginaries, and collective self-liberation. I develop my analysis with reference to movement educators who I work with in the Brazilian Movimento sem Terra (Landless Workers Movement, MST) and Colombian Escuela Política de Mujeres Pazífica (Political School of Pacifist Women, Escuela).

Keywords: emancipation, pedagogical, social movements, social relations, subjectivities.

Latin American social movements are reinventing emancipatory politics, in which those invisibilised and excluded by capitalist-coloniality are emerging as the emancipatory subjects of our times. These new political subjects develop social relations which disrupt the power of capital in their everyday lives through practices which reconnect people and communities with their creative capacities and each other. In this article I conceptualise and reflect on the role of the pedagogical. This is not understood as a method of learning but rather as a political-pedagogical project of subaltern struggle in which practices of learning and unlearning are embedded (Motta and Esteves, 2014). The pedagogical in this sense cannot be confined to the narrow limits of hegemonic understandings of education which alienates and separates the body from the mind, the classroom from the community, and the knower from the known (Motta and Cole, 2014). Rather, emancipatory pedagogical praxis occurs in multiple spatialities, embraces multiple knowledges and subaltern subjects, and these knowing-subjects become creators of political agency, generating movement practices and imaginaries, and promoting collective self-liberation.

The emancipatory pedagogical practices of social movements involve the creation of embodied peopled memories, the (re)covery and (re)invention of subaltern philosophies and theorisations through embracing multiple literacies, and an epistemological privileging of those on the margins. These philosophical and epistemological commitments are embodied in informal learning in the everyday life of a movement. They include the unlearning of the oppressor's logics as they interpolate our subjectivities and social

relationships, generating: formal educational spaces in which dialogues of knowledge are fostered; teaching which resignifies and reconfigures the teacher and school; and creating embodied and affective pedagogical practices which are embedded in the spiritual and cosmological.

Reinventing Twenty-first Century Emancipation: Politicising the Pedagogical and Pedagogising the Political

At the heart of the reinvention of emancipatory politics are processes which pedagogise the political and politicise the pedagogical (Motta and Cole, 2014). Such pedagogical praxis builds upon heritages of radical and subaltern educational traditions and cultural practices such as indigenous cosmologies, liberation theology and popular education. These practices are the descendants of Simon Rodríguez's project of educational emancipation. Escobar elaborates on this project:

[Rodríguez] wanted all— blacks, indigenous poor, direct descendants of the coloniser— to be equals; he intuited that education could fulfil this task because he had no doubt of the intellectual capacities of anyone, and believed conversely, that the people should be the basis from (which) popular democracy is constructed. (Cendales, Mejía and Muñoz, 2013: 7)

They also build upon the heritage of critical educators such as Paulo Freire. For Freire knowledge does not exist as a fixed object of facts (a bank) from which individuals might make withdrawals. Rather, knowledge is constructed through the dialogical process of engagement between the self and the other, mediated by the world in which all become co-constructors of knowledge, our social worlds and ourselves (Freire, 2000: 25). Critical to such pedagogical praxis is an overcoming of the dualism between mind and body, theory and practice, and education and life. As Freire describes:

Dialogue is an existential demand and enables a form of meeting which fosters reflection and action [...] Dialogue is the terrain which grants meaning to desires, aspirations, dreams, hopes [...] To exist humanly is to speak the world [...] Dialogue is the meeting of people mediated by the world, which enables such a speaking of the world. (Cotos, 2013: 112)

Dialogue of this kind enables transformation, thus linking theory-making with practice (praxis). Praxis involves the steps of application, evaluation, reflection, theorisation and then a return to practice. Emancipatory pedagogical practice is the product of praxis at the collective level of lived experience. Key in this process, as Anzaldúa (1987) and Lugones (2010) insist, is the creation of an 'other' historicity and the telling of 'other' stories to those of contemporary capitalism that reproduce the silencing, devaluing and destruction of 'other' knowledges, ways of life and histories of resistance. This suggests that emancipatory pedagogical praxis fosters the creation of spaces of dialogical co-creation in which a multiplicity of knowledges and ways of creating knowledge flourish.

Such subaltern educational heritages and practico-philosophies dethrone the knowing subject of capitalist-coloniality, which (emphasises) his mastery of others and production of the word as separate from the world. In contrast, emancipatory pedagogy fosters processes of mass intellectuality and creativity. They aim to enable communities

to re-author themselves through the power of the word which, as Freire (2000: 69) argued, is the power to name and change the world. This politics embraces multiple forms of knowledge, including the affective, embodied, oral, cognitive and cultural. It experiments with collective and horizontal pedagogies which enable people to produce themselves, communities and social relationships differently.

Such a politicisation of the pedagogical and pedagogisation of the political occurs in formal educational settings, often on the margins of dominant processes of neoliberalism. But it also occurs in spaces where subjects, bodies, epistemologies and spatialities meet in movement politics, community organising and informal situated-learning processes. These processes and projects transgress the borders and boundaries of education separated from life, and methods of learning dissociated from ethical and political commitments. Instead it seeks to co-create pedagogical projects with communities in struggle. Within this the school is reimagined as a site for the development of thinking, autonomous and innovative subjects, who are able to collectively produce their self-liberation. Teacher-training is reconnected to a pedagogical-political project and a conceptualisation of the ethical educator-subject as being one who is committed to an emancipatory pedagogical practice embedded in the struggles and needs of oppressed communities.

