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Seguimos Luchando: Women Educators' Trajectories in Social Movement Based Popular Education Projects in Buenos Aires, Argentina

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***Seguimos Luchando: Women Educators' Trajectories in Social Movement Based
Popular Education Projects in Buenos Aires, Argentina***

A Dissertation Presented

by

JENNIFER LEE O'DONNELL

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

February 2017

College of Education
Department of Teacher Education and Curriculum Studies
Language, Literacy and Culture Program

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Education Projects in Buenos Aires, Argentina

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There once was a woodcutter who worked very hard for a forestry company doing many different jobs. One day he was fired without being given a reason. He did not know what to do, whether to stay, whether to sell everything and move to the big city to try something new. He was feeling anxious and lost.

It also happened to be that those with whom he had worked with were also experiencing similar circumstances, but they began to organize their work in a cooperative way. The first to organize were the loggers union. As word got around, more and more people became interested, started asking questions, and were encouraged to join.

During a Q&A session, one of the *compañeros* in the loggers union explained to the woodcutter how their cooperative worked. “We work and however much we work is how much we earn. Nobody is going to take your job. If you only work a little bit, you will earn a little bit. If you work a lot, you will earn a lot. If we do well, everyone does well, and if we do something wrong, it is everyone who has done something wrong.” At first the woodcutter did not quite know what to make of what he was talking about, but eventually it started to sink in and he decided to join.

First day going out the woodcutter cut 30 trees. He went home thrilled because 30 trees in a day was a lot. Not long after he realized he actually preferred to work this way – no one was watching over him and checking if he were doing things right or wrong. He gave it a lot of thought and wanted to tell his wife how happy he felt. You see, she also worked hard and so they began to take account of how much she made and how much he made, and for the first time they began to dream about their future.

The second week began with enthusiasm, but the woodcutter only cut 18 trees. He could not explain this decline and decided it must be that he was not taking care of himself enough. He talked it over with his wife, “I think if I get a little rest, because I was so exhausted after that first week, if I start eating healthier foods, maybe then my batteries will be charged and I can return to cutting 30 trees.”

His wife said, “I will ask my mother and father to help us take care of the kids at night, do not worry, so you can get more rest.” They tried to eat healthy that week – fruits, vegetables, proteins, all of those things.

When the third week ended though the woodcutter had only cut *nine* trees. He was a bit depressed. He asked himself, “Why? I rested, I ate well, my wife and I organized the responsibilities to make things easier for us, and it still is not turning out well. *Why am I failing?!*”

His *compañeros* could see his depression and asked him, “What’s wrong?”

The woodcutter replied, “I can’t believe how many trees I cut when I started, when I started I cut 30 trees the first week! Then 18. Now only nine. You must think I’m being lazy, that I’m not working hard enough.”

His *compañeros* told him to relax, that they understood the situation. They asked, “tell us one thing, *when was the last time you sharpened your ax?*”

It turned out that the woodsman had forgotten that little detail. Many times we do things to share experiences, to keep us thinking, that bring us together. Value those things. But more importantly, this workshop was designed to help us all *sharpen our axes with others*. I did not come here to tell you how you sharpen your ax. I came to sharpen my ax too. But when you have a sharp ax, go to work. Continue doing what we do. Do it at the bus stop if you can’t do it in a school. Build something, seek out and meet with others. But let’s not forget that we also have to sharpen our axes and use them, *we also need to cut*. (Hortencia, Large Group, August 17, 2013)

I love this story of the woodcutter that Hortencia, one of the participants later introduced in this study, told a group of soon to be popular educators in training one mid-afternoon in August of 2013. I love the tale not only because of the symbolic meaning it holds in the work educators in Buenos Aires are doing in popular schools, but because it has come to reflect so much of what the writing of this dissertation has meant to me. Like the woodcutter in the loggers union, this work was made possible by cooperative effort – by the mentorship, love, friendly competition, and community sustained through intensive years studying social issues in education. There are many people with whom I have shared deeply moving experiences with; who have kept me thinking, analyzing, and writing; who have made me realize that there is significant value and reward in doing the work that we are doing as researchers, educators, anthropologists, and justice activists.

So to those who have helped me sharpen my ax over the years, I am profoundly grateful to – Dr. Laura Valdiviezo for your mentorship; Dr. Denise Ives for guiding me through my first years of doctoral study; Dr. Sangeeta Kamat, Dr. Claudio Moreira, Dr. Kysa Nygreen, and Dr. Stephen Sadlier for moving both me and my work in new directions; UMASS faculty members Dr. Sonia Alvarez and Dr. Barbara Cruikshank for courses that facilitated ideas presented in this project; and Dr. Max Page and Dr. Eve Weinberg for a life changing summer in Buenos Aires.

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It is because of your support that

my ax is sharpened

I am ready to go to work

to continue doing what we do

I am ready to cut

ABSTRACT

SEGUIMOS LUCHANDO: WOMEN EDUCATORS' TRAJECTORIES IN SOCIAL
MOVEMENT BASED POPULAR EDUCATION PROJECTS IN BUENOS AIRES,
ARGENTINA

FEBRUARY 2017

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Through a multisite ethnographic investigation, I provide a look at the vision and practices of women teaching in the popular education sector, particularly those who impact social, economic, and political public spaces in Buenos Aires, Argentina. As an alternative to Freirean based education theory, which may overshadow the collective work of women in popular projects, this work highlights women's commitments to education that contests neoliberal reform, transforming not only curriculum and pedagogies, social practices, and discourses inside classrooms, but the communities where they live as well.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Since the 1960s and 1970s, Latin American social movements have become popular forums for women throughout the region to build solidarity amongst other women (Alvarez, 2003). Contesting dominant norms of femininity and gendered expectations in their home lives and careers, women working within these spaces have been particularly influential in redefining democracy and citizenship through human rights organizing, public and private *encuentros* or gatherings, ethics committees, and dialogues centered on equality and cultural difference (Ball, Fischman, & Gvirtz, 2003; Dagnino, 1998; Friedman, 2009; Jara, 2010; Sutton, 2010).

As the 1980s approached, women's movements became a means to challenge authoritarian regimes throughout the region, and later played a crucial role in establishing a distinct Latin American feminism (Alvarez, et al., 2014). Though principally focused on issues germane to class and labor, this distinction embraced the multiple diversities that transformed women's movements in the region by way of contributions from Indigenous, African, lesbian, and transgender women of all parts of the Americas and Caribbean (Phillips & Cole, 2009).

In recent years women have joined together in social movements to deliberate on grassroots strategies to combat the negative effects of neoliberal globalization in general, as well as its devastating impact on gendered lives in particular. In these spaces, women have been making strategic use of democratic machineries and diverse community settings to broaden how feminism for social change is possible; their solidarity has

allowed social movements and the government a fluid, multilayered relationship that mobilizes women across jurisdictions and nations, as well as keeps a gendered perspective on states' agenda (Phillips & Cole, 2009).

Women teaching in the popular education sector in Argentine social movements have become one of the most militant sectors of society as a result of declining labor conditions and threatened income security (Murillo & Ronconi, 2004). Their efforts have been particularly instrumental in redefining the education field through the building of popular power among disadvantaged groups; fostering ties among civil, state, and political sectors; and constructing knowledge and developing skills in diverse learning communities. However this may be, their contributions have often been overshadowed or even silenced by similar ideas held in the more revolutionary centered ideologies of political activist and educator Paulo Freire (1985, 1990, 1998), whose theories of popular education developed at roughly the same time as the second-wave feminist movement (Boler, 1999). Based in Marx' assumptions about man, freedom, and progress, his ideas are often privileged over the preconceived "naïve" or "raw emotions" associated with women's collectives (Bowers, 1987).

Feminist education scholars (Brady, 1994; Ellsworth, 1992; Gore, 1993; hooks, 1994; Lather, 2001; Stromquist, 1998; Weiler, 1991) continue to critique the work inspired by Freirean pedagogy (Allman, 2001; Darder, 2002; Groves, 2011; Mayo, 2013; McLaren & Lankshear, 1994; McLaren, 1998; Richards, Thomas, & Nain, 2001; Schugurensky, 2011) for its lack of consideration of issues particularly relevant to women – laws, policies, customs, and institutions which, if considered, may increase their participation in practices that could secure the social, economic, and political

equality of the sexes (Adichie, 2014). This dissertation builds upon these critiques to showcase Argentinean women educators' social, political, and personal commitments to popular education as an alternative to neoliberal reform, and to demonstrate the ways in which they help transform not only curriculum and pedagogies, social practices and discourses inside classrooms, but the communities where they live as well.

Through a multisite ethnographic investigation of women teaching in the popular education sector and their pedagogies and responses to neoliberal reform, this dissertation answers the following questions: 1) What impacts women teaching in the popular education sector at different stages of their participation in popular education projects? 2) What shared ethos, guiding beliefs, or ideals characterize women teaching in the popular education sector within these different stages? 3) What are the strategies used by these educators to practice these shared ethos, guiding beliefs, or ideals? 4) How are women teaching in the popular education sector then connected or disconnected to these spaces?

Neoliberalism and Resistance in Argentina

In order to give context to the chapters that follow, I begin with a brief introduction to Argentina's recent history with neoliberalism that swept through the country in the 1980s and 1990s, a fragile moment in the nation's history, initially as a globally sponsored loan-based structural adjustment program. The country was healing from the military dictatorship that took control of the country from 1976-1981 and unleashed horrors in what came to be known as *The Dirty War* – when in reality it was state sponsored terrorism that included the kidnapping, torture, and death of over 30,000 Argentinean leftists including teachers, professors, students, journalists, activists, artists, and their supporters (Lewis, 2002). As a result of the government's excessive debts

acquired during this time, Argentina's path to democratization included new economic policies piloted by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) that offered the distraught country financial backing by way of a classic, market-based model designed to transform the active role of the welfare state.

The years that followed were times of economic and political turmoil, de-industrialization, the privatization of national industries, mass unemployment, frozen bank accounts, a valueless *peso*, and the obliteration of welfare programs once sponsored by the federal government. Factories closed as banks dissolved, and poverty rates rose from 18.2 to 42.3 percent of households. Austerity measures enacted by presidents Carlos Menem (1989-1999) and Fernando de la Rúa (1999-2001) resulted in policies that all but devastated the country's already fragile public institutions (Ball, Fischman, & Gvirtz, 2003).

As a nation undergoing severe crisis, Argentina sunk deeper into recession, taking public education with it (Jaramillo, McLaren, & Lazaro, 2011). Mediated by neoliberal market strategies and not by the social realities of students' and teachers' needs, consumer based rhetoric of choice, accountability, and quality reduced school autonomy and enabled private sectors to acquire greater control over the daily run of public school reform. Education policies during this time did not consider the lack of available resources in economically disadvantaged communities and did not take into account the management necessary to shoulder systemic change. As a remedy, federal education laws reduced teachers' salaries, cut classroom supplies and, disinterested in popular communities as pedagogical subjects, eradicated services geared toward supporting this segment of the population (Schugurensky, 2003).

In spite of the twelve year reign of Argentina's recent populist government (2003-2015), and Latin America's overall political turn to the left (Escobar, 2010), the country still suffers the aftermath of neoliberal education policies. Social exclusion and school dropout rates have increased in the past decades (Toubes & Santos, 2006), and many of Argentina's students find themselves at "educational risk" (Sirvent & Llosa, 1998). Recently, programs like *Adultos 2000* (Adults 2000), *Programa Deserción Cero* (Zero Desertion Plan), and *Progresar* (Progress) have been developed by the Ministry of Education to counter this dire outlook. Designed for youth and adults to complete their education, these programs offer flexible course schedules, mentoring, financial aid, and child care for low-income families.

Many educators throughout the country believe, however, that these state-sponsored programs are still flavored with neoliberal reform's disjointed solutions that do not grasp the specific needs of working class and poor students. As a result, educators with ties to social movements have taken action, with initiatives that combine the needs of the individual with the collective necessities of popular communities (Kane, 2012). Through partnership formation – what Alvarez, Dagnino, and Escobar (1998) term *webs* of heterogeneous ties between actors of civil, state, and political society – popular educators working within social movements have been instrumental in redefining education throughout Argentina.

Seeking to transform the relationship between education, society, and politics, these popular educators draw heavily on Freire's utopian theories of learning, critical pedagogy, praxis, and activism in nontraditional learning environments. Counter to what Freire (1990) calls *banking methods*, where teachers deposit information into empty

student bodies, popular educators believe it is their job to promote problem-posing methods to students and foster dialogic and cooperative relationships in the classroom and community through practices that attend to the particular situations of those excluded by the social system (Hall, 2012).

One problem with Freire's brand of popular education however lies in his notions of revolution, liberation, and utopia. As Fetterman (1986) notes in his review of Freire's (1985) *The politics of education*, his work may be guised as another means of social control used to implement alternative social policy. Additionally, while a Freirean based approach to education may challenge unsubstantiated reform efforts, any prevailing model for social transformation may lack consideration of intersectional issues relevant to the needs and challenges of particular social groups (Bartlett, 2005; Lather, 2001).

Statement of the Problem

With that in mind, this ethnography is guided by feminist activists and scholars seeking to conduct deep, compassionate, politically conscious, and human rights based research that showcases women's voices and experiences, with the intent to disrupt the propensity to render education-based collective action from exclusively male perspectives. Though considerable theoretical and empirical research is being done on students and educators working within popular education projects, particularly those within Latin America championing universal literacy, economic empowerment, egalitarian relationships inside classrooms and communities (Austin, 2004; Dyrness, 2007; Fischman, 1998, Galvan, 2005, 2008; Jara, 2010; Jaramillo, McLaren, & Lazaro, 2011; Mayo, 2013; Murillo & Ronconi, 2004; Richards, Thomas, & Nain, 2001; Sirvent, 2006; Suarez, 2008; Villenas, 2012), few analyses offer an alternative means of

understanding existent and effective popular educator visions and practices outside Freire's framework. While some say Freire himself has been held to guru-status, believed to be able to offer universal fix-its to all the educational problems of our times (Furter, 1985) – few current literature is available that decenters the monopoly his legacy has had upon the field.

A Turn to Gender Specific Oppressions

I am a United States based scholar, researching education as it intersects with feminism and social movements in Latin American contexts since 2004, and specifically Argentina since moving here in 2011. During this time I have joined in multiple mobilizations to stop violence against women and femicide that has been endemic throughout the region in recent years; visited schools, memorial centers, and recuperated worker factories; taken part in teacher protests for recognition of their work in popular schools; and acted with militant dance groups performing in awareness of the trafficking of girls throughout the southern cone. Participating in these activities, I have learned of the often overlooked communal efforts made by women to rebuild civil society in the aftermath of Argentina's recent military dictatorship and subsequent economic crisis, and the substantial role they have played in conjuring initiatives and policies that have ultimately rewritten the political script throughout the country.

The universal goals of a utopic, Freirean focused pedagogy do not always address such specificities in women's lives, and may "not directly analyze the contradictions between conflicting oppressed groups or the ways in which a single individual can experience oppression in one sphere while being privileged or oppressive in another" (Weiler, 1991, p. 450). Insisting that the world is far too diverse and complex for one

overriding prescription for social transformation, feminist scholars have long contested that gender and race-specific oppression is often of secondary importance to issues pertaining to social class in popular projects, and that women in mixed male/female organizations such as schools, cooperatives, and unions are often underrepresented or, in cases where membership of women dominate that of men, not granted positions of leadership at all. To further illustrate this point, in her work on popular education in Chiapas, Mexico, Palencia (2003) accounts that when women were in mixed workshops or meetings with men, men acted “like patriarchs, redeemers, or the only ones with something important to say. Men often correct women when they speak. In this oppressive context, women often surrender to the men’s power” (p. 227).

This dissertation continues this line of inquiry by utilizing a *mujerista* or Latina feminist framework (see Anzaldúa, 1987; Cortina & San, 2006; Delgado, 2006; Dyreness, 2008; Flores & Garcia, 2006; Miller, 2008; Olmedo, 2003; Trinidad, 2015; Villenas, 2001) to explore women teaching in the popular education sector and their trajectories as teachers, community leaders, and activists in social movement based popular education projects in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Specifically, it centers in on the ways in which women teaching in the popular education sector use politicized classroom and community practices to impact and inspire the work they do – at the beginning, when they are in educator training workshops; in the middle, where they practice their politics and pedagogy in classrooms, community centers, and picket lines; and in the end, if and when they leave popular education projects to pursue other endeavors.

Methods

Freire championed local knowledges (Kirkendall, 2010) and thus a study of popular education would naturally make an easy bedfellow of traditional ethnographic methodology, as it too has always been concerned with the connection between people and place. But as time passes, it has become more and more restrictive to bind one's research to one specific locality. Bartlett and Vavrus (2014) explain that global forces continue to impact flows of people, goods, and ideas, crossing and interconnecting through dispersed locations. As such, contemporary ethnographic methodology should reject "clearly bounded research sites" (p. 134) in order to expand its reach across place and scale. As space is socially produced through interrelated interactions, intimacies, as well as through distinct trajectories that intersect (Lefebvre, 1991), the methods chosen for this investigation follow the customs of a multisite ethnographic study. A multisite ethnographic approach has allowed me to make sense of data from different participant perspectives in a multiplicity of popular education spaces, draw connections between varied translocal practices and readings from extant popular education literature, and thus formulate links to broader social and political contexts. It has also enabled me to study the convergences and divergences that arise in heterogeneous group settings, and to sift and sort through pieces of data to detect and interpret thematic categories, search for unions and junctions, inconsistencies and contradictions, in order to form a better understanding of the shared culture among my participants.

Such knowledge stems from the following sources of data collected in various sites in the city and province of Buenos Aires, Argentina: 1) in-depth interviews with women in the popular education sector of diverse social, economic, and political

backgrounds, at different stages in their careers as educators and/or activists; 2) focus groups with women teaching or training to teach in the popular education sector; 3) ethnographic observations of popular education training workshops, classes, celebrations, and social movement mobilizations; and 4) examination of popular educator and activist made media (videos, pamphlets, signs, performances, social media pages, leaflets, fact sheets, t-shirts, stickers, buttons, posters, banners, speeches, chants, etc.).

Summary of Chapters

Within this introduction I have offered a brief overview of Argentina's recent social, economic, and political history, drawing attention to how this relates to the educational issues I will address throughout this dissertation – which stems from there being a lack of available ways of conceptualizing popular education in social movements outside of a Freirean lens, and a lack of consideration of the work women do as being on equal grounds with popular male educators. As the forthcoming chapters will show, the discourse on Freirean based pedagogy in academia and in social movement based education projects needs to be expanded to include the broad spectrum of people and issues relevant in today's society.

I begin chapter II with a review of the literature that provides an overview of Freire and Freirean based work in popular education, and present some of the arguments being made by feminist scholars in response to critical pedagogy. These scholars present a case against strictly class based education mobilization, calling for deeper analysis of the particular issues relevant to gender and race. Here I provide a review of empirical studies focused on women teaching in the popular education sector and activists throughout the world, some which utilize a Freirean lens while few others focus more on

alternative frameworks. Finally, to contextualize the practices of women teaching in the popular education sector working in social movement based popular education in Latin America today, I review work done by *mujerista* scholars and other literature which speaks to the social and historical context in Argentina that gave rise to women's participation in popular education projects.

Informed by a relatively new and underutilized research approach to education that merges queer theory with the philosophical work of Dutch philosopher Baruch Spinoza, this chapter concludes with an argument for employing affect theory as an alternative means of understanding women's popular pedagogy. Developed out of feminist and queer theoretical movements of the late 1990s, empirical studies exploring affect in popular movements offer a more embodied, holistic approach for considering women educators' practices in relation to neoliberal reform in popular education classrooms and communities.

Continuing on, chapter III details the research methods I have employed to answer my research questions, and brings awareness to the proposed benefits and contentions surrounding my chosen methodology – multisite ethnography. It also factors in data collection methods, analytical tools, and other strategies I drew from when conducting this study. I then provide a description of the research site and participant selection criteria, and conclude with a discussion of how I chose to analyze collected data.

To provide an understanding of the reasons behind why teachers come to popular education projects, chapter IV draws parallels between “the stateless” whom political theorist Hannah Arendt (1966) believes fall short because of their lack of a nation state,

and Buenos Aires teachers whose recent histories in light of neoliberal education policy have been marked by reiterated states of insecurity, discrimination, dependence, and lack of confidence in earning a salary, due to their migratory and marginalized status within the public school system. Arendt's disclosure of the stateless offers a framework for considering the social and political subjectivity of those who lack a place as part of a collective, and provides a better understanding of the trajectories leading Argentinean teachers to the public realm (Arendt, 1958), as well as the shared affects that bind them to popular education projects.

From their early career decisions, I then move on to explore mid-career women teaching in the popular education sector and their work in classrooms and communities. Here, in their curriculum practices, it is evident the significant role trauma has played in the educational experiences of popular students, its role in reproducing the status quo that enforces school and community divides, as well as social and class relations. Chapter V shows how women teaching in the popular education sector utilize "difficult knowledge" as a pedagogical opportunity to support students inside their classrooms and communities. Drawing from Britzman (1998), this chapter examines the ways in which women in this study made trauma pedagogical through "public grieving" (Butler, 2004) practices and curriculum entrenched in difficult knowledge. Here it manifests how women are resignifying emotional injury as strategic sites of social and political healing.

To build social and political coalitions and healing spaces amongst activists, educators, and students, the chapters I have accounted for thus far show how education movements organize affects to secure their collective projects. However beneficial mobilizing affects may be in rallying marginalized groups' political will, antagonisms

intersect in significant ways. While activists mobilize emotions and sentiments that coincide with a social movement's political objectives, that indeed might be antagonistic toward government and neoliberal reform, affects within social movements may be suppressed or managed in such a way that could produce or diminish group antagonism, or even operate in service of the neoliberal state. As social movement organizing continues to hold romantic appeal among education scholars, activists, and leftists alike, and it was popular education's utopian-centered approach to school reform that brought me to Buenos Aires to embark on ethnographic research in popular schools, like Nygreen (In Press), chapter VI focuses less on documenting successful popular education campaigns – as she notes, “literature on education-based organizing glosses over the ideological contradictions, tensions and dilemmas inherent in this work” (TBD) – and more on conflict and adversity within social change oriented groups. Here I implement Mouffe's (2005) thoughts on the political to consider the ways in which women teaching in the popular education sector experienced conflict and antagonism within education projects, through their relationship with other educators and with the government. It shows what can happen when market logic eclipses social movement activism; moreover, it reveals how negative dynamics can cause the collective process to deteriorate.

Finally, in light of new insights and understandings divulged through the research presented, chapter VII concludes with a summary and discussion of the implications of this dissertation for researchers, activists, and public educators, as well as further recommendations for additional research relevant to social activism and popular education.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature reviewed throughout this chapter can be situated within the more critical corners of theoretical and empirical studies on Freirean based popular education, leaving me still with several questions that drive my research agenda. As I have mentioned, research focused on popular education projects frequently utilize Freirean theories that some have criticized for its depiction of static representations of educators and activists whose hearts and passions never change, who are driven by an idealistic need for class liberation but by nothing more. Popular education literature rarely addresses inter-relational accords or contentions that may arise within heterogeneous groups of educators in relation to one another, to the communities they work in, and with the nation state. As such, there is a general lack of attention given toward what brings diverse groups of people to participate in popular education projects, what makes such practices worthwhile to them, as well as why they may personally and/or politically decide to abandon popular education projects all together.

In light of the severe oversaturation of knowledge on popular educators, activists, and leftist political heroes who are men, as well as the numerous social movements, popular schools, and community based organizations that bear the names of fallen male activists, questions remain – what are the experiences of women teaching in the popular education sector? What can we learn from them? I begin this review of research literature with a synopsis of the theoretical underpinnings of Freirean popular pedagogy, and then turn to feminist critiques that have arisen around education scholarship where

his influence is most palpable (Bowers, 1987; Brady, 1994; Gore, 1993; hooks, 1994; Ellsworth, 1992; Lather, 1998, 2001; Simon, 1987, 1992; Weiler, 1991).

Freire's Popular Pedagogy

Revolution and radicalism swept Latin America in the 1960s and 1970s, as it did through many parts of the world, led by leftist groups like *los Montoneros*, *Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo*, various trade unionists, journalists, artists, university students and professors. Popular education was emerging throughout Latin America during this time with a push for adult education that began with the Cuban revolution and its drive for universal literacy and community development. It continued on to Brazil with the liberating pedagogy of Paulo Freire who sought to “redefine the relationship between education and human beings, society and culture” (Jara, 2010, p. 291).

Freire developed the core of popular education philosophy while in Pernambuco, Brazil during this time. Though military dictatorships seized hold of many Latin American countries the decade that followed, forcing Freire into exile in Chile and cutting short the work that he was doing in Brazilian communities, he nevertheless managed to spread his philosophies to further reaches of the globe (Bartlett, 2005). Throughout his writing, lectures and workshops, Freire (1985) promoted the belief that schooling is never neutral territory as it always serves some interests while impeding others, that schooling can be used for emancipation just as it has been used for domination. As political actors, Freire (1985) insisted that educators “ask themselves for whom and on whose behalf they are working” (p. 80), and to teach people how to interpret and understand the social systems of oppression in hope that they may be able to make change to the situations they see unjust (Darder & Mirón, 2006). Training local

members of the education community to become leaders, for example, is crucial in Freirean pedagogy as guaranteeing that marginalized people “gain the skills and power to take their problems into their own hands” (Fink & Arnove, 1991, p.226).

This idea that the pedagogical and the political together are intrinsically linked is an essential attribute of Freire’s conception of popular education; based on horizontal learning methodologies that are participatory and democratic by nature, such an approach seeks to eliminate power imbalances between teachers, students, and community members (Darder, 2015). Freire (1994) believed building democratic relationships like this are essential to developing equal, respectful associations in the classroom and community where knowledge is co-constructed in learning spaces between students’ and teachers’ experiential worlds. Such knowledge “emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry men pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other” (Freire, 1990, p. 58).

Popular education’s curriculum is designed with *conscientização* or critical consciousness in mind, so that a deeper understanding of the social structures of society can ensue. This means that educational material presented in classrooms and community centers utilize learners’ knowledge, abilities, and experiences while also teaching new skills and information. Teaching that fosters *conscientização* through problem-posing education and dialogue, for Freire (1990), enables an encounter between individuals “mediated by the word, in order to name the world” (p. 76). Such “naming” of the world develops through analysis and dialogue focused on social, political, and economic contentions, and it is here where teachers and students develop the skills necessary for them to take political action and make social change (Macedo, 2006).

In summary, Freirean inspired teachers believe it is their role to support the knowledge of students by bringing local experiences to the classroom, that educators and students should learn together, but that this alone is not the end goal of education. Education has to go one step further toward organizing in pursuit of social and political awareness that is able to transform reality. This involves changing the logic that exists within education so that knowledge production becomes a quest for emancipation, a pursuit for freedom.

But is educating for freedom done so that educators can choose which classroom texts they will use? So they can choose how they will educate? So the students can choose? So they have the freedom to say what they believe? The following section addresses contestations surrounding what Freire means when he speaks of emancipation and freedom by asking *exactly who is he speaking of and for?*

Shelving Freire?

While Freirean thinkers consider *conscientização*, critical dialogue, democratic relationships between teachers and students as pertinent to progressive pedagogy, many feminist scholars question the relevance of a twentieth-century philosopher in the twenty-first century. Simpson & McMillan (2008) inquire, *is it time to shelve Paulo Freire?* Or is it possible to reinvent him in our unique circumstances? As they explain, some reject Freirean philosophy today because

...his theoretical orientation is shallow, e.g., his epistemology is suspect, his ethical theory is inadequate, and his social philosophy is unbalanced. Still others critique his views of teachers as cultural workers and administrators as strong leaders as being inconsistent with his liberatory philosophy. Even others reject Freire because they think his ideas are irrelevant to transnational and global issues and are hopelessly embedded in a Brazilian meta-narrative (Simpson & McMillan, 2008, p. 4).

Under the conviction that scholarship influenced by Freirean pedagogy remains a white, male dominated theory infused with Marxist-narratives of class-based emancipation – feminist, cultural studies, critical race, and other scholars insist that the world is far too diverse and complex for one overriding prescription for liberation (Bowers, 1987; Brady, 1994; Gore, 1993; hooks, 1994; Ellsworth, 1992; Lather, 1998, 2001; Simon, 1987, 1992; Weiler, 1991). The universal goals of an emancipatory education do not always address the specificity of people’s lives, and often avoids scrutinizing “the contradictions between conflicting oppressed groups or the ways in which a single individual can experience oppression in one sphere while being privileged or oppressive in another” (Weiler, 1991, p. 450). Scholars like Weiler (1991) challenge the universal approach that many Freirean based pedagogists align to, insisting that pedagogy should be both reflexive and considerate of the broad spectrum of people and issues in today’s society.

Brady (1994) takes issue with the patriarchal discourse in Freire’s earlier work, where women are “erased in Freire’s language of domination and struggle, [and] there is no attempt to even acknowledge how experience is gendered differently” (p. 143). Similarly, others have critiqued Freire’s writing style as heavily exclusive, relying on academic abstractions that speak solely to elite, male intelligentsia (Egerton, 1973; Fetterman, 1986; Pateman, 1986). Lather’s (1987) attack on the “gender blindness” of Marx-based, Freirean scholars, for example, calls out such work as being an issue of “and women, of course.” She discusses the ways in which such works have only recently added on an analysis of the subordination of women in their effort at class based social reform (for example – Darder, Baltodano, & Torres, 2003; Macedo, 2006), ignoring what

is actually required should gender based oppression be included in an analysis of life under capitalist regimes. Lather (1987) puts forth that women can profit from this broad body of theoretical knowledge, however they should be constantly checking that they themselves are not perpetuating another male dominated discourse. She suggests moving beyond grand social theories toward empirical research that places gender based issues at the forefront of concerns for social equality (Valdiviezo & O'Donnell, 2014).

Similarly, Gore (1993) is concerned with the proclivity of those who promote class-based projects, by way of Freirean influenced education, to create abstract political visions of what she aggressively terms “critical educational theory” (p. 42), failing to prescribe specific practices for classroom use. She believes that the result is a pedagogy that restricts its audience “to those readers who have the time, energy, or inclination to struggle with it” (p. 38), limiting its applicability and political potential to primarily academics and graduate students.

Empirical Considerations of Freirean Pedagogy

From as far back as the 1970s till today, Freirean-based pedagogy continues to be a “guy thing,” not only for its proliferation of male scholars but for its universal sense of authority when it comes to a “revolutionary approach” to pedagogy (Lather, 2001). Critiquing the notion that print, alphabetization, banking, and school books are the tools of salvation, as well as the European and American “compassion complex” that desires to help the rest of the world learn our economic or educational system, the Freirean mission too thrusts literacy and liberation on members of oral cultures that may unintentionally lead to the undoing of established ways of life (Ewert, 1977; Rasmussen, 2005; Sanchez Bejarano, 2005).

Ewert's (1977) findings in Zaire, for example, suggest that while Freire's approach may be effective, its revolutionary slant is less suitable to rural Africa. The Zairian community within which he worked did not define themselves as a group whose conflicting interests diverged from the social structure dominated by an elite class, and that they would rather exploit their connections with the elite than unite in a struggle against them as the oppressors.

Reaching similar conclusions in her participatory education project organizing revolutionary change among Andean peasant farmers, Sánchez Bejarano (2005) found that an Andean-centered perspective had little use for Freire's Socialist-Leninist views of social liberation. Seeing their lives as a series of circumstances rather than one of class struggle, the farmers preferred an *action-reflection-action* based approach that proved more relevant to larger patterns at work in their lives. Assuming revolution was not only possible but necessary, that the research team could be the ultimate saviors of what they termed the "oppressed" community, Sánchez Bejarano (2005) had to acknowledge their failure to organize syndicates amongst the farmers, and that they were instead themselves methodologically flawed.

Robinson (2005) provides a similar account in her work in refugee camps on the Thai-Cambodian border, where she attempted to adopt Freire's theories into her efforts with Cambodian Buddhist nuns. She concludes that throughout her journey, she awakened to the harmful effects an attachment to an ideal of liberation can have.

Turning to more recent works of Lather (2001), she prefers letting go of the security of grand revolutionary or universal theory in favor of a tentative, incomplete not knowing. Calling for education theory that is heterogeneous, open, and indefinable in its

characteristics, she takes particular issue with the limits presented in revolutionary attempts to transform education within the larger social structure through class and material struggle, visions of utopia and new social alternatives. She believes instead that these approaches to education should be considered in contemporary historical contexts.

Considering Women in Freirean Contexts

Though some recent literature on popular education does focus on women, it still primarily does so through a Freirean lens (Austin, 2004; Groves, 2011; Romero, et al, 2006). Austin's (2004) work on *Diálogos sobre Estado y educación popular en Chile* focuses on the aftermath of nearly 40 years of dictatorship and neoliberal democracy in Chile, as well as the more recent mass student protests that are demanding reparations to the failures of the country's education system. Paying particular attention to the efforts made by popular educators to meet the educational needs of the country, Austin (2004) places emphasis on the influential role of Freire who, as mentioned, took five year exile in Chile in the 1960s and is credited with having shaped the country's literacy and adult education programs.

What is lacking in current scholarship like this is a shift in focus away from Freire's ultimate claims to popular pedagogy, toward work that concentrates on contemporary efforts themselves. In the Chilean context, for example, this means turning to the work of women like Camila Vallejo, geography student and member of the social movement *Juventudes Comunistas de Chile*, whose eloquent speeches have been instrumental in bringing action against the exploitation done by the private sectors of education, the Chilean neoliberal model, and the lack of fairness in university admissions processes (Webb & Radcliffe, 2013).

Groves' (2011) work in Spain similarly integrates Freire's ideas as a lens to studying the cultural projects of the teachers' movements during the 1970s. Concentrating on the testimony of three militants active during the time, Groves (2011) believes "will serve to illustrate the factors which contributed to the emergence of an active opposition movement among teachers and the importance of Freire to their identity as militants" (p. 707). However this may be, she altogether leaves out the experiences of women educators of the time. In a footnote Groves (2011) explains that "Although women were present in the teachers' movement...I present the stories of three male militants" and the various paths each male took as representative of the typical story of masculine social mobilization. She clarifies her neglect in representing women educators' militant work because "in the 1970s primary school teaching in Spain was just starting to become a feminine profession" (p. 707). Nonetheless, other literature on women's work as teachers and militants in Spain tells a different story. While San Román (2006) would agree that the number of women in educator activist roles was reduced during the Franco dictatorship, as well as impacted by the influence Catholicism had upon the country, particularly women, there were women teachers contributing to the educational reform efforts as documented in first-hand accounts of their professional identities during the country's transition to democracy.

However rare, some literature exists that looks to the practices of women teaching in the popular education sector without paying homage to Paulo Freire or his pedagogical theory. For example, without mention of Freire, some compiled chapters in Walters and Manicom's (1996) *Gender in popular education: Methods for empowerment* highlight the work of women educators in countries like South Africa, India, Canada, U.S., Malaysia,

Australia, and the Philippines. Likewise, Spadacini and Nichols (1998) focus on women teaching in the popular education sector who trained community members in Ethiopia via information, education, and communication tools created and used to increase awareness on female circumcision. The subsequent activist efforts were told from the perspective of a team of Italian and Indigenous Ethiopian feminist NGOs using popular education strategies of theater, radio, storytelling, poster campaigns, newsletters, leaflets, and stickers to change attitudes and behaviors towards the practice.

Rather than focusing on popular education as a Freirean tool utilized by the women of these two organizations, Spadacini & Nichols (1998) focus on women's practices that challenged the traditional discourse surrounding culturally sensitive issues. Similarly, Palencia (2003) offers insights into her work with popular education in communities of *campesinas* and Indigenous women in Chiapas, Mexico. In women-only spaces, using popular education methods that she says came from within the gendered, Indigenous communities themselves, she investigates the ways in which women were able to address their individual oppressions to others, and confront the many obstacles they faced in achieving greater autonomy and equality with men. As Palencia (2003) explains, with absolutely no nod to Freire, that within popular education spaces run solely by women, "We discovered many things we do not see at first. At times we cry, at times we laugh. Sometimes we embrace each other. We realize what we have in common and we value the differences between us" (p. 225).

As the literature suggests, understanding women's trajectories across various stages of their careers requires expanding the theoretical base from which we study popular education projects. As suggestive in Bartlett's (2005) main critique of Freirean

based pedagogy, it suffers from an early Marxist theory of power as binary and repressive, arguing that popular education could benefit from looking at “power as ubiquitous, rather than located in certain groups; productive, rather than merely repressive; and relational, rather than reified” (p. 360). In her ethnographic inquiry into Brazilian popular educator training sessions, she sites Foucault’s (1980) work that demonstrates the ways in which power operates and is affective in people’s lives through the quotidian habits of daily living, in specific institutions like prisons, schools, hospitals, factories, cities, families, and medical clinics. Bartlett (2005) found that popular educators’ use of Freirean theory as related to dialogue, teacher-student relations, and incorporating local knowledge into the classroom could benefit from a Foucauldian framework where, rather than ignoring social differences in favor of a utopic classroom, popular educators and students begin to think critically about how power and oppression operate within their own lives and forms them as popular subjects.

With the aim of understanding women’s participation in social movements in general, and popular education projects in particular, it is pertinent to turn away from the established Freirean discourse surrounding popular education, toward the practices made, as Palencia (2003) would advise, within the communities of women teaching in the popular education sector themselves.

Mujerista Perspectives

With Freirean theory and critiques thereof, the following questions drive this research – What influences women in the popular education sector at different stages of their participation in popular education projects? What shared ethos, guiding beliefs, or ideals characterize women teaching in the popular education sector within these different

stages? What are the strategies used by these educators to practice these shared ethos, guiding beliefs, or ideals? How are women teaching in the popular education sector connected or disconnected to these spaces? The purpose in answering these questions is to contribute to academic research and activist discourse surrounding women educators in social movement based popular education projects. Though women educators *do* draw on Freire rather than reject his work entirely, they also offer their own unique flavor of curriculum and activism that contributes significantly to further understanding popular education projects in more dynamic ways.

To understand the work women do in popular education projects, I draw influence from *mujerista* and Latina feminist epistemologies (see Anzaldúa, 2006; Cortina & San, 2006; Delgado, 2006; Dyrness, 2008; Flores & Garcia, 2006; Miller, 2008; Olmedo, 2003; Trinidad, 2015; Villenas, 2001). These scholars provide a means of understanding women's affective experiences in both traditional and popular education projects by pinpointing the ways in which the intersection of racism, sexism, and classism impresses upon the everyday lives of Latina women. *Mujerista* scholars call attention to wholeness, humor, *confianza* and *convivencia*, as well as personal, emotional, spiritual, collectivist, and survivalist healing strategies in education communities in their struggle against repression. Framing the home, family, neighborhood, and social life as alternative sites where education happens, their work has afforded me the opportunity to look further beyond progressive teaching and learning strategies guided by Freire toward the deep, affective wells of knowledge that marginalized communities draw from to mollify the tyranny of logical and decontextualized schooling as well as those administered by state and private authorities.

Villenas (2001) work, for example, takes a *mujerista* standpoint to highlight the ways Hispanic mothers' narratives in the rural south of the U.S. contest the deficit framing of their family's education and child rearing practices by reclaiming home space as a place where education and a healthy sense of community thrives. Threatened by institutional and social forces, Olmedo (2003) likewise looks to resistance strategies of immigrants trying to survive in cultural environments different than their own, especially highlighting conflicts among generations of Latinas and the ways in which they draw upon "funds of knowledge" to educate their children and resolve community conflict. Trinidad's (2015) investigation into the lives of women who remain in rural Mexico while their husbands migrate for better work conditions recognizes the social, educational, and cultural tools these women employ to educate their children and ultimately survive personal hardship.

In the context of Argentina, Miller (2008) chronicles the important work of women in schools, stating female schoolteachers were the first to offer critique of society and protest unjust sexist prejudices in the legal system – arguing for women's rights over children, marriage, access to education, and political and economic power. Among skilled workers, clerks, and government employees, women teachers represented a new group in society who were "in touch with one another through their institutions of learning and through professional associations, forums in which they could share their common experiences." Miller (2008) believes this tantamount to their success because "their activities were collective, not individual" (p. 181).

As suggested, women educators intersect with activism in poignant ways, yet there is a noticeable gap in the literature that offers an empirical following of their

practices across their trajectories as classroom teachers, popular educators, and activists. The remainder of this review will address this gap in the context of Argentina by providing a different perspective on women educators' experiences in and their influence upon social movements and popular education projects.