As a means to contribute to this emancipatory pedagogical politics, in what follows I trace and systematise the centrality of the pedagogical in creating the conditions of possibility for the emergence of emancipatory spaces, sociabilities and subjects, and the development of the theories, strategies and practices of emancipation. I do this with reference to the experiences of movement educators in two movements with which I have worked and played an active role: MST, Ceara, Brazil and Colectivo de Mujeres Pazífica (Pazíficas Womens' Collective) in Cali Colombia, focusing on their feminist education developed as part of Escuela. My collaboration with MST educators (since 2008, involving three visits to Fortaleza) and the Escuela (since 2010, involving three visits to Cali) has included the development of methodologies, workshops and the systematisation of pedagogical practices. I also undertook interviews and participated in educator/movement activities. Additionally, these educators visited the UK twice to share and systematise their experiences with critical educators/movements.

Border-thinking Methodologies

This analysis forms part of a broader project of border-thinking research in solidarity with movements in Brazil and Colombia and the UK. Border-thinking as developed by decolonial and Chicana theorists breaks down closed conceptual and theoretical categories of knowledge production by speaking from the borders and margins of modernity, be that within the margins of the West or on its margins in the global South ([Anzaldúa, 1987](#); [Mignolo, 2009](#)). Border-thinking therefore involves an epistemological commitment and privileging of the margins and periphery and the co-construction of emancipatory politics across and between places, subjects, and borders in South and North.

In my practice, such border-thinking methodology has entailed popular-education work with MST critical educators and collective reflection on practice with the Escuela. It has also encompassed the development of textual work which, amongst others, conceptualises the feminisation of resistance that marks emancipatory practices and analyses the pedagogical turn in their emancipatory politics ([Motta, 2013](#); Motta and Cole, 2014). Additionally, it has involved sharing the experiences and theorisations of the MST

and Escuela with groups and collectives in the UK. These have included activist-scholars such as Liam Kane (2000), Tristan McCowan (2009), Peter Mayo (Borg and Mayo, 2007), Sandra de Carvalho and Ernandi Mendes (2011), who also theorise the pedagogical in the MST, and Norma Bermudez, who is an activist feminist-scholar and co-founder of the Escuela. These initiatives open dialogues to foster collective learning on practice.

My framing of the pedagogical practices of the MST as emancipatory builds upon these theorists' work who come from socialist and Marxist-inspired critical theorisations, developing concepts such as counter-hegemony or socialist consciousness to conceptualise these practices, and theorising the figure of the organic intellectual as the subject of these processes. However, my work is distinct, as it theorises the role of organic intellectuality as collective and prefigurative and does not limit the content of emancipation to counter-hegemony but includes anti-hegemony practices (Motta and Cole, 2014). There are of course other theorisations and conceptual framings of the MST's political-pedagogical project. A significant group works within the framing of citizenship and democratisation (for example, Vergara-Camus, 2009; Wolford, 2010; Tarlau, 2013) with a particular focus on state/society relationships. I chose not to work with this because of its representational assumptions in relation to the political which, as I have argued elsewhere, are unable to conceptualise and engage with the post-representational forms of movement emancipatory praxis (Motta, 2011).

In relation to the Escuela, despite the reality that women are often at the heart of new emancipatory politics, as noted by Motta (2013) and Gutiérrez (2014), there is little English language theorisation of this. Emerging from the region is theoretical-practical discussion in relation to decolonial feminism, particularly developed in the journal *Revista Venezolana de Estudios de la Mujer*. Whilst lack of space precludes deep engagement with this tradition, I believe that a decolonial feminism offers one of the most fruitful avenues for engaging in solidarity with new forms of emancipatory politics in the region, as it brings to our analytic and political attention the ways in which movements are often not seeking to complete the project of modernity but decolonise and disrupt this project (Motta, 2015).

These translations between intensely locally-embedded epistemologies on the margins of Latin America and Europe transforms both. This practical-theoretical engagement has also transformed me as a woman, mother, critical theorist and activist existing on the margins of Higher Education and having experienced multiple oppressions (Motta, 2015). It is my hope that, through the development of reflections and systematisation about the role of the pedagogical in emancipatory politics, I can analyse in solidarity with these movement educators and also offer movements and communities in 'other' places useful and meaningful reflections on how the pedagogical might contribute to the reimagining of emancipation in their (our) contexts.

The Movements

Brazil's MST is a social movement, born through the actions of families occupying *latifundios* (large landed estates) in the early 1980s following the intensification of peasant dispossession as land became commodified. Through their organising, communities push for schools, credit for agricultural production and cooperatives which are then organised by the building of community traditions, histories and moral economies orientated towards sustainability and community needs (Diniz and Gilbert, 2013). The MST believes that the education of rural communities – in rural communities – involves

taking ownership of their history and becoming agents of change able to transform their reality (Caldart *et al.*, 2012). Accordingly, they develop an emancipatory pedagogy embedded in heritages of popular education and traditions of liberation theology. This is premised upon a dialogue between knowledges, including traditional academic knowledge, oral histories, spiritual traditions, affective knowledges and popular histories and culture.

The Escuela is co-ordinated by the Pazíficas Women's Collective, a network that emerged in 2000 in Cali, Colombia. It aims to develop nonviolent, feminist proposals and practices to denounce and make visible the violences experienced by (Colombian) women. As Bermúdez recounts:

From the beginning we knew that the debate and dialogue we had opened would have major consequences for us and for moving beyond the old formulas of politics. We were facing something deeper; to question the meaning of politics, its objectives and its means; to question [...] that power is enacted not only in parliaments and battlefields, but also in social relations, on the streets, in the square, at home and in the bedroom. (Bermúdez, 2013: 4–5)

Thus emerged the Escuela which works through the traditions of nonviolence, feminism and popular education to create learning spaces in which the knowledges of all women are valued. Out of this have emerged multiple themes which orientate practices of transformation: celebration of diversity, poetic politics, humour as a vehicle to show that other gender relations are possible, and incarnated memory. From this praxis multiple and diverse experiences of individual and collective transformation have flourished (www.infogenero.net/sitio/; www.aullemosmujeres.blogspot.com).

These two movements are part of a wider plethora of movements and communities that are reinventing emancipation through the development of emancipatory pedagogies. Such emancipatory pedagogies contest and transgress the logics of capitalism in communities' everyday lives through the recovery of the creative intellectual, embodied, emotional, historical, political and material capacities of individuals and communities.

Pedagogies of Possibility: Fostering the Spaces, Sociabilities and Subjects of Emancipation

Processes of informal learning are key to the (re)construction of emancipatory spaces, sociabilities, and subjects, and thus to the conditions of possibility of a new popular politics of emancipation. The pedagogical becomes an essential part of creating the openings, possibilities and relationships to enable communities that are often silenced and violently invisibilised to appear as embodied political subjects. Here pedagogies of re-occupying and re-creating the space of the land, the community and the subject become central.

In the case of the MST we can conceptualise processes of mobilisation, the occupation of land and organisation of settlements as pedagogical. Through these experiences rural communities and families unlearn dominant subjectivities and internalised logics of oppression, thus fostering the conditions of possibility for the emergence of a new popular political subject enacting a multidimensional politics of emancipation.

The government represents the families and militants of the MST who live on MST settlements as being the 'beneficiaries' of land-reform policies. However, this hides the

role of struggle that proceeds and enables the transformation of occupied land into legally recognised MST settlements. It also hides the ontological shifts in ways of life and practices of self that the occupation enables and is enabled by. Such shifts and transformations can be understood as 'reoccupations of self' in which rural communities that have experienced expulsion from the land and the commodification of their humanity unlearn such dehumanising conditions of existence. As Gadelha describes:

The arrival [of families] to the settlement is represented [by the community] as liberation from this subjectification, as a reintegration of the subjectivity that is desired. In other words, the process of constructing a settlement involves the reconstruction of sociability. (de Carvalho, 2006: 66)

Such reoccupations of the self are enriched by the plurality of knowledges of participants. For example, in the case of the settlement of Santa Barbara, Ceará, region of Fortaleza, 130 families occupied the land in October 1996. As Feitosa (2002) has documented, these families came from different experiences of rural labour and cultivation, and some from urban experiences of informal labour or unemployment. He continues: 'These differentiated experiences enabled a rich exchange of knowledges', yet this was not an immediate and spontaneous process but rather 'it was necessary to create ways which could facilitate such a meeting of mutual enrichment' (Feitosa, 2002: 75).

Many challenges were faced in creating the conditions for a meeting of mutual enrichment, or dialogue of knowledges. As Maria Ocília Barros Monteiro relates:

In the beginning it was very difficult, there were nine families in the same house, with a small space for each of no more than a metre. It was difficult ... you don't know anyone, you are without family, without water and light in the house. (Gadelha, 2006: 63)

Navigating these challenges is also a pedagogical process in which individuals and families learn new forms of relating to one another premised on, as Sandra (14 April 2010) recounts, 'dialogue, respect of others and recognition of difference'. In this process, rural communities and families learn to live with different experiences and conceptualisations of the world, to negotiate with the state and its institutions, and to collectively organise production and social reproduction. As Neves (1997: 21) proposes, this produces a 'process of unrooting and rerooting as part of the reevaluation and reorganisation of the social conditions of life'.

Here individuals with previous experience in social movements and community organising become pivotal, often taking on the role of facilitator in initial community organising. In the case of the Santa Barbara settlement this involved, as Gadelha explains:

[that] they proposed that the structure of the organisation of the settlement should incorporate a coordinating body which would be submitted to a general assembly in which representatives of different committees that organised the activities of the settlement would participate. (Gadelha, 2006: 66)

In this process of settlement organisation, the community learns to administer productive activities and to construct pathways that foster the possibility for new forms of sociability. The successes and challenges of this process promote reflections, attitudes and actions which result in a continual collective evaluation. In the case of Santa Barbara

the community were able to come to a collective decision about the type of production that most suited its histories, needs and desires. Like most of Ceará they chose a form of mixed production, with both individual and collective land-use (Barreira and De Paula, 1998: 209).

But of course, pedagogies of learning sociability and collaborative living are full of contradictions in which there are advances and set-backs, conflicts and logics of inclusion and exclusion. As Dezim explains:

Participation declined recently. Before there were two full days of collective work, now there is only one, and there are fewer people participating. Despite there being fewer people, those who do participate do so consciously, and don't stay silent. (Gadelha, 2006: 71)

However, the processes of constant evaluation learnt by communities and the values and principles that orientate such collective construction enable analysis and strategic reflection in relation to these problematics. This has resulted in a commitment to developing formal processes of learning as a means of visibilising, reflecting on and learning to overcome these tensions and contradictions. Thus, for example, there are multiple formal education projects organised in the settlement and it was the first MST community in Ceará to open its own secondary school with teachers trained in MST pedagogies.