I first detail the socialization of women as teachers in Argentina. Here I address the feminization of the teaching profession and the sexism that this entailed. In light of this, I move on to convey some of the social and political milieu that gave rise to an increase in women teachers taking on activist roles. Finally, as Bartlett (2005) proposes new ways of representing popular education projects using a Foucauldian lens of power, I continue along *mujerista* lines of thought by offering an affect based approach to explore women educators as kinetic members of families, local communities, and society at large. Such work within is often at the heart of the work of women teaching in the popular education sector, yet it is often overlooked in scholarly research on social movements and in activist discourse. This new direction makes unmistakable claim that an understanding of the personal and affective realm in social movements and popular education offers more complete, thoughtful insights into progressive pedagogical projects.

With that said, I begin with a historical overview of women's socialization as teachers, which provides awareness on the emergence of their later work in contentious politics.

Women Educators in the Recent History of Argentina

Following the teachings of Freire, popular education in Argentina also began in the 1960s, however the movement all but diminished in the 1970s as teachers were one of many groups hunted down as subversives by the conservative military command in

power (Sirvent, 2006). Isabel Perón (1974-1976), who assumed presidency after her husband Juan Perón died, gave military orders to annihilate radical groups, or those suspicious of ties to them, in an attempt to rid Argentina of militant behavior. Led by a military junta under the command of General Jorge Rafael Videla, inhumane tactics expanded in brutality and quantity after Perón was annexed from the presidential office. Part of U.S. backed Plan Condor, which shared coldblooded training in torture and terror methods, Washington assisted the ruling regime in eradicating thousands of those with ties to leftist groups throughout the region. State sponsored violence that included the kidnapping, torture, and death of Argentinean citizens continued for several years (Brodsky, 2005; Lewis, 2002; Romero, 2002; Suarez-Orozco & Nordstrom, 1992; Timerman, 1981). At around 30,000, Argentina's victims of forced disappearance, torture, and death – known as *desaparecidos* – outnumbered any other country in Latin America at this embroiled time (Jaramillo, McLaren, & Lázaro, 2011). It was throughout these years that the dictatorship sought to modernize education, and it was as a result that teacher education in Normal schools underwent its first of many extensive reforms since their founding.

To provide some background – the majority of students, primarily female, earning terminal teaching degrees throughout Argentina today attend Normal schools where they receive five years of training in theory, methods, and an in-service practicum experience, after which they earn a certificate to teach in national schools. Normal schools that train teachers were first established in the country by President Domingo Faustino Sarmiento (1868-1874) and remained a virtually unchanged curriculum until the dictatorship took power. Held within an autonomous wing of the public school system, Normal schools

have had a significant impact on the development of national curriculum and education policy throughout the country (Fischman, 2007).

Morgade (2006) provides a taxonomy of teacher education in the formal education system in Argentina, beginning with their development at the end of the 19th century up until today's taxing and bureaucratic headache that closes a lot of doors on teachers seeking licenses to teach in public schools. The first Normal school opened in 1870 to both men and women, however men used teaching as a type of getting by job until better, higher paying masculine work became available. The state took notice of this phenomenon in the decade that followed and started to target women, particularly girls from lower social classes, who were offered scholarships to attend Normal schools. Because Argentina was divided amongst class lines, the colonial families who owned ranches vs. peasants on one side and urban working class on the other, the lower classes encouraged their daughters to study to be teachers as a way of lifting their social standing.

Fischman (2007) points out that in the early advances of the teaching profession, women were expected to uphold more than professional duties that extended to those of nurturer, priestess, civilizer, mother, and martyr. Reflected in Argentina's Educational Law No. 1420 Article 10 that stated that only women were allowed to teach lower grades on account of their presumed capacity for handling and being able to care for children (Fischman, 2007), women in Argentina were considered the natural choice for teaching as they were already expected to perform such womanly duties in their homes. Contrary to this, administrative and supervisory positions were held solely by men.

However laden with sexism this sounds, the results offered the potential for women to significantly impact the building of Argentina as a modern nation state. The call for women teachers to join and train in Normal schools became part of national policies to establish the educational system. Education Law No. 1420 (1884), for example, required all students age 6-14 attend school, not just boys. Girls would then begin Normal schools at age 14. Such spaces provided girls with an alternative to female domestication and were a trusted space where, though the modernization process taking place was worrying many old-fashioned mothers and fathers, families could trust the institution for the moral integrity of their daughters, while offering a space for women to gain social prestige.

Within these empowered spaces, Argentinean women began to resist official school mandates and created solidarity movements among teachers and students. With President Juan Perón's (1946-1955) populism of the 1940s, the ideologies that secured women at the bottom of the school institutional pyramid began to change. By 1947 women won their right to vote, and by the 1950s more women were using the Normal school as a stepping stone to enter further professional and political arenas.

El Movimiento Pedagógico of the 1960s and 1970s especially changed the way the feminine teacher was conceived in education, questioning the technologies of feminization themselves. "The Normal school and the ideology of second motherhood," Fischman (2007) points out, "reinforced the structures and cultures that contributed to the early feminization of Argentina's classrooms" (p. 356). But a change arrived at the end of the 1960s as radical leftist groups and the military dictatorship brought these ideologies crashing down.

Women's Work in Education

With modernization came an emphasis to move teachers as mothers or nurturers to that of a low paid worker. The military dictatorship was a proponent of teacher-as-technician as this promoted a sense of political neutrality in matters of pedagogy and curriculum. Value was placed on nationalism, rule-following, and anti-Communist order, with an emphasis on developing curriculum in a technical sense and administering lessons in a practical and efficient manner. Teaching as a profession lost its autonomy and became vulnerable to heavier workloads, government intrusion, and decreases in salary (Fischman, 2007).

It was not until 1984, when democratization came to congeal post-dictatorship, that teacher education programs and curriculum began a new process of transformation. Freire's ideas were then utilized on a global scale, with a particular focus on developing literacy skills and basic education for all. Inside classrooms, teachers who were once silenced by the dictatorship began to speak out about social inequalities, the rights of children, and other inequities. The role and rights of the teacher, alongside considerable curriculum transformations, occurred significantly during Argentina's return to democracy, resulting in program changes that emphasized rights and personhood (Suarez, 2008). Importance was placed less on law and its relationship to the citizen, and more toward social and cultural rights, activism, and resistance across grade levels.

With the return to democracy, women educators were a strong presence in aiding popular communities as they formed themselves as political subjects fighting for justice and equality. There was a need to build a body of knowledge regarding communities who were not represented justly in society and so in the classroom, preeminence was placed

on political and social history and remembrance of past atrocities of the state (Argentina, 1984). This came by way of identifying oppressions that would hinder the growth of collective participation, and by reconstructing social memory so that teachers and students who had lost their lives and loved ones during the dictatorship would not be forgotten (Dussel, Finocchio, & Gojman, 1997).

As educators were utilizing Freirean based pedagogy to make significant changes to implemented curriculum, as well as improve upon the teaching profession, students' education, and the general holistic development of their communities – crisis struck by decade's end. External debt accumulated as a result of military spending during the previous decade forced Argentina to undergo extreme economic reforms that involved an opening of the market to international trade, privatizing state-owned companies, and deregulating economic policies (Fischman, 2007; Suarez, 2008). Western liberal values promoted by international financial groups and backed by the U.S. government become the model for which democratization patterned itself (Vanden, 2007).

Though this initially did usher in high economic growth throughout the early 90s, the following section discusses the neoliberal policies and practices that resulted in insurmountable unemployment and debt by the close of the decade. Women teaching in the popular education sector emerged on the streets, on sidewalks in front of city municipality buildings, demanding better education for underserved communities and improvements in their work conditions.

La Crisis

Following the external debt crisis of the 1990s, which left the country in bankruptcy, neoliberalism began in Argentina as a World Bank loan and alternative

development project based on classic market theory designed to change the active role of the welfare state. The years that followed were times of economic and political turmoil, high rates of unemployment, frozen bank accounts, a valueless *peso*, and drastically reduced social expenditures, and came as a result of economic policies enacted by presidents Carlos Menem (1989-1999) and Fernando de la Rúa (1999-2001).

Mediated by the market and not the social or political realities of those in need of aid, neoliberalism in such cases envisions a world where those with power assist those without, where the inequalities that separate the haves from the have-nots disintegrates (Harvey, 2005). Though this sounds altruistic in intent, neoliberalism became “a policy roadmap and an intellectual justification for the expansion of the capitalist classes within the nation and globally” (Kamat, 2011, p. 189).

Kamat’s (2011) claims are exemplified by Stromquist (1995) who uses neoliberal international agencies advocating for gender development in Latin America as example of the neoliberal agenda further seeking to spread capital accumulation and expansion. She explains that under the neoliberal doctrine, women are provided access to education in order to become more productive, efficient contributors to the market economy. This comes by way of education geared toward the commoditization of domesticity – income generating and family planning classes, projects based on traditional women’s work like weaving and garment making. Stromquist (1995) believes little attention is provided outside of symbolic gestures to improve women’s education; girls in most parts of the world continue to trail behind boys in access to schooling. The neoliberal state remedies this through building privately funded schools and persuading family’s to recognize the

value of their daughters' education, however poverty is never directly addressed and a sense of blame is often placed on parental ignorance or teacher incompetence.

It would be inaccurate however to generalize neoliberalism as a monolithic set of capitalistic empowerment procedures that have played out similarly throughout Latin America. How policies developed depends upon the country and political actors involved in decision making processes. Schugurensky (2003) points out a number of myths often associated with neoliberalism and its role in Latin American politics. One such assumption positions power as only coming from external forces imposed upon a weak state. This dichotomous view of the evil outsider of global capital and the good but powerless internal actor of the weaker nation state ignores the multiple deals and alliances that develop and strategically support neoliberal reforms throughout the region.

Another myth dispelled is that only external actors benefit while internal actors sink deeper into poverty. In reality, Schugurensky (2003) notes that there are many internal reward systems in practice that make local political players very wealthy. Further, the belief that neoliberalism aims to invalidate the state in favor of market forces that can operate freely amongst nations is inaccurate. Neoliberalism "needs a strong and business-friendly state capable of reducing social expenditures, eroding redistribute policies, and relaxing labor legislation while controlling the ensuing social discontent" (p. 51).

In the case of Argentina, the economic, social, and political crisis of the nation made it easy for big banks to sweep in policies that generated de-industrialization, the privatization of state-owned companies and social benefits, mass unemployment, and the obliteration of social welfare programs sponsored by the federal government. Factories

closed as banks dissolved, and poverty rates rose from 18.2 percent to 42.3 percent of households (Jaramillo, McLaren, & Lazaro, 2011). The recession can be correlated to the currency exchange system which fixed the Argentine *peso* at a one-to-one exchange rate with the dollar, maintained through the government's excessive international borrowing to pay for debts acquired by the military dictatorship, and extreme government austerity measures (Jaramillo, McLaren, & Lazaro, 2011).

Ball, Fischman, and Gvirtz (2003) write that during this time most Latin American countries were subject to multiple attempts at significantly restructuring their educational systems so that schools would become less dependent on federal money. Many of these attempts emphasized the rhetoric of choice, accountability, quality, and decentralization, though they more often had the paradoxical effect of reducing school autonomy, enabling external private actors to acquire greater control over the daily life of educational institutions. Such practices were followed out in Argentina, and have had injurious consequences on the country's public education system.

Grinberg (2010) calls this decade in Argentina's history a "neoliberal factory" where privatization and laws removed processes that could protect employees, guarantee health care, and education. People's lives changed dramatically as social welfare and the local development of public services diminished; the education system was hit particularly hard with reforms that began with federal education laws' decentralizing national secondary public schools. This change of accountability did not consider the lack of available resources in less affluent provinces, and did not take into account technical expertise and management skills necessary to shoulder a new systemic change. To cope with these problems, many provinces reduced teachers' salaries and classroom resources

(Gorostiaga Derqui, 2003). Though Argentina was once the world's major producer of food and had reached educational achievement levels reputable throughout the Americas, once the neoliberal crusade took effect the country suffered high child malnutrition and school dropout rates (Schugurensky, 2003).

Popular education classes were nearly empty during this time and many believed that the movement had died. In classes that were held, however, it became ever more pressing to turn a critical eye toward this new economic and political agenda. Popular educators began rejecting the naturalized views of poor people, problematizing assumptions about who are the victims and who are victimized, not making scapegoats of others in poverty – for example accusing illegal immigrants for the problems of Argentine society, and actually recognizing and identifying mechanisms of power (Fischman, 1998).

It was not until *la crisis*, a time when Argentina's economy finally collapsed in 2001, that citizens began to face the challenge of demanding social change through radical protests, road blocks, the occupation of closed factories, and other acts of civil disobedience. Taking cues from collective organizing that began in the late 1960s, social movement formation during this time unified people whose savings had been seized by the state, as well as the 30% unemployed in the country. It was the combination of these two groups in society that mobilized in Plaza de Mayo to fight for their social, cultural, and economic rights, save their businesses, feed their families, and gain consistent employment.

Daily manifestations of men and women demanding work, food, and social change brought Argentina's economic and political crisis to its boiling point in 2001.

Here education initiatives grew in the same vein as did other social movements. In particular, unemployed workers came together during a severely depressed economy to recuperate factories and continue with production under a more cooperative system. Little by little, such movements inspired communities to take education into their own hands by creating more popular schools and opportunities in educational spaces.

Ocupar, Resistir, y Producir

Between December 19-23, 2001 a popular rebellion overthrew the Argentinean government of incumbent president de la Rúa, in what would become a new way of doing politics in the country. Popular movements became “a power in the streets and a visible presence in all provinces” (Petras & Veltmeyer, 2005, p. 28). Millions of civilians participated in manifestations, illustrating the disillusionment a majority of Argentineans felt toward party politics, politicians, and government institutions. By 2002, *Que se vayan todos!* or They all must go! became the slogan that united citizens seeking liberation from political leaders and international lenders, demanding better living and working conditions for the people of Argentina.

Frente para la Victoria (FPV) presidential candidate Nestor Kirchner (2003-2007) would be elected to office in 2003. Gaining 75% approval rating and receiving support from major trade unions and human rights groups like *Madres de Plaza Mayo*, an influential activist group of mothers whose children were among *los desaparecidos* during the dictatorship. He “legitimized the presidency as a valid interlocutor with sectors of the popular movement, human rights groups, trade unions, and the international financial institutions” (Petras & Veltmeyer, 2005, p. 30).

However this may be, as Murillo and Ronconi (2004) show, a political alignment with the ruling parties has a negative effect on militancy; lamentably, as democracy from below began to align themselves with the government, social conditions worsened, salaries declined, and over half of the population continued to live below poverty level during the first few years of Kirchner's term. Argentinean teachers, primarily women in poor provinces, suffered significantly as they were more vulnerable to economic hardship and had fewer options for seeking alternative employment.

By the end of Nestor Kirchner's regime however, social movements reemerged demanding more work plans, an increase in subsidies, opposition to state control, and increases in salaries and pensions for state and private workers. Civil society once again began to create spaces where the masses could maneuver and mobilize and political movements could grow (Sitrin, 2012). Armando Gandin and Apple (2003) consider it important to recognize how such actors at the local level conceptualize alternatives to the hegemonic order through ties to various social and political webs. Counter groups are constantly attempting new articulations for the right to public discourse through incongruities that create hybrid spaces to harbor alternative, reoccupied sensibilities and counter action. Jaramillo, McLaren, and Lazaro (2011) exemplify this in their work on *the pedagogy of recuperation*, which occurred as a result of the neoliberal state agenda closing factories throughout Argentina, and the occupation and recuperation of those factories by worker led movement initiatives. These worker-led alternatives opened opportunities for spaces to be occupied by new forms of art, education, and knowledge production.

Workers from *Movimiento Nacional de Empresas Recuperadas* (MNER) were able to occupy and recover 200 factories lost to private companies during the previous decade. Establishing worker cooperatives enabled them to form new methods of governance, means of production and, what Jaramillo, McLaren, & Lazaro (2011) call, “a new work culture” which turned the logic of hierarchal, private-owned factories on its head through the establishment of direct forms of representation and horizontal systems of organization. Their motto *Ocupar, resistir, y producir* or Occupy, resist, and produce was and continues to be one of the symbols of the struggle of this organization.

The work of MNER, for example, was not solely a worker effort, but was supported by the communities of youth, educators, families, artists, intellectuals, and academics who resided in neighboring *barrios*. The community protected workers against police raids and other hardships during their struggle to recuperate factories, and factories in turn developed spaces where communities could gather, create, learn, and express themselves together.

Knowledge Production in Popular Communities

Industria Metalúrgica y Plástica Argentina (IMPA) was one of the first and most successful factories to grow out of the recuperated factory movement. Taken over by its workers in 1998, they remain not only a working factory but a space for social and cultural production and an emblem of Argentina’s popular politics. In addition to workers and their families – artists, students, and others have created a cultural center within the buildings now occupied by the factory, and offer diploma-granting popular education programs, workshops, theater, and a community center for meetings, parties, and concerts.

IMPA was not only the first recuperated factory, but also the first to open a popular school in 2004. Led by educators and graduate students of the University of Buenos Aires (UBA) who sought to bring together factories, students, and educational researchers, those working within the project “began to see themselves as cultural workers, as public pedagogues, as subjects of social transformation” who wanted to share in “a vision and struggle to occupy and recuperate social, cultural and pedagogic spaces of factory life” (Jaramillo, McLaren, & Lazaro, 2011, p. 748).

Now there are over 20 specifically recuperated factory based popular schools in operation and over 1600 students and 200 educators who attend or work in them each day (Jaramillo, McLaren, and Lazaro, 2011). Building popular power and recuperating not only factories but knowledge production itself – in classrooms, research, the factory, and on the street – the popular education projects do this through the reinscription of educational, social, and cultural paradigms that frame school spaces and relationships within them. Demanding a meaningful and dignified education, one that considers community knowledge and experiences while denouncing the traditional, bureaucratic, and hegemonic interests of the dominant classes in education, popular educators take an approach to human development where things like food, health, welfare, education, and autonomy are paramount.

As mentioned, many social movement based popular education projects are always “on the defensive in the face of a very active and intrusive state” (Hardt & Reyes, 2012, p. 315). That said, educational initiatives of the recuperated factory movement, popular high schools, as well as the creation of popular universities prove that the

government's attempts to co-opt and defuse social movements are insufficient to destabilizing their power.

Cristina

Clearing 45% of the vote, Nestor Kirchner transferred executive power to his wife Cristina in 2007 (-2015). Though the country faced high levels of inflation, low salaries and foreign debt, many throughout the country initially believed Argentina had finally healed from the decade's earlier crisis by recovering some confidence in the country's public institutions. Factory owners benefited, as did those in the business of exporting agricultural products. Likewise under Cristina's administration, in a controversial move, the government renationalized state assets that had been privatized under previous governments including the national airline *Aerolineas Argentinas* and the oil company *Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales* (YPF).

While the consumption of the middle class did improve, foreign currency reserves all but depleted, resulting in restrictions on legal tender and importation controls that prevented many citizens from undertaking major purchases and investments. The government struggled to contain the inflation that independent analysts estimated rose well over 30% (Cristina's government officially reported much lower figures to international financial agencies and was accused of trying to hide the reality of the country's situation by massaging the numbers). As a result, many were unable to afford the rising price of food never mind pay rent or purchase their own homes.

The *peso* crash, sudden price surges, and importation restrictions sent Cristina's approval rates tumbling to only 27%. Even her most supportive factions, primarily blue-collar working-class citizens of the capital and Argentina's urban poor, began to doubt

her leadership. Though legions remained fed up with the way Cristina managed the country, many feared Argentina lacked suitable political contenders to oppose her in elections, that no group or political party could build an alternative to *Kirchnerismo* (Conniff, 2012; Schamis, 2008).

Argentina did not vote FPV candidate and Cristina backed Daniel Scioli for president at her term's end, and instead in a controversial 180 degree move, elected rightwing ex-Buenos Aires mayor Mauricio Macri (2016-present) in the 2015 election. An Argentine businessman and pro-market industrialist, the main platform of his administration has been the renovation of rundown school buildings, investments in health care, restoration of public squares, and the creation of a municipal police unit. Though too soon to tell, left leaning intellectuals, educators, and the like remain fearful that though the country fought hard for change of leadership, that Macri's cabinet of bankers and managers may prophesize the country's return to a free market economy and neoliberal politics like those that lead to the economic collapse of the 1990s.

Findings of the Review

As shown in this review, a great deal has changed since women first began careers as teachers, be it from their initial experiences presented in Normal schools, to their work in classrooms and communities, as well as on the picket lines, in recuperated factories, and on the streets. In spite of all their efforts, it was evident throughout my time spent in the field, as well as in a survey of names of popular schools, community centers, and movements themselves, that there is an overwhelming accolade of male figures used to rally communities together – in other words, there are hundreds of popular education

spaces in existence, and almost all have been christened with names of male activists who have fallen for the movement's social cause in some way.

Equally, while qualitative studies have indeed highlighted women's roles in popular movements, there still lacks attention to their place in popular education. Literature that does exist, as empirical studies demonstration, suggest a need for studies that focus on the work of women who not only educate in popular classrooms, but mobilize learners, community members, and themselves to fight for the right to public education using frameworks reflective of practices of women themselves outside the Freirean theoretical landscape.

Overall, the discourse in popular movements and in literature on popular education overlooks the work of women, highlighting revolutionary male figures and Freire's contributions to its development. While his work throughout Latin American, and the world, has been instrumental in defining popular pedagogy, the unique, lived experiences of Argentine women, along with their collective and individual contributions to the field is lacking. This dissertation addresses this gap in the literature on popular education; a cursory review proves there are relatively few empirical studies on women educators in social movement based popular education projects, with most literature focusing on women in social movements, or a general overview of popular education. In light of grassroots activism's growing presence around the world, current research is needed to highlight a diversity of roles in education projects. I suspect the lack of current research is due to an ever so romanticized image many education researchers project onto Freirean pedagogy, neglecting deeper critique or exceptions to his well-documented philosophy.

Rather than adopting a Freirean based framework for understanding women's practices in social movement based popular education projects, this dissertation intersects *mujerista* or Latina feminist epistemology – as previously reviewed – with affect theory as an alternative to understanding women's less revolutionary and more quotidian practices as popular educators. This review of literature concludes by touching upon scholars' turn to affect in the last ten years or so, in order to highlight the importance of the affective work of women in social movement and popular education spaces. I argue that turning to the affective practices of women teaching in the popular education sector will advance knowledge and understanding of this underrepresented group, as well as their contribution to the field of popular education. The relatively new and underutilized theoretical approach to popular education studies consists of a framework devised by affect theory scholars from diverse fields of education, geography, philosophy, political science, psychology, neuroscience, arts and literature, to name a few.

In the following section, I discuss affect theory in depth in order to later reflect upon and understand it in context with the practices of women teaching in the popular education sector in proceeding chapters.

Affect Theory and Mobilization

Throughout the 1990s, in response to what was believed to be limitations in post structuralism and deconstruction, feminist scholars turned to affect, marking a period of deep reflexivity that focused on the collective, interactive forces that function between bodies in encounter with other bodies (Clough & Halley, 2007; Hardt, 2007; Sedgwick & Frank, 2003). Their work sought to designate sensational atmospheres experienced between individuals which, unlike the linguistic properties attached to emotion that bares

the shadow of psychological individualism, are attached to things, people, ideas, actions, and any other number of other things, including other affects (Richard & Rudnyckij, 2009). These scholars set out to determine what contingencies impact the way affects are experienced within and between bodies without cognitive reasoning; for example, if we become excited by anger, disgusted by shame, or surprised by joy – what circumstances, temporal experiences, historical, and cultural variations across individuals and social groups influence our abilities to affect and be affected within social spaces (Leys, 2011).

Theoretical and empirical accounts in this area have shown that affects are always social in nature, and are found between humans, non-humans, and even matter which, through encounters, affect emerges. Bartlett and Vavrus (2014), for example, emphasize “the role played by nonhuman actors” in multisite ethnographic field work and how these, in effect, dissolve “binaries by focusing on *interactions* among actors within a network rather than on their location (local, national, global) within it” (p. 133). From this perception, people, objects, and texts become vested members of a particular network along with other social actors (Koyama, 2010, 2011) all capable of affecting or impacting and changing particular spaces and each other.

As bodies convene in affected spaces, the human as well as non-human matter involved in encounters are transformed in individual and collective ways (Gould, 2009; Massumi, 1995). Affect theorists have long turned to the writings of Dutch philosopher Baruch Spinoza (Spinoza, 2000) to understand the affective nature of collaboration which, for him, arises from a desire to reproduce affects of joy, which can then enhance the capacity to act. Spinoza believed the fundamental desire of all humans is to exist as vigorously and joyfully as possible in the company of natural beauty, enjoyable smells,

decoration, and a diversity of food and drink. He saw such ways of being “as instrumental for the education of the body and its mind” (Sharp, 2007, p. 751), believing joy is meaningful, joy keeps on, joy transports us to act and to feel fulfillment in the act of action. As Aloni (2008) suggests, Spinoza’s pedagogical drive “originates from an overflowing spiritual existence and a strong urge to actualize the vitality, wisdom and beauty which exists in most people only as a potential” (p. 534). The “sad passions,” for Spinoza, always amount to stagnancy.

Like Freirean scholarship, it is hard not to notice that Spinoza is talking of a type of utopia, not so much of social conditions but of ones that do not privilege body over mind, or the reverse. He believed actions of the mind and body were inseparably the same, interconnected, and that there is no primacy of one series of actions over others (Deleuze, 1988). Feeling and doing, for Spinoza, are one in the same mechanism that receives and processes external information internally, reacting to the sensitivities of other bodies that surround.

As Deleuze (1988) explains, when such bodies come across one another, sometimes they combine and form a more powerful union (what Deleuze, 1988 refers to as forming a *composition*), while at other times one molds the other, wiping out any solidity of its parts (what Deleuze, 1988 refers to as a *decomposition*). When we meet a body that is not in composition with ours, we feel our power reduced or blocked, and we correspond with sadness and our ability to act is decreased. When the opposite occurs, and we feel in composition with another body, our power is heightened and our ability to act is increased. Our conscious recognition and awareness of other bodies or ideas

depends upon if we enter into composition or decomposition with different affected subjects, objects, and spaces we bump into.

As individual and collective bodies are in constant states of mutability in their relation to objects, other bodies, and other bodies upon it (Seyfert, 2012), Spinoza saw affect as constitutive of a type of political practice, believing bodies living among one another possessed greater potential and power to act when in collaboration – the greater we are affected via mind and body, the more power we have to act through actions caused by our internal and external sensitivity to that which surrounds us. Considering affect essential to projects of collaboration and knowledge production, Spinoza’s ethical and political beliefs entail a constant effort to transform affects into action.

As detailed, Spinoza stressed that there should be a striving for joyful composition in heterogeneous groups that will allow union, that it is joy and the desire for joy, that incites people to seek to act together in their greater interest. Many contemporary feminist and affect scholars deviate from Spinoza at this point in that they believe such a dogmatic construction may placate discomfort at the risk of discouraging new social or political understandings (Ahmed, 2010; Deleuze & Guattari, 1977; Mouffe, 2005; Ruddick, 2010). The human desire to reproduce joyful encounters while sidestepping painful ones associated with such issues as racism, sexism, class biases, or other forms of oppression neglects to interrogate the power of pain, the power of suffering and antagonism in social contexts. Ruddick (2010) asks how “do we traverse the uncomfortable divide presented by difference as alterity?” (p. 26). For her, interrogating zones of discomfort and fear in the collective subject has the potential to open new political imaginaries as well.

As these scholars attest, affects of joy do not always address the incongruity of the masses nor the challenges presented when confrontations as a result of difference and discomfort arise. Deleuze and Guattari's (1977) work, while influenced by Spinoza, similarly frame "sad passions," not joy, as catalyst for a desire to act, opening an understanding of affect to a range of emotional registers. They believe it pertinent "not to avoid the sad passions but to engage them actively, to uncover the role they can play in the production of thought" (Ruddick, 2010, p. 35).

Throughout the chapters of this dissertation, I will explore the affective practices of women teaching in the popular education sector as an alternative to Freirean based revolutionary pedagogy. Here I consider both the *joyful* as well as *sadful* affects that play an important role in heightening their classroom and community practices, and though not free of conflicts and contestations that arise within relations amongst heterogeneous individuals, may be the instrumental factor contributing to their vision for combating neoliberal reform in Buenos Aires. In order to place affect theory in context with social movements in general and popular education specifically, the following section will look to the history of affect studies in contentious politics, as well as touch upon empirical studies focused on affect in popular education and social movement spaces.

Affect in Contentious Politics

Throughout the 1970s, the historical representation of affect in contentious situations was analyzed based on *crowd mentality*, or looking at individual lives and goals as they intersected with politics and protest. Protests and the activists who participated in them were viewed as the irrational response of individuals who, in dire circumstances, could no longer control their rage, temper, or reason. Crowd theorists

associated affects within social movements as determined by conflictive personalities and not the social circumstances that caused them. Thus activists within were deemed unreasonable or troubled and their outward expressions considered psychologically problematic.

This began to change when theorists started to focus on protest as strategic, and protestors within as thoughtful over their conditions and their abilities to mobilize collectively. *Mobilization theory* emerged when scholars became interested in the *how* rather than the *why* of mobilizing, and began ignoring earlier crowd theorists' reactions to protestors as mass mobs of the mad, and instead looked to organizing strategies, protest plans, etc. Rather than finding alternative interpretations however, they mined archival research data, never delving into participant observation and ignoring the individual all together.

In either case, crowd or mobilization theories, the broad spectrum of affects present in protest work were all but ignored. In the former because activists' discontent became naturalized as outbursts, signs of mental instability in marginalized groups, and the later because the activists themselves were all together disregarded in favor of structuralist interrogations of mass mobilizations. The turn to affect in the study of contentious politics began in the 1990s as a means to counter the established paradigms of such collective behavior models. Recent decades have introduced a more affect focused approach to social movement mobilizing, as Goodwin, James, and Polletta (2001) put it

...we accept a friend's invitation to a rally because we like her, or because we fear her disapproval if we turn her down, not just because we agree with her. It is affective ties that bind and preserve the networks in the first place, as much as give them their causal impact (p. 8).

In other words, affect work in social movements is necessary in magnetizing participants together toward pursuing a movement's agenda. The affective pedagogies (Gould, 2009) of popular movements rally emotions and sentiments that coincide with movements' political objectives and tactics, while suppressing those that do not, and are able to manage sensations in such a way that they are able to produce or diminish group feeling. Gould (2009) notes that the "*movement* in 'social movements' gestures toward the realm of affect; bodily intensities; emotions, feelings, and passions; and toward uprising" (p. 3). Political action is directed by the affects registered within a group because feeling states are sites of power, particularly in their role in regulating political behavior and what spurs people to act.

Collective identity revolves around unity amid members of social movements through relations of hope, trustworthiness, shared social, historical, or cultural ties, and affection. Aside from a movement's ultimate objectives, participation is pleasurable when strong feelings are shared among group members. Protest allows individuals to speak their mind as well as find joy and pride in who they are and where they come from. Likewise for some, negative emotions regarding stigmatized identities (being poor, working class, a woman, of color, an im/migrant) may also be the very thing movements capitalize on to organize and fight against such stigmas (Goodwin, James, & Polletta, 2001). In either of these cases, affect can be strategically used by activists as the basis to support their political efforts.

Movement organizers build solidarity, fidelity, and love amongst members and try to make participation an enjoyable experience whereby involvement itself offers pleasures, and sometimes that is enough to motivate participants without relying on

success or outcomes. Rituals, songs, folk tales, heroes, denunciation of enemies and so on are often the affective tools movements utilize to strengthen commitments, their vision, and make clear their ideas, ideologies, and initiatives. As Goodwin, James, and Polletta (2001) believe, such affective states

...are linked to the pleasures of protest. Most obvious are the pleasures of being with people one likes, in any number of ways. Other pleasures arise from the joys of collective activities, such as losing oneself in collective motion or song. This can be satisfying even when done with strangers – who no longer feel like strangers (p. 20).

As evident in the literature, rallying affects fosters less politicized social relations vital to movement organizing, and are as equally important to popular education, more so than what Freirean based revolutionary pedagogy suggests in anti-banking methods and *conscientização* alone. Instead, social movement based popular education projects utilize various objects, ideologies, and activities to mobilize themselves, their students, and communities in order to give them a common space in the public realm (Grinberg, 2010). Studying the affective techniques of women teaching in the popular education sector, as they organize and mobilize through classroom practices and community involvement, offers an opportunity to see how their pedagogies make possible that heterogeneous groups of actors take root within popular education projects and magnify their potential.

Empirical Studies on Affect

As evident in the empirical studies to be reviewed throughout this section, women mobilize to meet various needs, but what brings them to movement participation is often a desire for something better. Studies have shown that power works at the affective level in activists' practices in order to magnetize subjects together toward pursuing a movement's agenda (Grinberg, 2010; Gould, 2009; Sutton, 2010; Viterna, 2006).

Participants in these studies were moved by desire, by fear, by anger, and felt the need to have such feelings mobilized toward something (Mouffe & Laclau, 2002). Through meetings, planning sessions, demonstrations, pamphlet and picket making sessions, educators stimulate new assemblages of affects that are able to utilize potentially paralyzing emotions like grief, loss, and mourning, toward action (Gould, 2009). Transforming affective or emotional states, be it from despair to hope, sadness to joy, indifference to indignation – is an important pedagogical practice educators and activists utilize in order to convert themselves and community members into *compañeras en lucha* (comrades in the struggle).

Both Sutton (2010) and Viterna (2006) analyze affects that influence women's mobilization within popular movements, and why some who do mobilize are also willing to take part in potentially high-risk revolutionary activism. Their studies reveal numerous motives as to why women mobilize, even among those within similar movements, and that these reasons depend upon individual biography, social networks, and situational contexts.

Within Viterna's (2006) study in El Salvador, for example, the paths that lead to mobilization are multiple, and the categorical reasons move each woman uniquely. Biological availability is a key factor in how much one will participate. Young women with no children or household responsibilities are expected to have more time to commit to movement activities. Those who reside with their families however may be forbidden from participating in movement activities by their parents. A person's identity as mother may come to blows with the amount of time a woman may have to contribute to social movements; however pressing political issues may be important enough to her and her

position as caretaker to encourage her to fight in the struggle. Both identities as educator, as activist, as mother may be important to women activists however competing factors – the woman’s social network, her commitment availability – may result in an increase or decrease in action.

In Sutton’s (2010) study she talks about the bodily worlds of women in Argentina as they connect not to individuals but to social systems, hegemonic institutions, ideologies, as well as intersect with local and global forces. Sutton’s (2010) work explores the lives of women who participate in movements, and the ways in which social norms of womanhood are used in resistance, as in the case of the *Madres de Plaza Mayo* who use norms of motherhood or the docile grandmotherly figure to make claims to the state in ways other activist groups cannot. Other women’s activist groups have surfaced – *Piqueteras*; women in the struggle to recuperate factories and other businesses; *Mujeres Agropecuarias en Lucha*; and subgroups within mixed-gender organizations such as *Mujeres de Pie*, are a few provided examples of women’s key role in the struggle to form a more just and equitable Argentinean society.

These women’s bodies in mass become affective sources of power during protest. The body becomes the only thing they have to offer sometimes, and this manifests in things like hunger strikes, giving testimonies of past atrocities and reliving experience in order to claim justice. Sutton (2010) provides examples of women who *poner el cuerpo* – put their whole, embodied selves into action by assuming the risks, work, and demands of such a commitment. Examples of this can be seen in women’s communal kitchens, protests, and daily activist work which take up energy, time, and dedication. Here women use both their bodies to tie themselves to trees, to blockades, to physically obstruct

spaces; to use the body as a text or canvass, to disrobe, or dress up; to experience vulnerability, forgoing human systems like hunger or urinating, to get needs met; to cry, to laugh, to show outrage, to feel human and to feel and express emotions, to sing and dance.

Similarly Gould's (2009) work explores the affective pedagogy of AIDS activists in the direct action movement ACT UP prominent in the 1990s, particularly focusing on how their work offered novel ways for gay men and women to feel about themselves, society, and about political possibilities during the AIDS crisis. With emphasis on self-love and self-respect over shame and self-doubt, their work transforming people's emotional states from grief to anger was an important part of ACT UP pedagogy that escorted important consequences in the lives of those living with AIDS. Gould (2009) reports through meetings, demonstrations, pamphlets and signs, activists altered feelings of grief by naming it anger; this arose a new assemblage of affects that were able to alleviate potentially paralyzing feelings like sadness, loss, and mourning so that political action could ensue.

Such action can also be seen in the confines of extreme urban poverty, in one of the largest and poorest *villas* (shantytowns) in the city of Buenos Aires. Here, in Grinberg's (2010) study, the ways in which popular education practices influence resistance and struggle in daily *villa* life for young women is palpable. Taking place between states of abject fear, a lack of resources, social exclusion, as well as a desire and will to live a better life, her study on a popular documentary-making workshop explores the progression of everyday life in the *villa* and in school, whereby women making films about their neighborhood offers a different vision of popular communities. Often depicted

as crime, death, and indolence laden, the documentary films the women create together in the workshop express the recognition of *villa* life as a space of solidarity, life, and friendship. Grinberg's (2010) work shows how social movement based popular education spaces can transform the banal and everyday reality of women's lives into an affirmation of life, as well as intensify political will.

Power and Affect

However beneficial and effective mobilizing affects may be in rallying marginalized groups' political will, power can intersect in problematic ways. For example, while popular spaces can be sites of personal and political power, they can also be sites of social control – particularly in their role in regulating political behavior and what spurs people to act. While activists mobilize emotions and sentiments that coincide with a social movement's political objectives and tactics against neoliberal reform, research has also shown how affects may seek to suppress or manage sensations in such a way that could produce or diminish group feeling, or even operate as apparatuses of the neoliberal state (Muehlebach, 2012; Nairn & Higgins, 2011; Phipps, 2014; Richard & Rudnyckyj, 2009).

Muehlebach's (2012) study of volunteer and unwaged labor work in Milan, for the sake of charity and love via socialist or faith based volunteering, for example, demonstrates how the neoliberal state may nurture acts of generosity in order to bolster some of its more contentious reform efforts while garnering unremunerated workers, all for the sake of love. As Richard and Rudnyckyj (2009) also elaborate, in such cases affect produces subjects who, through cultural labor and the politization of the personal,

create global economic shifts while reducing deeper discussions of social, economic, and political structural analysis to a “matter of feeling” (Phipps, 2014, p. 15).

While examining affects present in the practices of women teaching in the popular education sector, my participants shed considerable light on how they were experiencing, utilizing, controlling, as well as being manipulated by the affected spaces they were in. The following chapter on methodology speaks to how I have employed an affect based theoretical framework as an alternative to Freirean theory, to the study of women teaching in the popular education sector and their trajectories as they move through popular education spaces.

CHAPTER III

METHODS AND RESEARCH DESIGN

The methods chosen for this dissertation research follow the traditions of a multisite ethnographic study. Such an approach has allowed me to problematize Freirean notions of the local, which while utilizing popular communities' ways of knowing to foster relationships and further knowledge development in dynamic ways, may also essentialize the situated richness of experiences that vary greatly in terms of race, gender, age, work, and migratory history (Bartlett, 2005). As Bartlett and Vavrus (2014) explain, global forces impact flows of people, goods, and ideas, crossing and interconnecting through dispersed locations; contemporary ethnographic methodology should reject “clearly bounded research sites” (p. 134) to problematize “the local” and expand its reach across place and scale. In this manner, a multisite ethnographic approach allowed me to make sense of the trajectories of women teaching in the popular education sector in diverse settings, draw connections between translocal practices and readings from extant education literature, and thus formulate links to broader social and political contexts.

Tomlinson (2011) talks about the struggle she had in finding a site that would permit her total access to observe participants, conduct interviews, and thus carry out the bulk of her ethnographic research. Similarly, having arrived to Buenos Aires with the idea of doing research on popular education, but not having an entirely clear idea of what that would entail, I had no idea where I would be able to set-up a home base, so to speak. I initially wanted to begin my inquiry with, as Lather (2008) puts it, a “not-knowing” or “ambivalence” toward any type of strategy for understanding spaces where researchers

have historically tried to appropriate differences within communities. Her views on “getting lost” recognize the limitlessness of our work in the field, suggesting that what we do not know may also become fertile, ethical grounds for understanding the racial, gendered, classed complexities of society (Valdiviezo & O’Donnell, 2014).