In the Colectivo de Mujeres Pazíficas the pedagogies of possibility for the emergence of a feminist school began as a reaction to exclusion and silencing of the needs, demands, desires and dreams of women within mainstream culture and politics. As Bermúdez explained to me, when recounting how the idea for the Escuela emerged:

In the early 2000s peace-talks were occurring between the government and armed guerrillas in which women's voices and experiences were excluded. There was no space to talk of the politics of motherhood, relationships and loss, love and desire within the experiences of female combatants. There was no place for a humanising of combatants. So we decided to write a letter to the women guerrillas in which we asked to hear their stories of motherhood, loving and loss within conditions of war and conflict. We sought to open a dialogue that could break the logics of patriarchal capitalism in Colombia in which politics is an extension of war and war an extension of politics. (Bermudez, 10 April 2012)

Appearing in public as political subjects with distinct voices, histories and experiences acted as a moment of rupture which disrupted politics as normal in Colombian society and opened space for the creation of the Escuela. Women who were used to men deciding everything – writing and directing the scripts of politics and power – began to realise that they could be active agents in Colombia's future. As in the case of the MST, this involved a process of unlearning subjectivities in which women were objects of others' discourses and represented as passive victims of Colombia's violent political logics. It involved creating new forms of sociability when women came together to support each other's acts of speaking. This experience began a process which re-rooted subjects within their own agency and dignity. As Bermudez continues:

Out of this processes [...] it became clear that women are at the centre of community life. They ensure the survival of their families and are at the centre of the conflict. Yet their experiences and practices are often denied and silenced. We realised that it was necessary to create a space in which

we could systematise and develop the knowledges and wisdoms of women that emerge from their everyday struggles. (Bermudez, 10 April 2012)

From this emerged the call for a series of seminars in which the question ‘what kind of learning space would need to be created to enable this process of unlearning and learning to produce new ways of life and social relationships’ was discussed. After eighteen months it was agreed to organise a school of feminist political education.

Such informal learning processes in both the MST and the formation of the *Escuela* weave together the threads which enable the emergence of new popular political actors, relationships and organisations. They suggest that pedagogical processes which re-occupy sociability, subjectivity and the space of the public are pivotal in this process.

‘Changing not only the Content of the Conversation but the Terms of the Conversation’: Collective Knowledge Processes and Multiple Knowledges

The MST and Countryside Education

The MST’s understanding of agrarian reform involves more than a legal redistribution of land and legalisation of occupations. The MST, as Conte describes:

propose[s] something that doesn’t exist, and because of this it is a utopia and thus we must work to create this at the micro-level. We propose a reappropriation of power, of the power that has been stolen from us. They don’t only steal our homes, our land, they also steal our power. They steal our power from us when they convince us that we don’t have power. (Conte, 2006: 43)

Thus the MST conceptualises agrarian reform to include the material, physical and the subjective, and accordingly the organisation of MST communities is multidimensional. It involves the development of agricultural production organised around community need and sustainability, the self-organisation of communities to ensure their social reproduction, and the development and honouring of cultural and spiritual traditions. At the heart of this are practices of autonomous education based around concepts such as *pedagogia da terra* (pedagogy of the land) and *educação do campo* (countryside education). As Pingas describes, this is:

[an] education of the subject people of the countryside; an education associated with emotions, symbols, ways of life, struggle, resistance, dreams, an education associated with an impossible dignified life within the contours of a capitalist society. (de Almeida *et al.*, 2008: 103)

Building on Freirian heritages and liberation theologies, the MST views these practices as being deeply embedded in the everyday realities and experiences of subaltern communities. As the MST describes:

Through our work we produce knowledges; we develop capabilities and forms of consciousness. In itself work has a pedagogical potential, and the school can develop this potentiality, as it encourages people to become

aware of its connections with other dimensions of human life; its culture, values, political positions. (Caderno do MST, 1991: 8-9)

Through their continuous political struggle and mobilisation the MST has achieved state recognition of this strategy of transformatory education. In 1998 the Programa Nacional de Educação na Reforma Agrária (PRONERA, National Education Program of Agrarian Reform) was created. This aims to 'strengthen education for agrarian reform in the MST communities, utilising methodologies that are specific to the countryside that will contribute to sustainable rural development in Brazil' (Pontes-Furtado, 2003: 200). *Educação do campo* is based on a critique of traditional rural education in which rural communities are presented as ignorant and underdeveloped and in which the curriculum is developed in abstract terms and lacking a relationship to their everyday needs, struggles and concerns. As de Sousa *et al.* describe:

The rural school was based on an idea of the social backwardness and precarity of those of the countryside [...] The historical representation of those in the countryside was that 'to work with the land letters are not really necessary'. (de Souza *et al.*, 2008: 47)

Conversely, for the MST *educação do campo* is a means of developing a rural education *in* and *for* the rural population. It is therefore connected to the everyday realities of communities and values their knowledges and contributions to Brazilian society and history. Through educational praxis they develop in practice a critique of the knowing subject of colonial-capitalism and an embrace of the placed knowledges of communities in struggle. This pedagogical practice is embedded in a self-liberatory philosophy which links education with life, politicises pedagogy and is embedded in an ethics of care and commitment of and for the oppressed (Gonçalves-Fernandes *et al.*, 2008).

Educação do campo cannot be realised within the confines of capitalist agriculture and schooling (Caldart, 2000: 19). It instead necessitates the development of 'other schools' and 'other teachers' that work against and beyond the traditional and now neoliberalised schooling system. Thus the MST has developed their own schooling network and teacher-training programmes autonomous from the dominant formal education system. *Educação do campo* is therefore a central site of struggle over societal projects and the possibilities of self-organised collective liberation.

Two projects in Ceará involved the development of innovative curricula which challenge the contours of neoliberal education and political-economy: an adult primary-level programme and a teacher-training course in *educação do campo*. These involved a participatory process of curriculum development which included movement representatives and educators dialoguing with a group of popular educators from the State University of Ceará. The projects were developed with a number of guiding principles underpinned by the social and ethical commitments to an emancipatory education. These included: the valorisation of multiple knowledges, including those of rural communities; the development of methods which enable knowledge dialogue; the fostering of responsibility and commitment to life, social and human ethics; the recovery of the cultures and identities of social movements in the countryside; and the collective construction of knowledge to generate transformation of oppressive situations (de Souza *et al.*, 2008: 49). As Sandra Gadelha, one of the coordinators of the teacher-training course, explained to me in April 2010, the group of educators and MST representatives met for days to discuss the basic contours of the curriculum. This included the conceptual orientations that would underpin different segments of the course. These projects demonstrate a commitment

to a building of emancipatory pedagogical practices which foster the conditions of the self-liberation of the popular classes (Pontes-Furtado, 2003).

For example, one segment of the curriculum discusses the historical and theoretical aspects of the sociology of education including: the relationship between education and society; the role of education in transformation; a sociological analysis of schooling; the relationship between education and the state; the social relationships between the countryside and the city; and the social and political organisation of MST communities and the role of education in agrarian reform. The contents of the course combined classical texts in critical sociology of education, Brazilian subaltern thinkers' conceptualisation of the sociology of education, MST texts and reflections and the participants' own experiences in relation to the themes discussed. The methodology of the course combines theory and practice and aims to train educators in a transformatory pedagogy committed to the liberation and democratisation of Brazilian society (E. Mendes, personal communication, 2013).

The curriculum is organised around a dialogue of knowledges in which there is commitment to listening to the other and embracing multiple knowledges, including self/collective knowledges of participants. Affective pedagogies embedded in imagination and solidarity bring dignity to participants' lives and histories of struggles, it develops their organisational capacities, and deepens their political commitments and connections between different MST communities and other communities in struggles. Such processes involve the resignification of subjects and the development of educators trained in the distinct pedagogical commitments of *pedagogia da terra* and *educação do campo*.

The courses create another slower temporality for programme participants (who are also militants in the MST) from that of the constant demands of political organising, social reproduction and collective production. This helps to foster spaces of reflection and processes of systematisation in relation to everyday life and its relationship with broader social, economic and political dynamics. The course also creates multiple learning spaces which stretch the narrow definition of schooling beyond its association with classrooms separate from everyday life, reconnecting learning with practice and struggle. As Fonseca *et al.* describe:

The school [...] organises educational processes through their reconciliation with everyday life. Thus, it is necessary to find other spaces, outside of the class room. As spaces of construction, reflection and learning [...] Social movements create other spaces, outside of the school, as spaces of potential learning; struggles, marches, occupations, experiences of cooperative production in the countryside and the city which foster relationships of solidarity. (Fonseca *et al.*, 2008: 64)

Multiple pedagogies are developed that engage not only with the conceptual but with the spiritual, symbolic and the embodied realities of communities' struggles and histories. Thus there is a use of poetry, art and theatre, including the recovery of histories of struggles and dignity of communities and involves *mística*— an artistic/cultural practice that opens and closes MST events such as workshops, meetings, occupations and marches. It can take the form of poetry, a re-enactment of popular struggle and history, dance, song and it often ends with all participants touching each other by holding hands or through a collective embrace. *Mística* thus involves pedagogies of the body in which new intimacies and levels of trust are developed between participants in their embodied enactment of their histories of struggle.

For the popular educators involved in the projects this has created a radicalisation of university praxis by embedding it in the logics of subaltern struggle. Educators have had to organise collectively to defend these institutional spaces of possibility and their relationships with the MST. They have become the border-thinkers who bridge the university and the movement creating practices which challenge the neoliberal contours of the former and help to foster the emancipatory contours of the latter. Pedagogies of possibility such as these are conceptualised by many critical educators that I spoke with as being acts of revolutionary love. These practices however, demand extraordinary levels of commitment and energy and can result in burnout and exhaustion – and are seldom met with university accolades and rewards.

Internally, there are still many within the MST leadership who do not view radical education and pedagogical practice as being central to their emancipatory project. Thus there is uneven commitment to the training of MST educators which results in uneven patterns of mobilisation and commitment (Borges de Souza, Conceição Ferreira and Gritti, 2008: 119–120).

This ambiguous commitment to emancipatory education is compounded by the broader context of the government's ambivalent commitments to PRONERA, its continuing commitment to agri-business, the slow pace of settlement legalisation and the resulting failure to redistribute land. As Borges de Souza explains:

Slowness in processes of disappropriation and the lack of land conquest for community production also help to explain the wavering commitment of educators and educatees. This wavering is particularly acute in those who do not realise that these conquests are often not realised immediately; that this is a slow process [...] Such understandings make it difficult to advance a process of critical reflection embedded in praxis. (Borges de Souza, Conceição Ferreira and Gritti, 2008: 122)

Thus much of the political energy of the movement is taken up in these more palpable struggles with transnational capital and local government. And unlike the pedagogical conceptualisations and practices of the Escuela (to be discussed next) the 'private' and gendered relationships of power have taken a secondary role in the development of *educação do campo*. Thus, gendered divisions of labour within settlements result in women taking on fewer leadership roles, and conventional modes predominating in which women occupy the domestic sphere while men are associated with the public sphere and world of work. Often the more pernicious gendered oppressions and exclusions characteristic of patriarchal capitalist-coloniality in Brazil also remain unproblematised and depoliticised in pedagogy and practice.