With Lather (2008) in mind, what I tried to avoid as this dissertation progressed was finding a theory I liked and fitting data into it. I knew from the start that what I wanted to do was collect data, transcribe, translate, review fieldnotes – and then ask myself *what is going on here?* and find theories that would support or diverge from the answers I would devise. Having already spent significant time in the popular education field during the research and writing of the pilot study of this project (O’Donnell, 2014), affect theory emerged holistically, providing me insights into the shared culture among participants in the sights I was working in.

With that said, though I had sat-in on a few popular education classes, the contacts with whom I had met during the pilot stage of this project were difficult to reconnect with. Many had changed jobs, emails, schools, etc., so reestablishing the relationships I had made, as well as my original sites of study, was challenging. As I later touch upon throughout the chapters of this dissertation, social movement based popular education projects are in movement, as are the educators who teach in them. Trying to find a prolonged site within which to do an ethnographic study was difficult to come by.

Upon returning to Buenos Aires, one of the first things I did to reestablish myself for further dissertation work with popular education communities was look to Facebook. I *Liked* or *Friended* as many social movement and popular education pages that I was able to find in the city, inquiring more about their organization as well as if they would be

open to me visiting their schools. Many were agreeable to school visits, as well as sharing information regarding upcoming events of their individual school or collective movement projects (see Appendix A. Recruitment).

Through initial connections I made via Facebook, a snowball effect of connections to different educators, schools, mobilizations, and networks emerged. As time passed, a multisite research approach produced important and interesting insights into the world of popular education and the multiple people who inhabit it. So rather than tying myself to one site, school, or group of educators, I followed the webs of connections I had made in the field. The following section provides further theoretical background on multisite or “mobile” ethnography, offering insights on the benefits and challenges of this chosen method with respect to my fieldwork and the dissertation itself.

Multisite Ethnography

Globalization and transnationalism have posed major issues for traditional ethnographic methods. Given the particular case of migratory, social movement populations, for example, the local can be inadequate space for conducting ethnographic research as “global interconnectedness co-exists with local variability” (Falzon, 2009, p. 6). Ethnographers have been concerned with the connection between people and place, but as time passes, it has become more and more restrictive to fix one’s research to one specific locality. Because space is socially produced through interactions, intimacies, as well as through distinct trajectories that intersect within the larger world system – people, goods, information, and ideas constructed around space are being displaced (Harvey, 1973; Lefebvre, 1991; Mitchell, 2000, 2003; Soja, 1989).

With comparative education historically focusing in on macro level analysis of countries and world regions, and anthropology of education traditionally localizing, there

remains an unbalanced understanding as to the ways sites of locality and globality intersect, bump into each other, connect. Bray and Thomas (1995) believe multisite ethnography offers “more complete and balanced understandings” (p. 484) because it considers subjects from various perspectives and thus results in a more thorough presentation of the circumstances being addressed.

Developed within world systems theory (Wallerstein, 1998), the political and economic aftermaths of colonialism, market systems, state formation, and transnational movements, Marcus (1995) argues multisite ethnography came about because fluctuations in subaltern situations have arisen. Falzon (2009) defines the essence of multisite research as the following of “people, connections, associations, and relationships across space...In terms of method, multi-sited ethnography involves a spatially dispersed field through which the ethnographer moves” (p. 1).

Calling it a “mobile ethnography,” Marcus (1995) explains that multisite ethnography follows meandering trajectories across and within multiple sites. Like traditional ethnography, this method builds lifeworlds and systems, but at the same time, constructs the system itself by drawing attention to the interrelated connections among people in movement. For Marcus (1995), it “moves out from the single sites and local situation of conventional ethnographic research designs to examine the circulation of cultural meanings, objects, and identities in diffuse time-space” (p. 96).

Strategies of following connections, associations, and putative relationships are at the center of designing multisite ethnographic research. It is “an exercise in mapping terrain” (Marcus, 1995, p. 100) but its goal is not to, as in traditional ethnography,

represent a universal view of a cultural or a social system, rather it is part of a more comprehensive look at the whole system itself.

Multisite research is planned around “chains, paths, threads, conjunctions, or juxtapositions of location” in which the ethnographer follows some form of connection among sites (Marcus, 1995, p. 105). The ethnographer forms such connections by: following people, their movements, and what happens to them when they move through spaces; following the material objects of a study – gifts, money, property, art, produce, music; following the metaphor, the discourses, the media; following the plot, story, or allegory, the collective social memory; following individual lives or biographies; or following the conflicts that ensue amongst groups of people.

Breaking with Tradition

As a qualitative, field-based educational research method, multisite ethnography does not relinquish the critical importance of single-site based ethnographic fieldwork but rather expands the terrain from which to understand the local and global forces that impact particular sites of study. Where traditional ethnographers hold that it is best to study a limited slice of the whole, multisite ethnographers work in more than one disperse site. Disperse does not necessarily mean country, but rather culture; rather than containing a culture within an ethnographic slice, it seeks to expand.

In addition to finding a single site location for conducting ethnographic research, Tomlinson (2011) also talks about the anxiety doctoral students may have in writing their dissertation using a multisite approach, as their work is essentially breaking the traditions of the well-established discipline of customary anthropological research. As Tomlinson (2011) recalls, those on her committee, as well as the anthropological community at

large, were uncomfortable with the “changing object and circumstances of anthropological research” (p. 166).

Geertz (1973) concept of “thick description,” of the prolonged observation of a particular site, is often used to criticize multisite ethnography as a harbinger of death to ethnographic depth. However, ethnographers taking on more sites in a series of short site visits, while adequately addressing the same material as one long study, as Falzon (2009) argues, grants the possibility of considering space as we often consider time – as productive of rich data. Each site has different “intensities and qualities” and essentially looks to expand what is “ethnographically in the picture” (Marcus, 1995). In other words, space becomes another route to ethnographic knowledge. If depth as conventionally defined is difficult to come by in multiple ethnographic field site circumstances, so be it, as indeed it may represent the way people *themselves* experience the world, and that “understanding the shallow may in itself be a form of depth” (Falzon, 2009, p. 9).

Research Design

In designing the “chains, paths, threads, conjunctions, or juxtapositions of location” of the multisite research study I have embarked on, as well as in developing a logic of association amongst the sites that came to define this ethnography, I took Marcus’ (1995) suggestion of “following the people” and their movements, particularly those of women teaching in the popular education sector, to understand what happens to them over time as they move through social movement and popular education spaces in various stages of their activist educator careers.

To provide a better description of the sites I studied, I must first explain the way popular education movements throughout Argentina were split into three camps, with

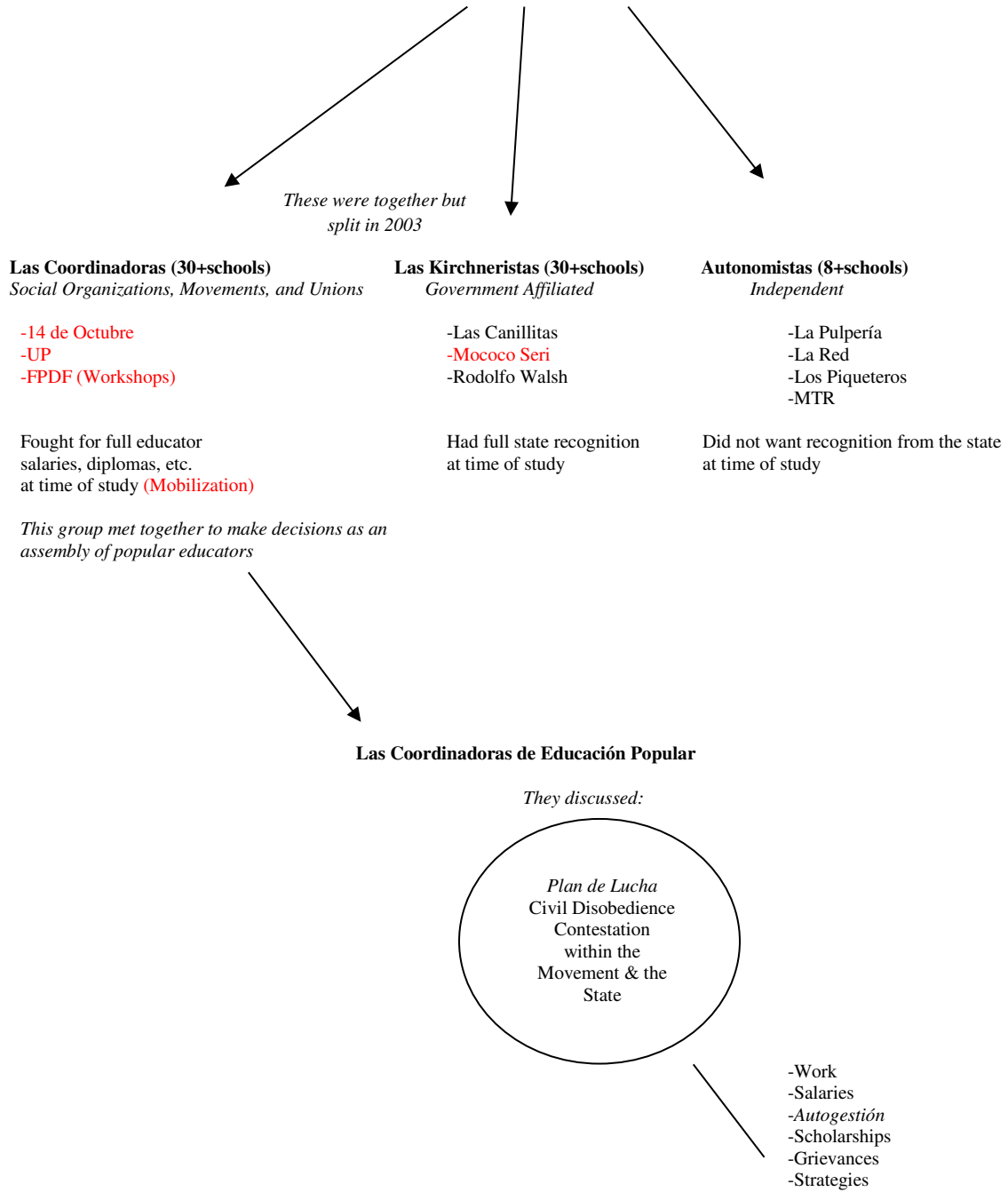
three different political points of view (See Table 1. Popular Education Chart). Each camp was made up of various movements, each with various *frentes* or organizing parties. The ones within which I conducted the majority of my study took place in popular schools run under *Las Coordinadoras*, within which several social movements were united by a central coordinator in charge of asking the state for resources on behalf of popular schools. This group was organized with the intension of seeking government funding and support for things like building material, scholarships for students, etc.

Outside of the group of popular schools organized together by *Las Coordinadoras*, another camp consisted of *Las Kirchneristas*. This group was similar to *Las Coordinadoras* with the difference that they supported and were completely supported by the national government under the Kirchners. Initially *Las Coordinadoras* and *Las Kirchneristas* were very closely aligned but, during Nestor Kirchner's presidency, they separated as *Las Kirchneristas* began to develop their political views in line with the government. At the time fieldwork was conducted, while Cristina Kirchner was still in power, they did not mobilize protests because they did not want to direct their actions toward grievances that may misalign with her presidency.

Finally, in the last camp, there were newer and smaller popular schools developing as *Autonomistas*. Their political view conceded that they did not want any state assistance – no salaries, scholarships, or infrastructure support. As mentioned, these tended to be smaller, and perhaps were actually only a social organization doing activities with young people that later decided to open a popular school. For the purposes of this study I chose not to follow any popular schools considered *Autonomistas* as their infrastructures were small and many were still in initial development stages.

Table 1. Popular Education Chart

Three Different Branches of Popular Education



*Movements highlighted in red are those focused on in this dissertation

Participants for the study were followed through various site visits and relationships I formed with various women educators in Buenos Aires – from popular educator training workshops, to popular education schools, classroom inaugurations and celebrations, to end of the school year graduation ceremonies. Because the length of time I had in the field collecting data was limited in, I was not able to follow each educator through to the beginning, middle, and end of their trajectories as educators in popular education projects. Instead I chose to sidestep “mono logical forms of knowledge” by presenting what Kincheloe (2005) describes as a methodological bricolage of educators’ life experiences as they flowed between different stages of their careers, in order to represent the full scope of their trajectories.

Due to the inductive nature of multisite ethnography, theories evolved as data was collected and initially analyzed; participants were observed without discernment at various sites until I was able to establish theoretical applicability to their particular histories. Some participants were opportunistically selected out of closeness, as one participant during my pilot study came into my life by happenstance – during my time in Buenos Aires, I met one woman first as a student who enrolled in an English language class that I was teaching to a group of adult learners. During our classes together I found out that she was a popular educator at *14 de Octubre*, one of the original popular schools that came about from the recuperated factory movement mentioned in chapter II. Other participants were chosen out of their enthusiasm or willingness to participate.

Acquiring participants, or following the people, eventually became a task in accumulating contacts either through other participants or through Facebook. Though I began by generally relying on a random sampling of women, in order to increase the

scope of data as well as uncover the full assortment of multiple perspectives and trajectories, I become more sensitive in selecting participants who closely matched the criteria of the developing study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). As my time and understanding of various sites grew, participants were selectively added and in some cases sought after because they represented some of the qualities that emerged as significant in my findings – they led activities with the goal of coalition building; they actualized affect based curriculum; or they were expressing feelings of antagonism with their movement, for example.

Data Collection and Analysis

As will become evident in later chapters, a multisite ethnographic approach offered a more dynamic analysis of the trajectories of women teaching in the popular education sector. Various data sites allowed me to examine how their experiences intersected or diverged within various stages of their trajectories, as well as explore contradictions that arose within these popular education projects in various social spaces. Data collection, transcribing, and translating began January 2013 as part of a pilot study, and ended May 2015. During this time I visited a series of popular educator training workshops of the social movement El Frente Popular Darío Fernández; popular education classes and a classroom inauguration celebration at Escuela 14 de Octubre located in Villa 50; the Union of Popular Organizations' (UP) Gender Commission Celebration in Villa Beltran; a mobilization in front of the Buenos Aires' Ministry of Education where popular educators were demanding government recognition for accredited diplomas, as well as subsidies for educators' salaries and students' scholarships; and finally, an end of the school year celebration for popular school Mococo Seri. Each of the popular schools,

classes, and events were hosted by different social movements, educators, schools, or community centers. Each site visit included classroom and participant observation and fieldnote writing, interviews with women teaching or training to teach in the popular education sector, audiotaping of large and small groups, and the collection of artifacts like handouts, curriculum material, and protest paraphernalia.

Ethnographic observations of popular educator workshops, classrooms, mobilizations, as well as attention to created media were likewise rich sources for exploring the beliefs and practices that impact women's work (Gould, 2009), and enabled me to make sense of data from various participant perspectives, and draw connections between local practices and readings from formative popular education literature. Thus, I gradually built complexity in local and translocal meanings and made connections to broader sociocultural, political, and historical contexts.

Additionally, through individual interviews I collected narrative accounts of women reflecting upon their experiences and practices as popular educators. Focus groups further enabled me to understand how women teaching in the popular education sector converge or diverge in their particular experiences. To conduct these interviews and focus groups I frequently adapted a qualitative research technique devised by Sutton (2011) which, in her investigation, used *concept cards* or cards printed with words that linked to her subject of study – women's bodily worlds in Argentina (see Appendix B. Interview Questions). As she describes this method

When designing my interview guide, I strove to create questions that would address major aspects of women's bodily experiences. Yet my questions seemed either too broad or too specific. It then occurred to me that in addition to my questionnaire, I would generate a list of all the words I could think of as significant to women's embodiment in the cultural milieu I planned to study...I

decided to write them on cards, so as to make it easy to visualize, handle, and move concepts around (Sutton, 2011, p. 183).

Like Sutton (2011), I too was concerned not only with finding participants who willingly wanted to participate in this study, but also with creating a space where women teaching in the popular education sector could “voice their experiences in their own terms” (p. 184). With the concept cards I was able to cater to my particular growing theories, while participants could “not only *link* topics sequentially, but also *lump* them together if they wanted” (p. 186), which proved less linear, more holistic than what some methods would assume.

Individual interviews and focus group conversations with or without concept cards were digitally audio and/or video recorded for accuracy, and followed a semi-structured format that allowed participants flexibility to raise additional issues and concerns. I asked women general questions about their family history, political beliefs, teaching and education background, as well as more specific questions about their feelings toward their work, their practices as educators, how they manage their time, if and why they came to be popular educators or if and why they might have separated from popular education projects. Interviews and focus groups covered a broad scope of themes that varied from one interview to another, depending on each individual woman’s personal trajectories and how their overall experiences in popular education projects affected them. In talking about the experiences that most impacted their trajectories as popular educators, I was able to contextualize women’s stories within Argentina’s history of social and political activism, gender based discrimination, a slow bureaucratic teacher licensing system, economic insecurity, the LGBT movement, amongst others.

So in summary, data collection included nearly 60 hours of participant observation and reflexive fieldnotes; audio recorded one-on-one and group interviews conducted primarily in Spanish with 15 focal participants including educators, administrators, activists, students, and Ministry of Education officials (participants each signed consent forms and this study was IRB-approved); 18 hours of videotaped workshops, classrooms, teachers' rooms, and protests in focal sites; policy and school documents; activist made media and student work.

Utilizing both Lather (1986) and Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw's (1995) work detailing research procedures for ethnographic inquiry, preliminary data analysis involved open coding for such things as 1) History of popular education in general, as well as information that connects education movements to Argentina's neoliberal history; 2) History and information on specific popular education projects (including location, neighborhood, descriptive details); 3) Educators' personal and professional backgrounds; 4) Educators' vision; 5) Educators' practices; and 6) Affect triggers (happy, sad, angry, as well as signs of affect registered in the body such as instances of laughter, tears, rage). Throughout the coding process, keeping memos or theoretical notes identifying concepts, half-formed ideas, jottings, and other thoughts allowed me to discover new categories to later go back to and explore further in the data. As such, these broad categories were selectively subcoded as deeper analyses ensued. Subcodes included keywords like 1) Belief, 2) Public vs. private space, 3) Games, 4) The body, 5) Male heroes, 6) Race, 7) Self-esteem, 8) Stress, 9) Power, 10) Government, 11) Feminism and women's experiences.

Influence over the Data

As an English mother tongue, Spanish as a second language speaker who has spent several years of my adult life living in Latin America or working with Latino immigrants and families in U.S. urban schools, data collection and analysis was considerably shaped by the roles, connections, and subjectivities I formed in these multiple spaces. Although I may differ from some participants in terms of race, class, formal education, nationality, documentation status, or gender identity and sexuality, as an ethnographer who has been both a teacher and an activist, I was able to spend time and share with popular educators in both the glory and the tragedies that occur in our mutual vocation and in the city where we live. In spite of levels of difference, personal and profession parallels allowed us to become intimate and likewise provided a platform from which I could cognize the similar and different knowledges that flowed between us.

My experiences and identities afforded me some insights over data revealing the ways in which neoliberalism negatively impacts educators and students both in and out of urban classrooms. The cultural and linguistic capital and social network I developed while living in Buenos Aires also helped me to be seen by *some* participants in this study as at least a bit informed on issues education communities faced within Argentina's political milieu, thus freeing them to discuss topics with me in greater depth. However I do recognize my status as a non-Latino, U.S. citizen sometimes left participants apprehensive to critique neoliberal and corporatist ideology my country has exacerbated throughout the world too strongly in my presence, and less often made them approach me with a somewhat suspicious manner. I also am aware that my identity as a graduate student from a left leaning university in Massachusetts, who has done work with

education activists in the past, makes me biasedly in favor of those in resistance to government interventions rather than identifying with those who are more actively solidifying bonds with the ministry. As such, to a degree, throughout my analyses I do try to keep an awareness of any interpretations I may be making due to my identity, coalitions, and positionality.

Ethical Considerations

In accordance with U.S. Federal Policy on the Protection of Human subjects (DHHS Policy 45 CFR 46), the University of Massachusetts, Amherst Institutional Review Board has granted approval of this study (Appendix C. Certification of Human Subjects Approval). The study was deemed to be one of minimal risk to participants and the probability and magnitude of harm or discomfort anticipated in the interviews, observations, and other data collection means conducted during the study were not greater than any ordinarily encounter in their daily lives.

Participants fully understood the nature of the study and the fact that participation was voluntary. They were informed that the confidentiality of recovered data would be maintained at all times, and identification of participants would not be available during or after the study. Permission to conduct the study and letters of invitation to participate were given to participants to sign both in English and Spanish. A verbal explanation, in English and Spanish, was also provided (see Appendix D. Consent Form).

CHAPTER IV

UNDERSTANDING WOMEN'S VISION AND PRACTICES IN POPULAR EDUCATOR TRAINING WORKSHOPS

“...making the rules, breaking the rules, and changing the rules.”

Buenos Aires is the third largest city in Latin America after São Paulo and Mexico City, and has been considered one of the world's major urban agglomerations. About 40% of the country's 32 million people live within the metropolitan area and, in considering the 2.8 million square miles of territory, this represents a considerable concentration of people. It is not an exaggeration to say Buenos Aires has had significant influence in shaping population and migration patterns, economic development, political action, and social attitudes throughout the rest of the country.

As mentioned in preceding chapters, during much of the 20th century the city experienced undulating periods of economic and political growth and instability. After the fall of the military dictatorship, President Carlos Menem (1989-1999) joined Argentina to the global economy through free market economic policies, regional alliances, and state disengagement from industry and services in favor of privatization and deregulatory trade systems. In spite of Argentina's two populist Kirchner administrations (2003-2007 and 2007-2015), and Latin America's overall political turn to the left, many fear the governance of rightwing city mayor and current president Mauricio Macri (2016-present) will keep public education entrenched in Menem-like neoliberal policies. For purposes of this chapter, it is especially important to recognize the ways in which increased privatization of education has led to teachers in Buenos Aires' public education system being in constant movement – the subjects within, the

ideas and ideologies that encompass them, the urban milieu that shelters them, are persistently insecure and in motion.

To provide an understanding of the reasons behind why teachers join popular education projects, I will begin by drawing parallels between “the stateless” whom political theorist Hannah Arendt (1966) believes fall short because of their lack of a nation state, and Buenos Aires teachers whose recent histories in light of neoliberal education policy has been marked by reiterated states of insecurity, discrimination, dependence, and lack of confidence in earning a salary due to their migratory and marginalized status within the public school system. Arendt’s disclosure of the stateless offers a framework for considering the social and political subjectivity of those who lack a place as part of a collective, and provides a better understanding of the trajectories that lead Argentine teachers to the public sphere (Arendt, 1958) and popular education projects. Such spaces are not actual, physical locations necessarily, but rather a place of human togetherness that nurtures a type of freedom where teachers can maneuver with others through political action.

Theoretical Overview of the Chapter

Arendt, born to a family of secular German Jews, lived the perilous and indeterminate existence of a stateless person for almost two decades. Fleeing Germany without travel documents in 1933, and not becoming a naturalized U.S. citizen until 1951, her experiences bereft of occupation, home, and language during these years led her to deep critical reflection regarding the fate of stateless persons and their relationship with the modern nation-state (Arendt, 1966). During this time she came to understand that for anyone to hold a genuine right to citizenship, that there must be a state which

upholds a consistent responsibility to provide it. The stateless are normally not self-governing, uprooted individuals, moving without direction from state to state. They are usually people established or seeking to establish in specific societies, but lacking legal acknowledgement of and apposite security for their standing as citizens. The chief wrong the stateless experience, then, is not that they cannot find a state to recognize their citizenship but that the state which should recognize them as citizens, or grant them citizenship, for whatever reason, will not do so (Gibney, 2014).

Where life, liberty, happiness, and equality before the law are said to be rights of those who are members of a nation state, the stateless have no community within which such rights are guaranteed, nor within which they may take political action. Stateless people's right to have rights, to have their needs met, is absent because they do not belong to some kind of organized community, and neither law nor rights exist for them outside of such communities. Arendt (1966) says that humans can lose all so-called rights, without losing their essential quality as human, their human dignity. It is only the loss of a polity itself that can expel them from humanity. Human rights, Arendt (1958) clarifies, can only be restored through a reestablishment of political public togetherness, in communities strong enough to enforce them.

Such togetherness is created when individuals act together around an issue or a common project (Arendt, 1966). Such projects encourage citizens to connect, to give voice, be seen, be together in the public realm, and are essential to practices of political freedom. It is in the strength of the groups we belong to, through organization, through mankind's ability to act in, change, and build a common world together, where freedom and equality are attainable.

Arendt (1958) perceives three arenas where human life (*vita activa*) unfolds – by way of *labor*, *work*, and *action*. Labor is biological, a process the human body needs to maintain life itself – it is what is distinctively animal in humans, and what Arendt sees as only a rudimentary step in the attainment of freedom. Where labor is private, work, in contrast, is public, and reflects how human beings actively engage in their environments through production and creation. It is concerned with building the structures where human life can unfold – the synthetic and artificial things we make in the world. Where our work is not necessarily political, but material, it is a precondition or what sets the stage, so to speak, for *action*. It is through action where human beings find their way to freedom, because action entails initiating something new in the world, doing something that has never been done before. Arendt (1958) says

Action, the only activity that goes on directly between men...corresponds to the human condition of plurality, to the fact that men, not Man, live on the earth and inhabit the world. While all aspects of the human condition are somehow related to politics, this plurality is specifically *the* condition...of all political life (p. 7).

In other words, action is given meaning in the presence of a plurality of others who understand and recognize the uniqueness of our actions. It is through the action of bringing something new into the world “through what we do and say” (Biesta, 2012, p. 687) that we are able to call into existence that which has never existed before.

Arendt holds that it is within humanity’s capacity to start something new, that freedom itself is found (Birmingham, 2005). Acts that call forth newness into the world can never be done in isolation, but must appear to the world as a proposition for further action. Actions crucially depend “on the ways in which others take up our beginnings” (Biesta, 2012, p. 688). We cannot control how others take heed of our production; such control would hinder others from their own beginnings, denying them of their freedom to

also begin something new. A plurality of action that leads to freedom requires what Biesta (2012) calls a *citizenship of strangers* or “a mode of human togetherness in which plurality is actively preserved,” or we might say, “actively pursued so that freedom can appear” (p. 690).

Utilizing an Arendtian model for understanding what brings women teachers to popular education projects provides a tactical way to survey educational interventions and human togetherness enacted in the public realm. On account of an unstable job market, political beliefs, long bureaucratic processes to earning a title to teach in public schools, personal lives and necessities, teachers share a lack of rights because of their stateless, or what Ampudia (2004) calls “migratory,” position in Argentina’s public education system. Teachers I talked with often found their career paths in constant movement, unable to organize amongst themselves to work toward improving the education system.

Little research has been done on what motivates teachers to join popular movements or seek opportunities for “becoming public” (Biesta, 2012) – the social, political, and cultural issues impacting the continuity of their work in traditional public schools. Equally, few studies provide insights into *how* popular educators begin to organize themselves. This chapter will examine mechanisms, consequences, and relations of affect influencing teachers before and during a series of popular educator training workshops held by the social movement *Frente Popular Darío Fernández* (FPDF). In doing so, I explore what impresses upon and forms teachers as popular educators, specifically: What influences women teaching in the popular education sector at the beginning of their participation in popular education projects? What shared ethos, guiding

beliefs, or ideals characterize their experiences when they begin training in popular educator workshops? What are the strategies used by educators to practice these shared ethos, guiding beliefs, or ideals? and How are women teaching in the popular education sector connected to these spaces?

Research Site and Participants' Backgrounds

An autonomous, multi-sector social and political movement born in 2004, FPDF has historically organized toward finding community members employment, decent living conditions, and encouraging communities to be free of drug dealers and political pundits throughout the city. Likewise FPDF carried out educational and recreational projects to meet the needs of young people who reside in *villas* or shantytowns by providing them space for learning, self-management, and solidarity.

With this group I attended a series of six popular educator training workshops with around 100 men and women, mostly in their 20s and 30s, that ran from 10-3pm on May 11, 2013; June 8, 2013; July 6, 2013; August 17, 2013; September 7, 2013; and October 19, 2013 – a total of 30 educator training hours. Along with students from different Normal schools in the capital city, FPDF educators decided to put on these workshops because they felt, on the whole, that the popular education paradigm was absent in traditional teacher training programs. The workshops were organized in order to be able to provide support tools so that educators could bring them to the classroom, other workshops, and places of learning.

Workshops were held in popular education institutes, public school spaces, or union headquarters. Meetings in May, July, and October were held at a popular education space that specialized in educator training and served as a type of popular Normal school.

The work being done at this location was recognized by the government of the city of Buenos Aires as a valid degree-granting institution (more on this in chapter VI). At the time of this study it hosted fifteen undergraduate and graduate teaching programs for several thousand students, and was the only institution of its kind in Argentina. The space was enormous; not only did it have numerous floor levels, but it also had a café area for students to buy food and drinks, to sit and talk, or do work. The multipurpose room where the workshops were held was located on the bottom floor of the building, and was decorated with handmade banners hung about the walls with the Darío Fernández insignia, images, and mottos painted on them.

Meetings in June and September were held in the auditorium of Normal School 4, a publically run, traditional teacher training institute. The Normal school was a large building located near a park, a Starbucks, an Audi shop, and other commercial enterprises. The workshop itself took place in a dimly lit multipurpose room that had a stage, portable bleachers, and folding chairs. I cannot emphasize enough how *unenjoyable* being in this room was for me, a person slightly older and linguistically less advanced than other participants. The floor was uncomfortable to sit on and the acoustics were eco-y and made it difficult for me to concentrate on the Spanish being spoken. Equally the dim lighting made the windowless room feel a bit sad, the bathrooms were not stocked with paper or soap, desks and walls were covered in graffiti, and chalk boards were fractured or broken entirely. Birds flew in and out of the hallways, trapped in from busted doors and windows. I have been told that these are typical conditions found in public schools in Argentina as little money is put in by the state to go toward building maintenance.

August's meeting was held at the union headquarters of the Latin American Workers Association, a place which obviously had more money running through its pipes than public schools. This space had comfortable chairs, lights, the acoustics were clear; there were not an inundation of signs or slogan posters hanging about the room.

Participants

Educators from the workshop were chosen firstly based on personal interest in participating in the study, and secondly on account that the experiences they shared in the workshops were in line with ongoing theories and data codes I had been considering. Although I began each workshop by introducing myself, explaining to everyone there that I was both a participant and researcher studying popular education in Argentina, I did not initially ask anyone to be focal participants. I decided during the second workshop that I had made my presence known enough to begin asking people to participate in the study. I received initial replies to participate via email from two of the group facilitators – Camila and Ana, as well as popular educators in training, Florencia and Rubia.

Camila had studied language pedagogy at Normal School Joaquín. She was not teaching at the time of this study because she decided to concentrate on things particularly related to popular education and giving workshops, and because she was having difficulty finding steady employment in a public school. Ana was studying elementary education at Normal School 4. She had a lot of experience being in social movements since she was a child – both of her parents were militants in the 1970s. She was also a popular education teacher in Sarmiento, with a project doing recreational activities in schools. Florencia was in her 30s. She was studying mathematics and teaching at a popular school in General Rodríguez. Rubia was 50 years old at the time of

this study and a kindergarten teacher in a traditional public school. She also worked with a group of women in a gender based movement in Villa 50.

By participating in more and more workshops I became judicious in seeking participants who closely matched the criteria of the study I was developing, in order to increase the scope of the data as well as uncover a fuller assortment of perspectives and trajectories. Based on comments made in the workshop, personal interactions, and their history with social movements or education, I eventually asked Paula, Barbara, Maria, and Galinda to participate.

Paula studied to be an engineer but switched to teaching. She considered herself an actress more than a scientist and taught theater workshops in the cultural center at Normal School 7. She was also working as a teacher's assistant in a traditional primary school. Barbara was studying law but switched to teaching as well. She was studying to be an art teacher. She was involved in the city's LGBT movement and sat in on popular classes on gender issues at Sarmiento University. Maria worked in a poorly funded school in General Rodríguez where she had been teaching English for several years in a kindergarten. At the time of this study she had switched to working with pre-literate children with special needs in the library of the same school. Here she would give storytelling workshops for children and elderly people. Galinda was an artist who did art and technology workshops in schools that provide training to kids who received government issued laptops.

Theme Developments

Each of these women came to the workshops for unique reasons, but with similar intentions of building a new type of education that was different to the current reality

found throughout Argentina. Training to be popular educators, or to become more familiar with the popular education paradigm, they favored traditional public schooling but felt it could be problematized or improved upon through the forging of more unified relationships with themselves and their vocation, other teachers, and the communities where they worked.

I would come to learn that many of the women present in the workshops came from very different places. Some had long labored over popular education as a counter hegemonic paradigm, others had been working in education movements before and had their own approach to popular education; still there were teachers who had never heard of or talked about it before, while some had only an idea of what popular education meant. Overall, many sought to develop a deeper understanding of popular education, and to establish an account of the isolated places they were coming from – their different experiences, their histories, their passions, their assets, and their reflections – and to bring these together in a communal way. In other words, they embarked on this educator training project to learn how to implement popular activities like theater, music programs, recreational games into their classes, but to also congregate in a public space to think about where popular, public, and private schools could come together to meet their needs, hopes, and concerns as teachers.

A greater part of these teachers' needs, hopes, and concerns, as I have mentioned, were intensified by the arrival of neoliberalism in the 1990s, where public schools and the work of school teachers first showed signs of what many referred to as professional depoliticization. In light of this, in seeking to understand what ethos, guiding beliefs, or ideals women teaching in the popular education sector share at the beginning of their

careers, this chapter derives from Arendt's work on the stateless and the public sphere to explore neoliberalism's depoliticizing effects of alienation and exploitation in the lives of the women in this study. Specifically, three themes came up continuously throughout large and small group discussions, one-on-one interviews, observations, and participation exercises in the workshops that I will explore – isolation from one's self to one's vocation, isolation from one's self to other teachers, and isolation from one's self to others in a community. Exploring isolation and its impact on teachers provides insights into the social circumstances that brought these stateless or migratory teachers to popular education training workshops and to a shared public space.

Findings

As mentioned in the previous section, two feelings were shared by many educators in this study who taught or wanted to become teachers in traditional public schools – exploitation and alienation. These depoliticizing affects stemmed from teachers' states of isolation from their vocation, other teachers, and those in their community. Ahmed (2010) writes that the sensation experienced by such alienation

is a feeling that takes place before others, from whom one is alienated, and can feel like a weight that both holds you down and keeps you apart. You shift, drop your head, sweat, feel edgy and uncertain. Everything presses against you; you feel against the world and the world feels against you (p. 168-69).

As participants in this study would agree, such a state offers no enjoyment nor sentiments essential for people to develop themselves professionally, to organize, discuss, and improve upon their communities. Building from Marx's (1964) *Manuscripts* describing the repercussions of the division of capitalist labor in terms of its capacity to alienate the proletariat from their material product, Ahmed (2010) further considers the ways in which alienation impresses upon workers who then suffer a loss of connection to

themselves, “given that the world that they created is an extension of themselves, an extension that is then appropriated” (p. 167).

During the course of this study it was clear that many women came to these workshops because they too felt disconnected from their vocation or the education community and sought to break into something different; viewed through the lens of Arendt (1958), these desires for connection to our work is important because it brings us to community and in turn opens the opportunity for building the kind of world one wants to build. Though educators reiterated the treatise that many associate with public education – that it is for everyone, that it is a way to form oneself and to think about one’s relationship with the world, or that it is a tool for social change – the more time passed in the workshops, the more teachers veered off these prescribed utopian talks of teaching to instead reveal the barriers that made it impossible for some to participate in building the public education community they envisioned.

They instead saw education in Buenos Aires as having become more and more appropriated by the neoliberal, capitalist agenda. In the following section I will discuss a conversation that occurred between my participants that revealed how such an agenda reared itself not just in their professional lives, but ramified throughout the city streets, public spaces, and in everyday interactions they inhabited.

Declining Public Space and its Impact on Teachers

Over the last decade there has been a significant amount of work from a range of disciplines and fields including political theory, philosophy, geography, urban planning, and education concerning the transformation and decline of public space (Giroux, 2004; Lipman, 2011; Mitchel, 2000, 2003; Soja 1989). As Harvey (1973) notes, the shaping of

public space in the city “is symbolic of our culture, symbolic of the existing social order, symbolic of our aspirations, our needs, and our fears” (p. 31). A geographical survey of the “existing social order” of Buenos Aires would reveal a deteriorating urban landscape due to “social polarization, environmental degradation, deindustrialization, eroding middle-class lifestyles, rising unemployment, declining health and social welfare, collapsing infrastructure, and grinding poverty” (Keeling, 1996, p. 5), all which have distorted the city and its inhabitants in profound and fundamental ways.

The fuse that ignited such distortions first sparked in the 1980s and 1990s, when neoliberal trade policies opened between the U.S. and Argentina allowing floods of capital to pour into the country, particularly the capital city. With it came privatized public spaces with neighborhoods, country clubs, and shopping malls that essentially walled off the rich from the poor and resulted in increased residential segregation. The prevalence of such privatized landscapes, what Lipman (2011) calls “spatialized exclusionary citizenship,” offered wealthy Buenos Aires citizens the illusion of freedom from the popular masses and the ability to move and do what they pleased without obstruction.

While luxury condos, trendy bars, and international franchises improved areas catering to the wealthy – street conditions, electricity, and sewage problems remained untouched by city leaders or international financiers in poor and working class neighborhoods. During one workshop activity with FPDF, popular educators in training were asked to create a collage from old magazines reflecting the living conditions of the neighborhoods where they taught in Buenos Aires. After the time allotted to creating the image, workshop participants met in small groups to present their renderings and talk

about the place and problems one would encounter there. Many educators in training drew the traffic that overruns the avenues, the mobs of people that load the subway trains each morning on their way to work, and about what they considered the near constant chaos of city living.

Incongruously, what participants would eventually conclude was that despite all of the chaos, they felt the city itself had been purposely designed in recent years to isolate them from one another. This was evident in the following small group interaction that occurred between participants after the collage making session.

We're always running late to somewhere or returning home late. As a society we always want to get somewhere else. We never want to be in the place where we're actually standing. (Camila, Small Group, September 7, 2013)

I feel terrible when I do this. *Why am I always in a hurry? Where do I have to go?* I could stick around and talk but I end up distancing myself from people. I am becoming more and more indifferent to those around me. (Seth, Small Group, September 7, 2013)

As mentioned, while the gated communities, secured waterfront high rises, and selective social clubs were closed off to the majority of Buenos Aires citizens, the chaos of living in a large populated city further had the effect of making educators distance themselves from even each other. Such distancing can be understood in terms of what Mitchel (2003) notes, which is that often the urban chaos that goes hand in hand with city living instills a fear in people of public space, thus making it easy for the dominant social class and their set of economic interests to enact a normalizing framework that stamps out coalition building in the city itself. Educators in the training workshop shared stories of how these closed communities, these underdeveloped and overdeveloped localities (Soja, 1989), indeed had the effect of isolating citizens from one another both in material and affective ways.

There are poor neighborhoods and rich barrios and we all exist in these geographic and economic divisions. In the north they follow fashion trends, famous actors and models live there, they all drive fancy cars. (Seth, Small Group, September 7, 2013)

And in the south it's the opposite. There are a lot of rundown buildings, drugs, people getting shot. (Alejo, Small Group, September 7, 2013)

And of course those in the north fear the people in the south. No one relates to each other as citizens of the same city. (Barbara, Small Group, September 7, 2013)

You just become numb to it, to the coexistence of these landscapes. (Rubia, Small Group, September 7, 2013)

Though expressing feelings of fear and impassivity, it did become evident as their dialogue continued that class struggle and contestation to the social norms *do* arise from the “numbness” once citizens become aware of the “exploitive nature of the social and spatial structure” (Soja, 1989, p. 111). Reflective of this awareness, participants in the collage making session expressed considerable concern regarding the collapse of public transportation, the lack of policies geared towards supporting the popular sectors who take public transport, and restrictions of public space – things like iron bars being placed around public parks, park benches corroded with rust, broken playground equipment – and how these uninviting public spaces influenced the deteriorating social relationships in and among the communities.