The Escuela: Decolonising Pedagogies of Everyday Life

By building on the lived knowledges and experiences of participants, the Escuela nurture new pedagogical practices that enable a collective and critical reading of the world and women's experiences of oppression, violence and displacement. Here the pedagogical process is organised in a four-month diploma course. The course is divided into four one-month parts. The first begins the dialogue of knowledge and is a time for sharing participants' experiences and knowledge, thus grounding one another in the histories and pathways of their lives. As Bermúdez (author interview, 2012) explains:

So, for example if a woman has learned to make recipes with which she had fed her family well and cheaply, the group makes it, tastes it, shares similar experiences. We then link this experience of making the recipe to the conditions of her life and questions such as food sovereignty. We read texts, watch videos about food sovereignty movements in Colombia and other places. We also talk about the neoliberal crisis and how this increases the weight of labour on the shoulders of women. We explore alternative forms of economy such as the feminist economy. The second month moves into a structured exploration of key thematic led by activists and popular educators such as the history of women's human rights, the nonviolence movement, and concepts such as gender, sexuality, diversity and ethnicity. The third month is spent exploring key thematic that have emerged out of the group learning process, such as domestic violence and its link to state violence; or the idea that the personal is political. The deepening of the dialogue of knowledges creates the groundwork for the final month in which the group asks themselves – how do we translate these learnings and experiences to the public sphere? With what aesthetics, which message and which practices do we want to share with our communities and broader society? (Bermúdez, 2013)

In the pedagogical work of the Escuela some of the most complex pedagogies of crossing between self/other and cosmos are developed. These work through the erotic, which, as Audre Lorde (1989: 1) describes, 'lies in a deeply female and spiritual plane, firmly rooted in the power of our unexpressed or unrecognized feeling'. It is a deep knowing or joy which forms the basis for an articulation of voice and political subjectivity which once experienced, cannot be forgotten and reburied. Their development of pedagogies that include ritual, the senses, dancing, story-telling, singing, combined with more traditional textual forms of knowledge, builds the conditions for participants' reoccupation of the world and enhances their ability to challenge and transform conditions of multiple oppression (Bermúdez, 2013).

Collective processes of story-telling create links of solidarity and enable monologues of isolation to become dialogues of understanding, voice and pleasure. As Pilar Restrepo, one of the participants in the Colectivo, explains 'Telling stories is a way of reconstructing reality, and sometimes, it also enables the healing of deep wounds' (author interview, 2010). Such pedagogical multidimensionality – affective, cultural, psychological, embodied, physical and intellectual – has the potential to transform the multidimensional nature of gendered (and other) oppressions.

In the telling of their stories, these women (as Norma describes) 'resignify' themselves and their communities in which those shamed, silenced and delegitimised become dignified co-creators of their histories, communities and selves. Such resignification occurs in the safe and intimate space of the first three months during which women build the conditions together for their public emergence as feminist political subjects. Their public appearance as political subjects also resignifies the public and the political away from a patriarchal capitalist logic of power-over and control of the other and towards an understanding and practice of power-within and power-with. Here the public becomes a space of commonality and recognition. It also becomes a practice of recreating spaces and reclaiming of women's power.

An example of such resignification is a ritual held on the Día de las Velitas (Candle Day, December 7th) which is a Catholic celebration of the Virgin Mary. Women

from La Escuela attempt to disrupt and dislocate the gendered power relationships and subjectivities fostered by dominant forms of Catholicism by creating a ritual space of public encounter between female survivors of the war, the mothers of those disappeared and murdered, and also those kidnapped by the guerrillas. Women flood into a public square in central Cali with candles and as they do this they make a poetic declaration (N. Bermudez, personal communication, 2013) in which they create a circle of love and solidarity around these women survivors.

Such public pedagogies open the possibility of a reoccupation of their bodies and selves. Here conservative articulations of motherhood, in which the mother is represented as the pure, virginal and passive carer of others, are disrupted as motherhood and mothering become spaces of dignity, voice and resistance. In its place flourish transgressive relationships with the self, others and the world, both in public and in private, as women and mothers come to value their agency and social power.

In the Colombian context of militarised neoliberalism the risks associated with this kind of emancipatory pedagogical practice are great, including death threats, disappearance and assassination. Thus the process of collectively educating the fear created by these conditions has been pivotal in nurturing the courage to emerge as feminist political subjects. Additionally, as in the case of the MST, the popular educators who dedicate their time and energies to such emancipatory education often exist in precarious labour conditions of contract work and/or deteriorating working conditions as the logics of neoliberalism colonise public education. In this 'feminisation of resistance' (Motta, 2013) women educators and activists often carry the triple burden of precarious labour, social reproduction and political work. Pedagogies of care and the politicisation of the private remain a central element of the Escuela's pedagogical practice in which education is reconnected to life and practices of collective reflection enter everyday realities of struggle and transformation. Yet, as Norma reminds us, 'always with laughter and poetry do we politicise and transform our present conditions (interview with N. Bermudez, 10 April, 2012)'.

However, this runs the risk of reproducing the feminised subjectivities of capitalism in which women carry the burden of care for their community but not for themselves (see Motta, 2013). Additionally, the creation of the conditions of voice and the emergence of new feminised popular subjects does not of necessity decentre dominant forms of power. Often these women subjects remain on the margins of political power and theoretical production. Nevertheless, without these pedagogical processes of possibility and reoccupation of subjectivity, spatiality and sociability, new emancipatory politics would remain unthinkable.

Conclusion

The pedagogical-political practices and projects of the MST and Escuela open the horizons of emancipatory possibility. They involve informal experiential learning and unlearning of the oppressor's logics as they interpolate subjectivities and social relationships. In these processes there is a resignification of the subject, community, spatiality and the public which enables the emergence of the previously excluded and misnamed as the emancipatory subjects of our times.

Formal educational practices foster the creation of emancipatory educator-subjectivities. Educators reclaim their intellectual and political capacities, are ethically committed to developing a liberatory pedagogy that is embedded in the concrete needs

and knowledges of oppressed communities, and view their practice as a revolutionary act of love. For the educators involved in such a reimagining of education their commitments and struggles are risky and in the conditions of neoliberalised labour prove emotionally and physically draining. The educators thus require courage and daring and involve the production of other-educator subjectivities to those of the commodified and disciplined neoliberal teacher.

Such pedagogical political practices also involve commitment to the forging of 'other' schools and educational spaces. Of necessity, these transgress the institutionalised conceptualisation of the school as being separate from life and instead embed educational practice in multiple spaces: the community, the workplace, the co-operative, the home, the self. Curricula are co-constructed on the basis of multiple knowledges and embedded in the experiences and struggles of subaltern communities. The spaces created in, against and beyond the classroom are dialogical and rupture the monological and authoritarian logics of commodified education. They shift relationships of competition, hierarchy and instrumentalisation into those of solidarity, care and commitment. They thus open spaces for the production of our worlds, selves and communities differently through practices that move us beyond the cosmology of capitalist-coloniality and yet do not seek to re-enclose these practices in an alternative monological practice of life.

The pedagogies developed by the MST and Escuela in differing ways and with different intensities are decolonising in that they embrace multiple forms of knowledge and work through the affective, spiritual, embodied, cultural, oral, historical and cognitive. These pedagogical practices enact the collective construction of multiple readings of the world in which oppressed communities speak in multiple tongues, rethinking and creating what it means to speak, to write, to theorise and to be. As Anzaldúa (2007: 81) describes in relation to her experience – and eminently applicable here: 'I will no longer be made to feel ashamed of existing; I will have my voice ... I will have my serpent's tongue– my woman's voice'.

These practices enact a decentring and unlearning of dominant literacies and embrace different and multiple epistemological grounds from which to transgress capitalism and become 'other' in multiple post-capitalist ways. In this transgression they reimagine and recreate the meaning and practice of twenty-first century emancipation.

References

- Anzaldúa, G. (1987) *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. Aunt Lute Books: San Francisco.
- Anzaldúa, G. (2007) *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. Aunt Lute Books: San Francisco.
- Barreira, C. and De Paula, L. A. M. (1998) 'Os assentamentos rurais no Ceará uma experiência a ser seguida?' in *Os assentamentos de reforma agrária no Brasil*. Brasília: UnB.
- Bermúdez, L. N. (2013) 'Cali's Women in Collective Crossing through Three Worlds: Popular Education, Feminisms and Nonviolence for the Expansion of the Present, Memory and Nurturing of Life' in S. C. Motta and M. Cole (eds.) *Education and Social Change in Latin America*. Palgrave Macmillan: New York and London, 239–260.
- Borg, C. and Mayo, P. (2007) *Public Intellectuals, Radical Democracy and Social Movements: A Book of Interviews*. Peter Lang International Academic Publishers: New York.
- Borges de Souza, A., Conceição Ferreira, da C. and Gritti, S. M. (2008) 'Formação de educadores de EJA: possibilidades de formação humana' in C. L. Bezerra Machado, C. S. Soares Campos and C. Paludo (eds.) *Teoria e prática da educação do campo: análises de experiências*. MDA: Brasília, 112–123.