Thirty years ago we were able to play in the parks, ride our bikes in the streets, walk the neighborhoods, drink a *mate* with our family. But now we live in a time and place where parks are fenced off, the infrastructures that support fun in the community are broken. (Rubia, Small Group, September 7, 2013)

You're right. The parks are getting worse. They do not invite you to hangout in them. There are fences all around you, police, rules, and regulations. It makes you not want to be there. (Camila, Small Group, September 7, 2013)

That's why when you go to the mall you see that there are people who spend all Sunday there instead of in the parks and public places. It's like the government

wants to keep us out of the parks and spending our money instead! (Barbara, Small Group, September 7, 2013)

The group continued to talk about the state of public spaces and the amount of policing done in green open areas of the city that were once meant for public use. When it was Barbara's turn she showed her collage; on it she had drawn large circles representative of green grass with glued magazine cut outs of children playing on them. Superimposed were thick black bars of fencing that newly walled off city parks in order to control citizens' behavior during designated and undesignated hours. Given the content, the green lawn and the kids inside looked trapped in a prison. Barbara then told of an incident that brought her face to face with some of the more overt discriminatory practices of policing public space.

In *Parque Centenario* the other day the police wouldn't let my girlfriend go in the park because they said she looked like a thug. (Barbara, Small Group, September 7, 2013)

But the park is public, it's for anyone? (Lee, Small Group, September 7, 2013)

It's because they say militants protest in the parks – they distribute socialist newspapers and so now anyone who looks *suspicious* is not allowed to enter anymore. (Barbara, Small Group, September 7, 2013)

Barbara's story speaks to the detriment policing has not only to certain bodies being able to move freely, but to the silencing of public political discourse via the socialist newspapers as well. It equally reflects how behavior becomes shaped by certain geography, certain spatial forms. Harvey (1973) writes that “once a particular spatial form is created” – in the case cited above, the park becoming a type of privatized public space – “it tends to institutionalize and, in some respects, to determine the future development of social process” (p. 27). Here privatized public space determined who had access to the community, whose ideological beliefs may be practiced or distributed to the

masses, and this has profound impact on how communities within the city are formed and maintained.

Feelings of Isolation inside the Classroom

As evident in the previous section, urban environments have significant influence over the people, classes, and cultures that create and dwell in them. As a place of heterogeneity, where people encounter difference in the public realm, the city is a hotspot for contestation over the shape of, access to, and rights of citizenship within it. However this may be, women in the training workshops I attended realized the power the government and the city itself had to prevent access to public organizing. Given Argentina's history of civil unrest, where people united *have* generated revolution, many participants were aware that solidarity and social change would not be possible unless teachers were willing to fight for it.

Solidarity will not come from the government. We have to do this in the neighborhoods, in communities, in schools. People need to join together and get rid of this idea that teaching is a lonely profession. (Camila, Small Group Discussion, June 8, 2013)

Joining the workshops came to fulfill a desire not only for improving their classroom practices, but for building the kinds of relationships that they felt lacking in their personal and professional lives. Participants agreed that teachers were being exploited, students were being hounded because of ranking and test scores, all the while policy makers instilled top-down mandates and obstinate curriculum that did not fulfill their own wants for community.

Our class sizes are huge. I work in three schools, two middle schools, and a technical school. In each I have a minimum of 40 kids. (Galinda, Small Group Discussion, June 8, 2013)

And to earn a decent salary, we need to teach more hours of classes. This makes teachers have less time for each class we do teach and it diminishes our ability to provide good quality teaching. (Camila, Small Group Discussion, June 8, 2013)

Students are given standardized tests and if they earn good scores for the school then the kids get a trip to Patagonia! Policies like this teach them that the points they earn are more important than what was learned. (Florencia, Small Group Discussion, June 8, 2013)

And if we complain, who do we turn to – above us are the directors and administrators and then there are those above the directors who manipulate them. From the time tests and curriculum are designed until they get to the classroom, those in power make it known that it's the teachers who are below them. (Rubia, Small Group Discussion, June 8, 2013)

These top-down, authoritarian, bureaucratic chains of command within the education system flush out those who want to transform public education. This is done by creating an environment where teachers are kept at a distance from one another and from their students, and where the school itself becomes removed from the actual lives of those in the communities who fill the classrooms.

Those working in the public school are very lonely people. (Barbara, Small Group Discussion, June 8, 2013)

And even though education is a fertile ground for promoting groupality, we aren't used to thinking this way. Our goal shouldn't be to capture the flag – it should be let's build something together. (Camila, Small Group Discussion, June 8, 2013)

Educators agreed that there was considerably little time given to the integration of community, and schools often closed themselves off to urban problems by request of school authorities, once again reinforcing this sense of alienation separating them from the larger world. Florencia, for example, who grew up in General Rodriguez during the Menem years, a time when many people were laid off work, remembered going through secondary school not being taught about the social conditions impacting the school community itself.

Our teachers should have taken us out into the streets and explained the reality to us – that this is a factory that’s closing because there is a system in place that’s making the work run out. We studied the world wars as if they were more important than our own factories closing just two blocks away. I lived three blocks from the Serenisima Milk Factory and we never talked about the hardships the workers faced there, the hardships many of our parents who worked there faced. Unless we break with the standards of traditional education we will continue to ignore these injustices. (Florencia, Small Group Discussion, May 11, 2013)

As Florencia’s comments suggest, feelings of alienation and exploitation were evident not just in the city streets, but had repercussions inside the classroom and the school as well. Such conditions were a catalyst in participants search for public space to connect with one another professionally and politically on issues pertinent to education. In the next section I discuss the strategies used by women teaching in the popular education sector who coordinated the educator training workshops to practice the shared ethos, guiding beliefs, and ideals touched up in this section, which have to do with the ways they sought to form stronger ties within the city and the pedagogical community they occupied.

Fighting the Neoliberal Agenda through Play

In writing this dissertation, one of the most useful critiques I found of Freirean based popular education came from Biesta’s (2012) work identifying three forms of public pedagogy – *pedagogy for the public*, *pedagogy of the public*, and *pedagogy that enacts a concern for publicness*. As he explains, *pedagogy for the public* comes by way of tradition public schooling, which sees the world “as a giant school” where educational agents “instruct the citizenry” on how to think, act, and be in prescribed manners (p. 691). This form of public pedagogy essentially erases plurality and difference,

minimizing freedom in favor of “law abiding, tolerant, respectful” (Biesta, 2012, p.691) citizens.

Intended to create critical awareness, pedagogy *of* the public comes from Freire’s *conscientização* and is located within democratic principles of his style of popular education. This involves facilitators rather than teachers committed to learning that is derived from the citizens themselves. Unlike the first, where an end goal for the public is predetermined, this pedagogy unfolds as group dynamics associate and merge. As Biesta (2012) mentions, though this form of public pedagogy connects more to the plurality of the public, one limitation is that democracy and learning become disciplined, suggesting that a pedagogy of the public “comes with a particular conception of political agency in which (political) action follows from (political) understanding” (p. 692). But the assumption is that to be political actors, to gain a political understanding, one must *learn* how to be political, and this often falls into the trap of “an educational regime” that remains “in the logic of schooling” where social and political problems become “learning problems” removed from larger community cognizance (p. 693).

Biesta (2012) prefers a public pedagogy that *enacts a concern for publicness*, one which “is not about teaching individuals what they should be, nor about demanding from them that they learn, but is about forms of interruption that keep the opportunities for ‘becoming public’ open” (p. 685). Such work does not include study circles, discussion groups, or political awareness meetings; “interruptions” that keep opportunities for “becoming public” open are explicitly “out of place and this makes them potentially important, both politically and educationally” (p. 694).

While the popular education workshops did for the most part rely on a Freirean version of a pedagogy *of* the public, some of the more important political interventions came about when group members engaged in a form of public pedagogy that *enacted* a concern for publicness. Such concern was not necessarily pedagogical in nature, it might even be considered “out of place” inside a traditional classroom, but instead relied on affective states of fun and the encouragement of play.

As Biesta (2012) notes, educationally such interventions are important because they enact a form of pedagogy that is neither based on the superior knowledge of an educator telling others how to act and how to be, nor does it put the education method under a regime of learning. Instead, a public pedagogy that *enacts* a concern for publicness – utilizing fun and other “out of place” interruptions – displays a concern for human togetherness, as Arendt (1966) would attest, because it presents an opportunity for evolving into something new, something further.

Groupality, Games, and the Body

It was clear that the vision educators had in building a collective community reserved a place of importance for the body, contrary to typical education *for* the public dynamics that often separate and hierarchize the mind over the body. Stimulating the mind and the body in recreation and with other bodies was integral to the building of community within the workshop space in new and spontaneous ways. As Ana made evident, the workshop facilitators sought to transmit some of popular education’s major concepts through the body first, and to later talk about how the group experienced these concepts.

It is import for teachers to recognize what happens to the body when we come together to build collectively. This is what we’re trying to do – show a

relationship between how our mind and body act together and with others. (Ana, Interview, May 11, 2013)

This was done through the use of interactive games, group discussions, and other activities that sought to stimulate sensations of fun within the workshops. Opportunities of this nature offered ways for participants to learn to play, to be reminded of rules, but to also fool with and transgress those rules or seek out new ones. Here participants discuss how breaking rules was an important part of the vision they shared for popular public education.

More than anything teaching should take a political stance. I can't have the thought in my head that I teach just so my students can one day earn a salary in a company. (Galinda, Small Group Discussion, June 8, 2013)

Yes! We need to teach them how to break the company instead. (Camila, Small Group Discussion, June 8)

For many, this idea of breaking with the established rules, the establishment, was a fundamental part of their beliefs about their roles as teachers, as many felt there was little room for creativity, freedom, and holistic approaches to educating students inside the formal school system. One way they were able to acquire more freedom was finding ways to play along with the bureaucracy, appeasing them, while still breaking the rules to follow their own curriculum.

In traditional schools you have to play along with what the administrators are asking for, like giving numerical grading at the end of each semester. But like, *Fernando participates a lot in class, he does not like writing, he likes talking best, and then I give a grade? How do I evaluate someone like this? So when the school asks me for a grade, I create my own grading rules.* (Paula, Small Group Discussion, June 8, 2013)

One of the collective beliefs agreed upon by workshop participants was that the formal education system teaches educators and students only how to respect the rules or norms, but felt it was their job to strategize new ways to challenge and eventually

transform these norms. August's workshop revolved around the theory, practice, and metaphor of play – what is play? what types of play do we find joyful? which play we do *not* want to participate in? which do we find pedagogically relevant? As it is easier to dare to change the rules in a game than it is to do so in real life, the next section shows how creating affective states of fun enabled popular educators in training to explore social, political, and educational possibilities of rules and rule breaking in a secure space with others.

Breaking Argentina's "We're all White" Rule

A particular cultural rule participants in the workshop wanted to break with was the construction of Argentina's identity, which has historically privileged European whiteness while dismissing Indigenous, African, or other racial groups living throughout the country. Since the Spanish settled Argentina in the 1500s, European trade and immigration brought increased amounts of money and influence to Buenos Aires. Argentina's elite class has historically sought to transform the city into a progressive, modern city reflecting European sensibilities.

In the 1900s Argentina first joined the world market and Buenos Aires became known by those with power and wealth as a sophisticated Europeanized city that those throughout Latin America should aspire to (Sarlo, 2008). Government incentives to bring white Europeans to populate and establish certain demographics throughout the country carried an influx of predominantly northern Italian and Spanish immigrants into the capital in search of jobs. Here they found work in labor industries while a small group of professionals became shop keepers, teachers, small business owners, clerks, and formed an urban middle class. The city enjoyed its European heyday in the 1920s and 1930s

where development also introduced theaters, cafes, artists, and French intellectuals to the city.

From 1946-present, migrants from countries throughout Latin America, *campesinos* from the interior of the country, and an influx of Chinese immigrants have come to live in Buenos Aires for access to jobs and a perceived better quality of life. Through policies of President Juan Perón (1946, 1951, and 1973), the government built *villas* and government welfare programs to provide shelter and means for the country's growing migratory population. Present day projects of urban development and economic segregation throughout the capital however have newly constructed discourses of poverty, urbanization, and disease regarding these communities. Such discourses perpetuate not only fear of heterogeneous public space, as mentioned in previous sections, but likewise those of the brown-skinned Other who inhabit them.

Women in the training workshops were aware of these disparities, and felt that though Argentina's public education system represents groups with a mix of people from different societies and cultures, that meeting the different needs of those in the classroom was underdeveloped in their traditional teacher training classes.

We ignore issues important to Bolivians who live here – questions like how many get to go to college – or we ignore the Mapuche traditions, or various other issues minority groups face in Argentina. We don't always like different realities, or realities we aren't used to, but it is important to understand them in order to educate for them in different ways. (Florencia, Small Group Discussion, May 11, 2013)

As already highlighted, an important reason why teachers were interested in the popular pedagogical model had to do with their desire to break with the established education system and the rules that it entails. Many realized that racism was present in Argentina, and that it was particularly grounded in the country's identification with

European whiteness that stigmatized the diverse social realities that make up the population. As such, many sought to subvert the myth of the white Argentinean.

School 31

Guest speaker and facilitator during our fourth meeting, Hortencia – a teacher at School 31 in the neighborhood of Luedo, a state run public middle school with morning and afternoon classes – led discussion and activities to teach how fun and games could be used to successfully stage protest, while also addressing how she and her coworkers were able to thwart some of the negative practices and systemic problems of whiteness, exclusion, alienation, and exploitation prominent within their education community.

School 31 hosted approximately 900 kids from the district in numerous grade levels, with roughly 30 students per class. The building where she taught was located in a complex of government subsidized high rises in the neighborhood of Villa Luedo, in the city of Buenos Aires. This area includes the surrounding towers of Capellina, Niágua, Misiones, Parque Alameda, Villa Valdez, Villa 15, and the scrap houses of Villa Luedo. Her students were children of working class, precarious workers – their parents were construction workers, did refrigerator repair, they were employees of small businesses, maids, dressmakers, they drove busses or taxis, and some were unemployed. Many were children of migrants from within the interior of Argentina, or they were from Bolivia, Paraguay, and other neighboring countries.

During the workshop Hortencia talked with us about some of the experiences she had as a popular public educator, where she strives to incorporate popular education curriculum into traditional classroom space. In order to let educators in training know more about the ways in which she and her fellow teachers were able to incorporate

popular pedagogy to confront neoliberal policy in public schools, she began by discussing some of the devastating policies implemented since Macri's mayoral governance came into power (it is important to remember here that as of 2016, Macri is now the country's elected president).

She explained that in 2008, Macri's government advanced policies against public schools that had devastating impact throughout the city. Faced with the first onslaught of the educational policy plans of *Macrismo*, unions called for isolated and sporadic strikes. While teachers protested however, the union could not protect their salaries unless the schools were filled with students. An agreed upon stance of adhering to the strikes and demonstrations but trying not to empty schools was negotiated. Teachers needed to be in their classes, making clear that the work stoppage did not mean the abandonment of schools. Instead they held a Strike Day.

Hortencia and her fellow teachers believed fun, games, and play could foster a pedagogical understanding of actions not only related to classroom activities with students, but offered an approach toward popular struggle itself. As she put it during an interview,

There is one important thing to remember and that is – games can transform the rules. They can transform time and space. They can transform the ways we connect with one another. Games are constantly making the rules, breaking the rules, and changing the rules. I can't think of a better way of talking about politics than that. (Hortencia, Interview, August 17, 2013)

She explained to the workshop that utilizing the tenants of popular public pedagogy – tenants Biesta (2012) would consider “out of place” in an education setting – teachers, families, and students convened at the school during the Strike Day to play, listen, dance, create, and learn in defense of public schools. Kids organized games for

other kids, teachers organized workshops, and community members came to participate or to put on cultural performances. There were workshops like chess, jewelry making, and storytelling. There were carnival games like bean bag tosses, bowling, and face painting. There were live performances of a folklore choir; Arab dancers; flute, bass, and guitar bands; Andean dancers; and parades. As Hortencia explained – the body present, in action, in fun, was an affective strategy in driving community solidarity during the Strike Day.

I think that's what school is, something made jointly by teachers, kids, and families. School 31 is getting better and this is not a coincidence. It is the result of effort and participation, and the shared work of children, teachers, and families. It's a real and hopeful victory for the whole community. (Hortencia, Large Group, August 17, 2013)

Hortencia noted that it was important for parents and teachers to think of solutions to the issues the community faced together. As she put it, there is no other way to build a society of equals if peer learning and building were not present. From these notions, feelings of fun were experienced during various activities that also helped to construct long term work – building proposals, emotional ties, changing attitudes and ways of relating to one another, and the desire and the pleasure of doing work with others.

Storytelling, for example, was an important part of the Strike Day, as represented in an activity proposed by educators and students for the flag-raising ceremony. A ritual with military roots reserved for honoring the national flag and the country's anthem became reappropriated to allow space for stories and legends told predominantly by Indo-American community members.

We wanted to consider diversity, multiculturalism, the American identity, and so we came up with the idea of telling American tales and legends. On the first day of the Strike Day, various community members were asked in advance to narrate a story during the raising of the flag. We decided to ask those who came to draw

whatever they wanted about what they had heard. (Hortencia, Large Group, August 17, 2013)

Rather than saluting the flag, community members came out to listen to stories that included *The Legend of the Bat*, *The Legend of the Turtle*, *Hanaq Pacha* or *The Wedding in Heaven*, *The Divorce of the Lion and Lioness*, and *The Tamanduá Inventor*. Drawings, paintings, and sculptures were born from these stories and came to fertilize images used to render a collective mural painted within the school's courtyard. From this activity, the school commissioned community members and professional artists living in Villa Luedo to paint a mural based on the stories and kids' creative drawings. Hortencia explained,

It wasn't just a few of us painting. It wasn't just artists. Everyone painted!
(Hortencia, Large Group, August 17, 2013)

Knitting ties, rebuilding ties, the collective production of the community through parades, music, folk tales – these expressions done together demonstrate how people living among one another, in often precarious conditions, can gather together on equal footing.

Don't get me wrong, these events aren't utopia. When participation is open to everyone, problems can occur. But these things have been minor. Problems did not happen because there was a sense of belonging. It made the kids and the families feel as if it were their own because the activities were their own. *Choripan* and Cokes were given to everyone, proposals were put together by the kids, and families and teachers helped develop their ideas. That's why it was a success. (Hortencia, Interview, August 17, 2013)

Games in Practice

As the morning and afternoon went on, it became clear that many things about Hortencia's workshop worked on a metaphoric level – as during the Strike Day, games and play were incorporated into the curriculum of the workshops so that the group of

popular educators in training could come together not through revolution, anger, or confrontation with the government, but through fun, rule breaking, and the body in contact with other bodies.

Hortencia asked the group to talk about some of the common elements in all games, and to further reflect upon what makes a game a game and not something else (See Figure 1. Game Board). Participants mentioned that games are fun, interactive, that they break the mold of everyday life and they are freeing. They also emphasized that games have rules. Hortencia asked everyone to think about freedom, if freedom is always an aspect of play, and if freedom can exist if there are established rules.

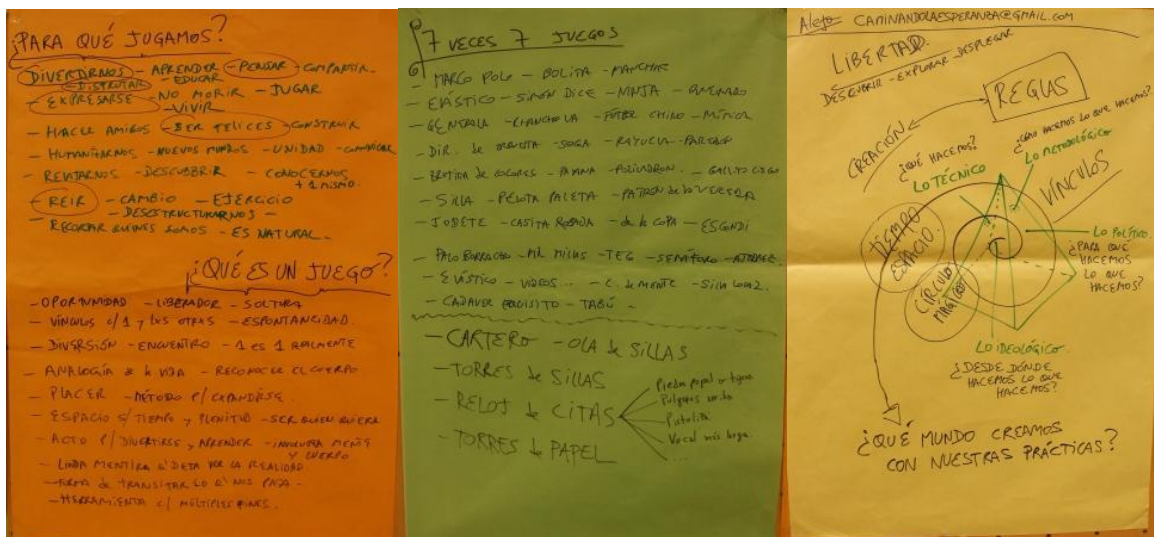


Figure 1. Game Board

After several minutes talking about some of the common elements in all games, and further reflecting upon what makes a game a game and not something else, we broke into small groups to discuss freedom further.

It's important that some rules are firm, because they also allow games to exist. I think that all of this negative connotation about rules is something we created as adults. Even kids add rules to make games challenging for them. (Pedro, Small Group, August 17, 2013)

I was thinking the same. Like yesterday I went to a dance class and I was a little nervous at first, the dancing was too free, too much contact. I was told “Just go and dance, release your soul,” and I didn’t know what to do! I couldn’t do what was asked of me and so I slid back into the corner. But later they told us to play with the wall and because there were some parameters, some boundaries, it really did bring something out of me, something more expressive, more free. (Paula, Small Group, August 17, 2013)

The group concluded that play should include limits or rules, and that popular education projects could utilize affects of play as a strategic way to get people interested in working together, but on the condition that parameters were set to better address the goals being fought for in the education project. This conclusion came into practice in an activity designed with the rule that for 20 minutes we would work together in complete silence. Workshop participants were asked to build six towers as high as possible, constructed from newspaper and tape (see Figure 2. Tower). Hortencia set some pretty strict rules – in addition to not talking, the towers could not be attached to the ceiling or against the walls or chairs, and no one was allowed to hold it. The tower had to be on the ground and able to support itself, and they had to be built in complete silence.



Figure 2. Tower

After we built the towers we reconvened as a large group to discuss what we liked and did not like about the game, its rules, and how the results turned out.

We were communicating – with the individual shapes we were making, with the material we were building our towers from. We were communicating with each other, not “there, this does not go there, and yes, put it there, we should put pieces of tape here.” But it was more body language. (Florencia, Large Group, August 17, 2013)

However this may be, not all were satisfied with the game and not all had fun doing it. As another workshop member expressed,

I did not feel I could play something and not talk. It generated a lot of anxiety and a lot of urgency and everything felt too contained. (Maura, Large Group, August 17, 2013)

Pedro asked Hortencia what happens when a member of your team or group starts to feel like this – excluded, left out, withdrawn from an activity. Hortencia replied,

I put myself in their place and I try to think about what it’s like to be excluded and why they may not want to play any longer. Basically things happen. We have fun, we cry, we fear, sometimes we are overcome with emotions. Take what happens here. You attend the workshop and as time goes by more has to do with if you are enjoying yourself than anything else. It has to do with fun, being with friends, meeting new people. It’s affective. The same happens in a game; if you aren’t having fun it’s difficult to continue to participate (Hortencia, Large Group, August 17, 2013)

Though Hortencia made evident the contingency of affects, how affects of fun are dependent on the individual in concert with those around them, she did not provide any advice to educators who encountered those affected in ways not uniform to the group, who may themselves feel alienated instead.

Defining alienation as the lack or loss of association to a shared happiness as others within an affective space, one of Ahmed’s (2010) key questions involves alterations of affect – questioning who or what converts bad feeling into good feeling and good into bad, considering who becomes exiled from groupality and becomes what she

terms an *affect alien*. Though this gets picked up further in chapter VI, I mention it here to show that one of the problems inherent in popular education projects is that like the formal education system, it does not address the needs of those who are affected in ways that may run different to the dominant social organization. Workshops were never clear on how to make possible the ability to be different without being marginalized from the collective. That is not to say that those who did not enjoy games and play so much were excluded; the workshop members were able to support affective relations of respect, integration, and coalition building in alternative ways.

As evident, teacher educators in training believed solidarity was one of the only ways of combatting the alienating, exploitive repercussions of neoliberal education policy, and a key component of the workshops was building this solidarity amongst participants with stateless or migratory histories within the education system. One way this was done, as just explained, was through affects of fun. Another had to do with employing affective material objects to manifest feelings and memories of nostalgia, home, and with being part of a team, which I discuss in the following section.

The Affects of Matter

In order to understand how such affects were stimulated in the workshop setting, I first turn to Thrift's (2004) work that considers the politics of engineering affects, and Birmingham' (2005) work which considers "animating affections" of gratitude as played out in urban environments. Thrift (2004) argues that modern urban areas are being structured to stimulate affects in the population – lighting, music, event management, performances – which are producing new forms of power and technologies that support them. As mentioned, games enabled mobilization utilizing fun within the workshop. But

there were other ways workshop organizers were able to engineer affects to build a more organized union of educators. They were able to, as Birmingham (2005) would concur, stimulate positive affects gathered over food, drink, ceremonies, music, and performances to commemorate, inaugurate, and celebrate their solidarity, thus inspiring acts of gratitude that gave way to further desiring of solidarity.

Imploring us to look not only to what binds individuals to one another through mind and body alone, but to the non-human resources or tools, to the “*matter of politics*” (p. xiv), Braun and Whatmore (2010) explore the transformative power of objects and things stating that objects are not merely extensions of our bodies, but rather objects “actively give shape to bodies and their capacities” (p. xviii). As recent developments have occurred in such areas as climate change, global capital, population flow, biotech fields, digital, virtual, and wireless tech, Coole and Frost (2010) believe our bond with our environment needs modernizing, and call upon us to “reorient ourselves profoundly in relation to the world, to one another, and to ourselves” (p. 6).

Affect theorists look to the multiplicity of ways we are motivated to question, challenge, and take part in the public realm of the political (Braun & Whatmore, 2010; Coole & Frost, 2010; Featherstone, 2010), and believe both human and non-human energies should be considered in our analysis of understanding collectivity. Humans and things came into this world together, and therefore it is impossible to classify them as something apart or separate from the technical aspects of existence be it language, machinery, or other devices. Non-human and tech objects are inseparable elements to our becoming stories as individuals and collectives (Braun & Whatmore, 2010).

Featherstone's (2010) consideration of new media investigates the potential to experience new intensities through the moving body via cinema, television, or other digital technologies. Such media has the potential to capture and manipulate images so that we are able to view affects as they register through gestures and movements that may normally go undetected through face-to-face interactions. The popular educator training workshops utilized video media in interesting ways. During each workshop facilitators would walk around with cameras in order to record participation in various activities that included drawing, dialoguing, acting, singing, and play. Days after each workshop the group facilitators would compile footage into five minute videos done with edits, cuts, framing, and energetic and culturally relevant *cumbia* music, and post these to the workshop's Facebook page. Based on the comments each video received, participants were energized by the compiled progress made in each workshop and, as Featherstone (2010) says, were motivated by the affective responses that registered in the body involved each activity.

Great first meeting! Can't wait for the second! (Facebook, May 11, 2013)

I'm so proud of my group, genius! (Facebook, June 8, 2013)

What a team! (Facebook, July 6, 2013)

Looking forward to continuing our workshops with a critical eye and to continue dreaming again. Big hugs. (Facebook, August 17, 2013)

Tremendous team! (Facebook, September 7, 2013)

What beautiful moments! See you all in the struggle! (Facebook, October 9, 2013)

As apparent, new media technologies are beneficial in revealing elements of affect that viewers are on the whole not accustomed to seeing, and thus have the potential to alter our understandings of the ranges of affective structures and the role of affect and

the body that operate in everyday life. The Facebook page itself was a way to maintain communication through the lag time between monthly workshops, where members could talk with one another, comment on photos, and learn of activities hosted by the movement. Their comments on the videos posted on the group's page revealed the ways in which viewing the work they had done in previous workshops, with the altered help of upbeat music, clips cut between idle time that enhanced the communal moments of each meeting, fostered team-like dynamics and encouraged participants to return to the next gathering.

Engineering affects of happiness, joy, and fun through videos made it possible for workshop coordinators and participants to sustain links among thoughts, ideas, and objects, as well as bring about positive group feeling. This work coincides with Ahmed's (2010) work on happiness, which supports the idea that objects too affect us, cause us to make evaluations of things, and those evaluations respond with how our body interacts or not with those things. Affects not only direct us toward objects, but to whatever or whoever surrounds that object. Ahmed (2010) talks about the affective quality of gifts - how if someone we love gives us an object, we then associate that object with all of the sensations of happiness we correspond to our beloved. Like the videos presented to participants each month after a workshop, things acquire joyful qualities, insofar as they were positioned in the direction of happiness.

Happiness plays a role in shaping the spaces that surround us, and the objects we treasure are often within close proximity to us. In other words, we gravitate toward objects we like while we repel against those we do not, "the things we do not wish to have, touch, taste, hear, feel, see, those things we do not want to keep within reach"

(Ahmed, 2010, p. 24). Happy objects are shared, passed around, and their conditional affects depend upon those who are sharing in the experience. When we agree that the same thing that causes me pleasure causes others within my proximity pleasure too, we become allies. So it is then that seemingly passive objects do not just impact human action but are actively part of the social and political assemblages we are part of.

One of the many affective objects present in the workshop was *mate*. A drink originally of the Guaraní people, *mate* is a traditional South American caffeine-rich beverage widely drunk in Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, Bolivian, Chile, and parts of Brazil. The Guaraní have a legend that says the Goddesses of the Moon and the Cloud came to the Earth one day to visit it, but found a jaguar that was going to attack them. An old man saved them and, in return, the goddesses gave him a new kind of plant from which he could prepare *a drink of friendship*. The preparation and symbolic meaning behind its social intricacies is evident in the manner of its preparation to the familial, welcoming occasions where it is present.

A simple explanation would suggest *mate* is prepared by steeping dried leaves of *yerba mate* in hot water, then serving it with a *bombilla* or metal straw from a shared hollow gourd. But this explanation neglects the precision that goes into a brew, as well as the disciplined choreography involved in its shared service. I will not go into further explanation of the rich care that goes toward protecting the drinker from scalding their tongue or the chemical breakdown of some of its undesirable nutrients. I will however discuss how *mate* is traditionally drunk in particular social settings, such as family gatherings or with friends, in order to show how it is affective in producing friendship and comradery.

When drinking *mate*, the same gourd and *bombilla* are used by everyone drinking. One person assumes the task of server. Typically, the server fills the gourd and drinks the *mate* completely to ensure its good quality (for this reason, passing the first brew of *mate* to another drinker is considered bad manners). The server subsequently refills the gourd and passes it to the drinker to his or her right. The ritual proceeds around the circle in this fashion until the *mate* becomes washed out or bland, typically after the gourd has been filled about 10 times.

Drinking *mate*, a *drink of friendship*, is affective in its ability to conger nostalgic, familiar sentiments amongst drinkers of all social classes (at least in Argentina, *mate* can be found in almost every home). As an object with affective properties, it unifies by creating an awareness of the drinkers' surroundings – drinkers are aware of the hot water slightly burning their lips from the metal straw, the warmth of the gourd in the palm of their hands. Likewise, those in the *mate* circle may be held in awareness of the group, questioning themselves – *am I next, who do I pass it to, am I talking and not passing it* (when this happens, drinkers are often teased by those in the circle with comments like “it’s not a microphone”). *Mate* has affective, communal properties seeped in nostalgia of home (drinking *mate* with your family and conversing is a typical way to spend an evening), patriotism and comradery (as mentioned, *mate* is the drink of the southern cone with precolonial ties), as well as the body’s need for nourishment, stimulation, nutrition (it is a stimulant and drunk amongst those driving long distances, for example, and may conjure memories of the often undergone teenage road trip). It is also a diuretic and too much of this *drink of friendship* makes the drinker aware of their swollen bladder, the body’s need to pee.

To say *mate* was a popular drink in the workshops would be an understatement. At each workshop the movement organizers arranged a food table of homemade empanadas, veggie pies, and beverages, as well as a literature table, all for sale. *Mate* and hot water were provided free of charge via the quintessential Argentine electric water heaters plugged into various wall sockets. From the food table to the *mate* being drunk by a number of different groups throughout each of the events, the nutrition engineered through these affected material objects registered feelings of sustenance, home, and friendship within the body. In viewing some of the participants' responses quoted above, the idea that they were not merely participants, but becoming part of the same team, was one of the ways in which educators' vision for building a coalition of educators were realized.

Chapter Summary and Discussion

I began this chapter by discussing Arendt's consideration of the social and political subjectivity of the stateless as experienced by those who have lost their place as part of a nation state. I then paralleled this with women training to teach in the popular education sector and their rootless, migratory, marginalized history within the formal school system. In exploring the conditions that influenced women educators' decision to participate in popular education spaces, alienation and exploitation were common feelings they expressed on why they joined the workshops. Through an investigation of the ethos, guiding beliefs, and ideals women teaching in the popular education sector shared at the beginning of their careers, I learned that joining the workshops fulfilled a desire not only for improving classroom practices, but for building the kinds of relationships that they felt lacking in their personal and professional lives.

As Honig (2001) outlines in her view of “the immigrant” in a foreign land, the stateless or migratory subject can teach us a more promising way to study insufficiencies, challenges, and relations between those within an organized community and those on the periphery. As teachers within popular education projects are filled with knowledge, tools, skills, and capabilities earned from a number of vocations, equipped with insights into the particular maneuverings at work in public or private school settings, they have the capability to see, evaluate, and consider popular projects as only an outsider can.

Because of this, I was able to highlight beneficial strategies used in the workshops that allowed women in training to practice their shared ethos, guiding beliefs, and ideals regarding public togetherness and groupality, enabling them to form stronger ties among one another and with their community. This chapter offers insights into how workshop participants got together to discuss, debate, and build upon ideas and knowledge not only with their minds, but with the benefit of doing the same with the body. The use of the body in communion with other bodies became a lesson in how to best address some of the systemic problems within the education community through practices that encouraged breaking with the established rules of pedagogy to create new ones. Similarly, the use of video and social media portraying happiness, joy, and fun, or the comradery of drinking *mate* together, made it possible for workshop coordinators to manifest politics of good feeling and belonging, all the while constructing solidarity and commitment to the education projects.

The findings underscored throughout this chapter are important because they provide an understanding of what brings teachers to popular education projects. In demonstrating the importance of community, solidarity, and relationship building for

those devastated by neoliberalism's alienating and exploitive tactics targeting the public school system throughout Argentina, they also provide a roadmap to developing the types of relationships educators felt they needed to progress education along with human togetherness. This togetherness does not emerge because of a particular location or event, but is dependent on a plurality of affects and actions that make it possible for community to emerge and create something new. Within the workshop spaces, the opportunities for becoming public opened up and, in Arendtian terms, made possible "a space where freedom can appear" (Biesta, 2012, p. 693).

BRIDGE I:

EL DÍA DEL MAESTRO

During one memorable performance activity in the workshop, the coordinators of the workshop series – Camila, Ana, and Alejo – took turns reading various parts of a spoken word poem written by members of the FPDF collective to honor fallen activist and namesake, Darío Fernández, on *Día del Maestro*. *Día del Maestro* is celebrated throughout the country each September 11th to honor teachers as well as commemorate the death of former president and founding father of Argentina’s universal public education program, Domingo Faustino Sarmiento. Typical classroom events on such a day may include nationalist-slanted celebrations in classrooms, small gift giving, discounts for teachers in stores and restaurants – depending on the school and often the economic condition of the neighborhood.

FPDF’s performance presented to the group attending the workshop an alternative approach to a somewhat passive holiday honoring Argentine teachers. Instead, through a performance rooted in themes of resistance, abject fear, a lack of resources, and social exclusion, coordinators were able to demonstrate the ways popular educators were drawing not only from affects of fun, but also from the collective pool of grief surrounding Argentina’s history of human rights abuses. Such practices were intended to not only give name to victims of tragedy, but to turn collective injury into tactical sites of inquiry and struggle.

Workshop organizers wanted to honor the teaching profession and those in attendance, so they held a performative spoken word vigil for Darío Fernández, a teacher

and militant who died defending public education inside and outside the classroom. First, to set the stage, they lit ceremonial candles and incense. All 100+ participants were asked to contribute not only their audience, but their bodies as well. Those in attendance were instructed to lie prostrate on the floor with their eyes closed, in order to become not only observers, but a type of living set piece to aid the performance of tragedy itself. Ambient music played a soft sound track of police car sirens and protest chants as poets told of the day Darío was murdered.

The Performance Begins

(Spoken in Spanish, in parts, tenderly but emphatically amid three poets):

The four year old kid who does not speak knows

The six year old kid who cannot read or write knows

The twelve year old kid who failed all his classes knows

The seventeen year old who knows nothing with certainty knows

Their parents know

Their grandparents know

Their guardians and their caretakers know

Those who have completed their studies know

And those who have repeated a grade know

Even those who have never come to a class know

You do not strike a teacher

Teachers aren't to be hit

(Read in Spanish, tersely, by Camila, walking between bodies lying on the floor):

Darío Fernández was an Argentine teacher and union activist killed at close range by police during an operation to prevent a roadblock in the province. He was

born in 1966 and grew up on a poor family *campo*, but moved to the capital for his secondary education at an industrial school. Here he earned a degree as a chemical technician. He received a teaching degree in 2005, at age 38, and began working as a chemistry teacher in one of the city's poorest neighborhoods.

(Spoken in Spanish, in parts, tenderly but emphatically amid three poets):

But the rich, the powerful, the police, the government, these jackasses do not know

What they know is how to hit

What they know is how to throw tear gas grenades

What they know is how to beat with sticks and stones

What they know is how to shoot rubber bullets

They do not know that you can talk with a teacher

They do not know that you can disagree with what the teacher says

But they do not know that *you do not strike a teacher*

Teachers aren't to be hit

(Read in Spanish, tersely, by Alejo, walking between bodies lying on the floor):

Union members decided that teachers would cut one of the city's major highway routes to protest salaries and an increased calendar year, however the government ordered police to take action against the teachers to prevent them from cutting the road and to ensure traffic would flow smoothly.

(Read in Spanish, tersely, by Ana, walking between bodies lying on the floor):

So upon arrival, teachers were pelted by rubber bullets, tear gas, and a firehose. Teachers were taken in groups, on foot and in cars, escorted to police stations. Darío Fernández was in the back seat of a Fiat retreating from the chaos. A police officer fired a tear gas canister into the car. The tear gas canister struck Fernández in the neck, causing his skull to collapse. Despite operations, he died the next day at the age of 40.

(Spoken in Spanish, in parts, tenderly but emphatically amid three poets):

They do not know this because they've never learned

So they should go home and write it in their notebooks

a thousand times until their hands burn
until it's stuck in their heads, so they can recite it by memory, and never forget

what everyone knows

The rich, the powerful, the police, the government
now, in the next years, and the successors of the successors

learn what the kids age four, six, twelve, seventeen

the delinquents, the failures, illiterates, repeaters
parents, grandparents, guardians, or caregivers know

You *do not* strike a teacher

Teachers aren't to be hit

(As prerecorded police sirens fade, the performance ends in a moment of silence)

Camila, Alejo, and Ana, throughout this pedagogical performance, took on the role of guide. The poem and words they read, the candles, music, the directives to lie down, to listen – it were as if they were leading the group through a public geography of grief to recreate sensations of loss in a communal way. Evident in this performative, reconstructing ritual where bodies were strewn with other bodies prone on the floor together – heads resting on bellies, the smell of bare feet by the face of another, a hand close to another hand – a public intimacy was created while lying vulnerable together with others. While giving name to Darío Fernández and noting the sacrifices he made for public education, the spoken word poem and surrounding ceremony had the chilling effect of evoking overtones of bodies, surveillance, mass killings, while on the ground and not moving.

Recreating grief, in presumably safe spaces like the workshop, wavers between affects of hope and despair, joy and sadness, indignation and indifference – demonstrating the ways popular educators were creating curriculum out of circumstances marked by trauma, while also drafting practices within as tactical sites for addressing social and political healing. Through pedagogical encounters focused not only upon Darío’s death, but on what is afforded when community members consider grief together, this performance guided the public through a prescribed reflection that confronted circumstances faced in the lives of people in precarious communities, in the communities where they teach. Such activities in the workshop opened space and possibilities not only for fun and rule breaking, nor to attain justice or pass policy, but to sit with and recognize tragedy and to consider its place in the community.