- Caderno do, MST. (1999) 'A Avaliação da concepção de cooperação agrícola do MST,' Caderno de Cooperação Agrícola no. 8, São Paulo.
- Caldart, R. S. (2000) *Pedagogia do Movimento Sem Terra: escola é aís do que escola*. Petrópolis: Vozes.
- Caldart, R. S., Pereira, I., Alentejano, B. and Frigotto, G. (2012) *Dicionário da educação do campo*. Expressão Popular: Rio de Janeiro.
- Cendales, L., Mejía, M. R. and Muñoz, M. J. (eds.) (2013) *Entretreijos de la educación popular en Colombia*. Ediciones desde Abajo: Bogota.
- Conte, I. I. (2006) *A educação como processo de formação de sujeitos*. ITERRA/UERGS: Veranópolis.
- Cotos, A. G. (2013) 'Formar en investigación desde la perspectiva de la educación popular' in L. Cendales, M. R. Mejía and J. M. Muñoz (eds.) *Entretreijos de la educación popular en Colombia*. Ediciones desde Abajo: Bogota, 99–130.
- de Almeida, L. P., Pingas, M. R., Pinto, P. E. and Knijnik, G. (2008) 'Discussindo a cultura camponesa no processo de ensino-aprendizagem em três escolas do sul do Brasil' in C. L. Bezerra Machado, C. S. Soares Campos and C. Paludo (eds.) *Teoria e prática da educação do campo: análises de experiências*. MDA: Brasília, 100–109.
- de Carvalho, S. M. G. (2006) *Educação do campo: prônera, uma política pública em construção*. Tese (Doutorado em Educação). Programa de Pós-Graduação em Educação Brasileira da Universidade Federal do Ceará, Fortaleza.
- de Carvalho, S. M. G. and Mendes, E. (2011) 'The University and the Landless Movement in Brazil: The Experience of Collective Knowledge Construction Through Educational Projects in Rural Areas' in S. C. Motta and A. G. Nilsen (eds.) *Social Movements in the Global South*. Palgrave Macmillan: London, 131–149.
- de Souza, E. J., Ferreira de Andrade, E., Mendes de Lima, G. A. and Bezerra Machado, C. L. (2008) 'Limites e possibilidades: um olhar sobre o projeto político pedagógico na perspectiva da educação do campo' in C. L. Bezerra-Machado, C. S. Soares-Campos and C. Paludo (eds.) *Teoria e prática da educação do campo: análises de experiências*. MDA: Brasília, 44–58.
- Diniz, A. S. and Gilbert, B. (2013) 'Socialist Values and Cooperation in Brazil's Landless Rural Workers' Movement: Reinventing the Lefts from Below'. *Latin America Perspectives* 40(4): 19–34.
- Feitosa, M. D. A. (2002) *Participação: ainda uma trilha na reforma agrária do Ceará: estudo de caso no Assentamento Santa Bárbara*. Dissertação (Mestrado em Educação Brasileira) – Programa de Pós-Graduação stricto sensu em Educação, Universidade Federal do Ceará, Fortaleza.
- Fonseca, da C., de Souza, L., Santin, L. M., Rodrigues, T. M., et al. (2008) 'A organização do processo educativo' in C. L. Bezerra Machado, C. S. Soares Campos and C. Paludo (eds.) *Teoria e prática da educação do campo: análises de experiências*. MDA: Brasília, 58–69.
- Freire, P. (2000) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Bloomsbury Academic: London.
- Gutiérrez, R. (2014) 'Beyond the "Capacity to Veto": Reflections from Latin America on the Production and Reproduction of the Common'. *South Atlantic Quarterly* 113(2): 259–270.
- Gonçalves-Fernandes, A., et al. (2008) 'A Pedagogia e as práticas educativas na educação do campo'. in C. L. Bezerra Machado, C. S. Soares Campos, and C. Paludo (eds.) *Teoria e prática da educação do campo: Análises de experiências*. MDA: Brasília, 26–43.
- Kane, L. (2000) 'Popular Education and the Landless People's Movement in Brazil (MST)'. *Studies in the Education of Adults* 32(1): 36–50.
- Lorde, A. (1989) *Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power*. [WWW document]. URL <http://www.womenstemple.com/EroticAsPower-article.html> [accessed 3 April 2013].
- Lugones, M. (2010) 'Towards a Decolonial Feminism'. *Hypathia* 25(4): 742–770.
- McCowan, T. (2009) 'Towards an Understanding of the Means–Ends Relationship in Citizenship Education'. *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 41(3): 321–342.

- Mignolo, W. D. (2009) 'Epistemic Disobedience, Independent Thought and De-Colonial Freedom'. *Theory, Culture and Society* 26(7): 1–23.
- Motta, S. (2011) 'Notes Towards Prefigurative Epistemologies' in S. C. Motta and A. Gunvald Nilsen (eds.) *Social Movements in the Global South Dispossession, Development and Resistance*. Palgrave MacMillan: Houndmills, 178–199.
- Motta, S. C. (2013) '"We are the Ones We Have Been Waiting for": The Feminisation of Resistance in Venezuela'. *Latin American Perspectives* 40(4): 35–54.
- Motta, S. C. (2015) 'Becoming Woman: On Exile and Belonging to the Borderlands' in Z. Arashiro and M. Barahona (eds.) *Our Voices. Women in Academia Crossing North-South Borders*. Lexington Books: Maryland.
- Motta, S. C. and Cole, M. (2014) *21st Century Socialism in Latin America: The Role of Radical Education*. Palgrave Macmillan: London & New York.
- Motta, S. C. and Esteves, A. M. (2014) 'Reinventing Emancipation in the 21st Century: The Pedagogical Practices of Social Movements'. *Interface* 6(1): 1–29.
- Neves, D. P. (1997) *Assentamento rural: reforma agrária em migalhas*. EDUFF: Niterói.
- Pontes-Furtado, E. D. (2003) 'A educação de jovens e adultos no campo: uma análise a luz do PRONERO' in K. S. Lopes de Matos (ed.) *Movimentos sociais, educação popular e escola: a favour da diversidade*. Editora UFC: Fortaleza, 198–211.
- Tarlau, R. (2013) 'Coproducing Rural Public Schools in Brazil: Contestation, Clientelism, and the Landless Workers' Movement'. *Politics and Society* 41(3): 395–424.
- Vergara-Camus, L. (2009) 'Autonomous Rural Communities, the State, and Electoral Politics'. *Latin American Perspectives* 36(4): 178–191.
- Wolford, W. (2010) 'Participatory Democracy by Default: Land Reform, Social Movements and the State in Brazil'. *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 37(1): 91–109.

Interviews

- Bermudez, Norma (2012) Activist-Scholar, La Escuela, 10 April, Nottingham.
- Gadelha, Sandra (2010) MST and University Educator, 14 April, Fortaleza.
- Restrepo, Pilar (2010) Co-founder of La Mascara Feminist Theatre and of el Colectivo, 18 December, Cali.