Performances like those mentioned in this Bridge were affective, and served to connect the pedagogical community to Argentina’s history of social injustices. These performative disruptions, following Biesta (2012), open public pedagogical spaces by troubling traditional *Día del Maestro* practices so that educators, students, and community members could be made aware, or made to remember, the traumatic death of Darío Fernández and others like him. Through *confianza* and *convivencia*, the force of such activities seeped in grief provided popular educators in training the ability to learn from atrocities enacted in education communities not through dialogue and story circles, or taking up arms for the sake of revolution, but through a call to social action that compels others to form stronger commitments.

The devastating impact of Argentina’s state terrorism, contestations over what constitutes a socially just return to democracy and the related set of challenges associated

with neoliberal reform – popular educators continue bumping into issues that raise questions on how to engage ethically with social issues through pedagogies that consider *whose life is grievable?* and *what is grief's place in education?* In light of Argentina's military dictatorship and more recent neoliberal education policy, educators in this study realized the significant role trauma has played in students' educational experiences, its part in reproducing the status quo that enforces school and community divides, as well as social and class relations. Popular educators used the performative vigil to highlight traumatic atrocities enacted by the state, and encouraged teachers present in the workshop to consider the vulnerabilities they and other activists encounter while working in and defending their communities. As one teacher toward the end of the workshop noted in discussion, these considerations helped her appreciate her own membership to the spaces and the people around her, and provided her further knowledge to better address the needs and improve upon the lives of those she taught.

Pedagogically exploring the intersection of Darío's death, with affects of grief within the larger social and political reality of being popular educators, opened public space for understanding mutual vulnerabilities and the violence faced inside all classrooms and public spaces. Such pedagogical opportunities served not only to commemorate attacked or murdered teachers, but equally to disrupt the hardening of feelings associated with precarious living conditions through music, humor, candles, relaxation posturing. Those within ear shot were reminded of the loss of the members of their communities not in solitude, but experienced such feelings under the banner of solidarity. It was not entirely militant, angry, or infused with political objectives, as *mujerista* scholars would attest, but more an attempt to make a place for grief in the

pedagogical encounter by attempting to rebuild the hard-wired bonds that have been broken by years of trauma.

In the sixth and final workshop, facilitated by Karina Corolla from the popular education center of *Compañeros en Insurrección*, the subject of popular education and trauma, particularly trauma experienced by girls and women in social movements, emerged. Karina's approach encouraged us to think of power as it intersects with culture, colonialism, and patriarchy, and to consider how popular educators must deal with intersectional levels of oppressions simultaneously. Chapter V builds upon these themes by showing how women in this study were problematizing histories within education movements, through their own seizure and retelling of women's stories through a curriculum of "difficult knowledge" (Britzman, 1998).

CHAPTER V

DIFFICULT KNOWLEDGE IN POPULAR EDUCATION

“...but other types of enemies invade our lives.”

Facilitator Karina Corolla began the final popular educator training workshop by showing short video fragments from the 1969 film *Burn!* The film stars Marlon Brando as William Walker, a British agent sent to a fictional 19th-century Portuguese colony in the Antilles island group of the Caribbean, to organize an uprising of African slaves to overthrow the Portuguese regime so England could control the island's sugar cane production. The scene showed a meeting among leaders of the black insurgence movement of the colony, local Creole elite with interests of free trade with the British, and a representative sent on behalf of England to recolonize the land. Up for negotiation during the meeting were not only goods or territory, but the population the British wanted access to – particularly African women.

Black women's bodies, Indian women's bodies, were used in the fight, were used to generate revolt, in negotiation, but there were no spaces created for them to govern. Instead they were taken from their natural environment, forced into a marriage contract, or forced into prostitution. (Karina, Large Group, October 19, 2013)

Karina used the film not only to critique the ways in which African women were positioned in the colonial narrative, but to encourage participants to consider how women of color have been situated throughout the history of the Americas. To build upon this theme, she had participants then listen to a song entitled *La Maldición de Malinche*. To give some backstory, Malinche was a Nahuatl woman and one of twenty native women the Spaniards took as slaves from Mexico's Gulf Coast in 1519. Through her enforced

role as interpreter, advisor, concubine, and intermediary for Hernán Cortés, Malinche is believed to have played a role in Spain's conquest of the Aztec Empire.

As a historical figure, Malinche's reputation has been altered according to changing social and political perspectives, though she is typically portrayed in dramas, novels, and paintings as an evil or scheming temptress. In Mexico today, *La Malinche* remains potent – understood in often conflicting interpretations as the embodiment of treachery, the quintessential victim, or simply as symbolic mother of the Mexican people. But the term *Malinchista* still refers to a disloyal woman (see Appendix E. Song).

Karina asked us to consider, *who was Malinche?* and the bigger implications her portrayal has for how women are personified throughout Latin America.

She was a woman who was passed from one village to another. She was sold, she was raped, but then stigmatized as the one who brought the conquest and destruction to Indigenous peoples. Women have historically been vexed by violence, massive amounts of rape, due to the very denial of our bodies, through our enslavement. The conquest of the female body has been a constant territory fought and claimed in the colonial process. (Karina, Large Group, October 19, 2013)

Discussions of Latin America's colonial history were paralleled with contemporary issues women face in Argentina. In particular, Karina drew attention to the lack of convictions rates brought upon perpetrators accused of raping women during the country's military dictatorship.

Even today, why has it been so hard to convict those accused of the rape upon women in clandestine detention centers? It's because the victims of these crimes, their experiences are crossed with the entire history of Latin America, a history of impunity in relation to women's bodies. (Karina, Large Group, October 19, 2013)

Clearing a Path for Women's Issues

These comments led to a discussion in which many popular educators and those in training expressed considerable concern for young women in their communities and

the experiences they carried. For example, Rubia talked about how the girls she taught were influenced by the negative media they were surrounded by on the streets and on television.

I started organizing birthday parties for kids. They all want to dance like Violetta. Violetta is a series on Disney and all girls want to have Violetta themed birthdays. And they tell me, “I want to look like Violetta, I want to have a body like Violetta.” These girls are five years old! Or they see that super macho Gangnam Style video and they want to dance like this. (Rubia, Small Group, September 7, 2013)

Gangnam Style was a popular K-pop single by South Korean musician Psy that was released in July 2012. By the end of the year, the song had topped music charts in over 30 countries throughout the world. As the song gained popularity, its signature dance moves – the horse gallop, lasso, leg sweep, flick, shuffle, pop and pose – became the stuff of dance floor legend. As Rubia described,

They call it the horse dance because of the steps. During the chorus you’re supposed to jump like a horse. This guy is with different half naked girls. The video doesn’t have much content; it’s just him dancing in different places with girls who act like they want to fuck him. Kids as young as five years old want to be like Violetta or these girls in the video. (Rubia, Small Group, September 7, 2013)

Stories of injustice, discrimination, and abuse only grew worse from there.

Florencia voiced what many were feeling, which concerned their role as educator activists and how they could support girls and women among all the conflicts going on in their lives and in the world.

As educators it’s our job to reach out to girls suffering violence at home, even if this isn’t part of our school curriculum. We may not know the specific story of each girl in our class, but we know the burden of violence we face as women, and we know that girl over there is probably not going to say anything because of how she’ll be perceived. And she will probably not understand the shit load of mathematics I’m teaching that day because her problems cloud her ability to learn. How do we make *this* a priority? (Florencia, Large Group, October 19, 2013)

Karina agreed that girls' and women's stories were often silenced in traditional schools and popular education spaces because this silencing has historically been built over centuries. With cases of violence, for example, she noted that it can be difficult to decide a clear and constructive path with regard to girl's and women's issues because these issues form part of the social fabric linked to power and making certain bodies invisible. Here she explained how even in popular education projects, women's issues rarely took precedence over issues of economic welfare.

The issue of whether social programs are being taken up or not and *bla bla bla, welfare!* We never add issues and problems and personal situations to our list of priorities. But this is how we make popular education complex. You will have many issues to support and some will not be high-level strategic issues, but those of everyday life because movements are made of people who live everyday lives. How you untangle these oppressions is based on reaching around the Yankee Embassy and transnational corporations to denounce the oppressions impacting our daily existence. (Karina, Large Group, October 19, 2013)

The Story of a Woman from Chaco

Through an anecdote Karina explained how these daily oppressions were impacting women's bodies, women's lives. The follow story recounts what she observed during a peasants organization in Chaco – a province in the northeast of Argentina with the worst social indicators in the country. An organization was formed amongst *compañeros*, activists, Marxists, anti-capitalists, who decided to discuss issues related to how the transnational trade agreement, *Mercosur*, would impact life in rural communities. While discussing *Mercosur*, many women raised the issue that *machismo* was affecting their ability to participate in the movement. One woman, a leader of the movement, could not leave her house because her husband would be furious with her when she returned, becoming violent if she dared come home happy or smiling.

I began the discussion by asking the group, “what’s the biggest problem you have with *Mercosur*?” And one *compañera* said, “my main problem is leaving my house.” Now keep in mind, we were talking in the context of *Mercosur*. So I asked, “what’s the problem?” and she said, “in the *campo* there’s a lot of *machismo*. Many women are forced to stay in their homes and not participate in the struggle for our lands.” And I asked, “what is the *machismo* in the *campo* like?” She said, “I have two husbands and 15 children.” Now we’re not talking about someone who stopped by because she saw a light on in the community center and decided to join us. She was one of the *leaders* of the peasant agrarian movement. She said, “Let me explain. My dad sold me when I was 15. Actually, I was not sold. I was given to a man to settle a land debt. Giving me to this man dissolved the debt.” (Karina, Large Group, October 19, 2013)

She was 15, and the landlord she was sold to was 45. That man had five children who were older than her, but she was forced to cook and clean and look after them like a mother. The landlord made her have sex with him and they had five more children. Then the time came where he could not have sex anymore.

She explained to us that “I had a body that could still bare children. So the landlord chose a second husband for me while I was still living with him. The second husband gave me five more children.” When she had the last, the doctor who treated her said that she could not have any more children. So without asking, he tied her tubes. She said, “that’s when I rebelled.” I asked, “how did you rebel?” She said, “I adopted a child. Since they decided I could not have any more kids, I rebelled.” These are stories that happen, and this is how you learn about sexism in the *campo*. (Karina, Large Group, October 19, 2013)

As Karina told it, this woman was bought, forced to make children, then forced to have her fallopian tubes tied. She was forced to have children and then forbidden to have children. This woman was the leader of a peasant organization fighting for agrarian reform, for socialism, however her story was also linked to the successive appropriation of her body.

We are building autonomous popular organizations, but first we need to know our subjects, and how the life of our subjects is traversed by these oppressions. (Karina, Large Group, October 19, 2013)

Karina explained that these are real stories of what happens to children, adolescence, and adults every day in social movements and popular education spaces.

If a girl gets pregnant and does not want the pregnancy, what do we do? If a transgender person arrives, if a prostitute arrives, how do we handle it in the movements as they are structured? It is much easier to go throwing stones at the Yankee embassy, but other types of enemies invade our lives every day. (Karina, Large Group, October 19, 2013)

Difficult Stories

Karina's lessons during the workshop offered a space for educators to consider how girls' and women's stories can be recognized within our learning environments. Such difficult stories created an environment where women could discuss conditions in their classrooms and in society, and opened an approach to potentially redirect their organizing strategies from one that fought capitalism as an economic issue, to one that also considered it a fight against neoliberalism's detrimental treatment of girls and women.

Zembylas (2014) believes in education's ability to use troubling histories to disrupt alienation and exploitation by showing how we are all emotionally connected to others through shared "difficult knowledge" (Britzman, 1998) we bring to pedagogical spaces. Grounded strongly in the affective power of grief's potential within a collective, his work recognizes the pedagogical benefits and challenges of living with trauma in the midst of powerful social, historical, and political legacies, offering the importance of such feelings as a form of knowledge that gives way to deeper connections and commitments of community.

Difficult knowledge as it intersects with affective teaching and learning can be found in numerous publications (for curriculum and – death see Berman, 2007; empathy

see Boler 1997; loneliness see Britzman, 2003; trauma see Dutro, 2008, 2011, Ellis & Bochner, 1996, or Simon, Rosenberg, & Eppert, 2000; crises testimony see Felman & Laub, 1992; fear see Jackson, 2010; chronic illness see Lather & Smithies, 1997; historical violence see Lehrer, Milton, & Patterson, 2011; forced migration see McConaghy, 2003; social justice see Niyozov & Anwaruddin, 2014; antiracist education see Shim, 2014; pleasure see Zembylas, 2007), however none have contributed empirical evidence to the conception of popular education as public healing spaces, particularly owing to ramifications of (state) terrorism or neoliberalism, in any direct way.

In the context of the devastating impact of Argentina's crimes against its citizens within the framework of a genocide, contestations over what constitutes a socially just return to democracy and the related set of challenges associated with neoliberal reform – women teaching in the popular education sector are encountering students' and their own past trauma and dealing with how to engage ethically with social issues in the present through students' and their communities' difficult knowledge. In general terms, the force of their curriculum provides the education community the ability to learn from past atrocities and share in the difficult knowledge that transpired just decades prior.

Through the myths and legends of movement heroes like Darío Fernández, to public performance, testimony, and community introspection, popular educators are creating pedagogical moments from trauma that manifest public togetherness through feelings of anger, sadness, or even inspiration for retribution. This chapter provides answers to – What influences women teaching in the popular education sector and their participation in popular education projects? What shared ethos, guiding beliefs, or ideals characterize them while they teach in popular education classrooms? What are the

strategies used by these educators to practice these shared ethos, guiding beliefs, or ideals? How are women teaching in the popular education sector connected or disconnected to these spaces? – this chapter will examine the ways in which women make trauma pedagogical – through “public grieving” (Butler, 2004) practices and curriculum entrenched in difficult knowledge. In particular, it will show how women are resignifying emotional injury as strategic sites of social and political transformation.

Being Moved by Being Connected

Ahmed (2005) considers the relationship between movement (*being moved*) and attachment that is implicit in our emotions. In her work she deconstructs the ways in which emotions both move us and bind us, make us feel as well as keep us committed and connected to place. As we are moved by events, emotions, people, and by circumstance, so too do we become committed to those things, and that which makes us committed also affects us in ways that mark us no longer the same as we once were. Hence movement, being moved, connects bodies to other bodies – where “attachment takes place through movement, through being moved by the proximity of others” (p. 100).

Likewise, this chapter looks to the ways mid-career popular educators in this study strove to both move and attach their students to the education projects by utilizing an affect based approach to pedagogy designed to address traumatic experiences in the formal education system and communities as well. It is important here to note that many students who enroll in popular education classes have been to four or five different schools, have dropped out, been kicked out, have been expelled repeatedly from educational settings, left school without returning, or came to popular education through

intermediate organizations such as housing cooperatives, public libraries, or organizations that work with youth and adults living on the streets. Like teachers in training discussed in chapter IV, students too can be characterized by their trajectory of entering and leaving schools, and their “migrant identity” that marks them transients within the formal educational system (Ampudia, 2004).

Reflecting on what they term *pedagogy of recuperation*, Jaramillo, McLaren, & Lazaro’s (2011) work in Argentina recognizes that the country’s formal education system does not anticipate the popular subject of the migrant, the border identity, inequality within the education system itself, and this only generates and deepens further disparities for students. As a result, many students have a very negative disposition toward school and their capabilities within them, and it is evident once they arrive to popular schools.

With that said, women teaching in the popular education sector realized the significant role trauma has played in students’ educational experiences, its role in reproducing the status quo that enforces school and community divides, as well as social and class relations. Though affects of fun were present in the classes and parties I observed, this chapter will show how mid-career women teaching in the popular education sector utilized difficult knowledge as a pedagogical opportunity to support students inside their classrooms and communities.

Theoretical Overview of the Chapter

Teaching from difficult knowledge in classroom spaces can illuminate the representations of social traumas in curriculum, as well as students’ ambivalence and anxiety with education and in their daily lives (Pitt & Britzman, 2003). Britzman (1998) considers the challenges of teaching and learning about and from difficult knowledge,

finding the “difficult” difficult not only because of subject matter held in curriculum artifacts, images, or classroom discourses – but because knowledge of trauma may be deeply known and deeply felt by the pedagogical communities within which such material is taught. However Britzman’s (2000; Pitt & Britzman, 2003) work encourages educators to look to the ways in which difficult knowledge can be incorporated into curriculum to offer more than reflections on despair and veneration – but may instead afford hope and reparation within pedagogical contexts.

Zembylas (2014) continues to build upon Britzman’s work by providing a way to theorize experiences of social and historical trauma, grief, and loss, while also revealing how such affects can be incorporated into a political project toward social and political action. Reorienting Britzman’s “hope and reparation,” he puts this in conversation with Butler’s (2004) writing that negates our thoughts that grief and mourning are privatizing, solitary conditions. In her meditations in *Precarious Life: The Power of Mourning and Violence*, Butler’s (2004) theorization of grief elucidates its potential to enhance our empathetic connections with others – in shared loss, vulnerability, sadness, or anger.

What grief displays is the thrall in which our relations with others holds us, in ways that we cannot always recount or explain, in ways that often interrupt the self-conscious account of ourselves we might try to provide, in ways that challenge the very notion of ourselves as autonomous and in control... Let’s face it. We’re undone by each other. And if we’re not, we’re missing something... despite one’s best efforts, one is undone, in the face of the other, by the touch, by the scent, by the feel, by the prospect of the touch, by the memory of the feel (p. 23).

Rather than considering trauma and grief’s depoliticizing aspects, her work encourages a sense of “political community of a complex order” (Butler, 2004, p. 22), an order based on relational ties, group dependency, and ethical responsibility. She questions

if there is something to be gained from grieving, by not seeking a resolution to it but instead surrendering and exposing oneself to its unbearableness.

If we stay with the sense of loss, are we left feeling only passive and powerless, as some might fear? Or are we, rather, returned to a sense of human vulnerability, to our collective responsibility for the physical lives of one another? (Butler, 2004, p. 30)

To answer these questions, Butler (2004) grounds her exploration of grief in American policies during the Iraq war, the treatment of Palestinians, and the U.S. military's handling of Guantánamo prisoners, cuttingly rejecting any suggestion that the devastation of the World Trade Center validated such violent, vengeful measures. Calling out George W. Bush's *War on Terror*, Butler (2004) suggests our nation's mourning should not have led to retaliation, but to a better understanding of the ways in which our country and the lives within are fundamentally connected to and dependent upon others.

The question that preoccupies me in the light of recent global violence is, Who counts as human? Whose lives count as lives? And, finally, *What makes for a grievable life?* Despite our differences in location and history, my guess is that it is possible to appeal to a "we," for all of us have some notion of what it is to have lost somebody. Loss has made a tenuous "we" of us all. (Butler, 2004, p. 20)

Butler (2004) maintains that human beings are entangled with one another, they are interdependent in their grief, their loss, their vulnerability, and mourning – but that there is a great and unknown transformative influence to these affects that can neither be charted nor planned in advance. She sees collective action taking hold through the interrogation of the limits of our sensory knowledge – what our bodies can hear, what we can see, what we can feel – holding opportunities for reimagining and rebuilding community through critique, questioning, and understanding our collective difficult knowledge.

The following section speaks of the participants in this study who were using forms of difficult knowledge and grief to move, attach, and transform students through their curriculum and practices in popular education spaces.

Research Site and Participants' Backgrounds

14 de Octubre

I met Sophia by chance. I was teaching English language classes in Buenos Aires and as luck would have it, she became my student. As we got to know each other I learned that she was an anthropologist and that her research and teaching were also on popular education. Sophia was one of the educators in my study with the most time teaching in popular schools. She had just completed her masters in teaching anthropology and explained to me that it was a 2-year wait for her degree to be processed and recognized by the state post-graduation, which ultimately put a hold on her ability to be accredited to teach at a public state school. Though she was passionate about the popular education project, Sophia acknowledged that working at popular schools was a way to gain experience while waiting for her teaching paperwork to go through the system.

Sophia started teaching at age 19 in Villa 50's popular school 14 de Octubre in 2007 – named after the date that the affiliated factory became reoccupied by its workers. *Las Coordinadoras*, the social movement under which she worked for, organized several popular schools together with the *empresas recuperadas* movement that developed in the early 2000s, with the intention of building educational spaces for workers and their communities. Since their initiative took hold, other schools had developed in recuperated factories, trade unions, and social organizations. Here Sophia taught various courses for

students who had not completed formal education – English, Social Movements, and Introduction to Research, among others.

We had our first meeting at a cafe in the Belgrano neighborhood of Buenos Aires on July 25, 2012, and continued to meet several times throughout the course of this study. In addition to interviews, Sophia granted me the opportunity to tour her school, meet with educators in the breakroom, and observe classes. I also visited 14 de Octubre's inauguration ceremony held to honor the finished construction of a new classroom at the school. The new classroom was being named after Ricardo Rivas who was part of the resistance movement against the *Alianza Anticomunista* – a conservative right wing death squad prominent during the military dictatorship.

Union of Popular Organizations, Gender Commission

The Union of Popular Organizations (UP) was another collective whose popular schools fell under *Las Coordinadoras* as well. Consisting of unemployed workers who formed as a collective in 2006, there were over 2000 UP activists in the movement at the time of this study. UP did a lot of activities for popular communities – tutoring, recreational activities, housing support, micro-businesses, *and* they also ran popular schools. During this phase of the study I worked with UP's Gender Commission. Here I focused on a ceremony held to honor participants who completed a series of gender based workshops.

I came to know of UP's work with gender through a woman named Marina who worked out of the movement's central office in Buenos Aires, located within the neighborhood of Constitución. I had initially met her at The Labor Studies Center of UBA, where I saw her give a talk on UP's work to place Bolivian migrant laborers in

community built homes. From there we developed a working relationship, meeting on several occasions and in a number of different locations, and she became instrumental in providing me with contacts for the pilot study from which this project grew (O'Donnell, 2014).

I was interested in understanding more about UP's work with popular education and gender, so I sat down with Marina at the UP headquarters to discuss the commission further. UP's Gender Commission worked in popular neighborhoods, stressing the historical, social, economic, political, and cultural influences that contributed to gender oppression in their communities. They were composed mostly of women and some men from diverse fields including psychology, law, social work, reproductive health, and education, who had been organizing for over five years to combat violence faced by women and children, human trafficking, stigmas toward sexual diversity, and restrictive reproductive health policy. Likewise they provided emotional, social, and joint support with social organizations and neighborhood institutions, as well as information on how women could attain temporary housing, work, support groups, and get in touch with other advocates committed to these issues. Signs of their strength and impact in women's spaces could be seen throughout Buenos Aires – in food carts and dinners, cultural centers, or in the streets where UP *compañeras* marched to vindicate the rights of women.

At the pedagogical level, their fight against gender inequalities could also be seen in community centers where the commission brought awareness, training, and education to girls and women through workshops geared toward unweaving sexist behavior from men and women, with the goal of transforming communities into places without humiliation, violence, or exploitation. These workshops covered topics like violence

against women, the legal rights of women, sexual and reproductive health, self-esteem building, gender myths, sexual diversity, as well as self-care, respect, and pleasure.

Marina invited me to a celebration that UP's Gender Commission was having in honor of those who completed a series of gender based workshops in Villa Beltran.

Theme Developments

This chapter will examine the social conditions that influenced mid-career women teaching in the popular education sector's curriculum of difficult knowledge, and the strategies used by them to turn emotional injuries to strategic sites of social and political transformation in one popular school in Villa 50, and an end-of-the-year celebration by UP's Gender Commission. Here I analyze difficult knowledge as it intersects with affective teaching and learning by exploring how popular educators encountered students' past traumas through public grieving practices and created opportunities for public healing spaces inside their classrooms and communities. Likewise I will show how curriculum entrenched in difficult knowledge holds the potential for resignifying emotional injuries as strategic sites of social and political transformation.

Through the encouragement of insiderness; inspirational speeches; and community events with food, music, and games – participants teaching from places of difficult knowledge sought to instill feelings of belonging in their students by not only recovering their confidence in themselves, but encouraging pride in the communities where they lived. Participants believed such pedagogy enabled many of their female students to confront unjust situations they encountered in their daily lives in order to manifest both personal and communal change.

Findings

Villas Miserables, representations of extreme urban poverty in Argentina, can be traced back to the early 20th century, though significant growth has remained constant since the 1970s, accelerating substantially in the 1990s. Upon occupied lands with no formal organization, paved streets, or running water, families build homes of scrap metal, wood, or concrete. Full of undocumented migrants, *villa* residents are generally left to fend for themselves, abandoned to their own devices, unless they cross the boundaries and disturb the world beyond its borders (see Figure 3. Villa 50). *Villa* life on television, in the media, through the chinwag of middle class Argentines, depicts crime, drug, and disease laden territory full of smoke, polluted water, open sewers, trash, waste, and should be avoided at all cost.



Figure 3. Villa 50

But popular educators I talked with tell a different story, a story of a school built by a community in need of a space for adults to finish the educations they had abandoned some time ago, for young people whose ways of being did not gel with government mandated education uniform to all Argentine students. Along with stories of hardship, they spoke of *villa* pride and belonging.

Difficult Knowledge at 14 de Octubre

14 de Octubre is a part of Villa 50 located beneath highway Louis Pacheco. Looming above the school was a GIANT billboard for the cell phone network company *Personal* (see Figure 4. Cell Phone Sign). The sign read *Cada Persona es un Mundo* or Each Person is a World. On it were the photographs of two young, stylish, white Latinos embracing in what appeared to be the comforting pose of those in a hassle-free, heterosexual relationship.



Figure 4. Cell Phone Sign

Though this image may have appeared in malls and populated avenues throughout the city, the location of the sign above the *villa* contributed an overall unsettling nature to the scene when approaching Sophia's school. One could interpret the sign and the couple depicted as God-like figures staring in opposition to the poor, undocumented society below. Thus, the young white Latinos seemed to represent the essential materialism of the world – that sense that life in our capitalist world was all and only about those things money *can* buy – the clothes with posh labels, the latest tech products, the whitened toothy smiles of our limited standards of beauty.

So the couple stared down on the Peruvians, Bolivians, Paraguayans, *campesinos* from the interior of Argentina as they passed under the billboard and through the maze of alleyways below. The sign looked down upon the people in the *villa* as if to say that all the talk of the city's prosperity was a lie – that the city itself produced wealth for some, but for the majority of people, their hopes for a better life were analogous to the winding *villa* alleyways that went nowhere.

This advert hung ominously above the community, the base of the structure that supported the billboard itself impaled the center of the public park kids used to play soccer in, but it did not call to them. It called to those on the highway to consume, while standing in cruel irony to those living in the *villa*, those who were dark skin and poor, from Indigenous communities, from *campos* that had run dry in the interior of the country. They did *not* represent a world unto themselves, *Cada Persona es un Mundo* – individuality, being anything more than the labels *delincuentes, pobres, negros*, was a luxury *los villeros* could not afford.

I met Sophia at the Drago Train Station at 2:15 to travel to the *villa*. Riding on the train to the school, Sophia pointed out “Here on the highway you can see where the city splits from the *villa*.” To one side you could see the luxury towers of Puerto Madera, and to the other the shacks of wood, aluminum, concrete, and cardboard that make up Villa 50.

14 de Octubre is housed in a factory of the same name. In addition to producing auto parts, it hosts a popular school and library, garden, computer and arts center. There was a relaxed atmosphere when entering the building. There were no guards, no one checking ID, no metal detectors. As we made our way to the classroom, we were greeted

with kisses on the cheek by teachers and students who were either just beginning or just ending their day.

Inside the Classroom

As McConaghy (2003) notes, pedagogy and curriculum of difficult knowledge should both ease and aggravate in order to engage learners ethically and politically with inherent asymmetries of trauma and vulnerability. However pedagogies of difficult knowledge that attend to vulnerabilities is not enough to inspire remonstration at injustice or build solidarity. Zembylas (2014) believes the radicalization of solidarity requires that teachers and learners become familiar with their mutual capacity to injure or make others' vulnerable. As Jansen (2008) suggests, provocative pedagogy should encourage affective connections with others, while also acknowledging the differences in levels of vulnerability as to how some social groups experience trauma and loss more than others.

Such awareness comes through what Jansen (2008) considers empathetic questioning and listening – *What are you afraid of? Why do you feel so strongly about that? Where did you learn this?* Through pedagogy that acknowledges, embraces, and confronts degrees of hurt as experienced by those in their classroom, this questioning allows educators to reckon with students outward expressions that mask pain, anxiety, fear, and vulnerability (Jansen, 2008). By continuing to question *What do you think can be done to change this?* – difficult knowledge puts agency in the hands of the person made vulnerable and thus proposes action in the face of precarity (Butler, 2004). “It does not dwell on the hurt and it does not feed a sense of defeat. Changing the storyline is absolutely crucial” (Jansen, 2008, p.73) even as the pain of trauma is acknowledged.

I mention this because during several visits to Sophia's classes, it was evident that students' personal circumstances still at times got in the way of their learning. Often students expressed that they did not like school, they felt anxious about studying again, or they believed they could not learn due to age, personal history, or a lack of access to resources like computers, childcare, transportation, books, or scholarships. Left over from their past experiences in the formal education system, Sophia tried to build positivity amongst students' heterogeneous pasts, knowing their negative encounters with education had been due to social inequalities rooted in class, race, gender, sexual orientation and identification.

Mid-career popular educators I talked with found it imperative to identify students' histories in order to consider the specificity of the subjects who came from migratory educational patterns. Combined with motivation and self-esteem building, these educators sought to generate new possibilities to restore students' will to learn. One of the ways popular educators did this was by creating flexible schedules that permitted students to continue their education and allowed exchange to occur between different members of the education community. Classroom content was presented in semi-structured modules and tutoring sessions, and served to assist students who were not able to complete coursework due to family, work, or other conflicts.

With that said, Sophia strongly believed that the *greater* part of her job as a popular educator was meeting the communities she worked with where they were at, understanding that space, and encouraging them to push past any blocks they may have – to open, to grow, to sustain.

A lot of what I do is teach encouragement and try to recover students' self-confidence. (Sophia, Interview, July 25, 2012)

She did this by building students' self-esteem through their own and their community's difficult knowledge, and further by encouraging them that they too could learn. I witnessed this during one class where one of Sophia's students, a woman in her late 60s, who had only finished her primary schooling, was just beginning her secondary classes. Sophia was going over a beginner English lesson with the class, *hello my name is...*, and when Sophia got to her she just froze. She said angrily, *I can't do it*, and remained inattentive on her cell phone for the remainder of the class. Later she looked for Sophia in the teachers' room. I saw the student hug her and apologize for having been, what she considered, *grosero* or rude in class.

I asked Sophia what she thought about this encounter. She commented that it was common for students to develop these types of "affection strategies" to compensate for what they felt they could not do in class.

Sonia also made cookies for another teacher once after a difficult time in class. I think we have to interpret this as a developmental strategy of the students, but instead of continuing this behavior we need to give them encouragement in class, show them that they can speak, answer a question, and give an opinion, without treating them as if they were children or disabled. (Sophia, Interview, December 14, 2012)

She then recounted a story about one of her students, Natalia, who got very angry over a newspaper article that did a feature on the popular school, because it said that 14 de Octubre employed "special teachers."

Natalia said, "why does it say here that we need special teachers? What, *are we different?*" I had to calm her, to tell her that we are a school like any other. This is important because we want students to recover their self-confidence and also, of course, to learn. Many come to our school with negative experiences, especially when they arrive. They feel they can't learn. Part of the reality of teaching here involves building self-confidence. (Sophia, Interview, December 14, 2012)

For Sophia and other popular educators, many felt their job was not solely to form a movement or unite communities. They believed their job was also to socialize participants to express their feelings, enrich their emotional vocabulary, and help them process their emotions regarding their education histories. Usually stemming from unresolved conflicts, *transferences* in educational settings occur when students' unconscious feelings stemming from love, desire, fear, pain, authority, or from an earlier history of learning, are projected into new situations, unto new people, within pedagogical experiences (Shim, 2014). Such projections are often inappropriate in the present situation.

Britzman (2013) writes that “there is no teaching or learning without transference and yet, the transference...may serve as resistance to learning” (p. 105). Sophia made evident that teaching from places of difficult knowledge eased some of the emotional complicacies many students experienced as a result of earlier helplessness that transferred memories of alienation, need, embarrassment, and frustration into their current classroom circumstances.

What you've got to understand is that a lot of women come from difficult circumstances – they are ridiculed, beaten, told since they were very young that they're worthless. And so because of this, mostly my pedagogy is about recovering self-esteem. In reality, instead of transforming society, I try to meet students where they are. Instead of throwing big social theories at them, I let not just their knowledge but their worlds inform what I teach. I try to listen and address their needs and issues, questions and opinions. (Sophia, Interview, April 14, 2013)

Similarly Sophia described how some of the results from this type of affective encouragement carried out in students' personal lives.

Many women, by the time they've graduate, have left abusive relationships, have improved their situations at work. Every year, the first day of class, we hold an assembly for first year students. Here students who are in their second and third

years will talk to groups of 70 plus newcomers. And women who were very introverted when they first came to us will speak out about their experiences in the program. It's very inspiring. (Sophia, Interview, December 14, 2012)

Ethnographies of Difficult Knowledge

During one visit to Sophia's school I observed her College Preparation class where 11 students in total – four men and seven women – were present. The course could be taken in a number of directions, and though she did not call her curriculum one of difficult knowledge, she did consider her approach anthropological in that she felt she taught in a way that sought to understand where students were coming from and to get them to understand their own social conditioning.

Students were in their third year at the school and Sophia knew them well from previous courses. Everyone was friendly and the atmosphere felt like a classroom of teenagers more than adults ranging in age 20-80. *Mate* was passed around and cookies and chips were nibbled throughout the class. Sophia sat at an old wood desk in the center U-shaped table arrangement. On her desk sat a sprite bottle with 95% of the liquid having been drunk some time ago by some unknown person. Tables and chairs mismatched as most of the furniture was donated from other social organizations.

The classroom was noisy; Sophia had to compete with sounds of cars from the highway above the *villa*, just outside her window. Cell phones rang and students often answered them and so many conversations occurred at once. The class settled down when Sophia introduced the topic for the day. On the board she wrote:

Proyectos de Investigación

In an effort to foster further understanding of their communities and the members within, students in their 3rd year were required to make ethnographic studies focused on a

social issue faced in the *villa*. Sophia assigned students to sit in their research groups, notifying them that by the end of the class she wanted them to present her with a list of their subjects, the context of their study, what they already knew about their study, and their study's possibilities or limitations. Their ethnography projects were focused on:

- Students who graduated from popular schools
- Students who dropped out of popular schools
- A food bank run by a local organization called *Obreros Católicos*
- Homeless elderly who lived in the Villa 50 train station
- Life stories of illiteracy and women in the *villa*

These projects were a way for Sophia to teach students rudimentary concepts about doing research – interviewing, analyzing, and making methodical observations – while also drawing on community experiences that would enable a better understanding of how to act on some of the difficult situations they and residents of the *villa* faced. Coinciding with Butler's (2004) thoughts on public trauma and grief, Sophia acknowledged that these ethnographic investigations likewise provided students a better understanding of the ways in which their lives and the members of their community's lives were fundamentally connected to and dependent upon each other.

It is a way to get them to understand more about their communities in socially and politically and culturally situated ways. (Sophia, Interview, November 12, 2012)

She and her students talked about how to analyze data, particularly highlighting ideas about community membership, what marked someone an outsider or an insider, and some of the benefits or the problems that may arise should one be either an outsider or an insider to a community while doing ethnographic research. To augment the discussion she used a book by anthropologist Philippe Bourgois entitled *In Search of Respect*:

Selling Crack in el Barrio, an ethnographic study of street-level drug dealers in East Harlem, New York.

She asked her students to decide if it were possible for someone outside of a community to become part of the community they were researching? Could they become indigenous to the community? The answers students gave drew upon a previous week's discussion based loosely on the work of Loïc Wacquant and his time spent in Chicago boxing rings.

Even if he became an excellent fighter, if he lived with black people and practiced with them at the gym, he is still outsider. There is a difference in culture, education, health, literature, music, neighborhoods, holidays... things defined by class and culture. (Balbina, Fieldnotes, November 12, 2012)

Students agreed with Balbina that no, it was not possible, that your life experiences as an outsider mark you different from everyone else. Some argued that maybe it would depend on the type of the community – the country, social class, neighborhood. An older woman named Louisa, however, added that

You can't hide from where you come from. That's violent and people know you're faking it. (Louisa, Fieldnotes, November 12, 2012)

Natalia, sitting at the back row of tables farthest from the teacher, dressed in sports attire, her long dark hair in ponytail, asked

What do we do if people do not want to talk to us about our projects because we're students and they're not? (Natalia, Fieldnotes, November 12, 2012)

Though they may have differences, Sophia encouraged them to talk with their neighbors to see what they had to say, to find common ground.

Ethnography is also about developing relationships with participants as much as it is finding information from them. (Sophia, Fieldnotes, November 12, 2012)

Sophia continued to walk around the room, showing different parts of the book – the blurb at the beginning that included lyrics of a hip hop song, photographs, the table of contents, participant phrases. She talked with the class about the reading, discussing some more of the limitations of the ethnographic method.

Ethnography is rich, creative, but there are always limitations. We were talking about the ways in which the communities where the researcher comes from may influence the investigation. What else might? (Sophia, Fieldnotes, November 12, 2012)

Students listed things like age, gender, personality, social class, nationality, the contacts you have that enable you to be in a place or have access to certain places, etc.

What about in Bourgois' book? What kinds of limitations did he face, other than being from a different type of community? (Sophia, Fieldnotes, November 12, 2012)

Franny, a young, quiet woman who sat with her group studying women and illiteracy, replied that in the book they read

It was difficult for him to talk to married women because he was an outsider and not so trusted. Because maybe the other men were scared he would hook up with one of their women. (Franny, Fieldnotes, November 12, 2012)

Natalia, whose group was working with homeless people living in the *villa* train station, mentioned that she too felt similar concerns to the author in the book, and that gender played an important role in how she would be able to communicate once in the field.

I feel as a single woman doing this study, that it's very difficult for me to talk to married men too. Or men in general, for that matter. (Natalia, Fieldnotes, November 12, 2012)

You could feel the anxiety slowly mounting in the room as women continued to raise issue regarding this point. As Sophia had said, often her role as a popular educator required calming students' nerves when they felt they could not do something. In the case

of Franny and Natalia's commentary, which raised issues regarding women's safety in their community, the difficult knowledge held within the content of their ethnographies encouraged students' to express their concerns while deepening an understanding of the injustices they faced. Sophia then encouraged women to locate their place and power together as "insiders" of Villa 50, and encouraged a sense of *compañera* solidarity that could be capable of making change to circumstances women faced on a larger scale.

As evident here and in the following sections, fostering such insiderness through attention to shared traumas and other difficulties experienced in educational settings or elsewhere holds the potential to solidify complex interpersonal bonds, collective dependency, and ethical accountability. Such work is able to politicize community not by seeking resolutions, but instead by surrendering and exposing our shared human vulnerabilities and connections (Butler, 2004).

Inside the Teachers' Room

Difficult knowledge presented in relationships not only amongst students, but between women teaching in the popular education sector as well. After classes I often met with Sophia and the other teachers. One particular teacher, Diana, was undergoing treatment due to a rare genetic disease that caused benign tumors to grow in various organs throughout her body. Diana was 27 years old and had been an educator at the popular school for some years. In the teachers' room she would often talk of her condition, her treatments, and how she was feeling. For example,

These past five days have been difficult. I have new medication and as soon as I ingested it I began to vomit. I called my doctor and he said I may be having a negative reaction. He said I should just vomit it up or I may experience diarrhea. Unfortunately, both cases were true. (Diana, Fieldnotes, November 20, 2012)

On the train home I asked Sophia about how she and the others were handling Diana's illness, as her health seemed to be declining rapidly. Sophia said that she and the other teachers were not taking it well, but that she was happy there was a space for them to talk, not only about work, but their personal lives and feelings as well.

These aren't just co-workers, these are my friends. We are all different ages but we are all friends. I have pictures of us all, arm and arm, on my Facebook. We're always talking about our work, our experiences in the movement and with the education project, but also about our personal lives. We say the teachers' room is our therapy. (Sophia, Interview, November 12, 2012)

Though it is often thought that our emotionally troubled experiences and ongoing struggles do not sit comfortably within traditional notions of schooling, a pedagogical practice of sharing our wounds may challenge entrenched inequities and privileged assumptions about others' lives in pedagogical communities (Butler, 2004). As Sophia mentioned, difficult knowledge in these small group settings with other educators were one of the ways she had been able to cope with the day to day difficulties involved in her teaching, as well as with her friend's declining health.

Building off Butler (2004), Dutro (2011) posits that students and teachers sharing their difficult stories – what she calls the traumatic, painful, hard stuff of life – can expose the ways our stories are connected to others, while at the same time revealing “how privilege and power shape the stakes of those exposures” (p. 199). Through reciprocal engagement and intellectual risk-taking on the part of students and teachers, Dutro (2011) believes difficult experiences can

...serve as a resource for building the kinds of visceral connections – and awareness of disconnections – that call into question the impulse to speak as though we know about a life or an entire community of lives, when all we know is the façade that has been narrated and re-narrated in the image and voice of the materially privileged (p. 196).

Difficult Knowledge in the Community

In other words, pedagogies of difficult knowledge, of grief and loss, hold the potential of creating social and political networks that bring forth collective responsibility for the lives of others. As Butler (2004) makes palpable – such entanglements, interdependence, and vulnerability can reimagine and rebuild community through pedagogy that critiques, questionings, and understands collective grief, and engages with the psychosocial dimensions and affective investments of the communities we teach in. One of the ways participants in this study did this was through curriculum that sought to know the lives of others through public grieving that ruptured solitude in order to do justice in communities that have experienced trauma and loss.

Building a sense of belonging, solidarity, from students' and their communities' shared difficult knowledge was evident during an inauguration ceremony I attended one weekend to celebrate the opening of a newly built classroom for students just entering 14 de Octubre, and during UP's Gender Commission celebration in honor of those who completed a series of gender based workshops. Public togetherness and a sense of common groupality did not come by way of legend and stories of revolutionaries alone; it came by way of including residents' experiences with difficult knowledge, all the while helping them participate in constructing a new narrative in the process.

Inside Villa 50

On the day of the inauguration I was to meet Sophia at a public plaza in Villa 50 where the celebration was taking place. On my own, navigating Villa 50 was next to impossible. I asked several vendors at the fruit and vegetable market if they could point me in the right direction, but none had any idea of where Plaza Quilmes was located. One

woman said she did not live “down there,” indicating that her home was closer to the entrance of the *villa*, and not *down* by the trash dump where residents left their garbage, and where the poorest of them resided. It seemed to me that even in the *villa*, a hierarchy existed. Those deeper in occupied a lesser rung on the social ladder than those closer to the city avenue and both the literal and symbolic exit.

Like a smile of broken teeth, the streets, once cobble stoned, showed signs of significant decay. But despite its initial grit, the *villa* was just like any other city neighborhood – there were stores, dentist offices, hair salons, restaurants, market stalls selling produce not typical of Argentina – herbs and spices associated with Andean communities throughout the north of the country. The streets were a maze and buildings a bric-a-brac of winding staircases, shacks, cement blocks, brightly painted exteriors, and alleyways. Everything felt congested and gave the feeling of being surrounded, at a disadvantage, because though there were plentiful places to hide, there was always a sense too that one could be seen.

I stumbled upon Quilmes Park, surrounded by towering shacks just below the highway, as I was eventually able to follow the marks of food cooking (*asado*, hamburgers, *choripan*), loud music, and decorated paper colored triangles strung up across telephone poles rippling in the wind. Children shouted goal points as they ran along the concrete lawn they used to play soccer in. There was a table with a laptop plugged into a sound system and a microphone for party coordinators to give speeches.

14 de Octubre’s Classroom Inauguration

When I arrived, Sophia gave me a tour of the new classroom. About the room were posters students and teachers made on the Argentinean economic crash,

desparecidos of Villa 50, books, and dry-erase boards hung up or still in their packaging. The walls of the room were adorned with images of Che Guevara, Evita, *Las Mujeres con la Dignidad*, the EZLN movement, Marx, an *Industria Argentina* poster, Simon Bolivar, Paulo Freire, Garcia-Marquez, and hundreds of photographs of students and teachers taken at various events held by the school.

We like them [the images] because they represent the diversity of social movements. Some photos were taken at a graduation ceremony; others were taken inside our classrooms or at mobilizations. They are memories of the students and teachers who are or were part of our school. (Sophia, Interview, November 12, 2012)

Where throughout the popular educator training workshops, affects were engineered to bring about solidarity through strategies that would arouse fun in participants, the work Sophia and other teachers were doing through these photographs manifest connections between popular community members of the school to the legends of movements and revolution. Rather than using these stories in romantic, detached retellings of tragedy, such practices as pinning the photos of the students themselves within the greater collage of Latin American leftist legends built upon the importance of their place as agents of social change. This was expressed not through games, fun, and interacting, but through affect based strategies that sought to manifest feelings of belonging in the face of tragedy. These images, for example, stood in opposition to the *Personal* sign I mentioned earlier that boasted Each Person is a World on to their own. Instead, in 14 de Octubre, in Villa 50, each person was a part of the community, part of a bigger world, and a bigger picture of change.

Popular educators used difficult knowledge embedded in activist projects to encourage, affirm, and even anger pedagogical communities' insecurities and frustrations

left over from past educational experiences. Affective work such as this “provides a dynamic imperative to action in that it enables bodies to go on” (Anderson, 2006, p. 744), and offers renewed feelings of possibility. Through an understanding of the oscillations in their students’ difficult histories and everyday lives, women teaching in the popular education sector were able to construct a fight against the negative affects their students felt toward schooling by pursuing, in the face of tragedy and injustice, good encounters with the expectation of better ones to come (Butler, 2004).

As in chapter IV, people in Villa 50 were encouraged to join the education project through affective strategies immersed in amusement, games, fun, eating, and music, but also present were tactics used to touch upon communities’ difficult and tragic histories. Stories told at the inauguration gathering were used to recover community members’ sense of self-awareness and sacrifice in themselves, in their knowledge and history, and in the public spaces they occupied. As in Butler (2004), any romanticized notion of struggle did not present itself. Instead, women teaching in the popular education sector presented in this section invoked the power of language to reflect upon *villeros*’ history of suffering, weakness, and vulnerability. Noting how the community came into being through hardship and struggle, emphasizing the shared adversity of the residents, opened the occasion to more effectually unify the group to continue fighting for their neighborhood, schools, and basic human rights.

The inauguration ceremony began with an opening statement from Noelia, a math educator at the school and one of the main coordinators of the event. She explained to the crowd of students, educators, and *villa* residents that the new classroom was named *Sala de Ricardo Rivas* or the Ricardo Rivas Classroom, after an activist from Villa 50 who

was killed by police during a people's march for housing rights in the *barrio*. As had been done during the educator training workshops for Darío Fernández, Noelia too led attendees in a moment of reflection upon the life of Rivas and the development of Villa 50 itself. Community members were asked to close their eyes and bow their heads as prayers were read.

Though they silenced you, silenced your youth, silenced your fight, you have left a trail behind you. There will be others that will follow in your footsteps. Your unjust and treacherous death was not in vain. You are in our memories, and in this small tribute we make your struggle our own. Today our classroom bears the name of a great man, *compañero* Ricardo Rivas. (Noelia, Inauguration, Villa 50, May 4, 2013)

Part of the Peronist Youth Movement of the 1970s, and a local expert on the history of social activism in the neighborhood, Noelia talked to residents regarding the rich past of the *villa* community, which she had been living, studying, and participating in for over 30 years. Her speech pooled together biographies of those who dedicated their lives to creating better conditions for Villa 50 residents, those who sought to eliminate stigmas of *villa* living.

Once it would have been very difficult to imagine the diversity that exists today in Villa 50 because back in the day we had no water, we had no electricity, we had nothing. We have had to fight for urbanization and for the rights that have been denied to us over the last decades and forever. Repression is always a permanent thing here, we always feel persecuted, it happens to us all. Just saying that you live in the *villa* creates a stigma. So to recover the *villa's* memory, we must learn from past mistakes, as well as from our successes. (Noelia, Inauguration, May 4, 2013)

The stories Noelia told had the purpose of enabling residents of the *villa* to find pride in themselves and their neighborhood, alongside everything difficult that accompanied living in precarious conditions. However these stories extended further than sole male revolutionaries' martyrdom, they reached around legends of Che and Freire, to

the everyday heroes who lived and breathed and worked and played in the streets being defended. Difficult stories were used to ignite pride, and in turn community solidarity, not only through playing games and activities or sharing food plates and *mates* alone. These stories showed the *villa* community thriving, changing, living and surviving, and encouraged others to continue to participate in its continual construction.

This was evident in the ceremony's closing remarks, where Noelia thanked the community for their help in building the school. This thanks was extended not only to well-known leftist heroes, social movements, or union activists – it was extended to parents, students, and teachers who made the classroom construction possible. For instance, in addition to their labor, *villeros* lent their tools, shared their construction knowledge, and managed to smuggle in building material – which was difficult to get past police officers as they were often on alert to stop the growth of the *villa* district. Here Noelia explained the effort it took during months of intense labor, as residents worked putting their blood, sweat, and tears into building the addition walls that made the new space possible.

Behind every brick there were shared hands and experiences, there was knowledge and appreciation of our neighbors in the neighborhood and respect for the work we carried out cooperatively. We were surprised by the pace, the willingness to jointly improve not only our space but also the space of families that are all around us. When we needed materials and tools the residents were eager to find them and willing to lend them to us. They'd drive through traffic during work days to get us wood, chairs, doors at any time, on Saturdays or a weekday. (Noelia, Inauguration, May 4, 2013)

Noelia's words spoken to the community shows that solidarity in popular education projects does not only come in the form of protest and revolution, it does not solely manifest in fun, nor does it deliver upon romantic renditions of struggle. Solidarity in popular education projects also involves an understanding of the political importance

of promoting openings, growth, and sustainability of public spaces that requires attention, acceptance, recognition, and care of the social histories and life stories of each community member.

Inside Villa Beltran

Recognizing the difficult knowledge of each community member through testimonies like those given by Noelia involved reciprocity in listening and sharing experiences from which others may be inspired to follow. Such practices often serve to challenge our perceptions of others; as narrative experiences are crossed by class, race, gender, and sexuality, they acknowledge “commonalities of human experiences and inequities at one and the same time” (Dutro, 2011, p. 206).

UP’s Gender Commission and the educators within likewise sought to strengthen women in popular communities in their daily struggles, and involved drawing upon the commonality of human experience to not only solidify their organization, but to ensure that judges, doctors, police, and employers complied with the laws and rights that have been fought for, and put in place, to protect women. Because of this, the work UP’s Gender Commission did was interdisciplinary, as the multitude of social problems women in Buenos Aires faced required a comprehensive approach from different experts. If women were homeless, if they worked, if they had children, if they needed emotional support – it took a different team of experts to know how to help each woman reassemble or improve her life.

Each educator in our interdisciplinary team has different knowledge, experiences, and skills that they can bring to the table to share. (Marina, Interview, December 11, 2012)

As Marina explained, UP's Gender Commission were a group of mostly women educators from varying backgrounds, brought together to deliver a more promising way to study insufficiencies, challenges, and relations amongst those who worked on women's issues.

We see violence when women are insulted or being beaten or harmed in some way. But it is also exercised in private institutions and at the level of the state, for example, when there are no jobs for women, no decent healthcare for women, when women are unable to go to school. Violence against women and girls occurs in different ways – physical, psychological, economic, political, cultural, through communication, sexual. As a team we understand that we cannot solve every problem, but we have found alternatives to help us resolve some issues and immediate problems...but political and social solutions still remain long term. (Marina, Interview, December 11, 2012)

I wanted to know more about the strategies used to encourage women to confront the state about such issues, and so Marina invited me to attend an end of the year celebration that the commission was holding to honor students who had completed a series of gender based workshops in Villa Beltran. Here, through stories, shared food, song, and dance, I learned of some of the ways solidarity was being built amongst women throughout popular communities, and how this solidarity was motivating others to stand up for their rights within a patriarchal society.

Similar to what my findings have shown thus far, it was evident that UP educators engineered affects of fun alongside affects of trauma to generate women's associations. As in Villa 50's classroom inauguration, narratives of difficult knowledge offered a way to heal and restore fractured communities, where testimonies given in the public sphere were used to minister to the wounds of the public, rebuilding spaces where people were then free to act together (McAfee, 2005).

UP's Gender Commission Celebration

I arrived at the train station in Constitución at 2:15 and to Villa Beltran about 30 minutes later. Two UP *compañeras* came to meet me at the train station to walk the three blocks to the Pampero Cultural Center where the commission's party was in motion. This particular community center was quite large, offering transitional housing, a free milk and bread program, clothing, and community garden space. Within it artists, teachers, and activists offered free workshops such as dance, music, percussion, and sports. They also had a community radio and TV station, and published neighborhood newsletters.

The park located by the cultural center had beautiful palm trees and provided a nice shade for the event. A large, hand painted sign read *Esta fiesta la hicimos entre todos* or This party was made by all of us. There were about 100 or more men, women, and children in attendance. All were wearing free, militant green t-shirts with the UP insignia screened on the front. A table of party favors included *mate* cups, group photos, books, and handmade Che paperweights.

Food was served – renaissance fair-sized chicken legs, Russian salad, ice cream, and tiny cakes you could eat without utensils. There was soda and *pan de campo*, plus decorations, signs, tables, chairs, a sound system, microphones, and a music circle. Singing, chanting, and dancing ensued while men and women moved their bodies to the live drum rhythms. Typed handouts of pro-women chants were given to each guest, but everyone seemed to know the words already.

Women will not be defeated
by beatings, by kidnappings.
Today we are still fighting

with the strength of the oppressed.
We can be found on any continent,
fighting for a different world.
If misery, poverty, and exploitation
still reign across America
then this we scream –
Equal rights for women!
Power to the people!
Anti-imperialism!
Countries without borders!
For socialism!

Marina began the event with a speech honoring the important *compañeras* who helped organize the Gender Commission.

When there are problems, when there is adversity, when one *compañera* has a problem in her home, luckily we have delegates who work hard, who are full of integrity, who care about what happens to each of our *compañeras*, who are attentive, who are interested in politics, human rights, who are honest, who help build our reputation, and fight for what we believe in and how we want to build this country. To change this country we have to learn to be caring, selfless, dedicated to the cause. (Marina, Party in Villa Beltran, December 14, 2012)

Here, though Marina referenced the traumatic, it is also through her mention of “care” three times that solidifies its importance in the change she and others in the commission sought to bring to the lives of women and girls. Like Sophia, Marina too felt a big part of her role in the Gender Commission was encouraging women on an emotional level.

We believe that there cannot be pedagogical silence against discrimination, against disrespect, against abuse – and so we teach our students about militancy,

social rank, state agencies, unions, and how if we organize in solidarity, then cultural change is inevitable. But many of our students' dream of things as simple and fundamental as being able to go to school. So we stress everyday that they have the same rights to an identity, to an education, to a lifestyle of their choosing as anyone. (Marina, Interview, December 11, 2012)

She then told me the story of Veka, a woman she worked with in the Gender Commission, who had a history of sex work in her past. Marina explained that Veka came to her about halfway through her first year of study feeling depressed and ready to quit school. She explained that because of her past she felt she did not have a future.

And I had to say to her over and over, every day, "Veka, there many possible futures." We must teach these women not to settle. We must teach them that though there are many things to be transformed in our society, we must not cling to what others have designed for us. (Marina, Interview, December 11, 2012)

This of course was a fundamental aspect of Marina's vision, which was that a possibility for a better future was possible. Evidently, "hope" for a better future was an important affective and rhetorical devise used throughout her speech during the celebration. Here Marina mentioned the hope she had for the future of UP.

I wanted to mention all of the progress that our organization has made, and in some way share this hope that sometimes the state, the government, the politicians take away. This hope to build a new world, we cannot let them take this hope away! Without hope we have nothing. (Marina, Party in Villa Beltran, December 14, 2012)

Prior to the meeting, Marina had told me that UP had an incident with the state department's Secretary of Security. Since then their organization had been targeted by those in power to shut their branch of the movement down, and that repercussions manifested in militant arrests, harsh words spoken to the press, among other measures to break their moral.

Altercations between the state and UP had to do with events concerning Marita Veron, a young woman who, 10 years prior, had been kidnapped from her home in the northwest state of Tucuman and sold into prostitution. Marita's mother had been searching years to find her and to bring those who took her to justice. Her search found and helped more than 20 women who were victims of human trafficking, but she has yet to find her daughter. Earlier that month those who had been accused of kidnapping Marita Verón and selling her to traffickers who forced her into prostitution went on trial in a court in Tucumán. In spite of 130 witness testimonies saying otherwise, all were found innocent *on all charges* of human trafficking due to an alleged lack of evidence.

At the time, Argentina had been in an uproar over what many citizens believed to be corruption on the part of the state and judicial system. Marina spoke of this as particularly important because these corrupt actions of the state particularly impacted the communities of women gathered at the event. As she stated in her speech,

We stand together today against human trafficking, against the unjust ruling of three bastard judges who only make verdicts with their wallets. Against the politicians who acquitted thirteen suspects accused of kidnapping Marita Verón and forcing her into prostitution. Marita's mother crossed heaven and earth to find her daughter, and it makes me furious, furious at the justice system that is unfair to those on the bottom rung of society, justice is only for those on top in this country. (Marina, Party in Villa Beltran, December 14, 2012)

It was clear in her speech that the efforts of women teaching in the popular education sector were not solely restricted to the classroom – they extended further into the communities and the problems they faced for being people of color, for being poor, for being women.

We must keep fighting against violence against women, against human trafficking. We must remain aware that they are kidnapping poor girls, girls in the north, from the *villas*. They are kidnapped and sold for prostitution, negotiated by mafias who would not exist if they weren't supported by those with political

power and the police. We all know that drug trafficking, prostitution, slave labor, the terror and misery that exists in our country exists with state complicity. Many of the girls who have reported being abducted said they did not dare go to court because the judges were also the ones abusing them. Injustice can only be defeated with popular organizing. So *compañeras*, will you continue to fight with us? (Marina, Party in Villa Beltran, December 14, 2012)

After Marina's speech, many women in the group who were receiving their certificates for completing coursework, or educators who had taught them, went to the microphones to show their solidarity. Here activists back up Butler's (2004) claim that trauma, loss, and grief are not necessarily privatizing, solitary conditions, but that such affective states can enhance our connections with others – in shared vulnerability, sadness, and anger that equally hold transformative possibilities in their grasp.

I got so excited during a recent march for Marita when we were sharing the sun that burned us, the rain that drenched us, and I saw so many of my *compañeras* join the fight. We are as tough as they say, we will continue to be united, and we will continue to fight and defend our lives. (Donna, Party in Villa Beltran, December 14, 2012)

We have shared many moments together, *compañeras*. Everywhere you look, you can see that we are forming together as a unit. We are forming together on the train each day to work, we have shared responsibilities that now seem beyond what's humanly possible. Thanks for everything and we will continue to fight. (Estefania, Party in Villa Beltran, December 14, 2012)

All of us have formed a family, a family fighting for the same things – for justice, education, work, homes. It is unfortunate that the state wants to prosecute the militants in the social struggle. But if they touch one of us it touches us all. (Carla, Party in Villa Beltran, December 14, 2012)

Through educators', activists', and students' words you hear the ways in which difficult knowledge, knowledge of girls and the struggles many women face, was able to inspire others to continue the fight the Gender Commission proposed. Even though such knowledge may be too difficult or uncomfortable to be taken up easily in the classroom, as public school curriculum is often preferred to be predictable and comforting (Pitt &

Britzman, 2000), pedagogy needs engagement with difficult knowledge by way of collective memory, justice, trauma, genocide, oppression, survival (McConaghy, 2003). The challenge for teachers then is in understanding how difficult knowledge is both cognitive and affective, and “how we bear witness to these traumas...and what it is that we will accept as sufficient call to social action” (McConaghy, 2003, p. 14).

We are not your cooks,
We are not your laundresses,
or your babysitter.
We are militants!
We raise our fists in struggle (repeat).
We do not want violence,
we do not want *machismo*,
we want to say goodbye to patriarchy
so we raise our fists in struggle (repeat)!
On March 8 we do not want
flowers, we do not want chocolates.
This is a day of struggle.
It is a day of women fighting
and not returning to the doghouse.
So we raise our fists in struggle!
We raise our fists in struggle!

Chapter Summary and Discussion

This chapter shows how mid-career women teaching in the popular education sector negotiated students' and communities' difficult knowledge in pedagogical spaces and urban environments. In it I have outlined the ways in which these educators were attending to the needs of their students and their communities through curriculum that addressed ambivalence, derision, and desires in learning contexts, and by developing educator activist narratives that contributed to a better way of dealing with difficult knowledge.

I began this chapter talking about the ways in which women in popular education training workshops learned about, discussed, and devised next steps concerning the ways women's and girls' issues could be addressed in popular classrooms. Through initial findings based on real, concrete stories of female children, adolescences, and adults in marginalized communities, I then explored how difficult knowledge was actually taken up by educators who were teaching in popular education projects.

I highlighted the contradictions, prejudices, and social circumstances of residents who lived in *villas*, the site location of the pedagogical communities I focused on throughout this chapter. Here I visited Sophia's classroom at 14 de Octubre where students were conducting their own ethnographic projects to understand the difficult conditions of their communities – illiteracy, school dropout rates, homelessness, to name a few. These understandings helped students appreciate their membership to the spaces and the people around them, granting further knowledge to best address community needs, and improve upon the lives of others and their own.

I then analyzed data from two celebrations, one hosted by Sophia's school and the other by UP's Gender Commission. Here I showed how mid-career women teaching in the popular education sector highlight traumatic atrocities of the state and other sectors – stories regarding the vulnerability of girls and women, particularly girls and women of color, at the hands of human traffickers who plunder poor communities; the history of state terrorism and the murder of *villeros*; and the often hard circumstances of the *villas* themselves. Through public testimony, orators acknowledged the vast improvements made in the lives of women living in communities made possible through social movement organizing and community solidarity, and inspired those present to continue to fight for change within their neighborhoods.

Affects like grief and trauma entangle teachers', students', and communities' personal stories with the social and political histories of the world. Pedagogically exploring this intersection holds the possibility of opening space for the vulnerabilities present inside all classrooms and public spaces, and offers a better understanding of the ethical responsibility humanity holds for one another. Such pedagogy and curriculum requires a tolerance for experiences which may seem unspeakable, controversial, or too traumatic for the learning community. However as Jansen (2008) notes, an understanding of unspoken emotions and affects that shape pedagogical encounters through acknowledging past injustices is critical and necessary if educators want to challenge inequities and assumptions in the lives of others.

BRIDGE II:

EL DÍA NACIONAL DE LA MEMORIA

As I have shown, through pedagogy that addresses difficult knowledge, mid-career women teaching in the popular education sector were able to unite themselves, their students, and communities in the popular education project. Though I recognize the importance and potential affective work like this has, I want to continue to explore women teaching in the popular education sector and their experiences within popular education projects across their career trajectories. To do this I need to consider further – what happens when women are not affected anymore? What happens when they want to leave the popular project all together? Building something different to formal education models can no question be a difficult transcending of social stigmas, where building coalitions may be easier said than done. I witnessed this during an altercation between students, and later educators, in Villa 50.

On Friday, March 22, 2013, *El Día Nacional de la Memoria por la Verdad y la Justicia* – a day that commemorates the death of civilians in the last dictatorship, 14 de Octubre had a special activity planned that included showing *Nieta Recuperada*, a documentary film on the found grandchildren of the *Madres de Plaza de Mayo*. Inside the school's multipurpose room students, teachers, and administrators sat in mismatched rows, watching the film projected on a white bedsheet fastened to a congruent wall. Present were two women from the neighborhood, Nadia and Ximena, who had never had formal university training in a Normal school but worked with teachers and students in an administrative capacity. Sophia said that they were often criticized by the other educators

for the way they handled difficult situations, because they did not approach conflict as a trained teacher might. Many educators believed these women should not have been allowed to work with students unless they completed a formal education program.

During the film *Yolanda*, a new student in the school, made a comment that insinuated that another student, Romina, was probably the child of one of the women who had been kidnapped, raped, and impregnated in a detention center during the dictatorship – because her blue eyes and blonde hair did not match with those of the neighborhood. Yolanda was well known throughout the *villa* and was considered *pesado* or heavy – she carried a lot of weight in the neighborhood, so to speak, and was rumored to sell drugs and be a sort of slumlord for the other inhabitants. The other students – including the two administrators Nadia and Ximena – lived in the *villa*, knew this woman, and were not particularly fond of her.

Romina, the target of the insult, and the other students laughed off the comment. Nadia did not. Instead she, using the only position of power she had over Yolanda, commented “*hayyy...la boca, chancha!*” or *watch your mouth, pig!* Yolanda stood up in an aggressive manner to the administrator but was settled back down into her seat by the women surrounding her. Nadia left the room furious and did not return to the event.

After the film the teachers and administrators went up to the teachers’ room to discuss the incident. Nadia was harshly criticized for her way of reacting to the situation; the teachers said that instead of handling it like a teacher would – *I don’t agree with you politically but let’s talk about your point of view, I hear what you’re saying but* – she reacted to the rude comment “*como una villera!*” or like a person from the ‘hood. Again

the issue was raised on whether Nadia and Ximena should be present in classrooms, with students, or if it would be best if they remained in administrative spaces only.

Sophia, for the most part, was quiet during this reprimanding. When I asked her later how she had been feeling she said that she did not think the situation on anyone's account was handled properly, but she knew if she spoke up then they would "be there all day discussing it." Her opinion was that

People from different social classes come together in these spaces. Teachers are generally from one social class and students from another. Like Nadia, to me she isn't just an administrative worker, she's part of the organization, the neighborhood, and the school. She plays an important role in this project. We are here to form political subjects but we also have to respect them. I am critical of some teachers here because they get angry when students and people from the neighborhood think differently than they do. We can't get angry when our community members say what they think. They don't think like we do, of course, they come from a different life style, different life experiences. Some teachers don't appreciate that this administrator also has other forms of knowledge to contribute. (Sophia, Interview, March 22, 2013)

Over the course of this ethnography it became more and more obvious that Sophia was getting burned out. Here she told me about the toll this work was having on her, particularly in the amount of time and effort such work demanded.

I'm from Belgrano; I'm not from Villa 50. My friends and family don't understand why I'm going to the *villa* or to protests in different parts of the city all the time. And the commute is tiring, long, in appalling conditions. When I travel to school I have to make an effort, I feel this heaviness in my heart whenever I go there now. It's not a bad feeling, but it's an effort. I've been doing this for *seven years* and I just don't have the energy like when I was starting out. The students, teaching and talking about social issues, politics – it was once very exciting. I *liked* that at the school we all shared the same pedagogical point of view, that we shared a common vision – we didn't have a director, we were *autogestado*. But this can also be stressful. In a traditional public school, if there's a conflict in the teachers' room, the teachers argue a bit but then they go to their respective classes and close the door. Or they go to the director and she solves the problem. But as *compañeros* in this education project we have to come to a consensus together. *It's exhausting!* (Sophia, Interview, April 14, 2013)

Sophia was not just tired, but was perhaps considering a change. I asked her what might cause teachers to leave popular movements to do other things. She commented that often times teachers left because the movement no longer coincided with their political beliefs. Women who were married or had kids were criticized because they could not give as much time to the movement as they had before. In other words, if in any way a teacher had more responsibilities, they received criticism by others in the movement and often ended up leaving.

For me, this criticism shouldn't be like this. Janice for example, she left because she got married. She was criticized for not having enough time now to give to the movement and took a job doing something else. Marla became exhausted and was feeling her work wasn't doing anything. For me, I'm becoming more and more disappointed with the project. Like we are in favor of public schools, Macri is closing public school courses, so of course we all agree we are against this. We are against repression and governments who murder our activists and teachers, obviously. But it gets problematic when we do not agree, when I am in favor of this or that, that's maybe different than what the collective thinks. (Sophia, Interview, April 14, 2013)

Sensing her dissatisfaction I probed further into her future plans. She explained that she was working with the popular project because she was invested in her work as a teacher, but

The political project, it's not as clear as it was for me. I will stay here but if I had the opportunity to work in a place that offers more money, I would take it. (Sophia, Interview, April 14, 2013)

It would be some months before I would have the chance to speak with Sophia again. When I did, I learned she had indeed left the education project and was moving on to other things. Through these chapters I have shown how women teaching in the popular education sector were able to conjure up practices that were affective in bringing about groupality or a sense of public togetherness – at the beginning, when women were in training workshops; in the middle, where they practiced their pedagogy in classrooms and

communities. Chapter VI will explore what happens when educators split with the popular education projects and what this means for the future of sustainable education activism in Argentina. I turn to Mouffe's (2005) work *On the Political* to offer a better sense of what happens when educators oppose the established views of the movement or when they are not affected in the same way as other members of their collective.

CHAPTER VI
UNDERSTANDING WOMEN'S DEPARTURES FROM POPULAR EDUCATION
PROJECTS

“...this love comes to kill the enemy.”

Since their inception, popular education movements have had continuous struggles with the state to be recognized as public, educational degree granting entities. Having such demands met would give popular schools money to pay teachers' salaries, maintain facilities, and acquire materials like books and chalk. It would also provide students recognized diplomas upon completion of their studies and access to scholarship funds to support themselves and their families while in school, or to use to go on to higher education.

Argentina has a huge responsibility in educating its citizens. Because popular schools have been offering a type of relief for the government by way of providing educational services in underserved communities, the government has responded to the popular education projects' demands by granting them *private school* recognition status (la Ley de Educación Nacional N° 26.206/Resolución N° 238/SSIEYCP/11). As of July 2011, a resolution to the Law of Education was passed to grant popular schools the same provisions as private schools by way of allocated money in the form of subsidies and tax breaks.

Though popular schools have won a small victory, they continue to fight for *full* subsidies and benefits, and to be recognized as popular *public* schools instead. Their argument is that unlike moneymaking private schools, the terrain of upper and upper-middle class Argentines, popular schools operate without profit for disadvantaged

communities. As such, popular schools want to be conceived like public schools and be funded by the government in accord. Further, regardless of their status as recognized private or public entities, the government continues to not make good on their legislation – at the time of this investigation Buenos Aires popular schools hosted hundreds of students who, upon graduation, still did not have their qualifications recognized by the state, and many educators were teaching without receiving wages for their work.

One of the ways popular education projects demanded their right to recognition was through large mobilizations in front of the Buenos Aires state department buildings. When called upon, each popular school organizes educators, students, and community members to join together with other movements in collective action in defense of their schools. In the streets, in picket lines, or during community work days, these joint ventures envisioned the erasure of distance between students, educators, and neighbors, between one popular school and another, and reinforced the belief that all schools are fighting to better education, make visible their claims, demand their rights, and strengthen organization.

So on June 11, 2013 educators and students of various popular schools staged a protest outside of the Buenos Aires Ministry of Education (See Appendix F. Manifestation Announcement). Here social movements again faced the ministry and demanded recognition, payment for the work they did that the state should have been providing, and answers from government authorities.

Sophia invited me to attend the mobilization with her and other educators of 14 de Octubre. I arrived to our rendezvous point at 2:30pm as stated on the flyer I had received, however I could not find her or any of the others from her school anywhere. First, the

flyer said to meet at 290 Paseo Colon, however the last address locatable on the buildings on that street was 285. Apparently the Ministry of Education was at 255. I passed along the walkway, asking passersbys directions. One woman told me that she too was looking to get into the ministry building but it had been closed to the public, barred with hard steel blockade doors, because their offices had been forewarned of the mobilization. She showed me the paperwork she needed to hand in to begin her job in an elementary school, but she could not gain access to the building to register it because of the protest.

At 3:15pm I decided to leave, as there was no sign of protestors or Sophia, so I headed back toward Plaza de Mayo to the subway that would take me home. As I was walking, in the distance, I saw a mob of people carrying flags and chanting *PODER POPULAR! PODER POPULAR!* – the coalescing chant of all the movements. I had to run a few blocks but just in time, I caught up with them (see Figure 5. Mobilization 1).



Figure 5. Mobilization 1

It was tremendous, more like a parade than a protest. They had massive banners with the insignias and names of their schools, a band with drummers and trumpet players, dancers and jugglers, a sound system and speakers, a truck with a pep leader. Police escorted the mob in a motor brigade, clearing and organizing street traffic as they passed (see Figure 6. Mobilization 2).



Figure 6. Mobilization 2

I am not sure the total number of people or schools represented but there were clearly hundreds. The crowd had a menacing, yet jovial feel as men took the ends of flag poles they carried and banged ferociously against the steel blockade doors demanding entrance (see Figure 7. Mobilization 3). I overheard one of the men who seemed to be one of the leaders of the mobilization shout to another that if the banging kept up they would need security.



Figure 7. Mobilization 3

Meanwhile activist groups set up a stage with mics and speakers (See Figure 8. Mobilization 4). On the stage platform educators and students representing various

popular schools throughout the city lined up to speak out on mics to express their demands to the ministry office and anyone who would listen.



Figure 8. Mobilization 4

We are here again because the government of Buenos Aires, the Ministry of Education, does not have the political will to pay wages or finance our schools, which they are obliged to do because “*ponemos el cuerpo*” to the fight that guarantees everyone the right to education in this city. Popular schools have shown in our struggle that we have the absolute capacity to carry out educational experiments, the power to decide and define ourselves autonomously, democratically, and transformatively to meet the educational needs in our *barrios*. (Louisa, Mobilization, June 11, 2013)

“*Ponemos el cuerpo*” to the construction of popular schools with no purpose other than to construct public education for and from the popular sectors. We are building a different education, an education that thinks of the students first, that is not about exclusion but inclusion, which thinks of conflicts that exist in society and tries to solve them. We will not leave here without a written contract, without a resolution assuring payment of wages to workers who teach in recognized schools. (Lorena, Mobilization, June 11, 2013)

Themes from the popular educator training workshops surfaced in mobilization rhetoric and in practice – for example *poner el cuerpo* (literally – to put in the body) is a very specific Argentine way of talking about the embodied efforts of activism, or in this case, of educators’ physical, emotional, and intellectual commitments to popular communities (Sutton, 2010). To *poner el cuerpo* means not just to talk, think, or desire, but to be really present and involved; to put the whole being in action, to be committed to a social cause, and to assume the bodily risks and demands of such commitment. Also

mentioned was this notion of coalition building which, as in the workshops, was an important component of movement mobilizing recognizable through the body's enjoyment, pleasure, misery, play with others through dance, music, song, marching, and being angry together.

We are demanding recognition for ourselves and peers who are building new forms of public education, who are constructing popular power and experiences to contribute to an equal world. We will not leave until the city responds. We cannot continue to operate without wages. Our workers are trained educators, they have experience working in public and private high schools, and because of this our schools have been growing throughout the territories. (Helen, Mobilization, June 11, 2013)

After the speeches activists blocked the major route running adjacent to the ministry building. Street cutting organized in an almost perfect choreography, causing drivers to blare their car horns at bodies obstructing the direct route through the avenue. Subsequently, then Minister of Education of the *city* of Buenos Aires, Esteban Bullrich (in 2016 he became the *national* minister under Macri's administration), came outside with his bodyguard to address the mobilization (see Figure 9. Mobilization 5).



Figure 9. Mobilization 5

I was positioned directly behind him. I could touch the grey in his sweater. The crowd was tight. I could smell coffee and tobacco on the breath of the man behind me as he shouted in profanity, in demand. People pressed into one another. In a cacophony of voices they yelled, screamed, and chanted for a sit down meeting with Minister Bullrich to discuss their needs. The following voices represent just some of the hundreds of arguments being made by popular educators that day.

You are a public official. We pay your salary, so you have to answer to the demands of the society that pays you. We are part of this society and we want answers.

We are being denied our rights.

Do not escape by the back door, minister.

I'm attending to you here at the front door. (Bullrich, Mobilization, June 11, 2013)

The government is violating workers' rights and access of education to the masses.

We have recognized high schools but you are not paying our wages, so we need to have a meeting with you inside.

The only minister who has recognized the popular schools *has been me*. Don't forget that. (Bullrich, Mobilization, June 11, 2013)

Then do it correctly, without violating constitutional rights.

We have presented papers, papers, papers, papers, we have phoned, we have been busting our balls. You must respond to the people.

It has been two years and workers are still not paid a salary.

Everyone cutting the street today is educating people for you without being paid a salary. You are educating people at our expense.

Well, since you are all standing here not working, it seems to me that we should *not* pay you. (Bullrich, Mobilization, June 11, 2013)

Dame la plata, hijo de puta! Dame la plata, hijo de puta! Dame la plata, hijo de puta! (Chant, Mobilization, June 11, 2013)

Let's negotiate a salary, let's negotiate inside, let's go in, let's go.

I cannot say how much we can pay you because I do not know how much. We cannot resolve this today. (Bullrich, Mobilization, June 11, 2013)

Yes we can, it is a matter of political will. Sign an act of commitment, let's go inside and sign an act of commitment.

But I cannot do it today. I have a meeting. (Bullrich, Mobilization, June 11, 2013)

We are here asking for a dialogue. Sit with us for 10 minutes in a more comfortable place where we can raise these arguments.

I'm guaranteeing a meeting. That's all. (Bullrich, Mobilization, June 11, 2013)

No, no, no! No, no, no! No, no, no! (Chant, Mobilization, June 11, 2013)

Today we can sign an act of agreement. Next week we sign a resolution.

That is not the way it goes. (Bullrich, Mobilization, June 11, 2013)

Reunión Ahora! Reunión Ahora! Reunión Ahora! (Chant, Mobilization, June 11, 2013)

We're not having a meeting now. (Bullrich, Mobilization, June 11, 2013)

We aren't leaving. We are going to sleep here if you don't give us a signature. If you don't sign an act of commitment, we are all going to sleep here on the street.

You know the humidity in the summer time could kill us, Bullrich!

Do you want that blood on your hands?

Sign an act of commitment and recognize us for the workers we are!

Next week, next week, but that's bullshit. We want a meeting now!

We have students who are asking that their diplomas be worth something.

Let's go inside and work this out!

If not we are going to start breaking things.

Rompe Todo! Rompe Todo! Rompe Todo! (Chant, Mobilization, June 11, 2013)

As evident in the interactions between educators and the Minister of Education, repercussions of governmental presence in grassroots movements cannot be glossed over (Nygren, In Press), and so this chapter is interested in the ways in which particular alliances may also lead to conflict within these often messy, heterogeneous spaces. Though such alliances provided popular schools' immediate assistance by way of subsidies and tax breaks, and students who completed programs benefitted from certified diplomas upon graduation, the question remains – what repercussions would ripple through education projects, with their grassroots pedagogical vision springing from the ground up, when allied with the government? Repercussions of the state's presence in these spaces should make popular educators cautious over if their vision could be compromised, especially while bonded to an entity indebted to groups like IMF.

Unlike much of the literature written on popular education – which frequently presents uncritical views of popular organizing's inherently democratic nature as one *fighting* neoliberal, hegemonic influence (Armando & Apple, 2003; Grinberg, 2010; Jara, 2010), or offers decrees on bringing Freirean-inspired pedagogy into traditional school communities (Bartlett, 2005; Jaramillo, McLaren, & Lazaro, 2011; Macedo, 2006) – this chapter explores what happens when transitional antagonisms develop once solidifying bonds emerge between popular schools and the government. In doing so, I provide an account of former educators who secured government recognition, but eventually lost their power within their schools. As they, and many popular educators I talked with found out, the government had ways to eradicate those whose vision ran counter to the dominant ideological landscape, forcing many to drop the more radical aspects of their

work in favor of a tamed pedagogy aligned with traditional public school values of the state.

To interpret this turn of events, I draw from Mouffe's (2005) theoretical work on politics of public togetherness, with Biesta (2011) and Kamat's (2014) insights on democratic discourses centered on empowerment, inclusion and participatory democracy, to show how popular education and social change movements conceived of partnership building amongst educators, students, and communities under impediment of neoliberalism.

Politics of Consensus

Education movements seeking state recognition mobilize by way of an Arendtian model of the public, as mentioned in chapter IV, where people come together publically to act as a form of freedom – in this case of protestors in front of the ministry, the freedom to education and to educate communities in the manner they see fit. Arendtian politics consist in developing the ability to consider a variety of perspectives, while advocating for an intersubjective agreement in the public sphere. The public is a place where agreements may be reached, and where an exchange of voices and opinions may be heard on common ground.

Arendt's political vision is one of self-determination and negotiation through *action* in the form of dialogue and speech acts, yet her theoretical consideration of the plurality of public togetherness at the same time heeds little mind to conflict within messy, heterogeneous spaces – just as palpable in protestors' interactions with the minister, as within collective, educational spaces themselves. Mouffe (2005), on the other hand, fixes the political as a space of “power, conflict and antagonism” (p. 9). Taking

particular issue with contemporary liberal democracy's views of the "post-political," and the disciplining role of consensus, she, along with theoretical peers Rancière (2004) and Žižek (2002), sees antagonism not as something to weed out of the public, to ignore all together, but rather as a fundamental part of human collectivity. Attempts to disregard this, by approaching politics as complications to be salved through careful consensus, may backfire – potentially generating negative responses in the form of extremist parties or fundamentalism. For critics of the post-political, modern democracy faces the challenge of allowing healthy political differences and divides.

In order to secure groupality and public togetherness among activists, educators, and students, previous chapters have shown how education movements organized varying affects to secure their collective vision. However beneficial and effective mobilizing affects may be in rallying marginalized groups' political will, antagonisms can intersect in significant ways. For example, while popular spaces can be sites of personal and political power, they can also be sites of social control – particularly in their role in regulating political behavior and what spurs people to act. While activists mobilize emotions and sentiments that coincide with a social movement's political objectives, that indeed may be antagonistic toward government and neoliberal reform, research has shown that affects within social movements may be suppressed or managed in such a way that could produce or diminish group antagonism, or even operate in service of the neoliberal state (Kamat, 2014; Muehlebach, 2012; Nairn & Higgins, 2011; Phipps, 2014; Richard & Rudnycky, 2009).

Kamat (2014) argues that democratic discourses centered on empowerment, inclusion, and participatory democracy may actually sustain neoliberalism and capitalist

hegemony rather than impede them, where “local decision making and direct democracy...function efficiently, meeting defined objectives and minimizing costs” (Kamat 2014, p. 73). She elucidates this further through an analysis of “self-help groups,” which serve as an example of “inclusive development and empowerment, in which those excluded from development take charge of their own social and economic needs rather than relying on the state or the NGO sector” (Kamat 2014, p. 75). This shares obvious parallels with the “self-help” work or *autogestión* organizing strategies of popular education movements whereby grievance or discord with the government may be evident – as long as their demands do not threaten the neoliberal capitalist order but continue to provide educational services that the government should be providing its citizens (Hardt & Reyes, 2012).

The paradox of a post-political, post-democratic society, Kamat (2014) points out, “is that on the one hand there is a heightened pluralism of identities and differentiation of roles and responsibilities, and on the other hand there is a normative consensus in the way problems are enumerated, desires articulated and issues catalogued” (p. 79). With that in mind, the popular education movement’s alliance with the state may be adopting a restrained form of governance that is in essence problematic for sustaining an education project whereby problems and issues can coexist or even instigate new political associations.

This chapter provides answers to – What affects influence women teaching in the popular education sector and their participation in popular education projects? What shared ethos, guiding beliefs, or ideals characterize women who decide to leave teaching in the popular education sector? What are the strategies used by these educators to

practice their shared ethos, guiding beliefs, or ideals? How are women teaching in the popular education sector connected or disconnected from these spaces? – this chapter implements Mouffe’s (2005) thoughts on the political to consider the ways in which women teaching in the popular education sector experienced conflict and antagonism within education projects, through their relationship with other educators and with the government. It will show what happens when educators split with popular education projects and what this may mean for the future of sustainable education activism in Argentina.

Theoretical Overview of the Chapter

Arendt (1958) and Mouffe (2005) offer distinct ways of thinking about the politics of public togetherness, which are both relevant to the ways in which education movements conceive of partnership building among educators, their students, and communities. For Arendt, *action*, which is different from both *labor* and *work*, is the essential human condition of plurality that characterizes the potential humans have to acquiring a genuine form of freedom. Previous chapters touched upon the ways popular educators utilized affects of fun as well as shared histories of trauma and grief to bring about unity and ultimately action in communities left isolated and depoliticized on account of neoliberal reform throughout Buenos Aires. Mouffe (2005) understands that “people need to be able to identify with a collective identity which provides an idea of themselves they can valorize” (p.25), but nevertheless critiques such an understanding of the political as one “without antagonism” (p. 4).

While Arendt recognizes community as an association of individuals seeking public togetherness, and through that public action, she, as the education movements, do

little to acknowledge that individuals may also have aggressive or even hostile conflicts amongst one another. That is not to say tensions are entirely absent from Arendt's views of the public – it is just presumed that discords are resolved when people act and participate together in exchanging arguments, dialogues, and proposals, out of a drive to improve, commune, and contribute to a consensus that serves the collective public good. As Mouffe (2005) makes evident, when politics are limited to those who already approve of the rudimentary conditions that are at work in the public realm, then the difficult and often richer aspects of *how* democratic processes congeal, and *how* hegemonic practices are instituted, are left unexamined (Biesta, 2011; Honig, 1993). In other words, suggesting public accord is natural disservices both autonomy and egalitarianism and denounces the possibility of generating new political identities and subjectivities in the process.

Membership or Alienation

By focusing solely on democratic order, the “stable and positive identity obtained through identification with an existing socio-political order” (Biesta, 2011, p. 145), we neglect the rich, power laden political aspects that drive the establishment and maintenance of that order. Mouffe's (2005) work exposes the conditions of membership within political spheres by emphasizing how such conditions inherently include some while excluding others. She argues that those excluded from the political community are not “outside” because of a lack of rationality or morality, but because what is considered rational and moral is “partly the ‘effect’ of the particular hegemonic construction of ‘inside’ and ‘outside’... [and] because their political values are different from those who are on the inside” (Biesta, 2011, p. 144).

Ahmed's (2010) understanding of *affects of happiness* offers an analogous interpretation of Mouffe's views of public togetherness by considering those who are exiled from hegemonically assembled spheres or who exist in them only as menaces or dissidents, whom she terms *affect aliens*. Defining alienation as the lack or loss of association to a shared happiness as others within an affected space, her work investigates alterations of affect in public spheres – contemplating who or what converts bad feeling into good feeling and good into bad. Feminists, by declaring themselves feminists, for example, have been read as destroying a way of life that others believe good, thus becoming a cause of unhappiness. The feminist, believed determined to stomp out the happiness of others, is a curmudgeon who refuses collective happiness and is thus deemed a herald of negativity. Estranged from happiness, she brings others down, not only by talking about unhappy topics such as sexism or intersectional racism, but by exposing how happiness is hegemonically constructed by seeking to erase the signs of just getting along.

The feminist, for Ahmed (2010), is believed alien because she refuses to be affected or participate in things deemed “good” by society, and because she does not sit comfortably with the things thought to bring happiness to others. Her body is predetermined to bring bad feelings because she does not succumb to the social pressure to maintain the status quo, so she becomes a blockage point “where smooth communication stops” (Ahmed, 2010, p. 68), thus she becomes something to be removed. Feminists' unhappy and difficult to get along with persona is always presumed to be interfering with the happiness of others. Using “the angry black woman” as example, Ahmed (2010) mentions that even within feminist circles, tensions that arise are felt by

particular bodies and get attributed as caused by certain Othered bodies, thus considered liable for inflicting damage to solidarity and cohesion.

Like the feminist, the immigrant too suffers because he or she does not share the same feelings of happiness toward certain dominating social practices as locals, and thus becomes excluded (Ahmed, 2010). The “melancholic immigrant,” a familiar subject in contemporary race politics, holds onto objects that represent differences to the society at large – the turban, or memories of being teased about the turban, may tie one to their culture but further to the history of racism associated with such cultural objects.

Differences become blockage points in the dominant community, whereby the immigrant is considered one who is not only stubbornly attached to difference, but who insists on speaking about how being different affects him, where such speech is heard by society as otherwise laboring over sore points. The melancholic immigrant’s fixation with injury is read not only as an obstacle to his or her own happiness, but to the happiness of future generations, and in the long run to national happiness (Ahmed, 2010).

In refusing *to just go along with, just get over it* the feminist and the immigrant cause discomfort that gets associated and stuck to his or her body, believed to inflict others who may come into contact with such feelings of negativity. Like Mouffe (2005), Ahmed (2010) does not believe such affect aliens should simply put their feelings aside in the hopes of getting along, as public concern with those whose histories may arouse feelings of hurt is not counterproductive – the social good could learn from those who refuse to give up their suffering, their struggle, for the sake of keeping the peace in the public realm. Such concern can deepen democracy, as it is in such awareness that

hegemonically structured practices and beliefs are pushed in new directions that disarticulate those currently practiced, thus creating new ones (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985).

An important aspect made evident in Mouffe's (2005) conception of the political is not in negating that a democratic community can have harmonious forms of governance, but that such communities must remain aware that this congruence "is constituted *hegemonically* rather than on the basis of neutral or natural values and identities" (Biesta, 2011, p. 145). It is through *agonistic* struggle (distinct from *antagonistic*), which I will discuss in the following section, that Mouffe encourages an understanding of how democratic processes congeal through an examination of, what she terms, *sedimented* hegemonic practices that once originated from contingent political institutions (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985). Such holds the potential to reconfigure power relations through the irreconcilable differences of opposing hegemonic projects that puts conventional practices under scrutiny and prevents opposing arguments from drawing to a close. The agonistic model acknowledges hegemonic articulations that determine the configuration of a society at a given moment, yet recognizes the potential antagonism has to disarticulate and transform society into something new. It is not by way of antagonism alone however, but in the construction of new hegemonic practices that are fundamental to advancing democratic politics in unforeseen ways.

An Agonistic Approach

So where Arendt relies less on negotiations of conflict, and more on the togetherness of people who hold the possibility in their very actions of reaching resolution, Mouffe (2005) sees the limitations of an ordered understanding of democracy, leaning instead toward antagonism as an essential element of political life (Biesta 2011).

She would concur that our current post-political society is discriminatory in its belief in the obtainability of universal accord, negating any form of antagonism in favor of false collective forms of identification. The goal of democracy in such cases then is not to reach consensus or organize compromise, but in attaining a “tamed relation of antagonism” (p. 19), one where differences are allowed to exist in reimagined ways.

Mouffe (2000) states that the antagonistic dimension of the political can never be eliminated, “only ‘tamed’ or ‘sublimated’ by being... ‘played out’ in an agonistic way” (p. 107). For instance, where antagonism sees others as *enemies*, an agonistic approach entails seeing others instead as *adversaries* – “because we have a shared adhesion to the ethico-political principles of liberal democracy: liberty and equality” (Mouffe, 2000, p. 102). As she outlines, antagonisms may be evident but need not destroy the political collective. This would involve not seeing an enemy, someone whose belief system needs to be eradicated, but rather ensuring existing antagonisms have a place, that they are not negotiated upon nor compromised.

As I have shown, to secure groupality among activists, teachers, and students, education movements organize varying affects to secure their projects. However beneficial and effective mobilizing affects may be in rallying marginalized groups’ political will, antagonisms intersect in both productive and devastating ways. This chapter will explore what happens when educators split with popular education projects over antagonisms that have arisen due to popular education movement’s alliance with the state, and repercussions this has had on educators whose ethos may not run align with movement efforts after government intervention. Continuing to explore affects at work in various career stages of women teaching in the popular education sector, this chapter will

look to the ways in which these women experience conflict and antagonism within education projects over differences with other educators and with the state government.

Research Site and Participants' Backgrounds

14 de Octubre

I had not seen Sophia in some time, and we had not been in touch since we were supposed to meet up at the protest in front of the Ministry of Education, but did not. After email tag, and several attempts to coordinate our schedules, we were able to meet on September 12, 2013 at a café in our neighborhood to discuss recent events that had transpired in her life that were relevant to her position at 14 de Octubre.

As a reminder, Sophia began working with popular schools at the age of 19 and, as I would soon learn, she decided just four weeks prior to our meeting to leave the job and the organization she had been working with for the last seven years. At the age of 26, like many of similar age, she felt she was at a crossroads, that she had arrived at a particular moment where she needed to end a cycle and begin another. Neither of us knew at the time of our meeting that it would be close to the end of her time teaching with the popular education project; as a subject of study, she presented an interesting case for why educators may choose to leave popular education projects. Through Sophia, I explored in the previous chapter some of the affective practices of mid-career educators invested in popular projects; now I will show why they may decide to leave due to internal strife and differences of vision with the popular education projects themselves. I explore antagonisms that arose between educators in popular projects, and the transitions they experienced while deciding to leave their schools.

Mococo Seri

In doing a search for popular schools, I came across the webpage of Mococo Seri, a school for the transgender community devoted to education, activism, and feminism. Mococo, which had been running for two years at the time of this study, was an education project that had gained recent support and state recognition by the government, together with the government organization Fundación Diversidad Destino.

To give some history, transgender activists have been defending public space throughout Buenos Aires for decades. As a result of efforts that have spanned almost 20 years, they have been instrumental in getting federal policies passed that protect them in their work environment, grants specialized access to health care, education, employment, and safe housing. Of merit, the Gender Identity Law passed in 2012 grants each person the right to live according to their chosen gender, be treated according to their gender identity, and be identified on government issued legal documents in their chosen name/s, image, and sex.

As evidence suggests, Argentina's gender based laws and policies are further ahead than most nations, but there are still institutions that make life difficult for the transcommunity. Transgender people in Argentina live an average life of 35 years, over 70% do not finish high school, and 80% work in prostitution (Berkins & Fernández, 2005). LGBT activists within social movements have been vigorously involved in designing strategies to counter vulnerable situations their community faces throughout Buenos Aires. They provide outreach and support through initiatives that teach the transcommunity to take advantage of different public policies offered to them by the state. They have also coordinated with hospitals, specifically in the area of infectious

diseases, different ministries of the government, with various health centers, lawyers for sexual rights, as well as other activists and social workers.

Despite the important work the LGBT community has done on behalf of transgender people, as with all political relationships, partnerships and alliances forged in the name of justice-work are not always utopic. Published on the Mococo Seri website, for example, nine cisgender and transgender popular educators posted their resignation letter to the school entitled *Comunicado de ex Profesorxs del Popular Trans Mococo Seri* (See Appendix G. Comunicado). At the time I had only met idealistic young people training to be educators in popular schools, or who were already invested in teaching popular classes. I had yet to meet anyone who showed disdain for the movements or with the project they were a part of, or who addressed the ways in which government recognition of popular schools could be detrimental to the movements themselves. I was compelled to meet with these ex-professors to learn what it was that provoked them to leave.

As they had each signed their name to the *Comunicado*, I searched them out on Google and Facebook to arrange a meeting. I was able to find Margarita Gutierrez's email via articles she had published online. From there she put me in touch with the rest of the group of ex-Mococo educators.

After attempts to synchronize schedules, I was able to meet with two of them, Ashley Acuña and Valezka García. We met November 12, 2013 at La Orquídea, a typical Argentinean café, just a few blocks away from the neighborhood of Chacarita where Mococo was located. Ashley was 48 years old at the time we talked. She has a degree in psychology and was an active scholar of feminist and lesbian politics. She considered

herself a transpedagogy activist. Valezka was a sexual, diversity, human, and gender rights activist. She was born in Quilmes, and studied at the Universidad Nacional de La Plata in the journalism department.

Because this section of the study is focused on why women teaching in the popular education sector leave popular education projects, I will focus primarily on Ashley and Valezka's accounts of why they and seven other women deserted the education project, rather than on the school itself and its current function. Though I acknowledge that there are opposing views, and that there may be sound reasons for why women would like to introduce government funding or market logic to popular schools, I was particularly compelled to meet solely with ex-professors to learn what it was that provoked them to leave.

That being said, I did want to know more about Mococo Seri and how it was being operated. After talking with Ashley and Valezka, I was able to make contact with the school on Facebook, and was invited to attend the academic school year 2013 celebration to inaugurate their new library and multipurpose space on Thursday, December 5 at 6pm.

Theme Developments

It was evident in each of my encounters with women teaching in the popular education sector that power dynamics manifest, be it in the way movements tried to sustain themselves through controlling certain affects and aspects of the lives of educators, by governing educators' free time, enforcing practices and rituals of togetherness, or stigmatizing those whose political views verged from the dominant ideology of the movements. Consequently, turnover in popular schools was high, starting

with 20 teachers with at least six leaving by the year's end. From those I talked with, I learned that educators often left because they did not feel comfortable in the movement or in the schools anymore, they began to have different political views – they had another political project in mind, or they felt rejected by peers in their particular pedagogical setting. Others left because as they got older they began to have more going on in their lives – work, time constraints, family – and did not have the time to give to social movement organizing.

Historically there had been a greater circulation of educators because of the nature of the organization – when popular educators did not earn salaries, and schools were run more like political organizations than employment, varying financial situations caused educators to leave. Once some earned salaries, they experienced less turnover; those who left did so more often on account of conflict and antagonism within their schools or with the education projects themselves, their relationship with other educators, or due to alliances with the government.

Hardt and Reyes (2012) would confirm that a real social movement is indeed “one in which its members change place” (p. 332). This chapter will examine the ways in which women teaching in the popular education sector “change place” through an exploration of conflicts that occurred within popular education projects when the striving for a politics of consensus failed. Specifically, this chapter will examine the affective conditions and relations that influenced women teaching in the popular education sector to leave 14 de Octubre and Mococo Seri. Here I analyze how women teaching in the popular education sector experienced antagonism and conflict as it intersected with the hegemonic construction of popular education projects and state run public schools,

revealing how they reached their point of departure and if and how they were able to construct new political subjectivities in the process.

Findings

14 de Octubre

It had been a difficult year for Sophia and the other educators at the school. In the months that we had not seen each other her *compañera* Diana, who had been working with the school for several years, had died. Mentioned in the previous chapter – the disease she had that would generate non-cancerous tumors throughout her body had taken a turn for the worse.

She spent all of her life going to surgeries, she had a tumor here, here, here, but then they found a tumor in her intestines and it was bothering her to go to the toilet, so they decided to do a biopsy and there they found out that it was cancerous. That was a Wednesday and, well, on Monday we received notice that she went to the hospital and the doctors told her that she had only a matter of days. (Sophia, Interview, September 12, 2013)

She explained to me that this happened just before I was to meet up with them at the mobilization in front of the Ministry of Education, and that their school just could not get organized to march because they were in mourning from the passing of their teacher and friend.

So it was a difficult year, because of this, because this affected all of our moods. (Sophia, Interview, September 12, 2013)

As she continued to talk though, there were many experiences that occurred during the school year that made her continued work experience “very intense.” She described the effort it took to teach different subjects, tutor, organize the public library, and other school administrative tasks that she had become responsible for – she was put in charge of the coordination team that required her to develop and maintain relationships

with other neighborhood organizations and institutions (food stands, health centers, other schools), organize festivals, graduation ceremonies, cultural events, etc.

But it was not just the extra responsibility. I had gotten to know Sophia well over the years and if I had learned anything about her it was that she thrived on a busy schedule, she ate spreadsheets for breakfast, and above all she was able to get things done. No, on top of all these new responsibilities, a great deal of negative dynamics began to deteriorate the team teaching process and relationships between educators at the school.

For some background, team teaching was implemented in popular education projects to cultivate an environment where teachers could discuss the situations of their students, their course subjects, and the exactitudes of teaching students in popular communities amongst their peers. Working in teams when planning the content of a program, how to apply teaching practices, contemplating difficulties or particularities was believed to foster discussion and reflection on the practices that enrich class dynamics and better address the needs of students.

We started thinking in different directions, and would have constant discussions about different things, sometimes political things, sometimes about how to develop an activity, how to teach something. (Sophia, Interview, September 12, 2013)

One issue that came to be of concern among Sophia and her *compañeras* had to do with the way the school would distribute salaries they began to receive from the government.

I thought once we got salaries we were going to be able to have a more consolidated team. But the *compañeras* in my school still thought we ought to share our salaries, and so we had a lot of arguments about this as well. The idea of the salaries was so that we didn't have to look for another job and we could dedicate ourselves to this project. Some wanted to split the money equally,

regardless of how many classes we taught or meetings we attended. To me this was ridiculous because not everyone had the same amount of hours or responsibilities. (Sophia, Interview, September 12, 2013)

Here one can already begin to see some of the problems government funding brings – does money get administered based on hours, commitment, or even meritocracy in the manner accustomed to a more capitalistic schema, or does it get pooled and split in a cooperative way?

One woman, Roxana, was a proponent of this later idea. Sophia explained that Roxana did not participate in school events other than those directly related to her classes. For example, educators filled out a type of communal teaching log noting what they did each day – lessons they taught their classes, activities, etc. This had been a decided upon practice of the teachers, but Roxana refused to do it.

Say she was absent to a teachers' meeting, and she didn't agree with our decisions, afterwards she wouldn't respect them. In our schools, everything is done with a lot of respect. I am one of the school coordinators, me and one of my friends, and she always criticized us. We did our best. All of our administrative paperwork was in order and we were the first school to receive salaries from the government because all of our paper went through the circuit without any problems. Yet at the same time we were seen as an authority, and we were criticized. (Sophia, Interview, September 12, 2013)

So though Roxana's proposition for the equal splitting of funding makes sense in the context of social movements, when Sophia talked of the amount of hours she had put in, the lack of commitment others gave toward the project, it was understandable the belief that some should indeed get paid more than others. But because educators were still new to receiving funding, they had not yet figured out how to let these frictions regarding differences of opinion over allocated money exist within and amongst one another without destroying the dynamics of the group. Sophia continued to have

problems with Roxana during her last months at the school and thus she became the prime catalyst for her departure.

She is completely destructive. She is, I don't know, 50 years old, and she has taught sociology for three years, but for the last three years she's been deconstructing and destroying! Instead of building she destroys. She thinks that she is the greatest sociologist since Pierre Bourdieu, and she looks down on us from the top of a mountain somewhere. (Sophia, Interview, September 12, 2013)

Sophia gave some examples of things she would do that seemed destructive. As far as her interpersonal skills with students and other educators, she explained that a lot had to do with the way she related to others – not as *compañeras*, but as enemies.

She is an atheist, which is fine, I am too, but we have a lot of religious people in our classes and as part of our community. Regardless of your beliefs you have to respect others' points of view. And she would talk negatively about the church and God, and I agree with her, but it was insulting to many of the students. In politics if we have to fight, we have to fight, ok I know that. But we can't be hostile. I know that politics isn't, "oh everything is great," but we are *compañeras* – she isn't facing the enemy, she is facing her team. (Sophia, Interview, September 12, 2013)

Sophie made clear one of Mouffe's (2005) key assertions, which is the need for those within the public, political sphere to manage or salve antagonisms, to welcome those whose opinions or beliefs may differ not as enemies, but more as adversaries. It becomes obvious later on that this ability to sooth affects in such a way that does not shut down communication, does not rub out those whose beliefs differ than those practiced and upheld by the education projects, was not something popular educators at 14 de Octubre were able to make manifest.

A Social Organization or a Public School?

Decisions about which practices were to be upheld within popular schools were made based on debate outcomes and discussions within assemblies. Assemblies could be called by either educators or students, with the agenda decided upon by the needs of the

school. It was during one of these meeting that the group of educators decided it would be in the best interest of their unity as a collective to ask Roxana to leave the school.

During all of our meetings, which she wouldn't attend, it was always pointed out that she was destroying our organization, and that her behavior wasn't the type of attitude we should have toward our *compañeras*. We talked together and we decided that we had to ask her to leave. We were 22 teachers and 18 wanted this woman to leave. So we decided to tell her this in one of our meetings, to tell her that it was the decision of 18 *compañeras* to ask her to leave the school. (Sophia, Interview, September 12, 2013)

Over the course of three months, throughout mandatory meetings that the educators held once a month on Saturdays, the teachers talked to Roxana about her behavior. During the first, they spent over three hours telling her how her negative behavior was affecting the group. During the second, they began to discuss matters she did not agree with but instead she continuously disrupted them and nothing was accomplished at all. Finally, the team decided something needed to be done, but because of the politics of popular schools, trying to “fire” this woman was not an easy process. Here again it is unmistakable that the line of distinction between a social organization and one that receives government funding befuddles how projects identify themselves and the orders they follow.

We are not like a state public school. In public schools you can't get fired because it is very bureaucratic. It takes a lot of time. But we are not a public school. We are a social organization and in any social organization or in any political party, when a *compañera* is not being a *compañera*, when they do not respect the collective decisions, what are we supposed to do? (Sophia, Interview, September 12, 2013)

Since being recognized by the state, a tension began to exist between popular educators' conceptions of if they were workers or if they were militants. In dealing with Roxana, they decided that it was more important to be militant and to be part of a group and to share a political and pedagogical vision, so they made the decision that they

wanted her to leave. But she did not accept it, she felt her rights as a salaried worker should be protected, and decided to take it to the general assembly of all popular schools.

Sophia explained that this situation caused a divide amongst the *compañeras* – those who supported Roxana as a worker who had rights, and those who did not support her as she was a disruptive member of a social collective.

I got very angry with the process because the ones who supported her were these two women that were my friends, Nadia and Ximena. They are not teachers; they are women from the neighborhood. Do you remember I told you that we have had a lot of fights because some *compañeras*, particularly Roxana, were very vocal about how because they are not teachers, that they aren't on the same level as them, that they don't deal with situations appropriately? Well, these two women who I have supported for a long time, they supported her! Their arguments were that she had rights to her job because she was part of the school for a long time, for many years, and because she was a worker. But they forget about all of the mess she has made. (Sophia, Interview, September 12, 2013)

No one wanted to go to the general assembly of popular schools but as a collective they all had to attend. During the meeting it was obvious that the assembly of popular schools were split with regards to those who supported the collective decision of 14 de Octubre educators and those who supported Roxana.

This discussion lasted hours and it was insufferable. And we had to listen to her quote from *La Constitución de los Docentes*, which is like a teachers' book of rights and laws of Argentina. But I told them, if we take this into account as law, then we haven't opened a popular school, we've opened some form of public school. (Sophia, Interview, September 12, 2013)

So the tricky part was, on the one hand they wanted to be paid like public school teachers and have the same rights at the federal level, but internally they still wanted to run the school as a social organization detached from the more governing aspects of the public system. Here the education projects' relationship with the government became a point of contention the collectives did not have a handle on. Were educators to be treated as workers, teachers, militants, as part of a social organization? As her position as part of

the public was contested, antagonisms surrounding Roxana's place within the collective left the hegemonic structure of the movements themselves in disarray. Here Sophia explains the results of the meeting and what was ultimately decided.

The first meeting resulted in an impasse, a tie. We couldn't solve the situation. So we decided to think about it until the following month and meet again. We had to decide if she would leave our school and go to another one, even though no one wanted to receive her. And the other option was that she stay at 14 de Octubre. There were just two options and the organization of popular schools had to think over those options and come together to vote. (Sophia, Interview, September 12, 2013)

Sophia said the main thing she felt was annoyed throughout this process because many in the organization knew Roxana, they knew her reputation as being difficult to work with. Sophia said that throughout their time working together, that other educators from other schools would jokingly ask, "how can you bare working with this woman?" But when it came time to support 14 de Octubre in firing her, they did not. The decision, a month later, was that she would stay.

At a Crossroads

Sophia explained that at that point, she felt she needed to end a cycle. She felt she had no choice but to leave.

I started my career here. Since I have been an adult, since I finished my secondary school, I was part of this movement. Now I need to go in a different direction. (Sophia, Interview, September 12, 2013)

Acknowledging that quitting mid-school year was a callous move, she knew it was time to leave the organization. When Sophia talked about her final days with the education project, the confusion and even contradictions around if they were militants or if they were workers was once again recognizable in the manner within which she left –

structuring her departure as one would do a 9 to 5 job rather than a community built project.

I wrote to them and said that in 14 days I was leaving. I gave the required amount of notice like you would in any job. I wasn't worried about them finding someone to take on my classes because now these hours are paid. Before, when we didn't receive salaries, when someone left it meant someone else had to do extra work. (Sophia, Interview, September 12, 2013)

When Sophia told the other teachers of her departure they were sad. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, they were all friends, friends for whom she had fought side-by-side with, whom they went to when life and work piled up. Most of the educators did not think that she was going to leave. They thought that she would rethink her decision or that she was blowing off steam.

They phoned, until my last day, saying "no please stay." I am one of the teachers who had been there the longest, so I received a lot of calls like this. I told them if there was something I could do, I would do it, but I feel that I can't. I had reached my emotional limit. All of them were very angry with the organization and most of them thought that I was going to stay until the end of the semester to protect the school. But I felt that really I couldn't do it. (Sophia, Interview, September 12, 2013)

Sophia went to the school her last day, responsibly taking her grades and materials that she had been using to give it to her replacement teacher. She made a memo and in it she talked about her classes, how she worked, and how she evaluated students.

Everything was very organized.

I went to each year to tell them as a group that I'd be leaving. I went to first year, which is the group that I've known for the least amount of time. They are very young and I thought that it was going to be very easy. Well, I was wrong. As I was telling my students about my last day, one woman told me, "*nos dejas tirados*," it's like you are throwing us away or you're abandoning us. It broke my heart. Some of the older ones told me – well, you are going to be better, to progress, we are sad but we are happy for you. The others were like - oh no, why, we are going to miss you. They were very kind with me but this expression, "*nos dejas tirados*," it was hard. It was hard because it was obvious they were

affected. And me, who was all organized, at that point, I lost it. I couldn't stop crying. (Sophia, Interview, September 12, 2013)

Sophia said that her *compañeras* hugged her, they were sad, but she also thought that many were a little bit angry because they felt like they were also being thrown away.

Like we started something together and, I would have liked for it to have been different but it wasn't. I couldn't control it. (Sophia, Interview, September 12, 2013)

Many of the other women were angry about the situation they had been put in after the conclusion had been reached in the general assembly, and they had been thinking too that they wanted to leave the project all together. Unlike Sophia, who had her family's support, who also had another job to fall back on, the other teachers had to stay teaching because of personal or financial reasons. Here again, government support may have had the adverse effect of summoning a dependence upon money that may prevent a true social organization from thriving, where antagonisms exist but are forced to be quenched so that educators get along, get paid.

Sophia's Desires and Limitations

The desire Sophia once had to do this work had dissipated, and I wondered if it were completely gone.

I think our fight is ok, our project is ok, but it is not a perfect place, it is not paradise, we have a lot of conflicts, and I don't want to spend my energy on this. I think the world is a disaster and there is a lot of inequality, but I feel that being a part of this is not very productive. I have to think of other ways to live, other projects. I think the popular schools have a lot of positive things, and have done a lot, but I also think they have their limitations. And I don't want to go on. I don't know if it is worth the effort. (Sophia, Interview, September 12, 2013)

I wanted to know more about other conflicts and problems, the limitations she saw in the education projects. For example, one thing I noticed about the popular educator workshops I had attended was that some were my age, there were people who

were older, but many more were very young – 18, 19, 20 years old. I wondered if the movements and popular schools were solely geared for young people who were transitioning between college and the working world, and if they were really as inclusive as they purposed to be.

My *compañeras* and I have talked about this a lot, about how these types of organizations only enable some people in some conditions to participate, and it is exclusive for others. We had a lot of *compañeras* who were older or were in other parts of their lives who wanted to commit to the work we do, but as they could only go to their classes or go to one meeting per year, or per month, they were left out. For me this is ridiculous because the school needs experienced educators. Although we are young and we have a lot of energy, a lot of idealism, it is not enough to run a school, or at least in good conditions. Popular schools need the experience of teachers who have worked in other types of schools, because although not all teachers think the same, we need that experience in order to learn, to be mentored. (Sophia, Interview, September 12, 2013)

It is hard to ignore the contradictions here, considering that Roxana was 50 years old and perhaps fell into this “someone of a certain age” category, someone who was in a different place in her life, who could not commit at the same pace as younger educators. I wondered if there were common reasons that older or more experienced teachers left the popular education projects or why there were not systems in place to support all kinds of participation. Even Sophia, who had stated teaching at age 19 and was 26 at the time this interview took place, was one of the older educators I had talked with during this investigation.

There are a variety of reasons. Many think at this point in their lives they do not have the time to join these organizations. Some of them leave because they think differently and decide to go to another political party, or they go to another organization because they found that this place wasn't what they expected. And some of them think this all goes nowhere, that these are just local schools and they've reached their limits. (Sophia, Interview, September 12, 2013)

Sophia did not know what her next step would be. Though she would have liked to have continued working collectively, she was not particularly drawn to any of the other

education projects in the city. She was not entirely sure if she would join another social organization or move on to new things.

I think eventually I am going to...well I don't know. I don't know. I need to get a good job, I need to move on, but I do still think there are a lot of things that we have to do; there are a lot of needs in this city. If in some time I find something worthy and I have time to do it, if I can do something, I will. (Sophia, Interview, September 12, 2013)

Mococo Seri

I decided to walk to Mococo Seri's closing ceremony of the 2013 academic year, which was held to honor students who were attending the school, as well as hand out certificates to those who had completed initial courses of their professional training. It was a lovely, late spring afternoon with a warm breeze as the sun was setting, and also only 2km from where I lived. The walk was interesting. For about half the way there there were large, colonial era mansions set by the Spanish during the days when the city was beginning to modernize. Then I passed gated properties, verandas and flower gardens, until reaching Avenida de las Incas, a lovely boulevard that led to the less gente Forest Avenue, where tire shops and gas stations lined a bustling urban street. This went on for equally another kilometer until I reached Lacrose, a hectic bus and train hub flooded with people leaving from work.

Chacarita is a district in the north-central part of Buenos Aires where Mococo was located. The neighborhood is a combination of tree-lined streets, vintage row houses and apartment buildings, best known for the 95 hectare Cementerio de la Chacarita, a cemetery of above ground vaults, mausoleums, and tombs veiled among broken glass and littered with rubbish, that had for some years fallen to disarray. Mococo itself was located just next door to the federal commuter train rail terminal, which handles local and long-

distance services throughout the country. The high rise that hosted the school on its 5th floor looked a bit sketchy, but once I entered the level that the school was situated on it proved a lovely space. The walls were freshly painted, the furniture matched, tables were laid with pamphlets, and bill boards adorned well-penned announcements. The school was well lit, clean, capacious. This did not have the feel of other popular schools that I had visited during my time in the field – schools in recuperated factories with donated, dilapidated furniture; poor acoustics and highway noise; graffiti covered desks; busted windows; a lack of toilet paper. You could tell money, time, and effort went to its upkeep.

I arrived 20 minutes before the celebration started, just after 6pm, as they were setting up sound check, pricy video equipment, and a projector. There were about 60 people at the time I arrived and well over double that by the time I left. These were friends and family members, students, teachers, and others from the community. This was not a warm event like others I had been to, there was *a coolness* to the audience, a hipness if you will – but never the less, this seemed a strong and supportive community.

So what brought me to Mococo's end of the year celebration? As mentioned, in a *Comunicado* published on the school's website, nine cisgender and transgender educators posted their resignation letter to the school. At the time I had only met very idealistic young people training to be educators in popular schools, or educators who were already invested in popular classes. I had yet to meet veteran educators who showed disdain for the movements, with the project they were a part of, or who directly addressed the possibility that government involvement in popular schools could be detrimental. I was

compelled to meet with them to learn more about what it was that provoked them in such a way.

Just prior to attending Mococo's end of the year celebration I had met with Ashley and Valezka, two of the women who had signed the *Comunicado*, at La Orquídea – a noisy café set on a busy street in Chacarita. The point of this meeting was to discuss circumstances that led to the publication of a group denouncement of Mococo Seri and their subsequent leaving of the organization. After witnessing the profound affections exchanged in their hugs, I would learn that this meeting was the first time they had seen each other since their resignation.

After we left the school there became a distance between those of us who had signed the *Comunicado*. (Ashley, Interview, November 12, 2013)

It was a lot to deal with. Some did not want to talk about it. There was too much pain. The night we posted the notice we got together for a beer and cried. It helped us to distill and process what had happened. It affected us so much because we built that place from the ground up. (Valezka, Interview, November 12, 2013)

Ashley and Valezka explained that with many education movements seeking government recognition for their work, the fight comes from certain bodies – the poor and working class, women, people of color, the LGBT community. In order to grant these bodies rights, the government requires “safe” partnerships between the schools seeking recognition of their work and institutions of the state – in this case, a government affiliated foundation called Fundación Destino partnered with Mococo Seri as a means of granting the government some leverage over the school. As Mococo was gaining recognition and acclaim, not only nationally but on an international scale, the foundation and essentially the government wanted and eventually achieved control of the school.

Since its inception, there were disputes regarding how much the government partnered foundation should be involved in allocating the 750,000 pesos (almost \$200,000 U.S. dollars at the 2013 exchange rate) the school received from the state that year. Moreover, there was a lack of a shared position between the transpedagogical vision that the establishing women teaching in the popular education sector had started with, and the vision the foundation and government had for the school once it began to receive funding. Attending Mococo's end of the year celebration gave me insights into some of the things Ashley and Valezka mentioned with regard to their departure, particularly how government partnership interfered with original grassroots educators' dream for a popular transpedagogy, as well as the cooptation of the school by the government affiliate.

Pros and Cons of Government Partnership

The end of the year celebration began with a flag ceremony and the singing of the Argentinean national anthem. President of Fundación Destino, Sebastian Esquel, gave an opening speech to students and attendees. In the speech he sought to acknowledge the fruits of the year's labor, yet did not shy away from expressing the difficult, stressful year they had. In spite of the difficulties, Sebastian articulated that these stresses ultimately paid off as they led to the creation of new cultural and workshop spaces in the building, and what he believed was the overall empowerment of *compañeros*. Here he thanked organizations who joined with Mococo, making mention of local, national, and international allies as having contributed to its growing success.

Thank you to all the social organizations that have joined us, who have been essential and instrumental in their participation. As you know, everything here has been built as a collective. And this year we were proud to participate in the Inter-American Human Rights Commission, where we convened with other education workers and human rights activists. We were able to share our experiences with all our *compañeros* of this great nation, and that has been crucial for us. Finally,

let me be the first to say, next year we'll be part of a network of UNESCO schools, which is an important achievement because we believe that there is a lot of work still to be done, it will continue to be hard, but we must do it. (Sebastian Esquel, Celebration, December 5, 2013)

As Esquel suggested, partnership with various organizations within and outside the transcommunity enabled Mococo to become a place to channel different situations that transgender students may be presented with – lack of access to education, healthcare, work, and culture. Mococo worked with housing groups that founded suitable homes for transgender women, as well as with different call centers that provided advice and guidance in situations of domestic violence. Roberto Ribeiro, a social worker who had a significant role in running the school, talked further about the partnerships they had been forming and how this too helped further their education project.

It is very important for us to solve the problems of our students as part of a team. Thankfully valuable, indispensable people have joined with us like professors and students from the University of Buenos Aires. They've worked throughout the year with us, articulating strategies designed to accompany and strengthen Mococo students' learning processes. (Roberto Ribiero, Celebration, December 5, 2013)

So unlike most popular school mobilizations I observed who actively protested against the Ministry of Education, Mococo had a firm alliance with both government and non-government entities. On behalf of the government, one politician from the National Ministry of Education was given substantial opportunity to address the school community. Of note, he did not hesitate to drop the names of several important government figures who wanted to contribute to the school and its growing public notoriety.

I simply wanted to say hello to all of you who are part of this educational experience at this school. I want to give a special greeting from Minister Alberto Sileoni, who visited with you here on April 15, the beginning of the school year. Also, I send a special greeting from Pablo Urquiza, the Deputy Minister of the

National Education Ministry. (Ministry Representative, Celebration, December 5, 2013)

Throughout his speech the ministry representative emphasized the state's views on gender democracy, which are indeed progressive, highlighting federal level policies that have expanded transgender rights, by behest of social groups who had been fighting for years for these rights. It was evident the representative believed the school had important implications not only for Argentina, or Latin America, but for the world. Here he mentioned the history of alternative education in the country, praising the ministry's role in promoting opportunities to complete schooling for all people.

Education policy in Argentina has the reputation of being profoundly countercultural. We've done a lot to build schools in this part of the 20th century; high schools were few or at least not many. Thankfully many high schools have been built in institutional spaces like this, where many boys and girls who were not intended as recipients of high school diplomas can now get one. The same is true with this high school space for transgender people. This space is nothing but an example in Latin America and the world of practiced democracy. (Ministry Representative, Celebration, December 5, 2013)

Mococo had built a reputation as the first transgender school in Latin America and so as a growing entity that was once a grassroots institution, it is hard to ignore the government's interest. Given Argentina's tarnished reputation of human rights abuses left over from the military dictatorship, the appeal to transgender rights may improve the country's image on the international stage. Though promising in context, the government's intentions seemed lacking in the treatment given to movements who mobilized at the ministry, movements who had less of a presence on circuits like UNESCO, for example. It is equally hard to imagine the National Minister of Education making a personal visit to the popular schools or communities I had spent time in for the research of this project.

A Transpedagogical Vision

Ashley and Valezka acknowledged that the federal government partnership helped in constructing the school in significant ways. When Mococo began it was not a place that was ready for a school. With funding they were able to get walls hammered up, fresh paint, and money to essentially put the space together. Government money also enabled the building of a new library and multipurpose room, and overall turned the school into a livable space for students. With that said, Ashley and Valezka believed the school would fail because after they left, it became staffed by teachers who had little knowledge of gender and gender rights, and was ineffective in creating pedagogical opportunities that confronted issues facing the transgender community. As they explained, students of Mococo came from all over the city. Many had been sex workers, squatters, homeless, or street kids.

We walked through different places where they'd be, we'd go to places well known to where sex workers work. We went to these different areas and we distributed brochures, spoke to the girls, and explained what the popular school was. And some came. (Valezka, Interview, November 12, 2013)

The objective they had when they started the school was to help students earn a diploma, but to also generate networks to health services, safe housing, and judicial representation.

Trans people are not provided good services in public hospitals and they are often violently discriminated against. So we'd talk to people who worked for human rights organizations, and they'd help articulate our needs to hospitals, to doctors, and ask if any would be interested in working with trans people. We were able to generate links between our school and the health services community to facilitate the entry of trans members in their care. (Valezka, Interview, November 12, 2013)

Fighting for a community that could sustain itself economically and materially, these educators asserted that they had *poner el cuerpo* into this project since it had begun.

It required a lot of movement on the street, going to different places and making concrete agreements with people in the flesh, and not with institutions.

We were concerned about revictimization. We were not going to be a bridge for students to be abused and mistreated. So every weekend we held lots of discussions and debates, we spent many long hours tired and hungry in assemblies, trying to decide the best course of action for our students. (Ashley, Interview, November 12, 2013)

Based in methods of popular education, intersected by principals central to feminism, Mococo was originally grounded in a transpedagogical framework with the vision of disrupting apparatuses of power, heteronormativity, and paternalism that impacted transgender students' lives.

The collective we envisioned was based in the methods of popular education and Paulo Freire. However trans people come in with profound survival strategies and life lessons, so our pedagogy also involved dialogue and lessons from these shared experiences. But anyone can go teach from a place of shared knowledge construction. Transpedagogy specifically has to do with disarming patriarchy. So we'd draw from the knowledge that all of us in the classroom had with regards to gender, diversity, and patriarchy, and we encouraged developing and problematizing these concepts with our students. (Ashley, Interview, November 12, 2013)

For example, if they were talking about what would traditionally be called health education, instead of thinking about it and transmitting it to students as traditional curriculum would dictate, Ashley and Valezka explained that in its place they would confront issues of power and power relations. How do we see the healthy other, what is a healthy body? – so health lessons would involve deconstructing medical discourse as well.

Power and how it impacts our students as they live their lives is not easy to get across to them, but it is tattooed on their skin, it is comported in their movements, and it is in the mindset of socialized bodies. Hegemonic power, how it acts on bodies, does not act in the same way on poor bodies, on a white body with money, it does not act in the same way on a trans body, and it does not act in the same way on a lesbian body. So these are some things transpedagogy explores, and

what we began to explore in our classrooms. (Ashley, Interview, November 12, 2013)

Unfortunately, as the foundation acquired power over the school they were also able to usurp this curriculum, ushering in an affect based pedagogy amongst students, one which Ashley felt was detrimental to a true, activist based transpedagogy.

The foundation claims to be united under this slogan of love, the love of gender and sexual diversity. But patriarchy continues to linger at its base. It's a heteronormative-patriarchal-hegemonic love. When it's perceived that something is challenging the patriarchy, this love comes to kill the enemy. (Ashley, Interview, November 12, 2013)

The enemy, at least from Ashley and Valezka's perspective, appeared to the foundation as the original grassroots founders of the school who challenged the government's presence in their space. Taking the form of what Foucault (2007) might term "pastoral power," the new order ushered in by the foundation took a more sterilized tone toward their activism – rather than confronting inherent evils within structures of society, they desired in its stead that *compañeros* under their watch were fed, cared for, looked after, educated, sheltered.

Pastoral power is fundamentally "a power of care" (Foucault 2007, p. 172) found not in displaying strength, superiority, and wealth but rather it manifests in tasks undertaken through devotion and purpose. Pastoral power engages in an undeviating involvement in daily conduct, in the organization and management of lives, goods, wealth, and things. It is a power not only concerned with the individual, but the community as well, which has thus given rise to an "art of governing" characterized by directing, leading, guiding, manipulating, monitoring, and taking charge of collectives and individuals throughout their daily lives – it is the art by which some people govern others and others let themselves be governed by some people (Foucault 2007). This

pastoral leadership under the semblance of what Ashley designated as “love,” took on slogan-like characteristics used to rally students and communities together; love and the act of care was mentioned a great deal during the celebration ceremony.

As stated, Mouffe (2005) understands that people need to identify with a collective identity that allows them to valorize not only the group, but themselves as well. Nonetheless, she would concur that politics should not be limited to those who approve of the rudimentary conditions at work in the public realm, as these neglect the rich and power laden aspects that drive the establishment and maintenance of that order. In regard to the negative impact of “care” on students – that is debatable, though there was a sense that love and fun were given precedence over deeper issues that confronted social injustice or even government’s larger responsibility to the people. Here, for example, Emilia Rojas, coordinator of building operations of the school, spoke of her work as also as an act of love.

I feel privileged and very beloved – this is our school, but mainly this is our home, and it is a home to everyone. These are privileged spaces, privileged spaces that play an important role in the daily life of our pedagogical work. We believe in love and we believe that we must profess it every day based on acts, not only words. And in Mococo Seri we want to create a new code, a code of love, solidarity, bonds of trust, knowing that we trans are sisters. (Emilia Rojas, Celebration, December 5, 2013)

Along with love, trust was another important facet of the work at Mococo. As Ribiero explains,

The most important thing within this space is trust. We do this work with lots of love, lots of vocation. (Roberto Ribiero, Celebration, December 5, 2013)

Through these administrators’ discourse, it was evident that the transpedagogical framework of deconstructing power, of understanding institutions and how institutional prejudices impact the lives of transwomen and transmen, had been trumped by love, trust,

and care work. Again, I am not convinced that is entirely a bad thing. Students seemed to be thriving in this governmentally sanctioned space, and the school building and resources available within had much more to offer popular students than other community built schools I had visited throughout this project. With that said, while I do recognize that love and community is often what marginalized groups create and what is needed to counter the sense of alienation often felt and experienced in the world, the question remains – what is the point of creating safe spaces if ongoing activism against larger social pressures, issues, and power does not happen?

During the celebration a film was shown depicting students sharing their experiences at Mococo. In it they also explained how the school had affected their lives in positive ways.

More than curriculum, more than pedagogy, the most vital thing is love. In what other high school will they call you on the phone and ask “we haven’t seen you in two days. Why haven’t you come to class?” Most of us here have in some ways been rejected by the world, by society, but then you walk through the doors here you feel so much tenderness. (Shelia, Celebration, December 5, 2013)

Mococo Seri is critical for us because not only do they teach girls to study, they teach us to respect each other, to listen to one another. The idea for the future is that transwomen can be a part of any school, anywhere, and we can feel comfortable. (Celeste, Celebration, December 2, 2013)

Valeria was in her first year at Mococo. With less than an 8th grade education she returned to her studies to become a surgical scrub nurse. Moving to Buenos Aires from Chile in the previous year, she mentioned that such a school was not an option her country had for transgender people, and that there were limited opportunities for them to get the help they needed. Here she mentioned how the school had impacted her life, particularly in opening doors once closed to her.

I started studying at Mococo this year because last year I lost my freedom. I was arrested because of things I had gotten caught up with. I was not very enthusiastic about studying, but I'm having a really good time because the girls make it a lot of fun. Apart from that, I am working a lot with my other classmates. The truth is, this school invites any girl who suddenly finds themselves having problems or are being detained or arrested, and encourages them to study. Here you have everyone's support. For all transwomen this is a tremendous opportunity. (Valeria, Celebration, December 5, 2013)

In addition to the love and comfort students expressed, their classes were also mentioned as places where they could experience joy in their work practicums.

The cooking courses! There's a lot of energy in the kitchen. You have fun cooking. Who you are goes into the food you are preparing, it is transmitted in food. (Daphne, Celebration, December 5, 2013)

I take the economics and fashion design courses. We have a great time and we are also designing our own brand that'll come out later this year. (Alma, Celebration, December 5, 2013)

It is not difficult to see that the courses these students were taking part in were not fighting against commodified pedagogy or deconstructing how power impacts the transgender community. The classes they were taking – restaurant, fashion, economics – were instead meeting with the demands of the market. Though these courses may be empowering in the fact that they offered transgender people skills needed to participate and sustain themselves in the workforce, it also shows a divide between the transpedagogical vision the school started with, and the one it transformed into with government recognition. Would these two different visions for popular education pedagogy be able to coexist, given their antagonistic relationship? Unfortunately, government stakeholders made such a scenario impossible.

A Matter of a Conflict of Vision

So as it went in Sophia's school, with state recognition came a great deal of conflict over how Mococo would run, how money would be spent, as well as what

curriculum would ultimately be taught inside the classroom. Here Ashley and Valezka talked about how the school began and how it eventually led to their departure. In short, they were a collective expelled from the school because they would not give up their vision of a transpedagogy.

We were erased. They went over our heads and took the school on the basis of legal status with the government. They had signatures, and they got to keep the school. (Valezka, Interview, November 12, 2013)

We started small, but once the federal government started helping us with lots of money, that boosted the school's potential. It drew attention from outside organizations and that made it possible for the institutional coup that essentially broke existent horizontal assemblies. Fundación Destino brought their norms, their people, their directors, their ways, and it ended up being a top-down, patriarchal institution. (Ashley, Interview, November 12, 2013)

Ahmed (2010) and Mouffe (2005) would agree that social organizations in such cases could learn from those who refuse to give up their beliefs for the sake of keeping the peace in public. On the contrary, Ashley and Valezka believed that once the government acquired control of the school, they were forced out because of their antagonistic positions – or as Ahmed (2010) would put it, their lack or loss of association to a shared happiness as others within a social space. The foundation gradually acquired control of the school's assembly, through divisive maneuvers and manipulations. They already had an agreement made with the Ministry of Education and so they held the money to ensure the school's physical space. All that was left was for the foundation to become the decision making body of the school. To do this they went behind the original teachers' backs and had agreements made with each of the students, making promises that if they voted in consensus on certain issues, then they would grant them subsidies in some way. Through these means they managed to take over the assembly.

From the patriarchal perspective of the foundation, the students are essentially bodies, submissive bodies, and we clearly see this act as an exercise of power over *compañeras*. The *compañeras* signed the agreement because they need diplomas. So we arrived to the school one day, we come in on October 22 and there was a meeting, and we found out that this meeting was arranged and these signatures were collected behind our backs, because they wanted us out. (Ashley, Interview, November 12, 2013)

There was the option to stay but obey their orders, to verticalize. At this point it ceased to be a popular school, it ceased to be the school we started. (Valezka, Interview, November 12, 2013)

Educators at Mococo who came after were contracted individually, and there would be no association between people sharing a unique vision. As Ahmed (2010) suggests, the foundation sought to stamp out affect aliens – those educators who through their differences might have converted good feelings to bad, or perhaps feelings of “care” and “love” to those more aligned with anger and justice. As such, they displaced all of the original people in leadership positions including lesbians, feminists, women, transmen and transwomen, teacher teams, collaborators, and coordinators. Those who remained were cisgender men and they were in charge. As a collective of educators who had originally started the space, Ashley, Valezka, and the others decided that since the assembly they had started broke, that they would leave.

It morphed into something else. It disarmed all that we were building. We were building from a depatriarcalizing and anti-capitalist perspective according to our values. That is, we were opposed to any form or vertical structure where everyone is subject to an authority. It became clear that the foundation could not live with these ways of doing things. (Valezka, Interview, November 12, 2013)

The decision of the public *Comunicado* had to do with wanting to make visible this effacement – these original educators refused to let the government or the foundation erase them through this cooptation. Since they were the ones who owned the rights to the Mococo webpage, because one of their *compañeras* had opened the domain long before

the foundation took over, they published their grievances publically on the school's official site. The foundation demanded they take it down, and even tried to reclaim the website from the place where domain names were registered, but the original educators of Mococo won the right to keep the site and to keep their written protest public.

At the time of this research both Ashley and Valezka continued their activism with the transcommunity, though they had not returned to popular education. Valezka was working with the transcommunity but rather than teaching, she was militating full time. Along with other LGBT activists, she worked on developing activities like the Pride Parade of Buenos Aires, as well as more specific campaigns like *Orgullo Influyente*, which helped incarcerated transwomen by collecting non-perishable foods, clothing, and other donations to bring to them should they be imprisoned.

Ashley was also doing territorial work with transwomen in the neighborhood of Constitución. She and other activists listened to their stories and complaints about the police and if they misbehaved in treating them.

The police were writing up one of the girls for a misdemeanor. They had picked up the girl and took her to the station. We called our lawyer and cleared up the situation in an hour. If not, usually girls spend the night in jail for misdemeanors, which isn't something they should have to do, legally speaking. What we do is provide them with information that they don't have. Because what are their possibilities once they leave prison if they are living in conditions that often end up putting them right back there? Sadly we are not going to change the prison system, but we can help these women navigate the system that puts them in dangerous conditions (Ashley, Interview, November 12, 2013)

Chapter Summary and Discussion

After the 2001 crisis, social movements were a way for many people in Argentina to safely do things like criticize leftist ideals, capitalist ideals, of course the right's ideas, while popular schools served as environments where students and educators could do

concrete community work. Since their beginning, popular education movements have been in constant debate with the state to be acknowledged as fully public, educational degree granting entities. Having such needs met would provide popular schools money to pay teachers' salaries, upkeep classrooms and buildings where students are taught, and attain resources pertinent to any learning environment – chalk, paper, boards, etc. Government recognition would also give students who attend popular schools the chance to earn legitimate diplomas upon completion of their studies, and grant them access to scholarship funds and higher education.

Popular schools had convinced the government of Argentina that they were genuine educational institutions, relieving them of the stress of educating its citizens. The government responded to the popular education projects' demands by granting popular schools the same provisions as private schools by way of allocated money in the form of subsidies and tax breaks. In light of this, there are many ways to interpret the turn of events that jeopardized founding educators' pedagogical vision in 14 de Octubre and Mococo Seri. One way would be that the schools were co-opted, that financial need conceded to neoliberal hegemony – exiling affect aliens like Sophia, Ashley, Valezka, and others whose views became marginalized and made to disappear in the newly dominant ideological landscape (Ahmed, 2010). Another way to interpret these events could be that movements were able to clout their knowledge of participatory democracy and partnership building so that money, resources, and accreditation could further their efforts to improve education opportunities for popular communities.

In either case, it is clear that political bonds forged between state and social organizations were ripe with dissent and antagonism. This chapter focused on the antagonism and internal conflicts generated in popular schools after the intervention of the Ministry of Education

with subsidies and benefits. It showed what can happen when the logic of the market replaces the logic of movement activism; moreover, it showed the emergence of negative dynamics that caused the team teaching process to deteriorate.

Through time spent with Sophia at 14 de Octubre, I would come to learn of the ways in which internal struggle among educators new to receiving funding weakened relationships within popular schools among collectives who once considered themselves unpaid social activists. Educators wanted to be paid like public school teachers and have the same rights at the federal level, but internally they still wanted to run the school as a social movement detached from the more governing aspects of the public system. The line of distinction between a social organization and one that received government funding became a point of contention the collectives had not yet figured how to live with in ways that could advance their education projects further.

In essence, when money was a factor, it changed the dynamics of the social organization and the relationships within it, excluding some while leaving others dissatisfied. Organizations often only enabled some people in some conditions to participate, and excluded others – for example older women, women married with children, those who had other responsibilities in their lives in addition to activism, or those whose ethos ran different to the dominant order.

I would come to learn from Ashley and Valezka that their collective of women educators believed that once the government foundation took over, and the school was able to secure recognition and funding for Mococo, the state ultimately co-opted the school, bringing with it heteronormative, hegemonic, patriarchal values, and allowing heteronormative power to take root within. In conducting this study, their experience was

rare. I had been surrounded by so much positivity training in the workshops that it was interesting to see what happens when educators were affected negatively by the nature of the movement and the education projects themselves.

It was obvious that the ability to sooth affects of antagonism in ways that did not shut down communication, did not rub out those whose beliefs differed than those practiced and upheld by the education projects, was not something social movements had a grasp on yet. As Mouffe (2005) states, antagonisms may be evident but need not destroy the social collective. This involves not seeing an *enemy*, someone whose belief system needs to be eradicated, but rather ensuring existing antagonisms have a place, that they are not negotiated upon nor compromised. There is a need for those within popular education projects to manage or salve antagonisms that have developed as a result of government intervention, to welcome those whose opinions or beliefs may differ not as enemies, but as adversaries whose insights may advance popular education projects further.

Transitions are complicated, and likewise social movements do not always encounter them smoothly. Discourses that may appear democratic and open, actually end in obscuring or neutralizing those whose perspectives run different than the status quo. There needs to be a better understanding of conflict inherent in change, in human life, and that there are no relationships or institutions without it. In achieving certain rights and recognitions with the government for example, popular education projects must continue militating for improved government recognition standards, increased funding for classroom materials and student scholarships, equal gender laws and marriage acts, for comprehensive sex education, as clearly defined by Argentina's state policies. At the

same time, when rights have been gained, when civil liberties have been reestablished, there remains to be new laws and policies to fight for.

Education projects must learn to live in a constructed democracy ripe with conflict. The push and pull of the people with one another, with their elected representatives, with state accountability, set within conditions that guarantee such democratic practices will continue regardless of difference or disagreements, are essential to social progress and is something owed to many communities who have experienced suffering and persecution.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

Though considerable theoretical and empirical research has been done on students and educators working within popular education projects, few offer an alternative means of understanding these spaces outside educator activist Paulo Freire's framework, and too little literature decenters the monopoly his influence has had upon the field. Scholars like Bowers (1987), Weiler, (1991), and Lather (2001) have shown that while a Freirean based approach to education may challenge unsubstantiated neoliberal reform efforts, his prevailing model for social transformation often lacks consideration of intersectional issues relevant to the needs and challenges of particular communities. Scholars like Brady (1994), Ewert (1977), and Sánchez Bejarano (2005) have confronted the universal approach that many Freirean based pedagogists align to, insisting that pedagogy should be both reflexive and considerate of the broad spectrum of people, their issues, and their contributions within today's society. Seeking to build upon a better understanding of gender-specific concerns in popular education projects, knowledge presented in this work joins with feminist, cultural studies, critical race, and other scholars as those mentioned above, who insist that the world is far too diverse and complex for one overriding prescription for liberation through education.

Women Revisioning Education

During my time spent in popular education communities throughout Buenos Aires, it was evident in the spaces I encountered that though women's work in social movements has been particularly instrumental in redefining education through the building of popular power among disadvantaged groups; fostering ties among civil, state,

and political sectors; and constructing knowledge and developing skills in diverse learning communities, there remained a general lack of broader recognition of their contributions, which were often overshadowed by the more revolutionary centered ideologies and romanticized personas of their male political activist and educator counterparts.

The chapters throughout this study have sought to remedy this through an exploration of women teaching in the popular education sector and their trajectories as teachers, community leaders, and activists in social movement based popular education projects. I have done this by specifically highlighting their politicized classroom and community practices that impact the work they do at various points in their careers – at the beginning, when they are in educator training workshops; in the middle, where they practice their politics and pedagogy in classrooms, community centers, and picket lines; and in the end, if and when they leave popular education projects to pursue other endeavors. I have turned to the scholarship of *mujerista* and Latina feminist intellectuals like Cortina & San (2006), Delgado (2006), Flores & Garcia (2006), Miller (2008), and Trinidad (2015), whose efforts advocate research that supports Latina's personal, emotion, spiritual, collectivist, and survivalist healing practices in their struggles against oppression (Dryness 2008). Within this camp, scholars have brought to light the significant work done by Latina women focused on the everyday resistance strategies where oppression and inequality are experienced (Delgado Bernal, 2006, 2008). Such work also provides a means of understanding women educators' experiences in popular projects by pinpointing the ways in which the intersection of racism, sexism, and classism impacts the daily lives of women in popular education spaces.

So in light of the severe oversaturation of knowledge on popular educators, activists, and leftist political heroes who are men, as well as the numerous social movements, popular schools, and community based organizations that bear the names of fallen male activists, this study has provoked initial, but important answers to the following questions – what are the experiences of women teaching in the popular education sector? What can we learn from them?

Teachers Going Public

Seeking a nuanced means of understanding the experiences of women in social movement based popular education projects, and what we can learn from them, I have investigated the intersections of *mujerista* and Latina feminist epistemology with affect theory (Grinberg, 2010; Gould, 2009; Sutton, 2010) as a path to understanding their vision and practices as popular educators. As I have shown, the affective pedagogies of women teaching in the popular education sector rally emotions and sentiments that coincide with movements' political objectives and tactics, and are used to magnetize participants together toward pursuing a particular agenda. Feeling states, in such cases, are sites of power, because of their particular role in regulating political behavior and what spurs people to act.

Providing insights into *how* popular educators begin to organize themselves, chapter IV has offered a thorough examination of the mechanisms, consequences, and relations of affect before and during a series of popular educator training workshops held by the social movement *Frente Popular Darío Fernández* (FPDF). Here I revealed how many women educators in this study joined popular movements because they were seeking opportunities for “becoming public” (Biesta, 2012) – for gaining community

support for the social, political, and cultural issues affecting the continuity of their work in traditional public schools.

This chapter began by discussing Arendt's consideration of the social and political subjectivity of the stateless as experienced by those who have lost their place as part of a nation state, paralleled with women training to teach in the popular education sector and their rootless, migratory, marginalized history within the formal school system. In exploring the conditions influencing women educators' decisions to participate in popular education spaces, I found affects of alienation and exploitation were the common sensations impacting the professional lives of teachers becoming popular educators in this study. Joining the workshops fulfilled a desire not only for improving classroom practices, but for building the kinds of relationships that they felt lacking in their personal and professional lives.

Strategies used by workshop facilitators allowed women training to teach in popular schools to practice their shared ethos, guiding beliefs, and ideals regarding the importance of coalition and community building in social movement work, enabling them to form stronger ties among one another in a shared public space. Workshop participants, for example, had the opportunity to come together to discuss, debate, and build upon ideas and knowledge not only with their minds, but with the benefit of doing the same with the bodies as well. Affects of belonging were inspired not only through shared cerebral knowledge, but through the use of the body in communion with other bodies within the education community by breaking the established rules of pedagogy to create new ones. Other affects were strategically used in popular educator training workshops to support social movements' political efforts through relations of hope; trustworthiness;

shared social, historical, or cultural ties; and building collective identity and unity among participants. Drinking a *mate* together, or through games that stirred happiness, joy, and fun, made it possible for workshop coordinators to manifest politics of good feeling and belonging, all the while constructing solidarity and commitment to the education projects.

Participation in popular educator training workshops became pleasurable when strong feelings were shared among group members. Individuals were able to speak their mind as well as find joy and pride in who they were and where they come from. In concurrence with Goodwin, James, & Polletta (2001), workshop organizers were able to capitalize on negative emotions regarding stigmatized identities (being poor, working class, a woman, of color, an im/migrant) to organize and fight against such stigmas. Movement organizers built solidarity, fidelity, and love amongst members, and sought to make participation an enjoyable experience whereby involvement itself offered many pleasures. Rituals, songs, folk tales, heroes, denunciation of enemies, and so on were the affective tools movements utilized throughout the workshops to strengthen commitments, their visions, and make clear ideas, ideologies, and initiatives.

Insights found in this chapter are important because they demonstrate what sensations bring teachers to popular education projects, as well as the strategies used in education movements to maintain their participation. In demonstrating the importance of community, solidarity, and relationship building for those who have been devastated by neoliberalism's alienating and exploitive tactics targeting the public education system throughout Argentina, these insights also provide an initial roadmap to developing the types of relationships educators feel they need to progress human togetherness and for the chance of pedagogical actors and events to become public. Within these spaces, the

opportunities for becoming public opened up or, in Arendtian terms, made possible “a space where freedom can appear” (Biesta, 2012, p. 693).

Difficult Knowledge as a Path to Action

Through meetings, planning sessions, demonstrations, pamphlet and picket making rallies, educators stimulated new assemblages of affects that were able to utilize potentially paralyzing emotions like grief, loss, and mourning, toward political action. Transforming affective or emotional states – be it from despair to hope, sadness to joy, indifference to indignation – was an important pedagogical practice educators and activists utilized in order to convert themselves and community members into *compañeras en lucha* (comrades in the struggle).

Equally though, popular educators created pedagogical moments not only from joyful or positive affects, but as chapter V shows, from trauma, grief, and sadness that similarly manifested public togetherness and groupality. This was apparent in the ways in which women in social movements made trauma pedagogical – through “public grieving” (Butler, 2004) practices and curriculum entrenched in difficult knowledge.

Focused particularly on how mid-career women teaching in the popular education sector negotiated students’ and communities’ difficult knowledge in pedagogical spaces and urban environments, women throughout this chapter were attending to the needs of their students and their communities through curriculum addressing ambivalence, derision, and desires in learning contexts – in educator activist narratives that contributed to a better way of dealing with difficult knowledge. Throughout chapter V I visited Sophia’s classroom at 14 de Octubre where students were conducting their own ethnographic projects to understand the difficult conditions of their communities –

illiteracy, school dropout rates, homelessness. These understandings helped students appreciate their membership to the spaces and the people around them, granting further knowledge to better address community needs, and improve upon the lives of others and their own.

I then analyzed data from two celebrations, one hosted by Sophia's school and the other by UP's Gender Commission. Here I showed how mid-career women teaching in the popular education sector used speech to highlight traumatic atrocities of the state and other sectors – stories regarding the vulnerability of girls and women at the hands of human traffickers who plunder poor communities; the history of state terrorism and the murder of *villeros*; and the dire circumstances of the *villas* themselves. Within these speeches though, orators acknowledged the vast improvements that have been made in the lives of women living in these communities, made possible through social movement organizing and community solidarity.

Pedagogically exploring the intersection of grief and trauma with the larger social and political reality of students' worlds opens the possibility for others to discover the vulnerabilities present inside all classrooms and public spaces, and offers a better understanding of the ethical responsibility humanity holds for one another. Tolerance for experiences that may seem unspeakable, controversial, or too traumatic for the learning community, and an understanding of unspoken emotions and affects that shape pedagogical encounters, is critical and necessary if educators want to challenge inequities and assumptions in the lives of others.

Through these chapters I have used affect theory to explore the affective practices of women teaching in the popular education sector, and as an alternative to Freirean

based revolutionary pedagogy. I have shown how the *joyful* as well as *sadful* affects played an important role in heightening their classroom and community practices, and though not free of conflicts and contestations that arise within relations amongst heterogeneous individuals, may be the instrumental factor contributing to their successful efforts in combating neoliberal reform in Buenos Aires.

Nevertheless, while I recognized the importance and potential affective work like this has, I further wanted to explore women teaching in the popular education sector and their experiences within popular education projects across their career trajectory. To do this, chapter VI answers – what happens when women are not affected anymore? What happens when they want to leave projects all together?

Points of Contention in Education Movements

Creating community and building coalitions is easier said than done, and it can be difficult to secure amongst activists, educators, and students. However beneficial and effective mobilizing affects may be in rallying marginalized groups' political will, antagonisms can intersect in significant ways. For example, while popular spaces can be sites of personal and political power, they can also be sites of social control – particularly in their role in regulating political behavior and what spurs people to act. While activists mobilize emotions and sentiments that coincide with a social movement's political objectives, that indeed may be antagonistic toward government and neoliberal reform, chapter VI shows the ways in which affects within social movements may be suppressed or managed in such a way that could produce or diminish group antagonism, or even operate in service of the neoliberal state. Through Mouffe's (2005) thoughts on the political, this chapter considers the ways in which women teaching in the popular

education sector experienced conflict and antagonism within education projects, through their relationship with other educators and with the government.

Since the beginning, popular education movements have been in constant debate with the state to be acknowledged as fully public, educational degree granting entities. Having such needs met would provide popular schools money to pay teachers' salaries, upkeep classrooms and buildings where students are taught, and attain resources pertinent to any learning environment. Government recognition would also give students who attend popular schools the chance to earn legitimate diplomas upon completion of their studies, and grant them access to scholarship funds and higher education.

Popular schools have convinced the government of Argentina that they are genuine educational institutions, relieving them of the stress of educating its citizens. The government has responded to popular education projects' demands by granting popular schools the same provisions as private schools by way of allocated money in the form of subsidies and tax breaks. But as this chapter revealed, this can be both good and bad. Though antagonistic strategies mobilized in contestation with the government to have their needs met were affective, the projects still had not been able to juggle transitional antagonisms that developed within popular schools once solidifying bonds emerged between their projects and the state.

Through time spent with Sophia at 14 de Octubre, I would come to learn of the ways in which internal struggle amongst educators who were new to receiving funding deteriorated relationships within popular schools amongst collectives who once considered themselves unpaid social activists. Educators wanted to be paid like public school teachers and have the same rights at the federal level, but internally they still

wanted to run the school as a social movement detached from the more governing aspects of the public system. The line of distinction between a social organization and one that received government funding became a point of contention the collectives had not yet figured how to live with in ways that could advance popular education projects. In essence, when money was a factor, it changed the dynamics of the social organization and the relationships within it, excluding some while leaving others dissatisfied. Insights from ex-Mococo Seri educators Ashley and Valezka likewise revealed similar truths, particularly how a school built by a collective of women educators was co-opted by a government foundation that had taken over once their school was able to secure state recognition and funding. As they believed, the state ultimately co-opted the school, bringing with it hegemonic, patriarchal values, and allowing heteronormative power devices to take root within – antagonisms that ensued resulted in their leaving the school.

It became obvious that the ability to sooth affects associated with antagonism in such a way that did not shut down communication or groupality was not something popular education projects highlighted in this chapter had been able to do successfully. As I have shown in both 14 de Octubre and Mococo, there remains a need for those within popular education projects to manage or salve antagonisms that develop as a result of government intervention, to welcome those whose opinions or beliefs differ not as enemies, but as adversaries whose insights may advance popular education projects further. There needs to be a better understanding of conflict inherent in change, in human life, and that there are no relationships or institutions without it.

Implications for Researchers, Activists, and Public Educators

Intent on an education that is emancipatory, utopian centered (Giroux, 2001; McLaren & Lankshear, 1994) – what Allman (2001) calls a “revolutionary critical education” (p. 3) for social transformation – Freirean influenced pedagogy often overshadows the collective work of women in social movement based popular education projects (Boler, 1999; Bowers, 1987). As with any educational discourse, popular education must constantly be reframed and redefined so that there is no universally acceptable definition or approach. While Freire’s efforts have been instrumental in defining popular education throughout Latin America and the world, his work and his image have also been “deformed, romanticized and perhaps misunderstood” (Facundo, 1984, np). This work does not denounce Freire’s contributions to education but, as Facundo (1984) suggests, is as critical of his influence, theories, and practices as he has shown us to be of our own.

Aronowitz (1994) remarks that the name Freire “has reached near iconic proportions in the U.S., Latin America and, indeed, in many parts of Europe” (p. 218), his image rising to mythic proportions alongside marketable revolutionaries like Che Guevara and Fidel Castro (Furter, 1985), while the work done by and for women remains on the broader edge of popular projects. As hooks (1994) ruminates

there has never been a moment when reading Freire that I have not remained aware of not only the sexism of the language but the way he (like other progressive Third World political leaders) constructs a phallogocentric paradigm of liberation wherein freedom and the experience of patriarchal manhood are always linked as though they are one and the same (p. 49).

With the aim of understanding women’s participation in social movements in general, and popular education projects in particular – what makes their practices

worthwhile, as well as why they may personally and/or politically decide to abandon popular education projects – this dissertation has turned away from the established Freirean discourse surrounding popular education, toward a *mujerista*, affect based approach that seeks an understanding of the vision and practices of the communities of women teaching in the popular education sector themselves.

Through such an approach I have shed light on how the work of women teaching in the popular education sector intersects with social activism in poignant and touching ways, and has been able to fill a noticeable gap in the literature that offers little empirical documentation of women’s practices across their trajectories as classroom teachers, to popular educators and activists. Through this investigation of women teaching in the popular education sector and their commitments to popular education as an alternative to neoliberal education reform, this dissertation offers scholars, educators, and activists of the popular education community answers to what influences women teaching in the popular education sector at different stages of their participation in popular education projects?; what shared ethos, guiding beliefs, or ideals characterize women teaching in the popular education sector within these different stages?; what are the strategies used by these educators to practice these shared ethos, guiding beliefs, or ideals?; and how women teaching in the popular education sector connected or disconnected to these spaces?

Knowledge that traces women teaching in the popular education sector and their practices across various stages of their careers is important to researchers, activists, and public educators specifically because the vital work Argentinean women educators are doing socially, politically, and personally in popular education projects presents an

alternative to neoliberal education reform that no longer merely theorizes about “patriarchal manhood’s” revolution, but engages in women’s vision to transform curriculum and pedagogies, social practices and discourses, and communities as well.

Additionally, while a great deal of literature addresses Latin America’s political turn to the left in the recent decade (Alvarez, 2003; Conniff, 2012; Dinerstein, 2010; Escobar, 2010), little attention has been paid to how social movement culture has impacted and been impacted by education. This project contributes to the field of knowledge regarding contentious, leftist political movements in Latin America by presenting a current representation of education movements as they fight, teach, learn, and struggle for better conditions for popular communities.

Recommendations for Future Research

The Arab Spring; riots in London; Israel’s middle-class protests against high housing prices; students protesting in Chile; the Berlin car burnings; India’s movement against corruption; street mobilizations against exploitation and inequality in Hong Kong; and the Occupy Wall Street and Black Lives Matter movements in the U.S. – as global economic crisis swell, a rising number of women across world regions are in search of ways to contend with the impact neoliberal reform policies have had on low educational achievement levels, unemployment, marginalization, corruption, and other forms of oppression. For decades, South Americans have faced these challenges and as a result have been able to mobilize many successful grassroots solutions to crisis across the continent. Strategies from South American educational, social, and political movements can be applied elsewhere in the world to build more democratic societies for women.

Argentina is a country whose popular sector continues to influence the path of political and social trajectories through movement organizing. Understanding the work of

women teaching in the popular education sector has the potential to influence other social movements undergoing similar struggles for political justice and social mobility, and could be used to increase community engagement and raise educational achievement levels where activism and popular pedagogy intersect throughout the world. Though this study focused on a particular group of women teaching in the popular education sector, working in a particular part of the world, an understanding of their practices to combat neoliberal reform in their classrooms and communities holds important potential in contributing to an understanding of how the popular educator subjects is formed, how collective identity is maintained, and how this may lead to progressive social change not only in education, but in women's lives as well.

Further ethnographic investigations are needed toward the practices of women teaching in the popular education sector across their trajectories in social movement or other community based education projects to allow further understanding of women's role in creating and sustaining effective sites of pedagogy. These investigations should further develop in diverse parts of the world that may be similar or different than those presented in this study – be they urban, rural, within Latin America or elsewhere, amongst various members of distinct ethnic, gendered, racial, religious communities, in order to afford a broader spectrum of circumstances and situations affecting women educators and the communities in which they teach.

APPENDIX A

RECRUITMENT

Hello _____,

Thank you for contacting me. My name is Jennifer and I am a doctoral student from the United States doing research in Buenos Aires. I am writing my thesis on popular education. The purpose of my research is to understand the experiences of women educators and/or activists as popular educators. I would like to understand why they dedicate their time to teaching popular education classes and more about their personal and professional experiences in doing so.

If you are interested in participating in this study, could we arrange a time for me to visit your schools or we can arrange a time to meet and talk in person at another location.

Questions I will ask you will be about your point of view as a popular educator and /or activists in social movement based popular education projects in Buenos Aires. The results of this study will be included in my doctoral thesis. Your name will not be used and you will not be identified personally in anyway or at any moment in the research or final written product.

You are free to participate or not to participate without prejudice and you may also withdraw from part or all of this study at any time.

Hola _____,

Gracias por ponerse en contacto conmigo. Mi nombre es Jennifer y soy una estudiante de doctorado en Estados Unidos haciendo una investigación en Buenos Aires.

Estoy escribiendo mi tesis doctoral en la educación popular. El propósito primario de esta investigación es entender las experiencias de mujeres que son educadoras y/o activistas en las aulas de educación popular. Quiero entender las razones por las cuales ellas dedican su tiempo a enseñar en clases de educación popular y cuáles son sus experiencias personales y profesionales.

Querría preguntarle unas pocas preguntas acerca de su experiencia con eso. Si está interesada en participar, quizás puedo visitar las escuelas donde usted enseña o nos podemos encontrar en persona?

Las preguntas que le haré serán acerca de sus puntos de vista en relación a su trabajo como educadora y/o activista en los movimientos sociales y educación popular en Buenos Aires. Los resultados de este estudio pueden ser incluidos en mi tesis doctoral. Su nombre no será utilizado, ni será identificado personalmente, en ninguna manera ni en ningún momento.

Es libre de participar o no participar sin consecuencia y se puede retirar de este estudio en cualquier momento.

Script of Announcements made to let People know that Researcher was being Conducted

I am here today to observe the kinds of things popular educators do in their classrooms – how they teach, some of the activities they do, and subjects being taught. I will take some notes based on my observations here today in class. Anyone here is welcome to take a look at my notes and offer suggestions or addition comments or clarifications. I encourage you to let me know if you do not want me to write about something that is happening in the class or to ask questions from me. If at any time you feel uncomfortable, please let me know and I can stop taking notes or I can even leave the classroom.

Hoy estoy aquí para observar el tipo de cosas que los educadores populares hacen en sus clases - la forma en que enseñan, algunas de las actividades que realizan, y los temas que se enseñan. Voy a tomar algunas notas basadas en mis observaciones aquí hoy en clase. Cualquiera aquí es bienvenido a echar un vistazo a mis notas y ofrecer sugerencias o comentarios de adición o aclaración. Los animo a que me haga saber si no quieres que escriba sobre algo que está sucediendo en la clase o para hacerme preguntas. Si en cualquier momento usted se siente incómodo, por favor hágamelo saber y puedo dejar de tomar notas o incluso puedo salir del aula.

APPENDIX B
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Principal Investigator: Jennifer Lee O’Donnell
 Doctoral Student, College of Education
 Educators within Social Movement Based
 Popular Education in Buenos Aires, Argentina

Study Theme:

- 1) Where do you work or where have you worked?
- 2) What made you teach or have an interest in popular education?
- 3) Describe your experiences as an educators and/or activist in popular education.
- 4) If I have further questions, may I contact you?
- 5) If you are currently giving classes, may we arrange a time for me to visit and observe your class?
- 6) Choose five words (the colors are not important). Tell me how the word relates to the work you do with popular education. In each case, tell me why you chose that particular word.

Harassment	Appearance	Art	Barrio	Change	Marriage
Class	Skin Color	Patriarchy	Economic Crisis	Inequality	Guilt
Sport	Desire	Pain	Exercise	Pregnancy	Aging
Ethnicity	Expression	Family	Femininity	Home	Youth
Law	Maternity	Migration	Movement	Death	Women
Pleasure	Power	Politics	Race	Recreation	Religion
Masculinity	Health	Sexuality	Word	Death	Violence

Investigadora Principal:

Jennifer Lee O'Donnell

El Tema de Investigación:

Estudiante de Doctorado, Escuela de Educación
Educatrices Populares en Educación Popular de
Movimientos Sociales en Buenos Aires, Argentina

- 1) Lugar de trabajo (y si tiene más de un trabajo) y antigüedad?
- 2) Lo que hizo que quiera enseñar o tener interés en educación popular?
- 3) Describa su experiencia como maestra o activista en educación popular.
- 4) Si tengo más preguntas, lo puedo contactar?
- 5) Si está dando clases de educación popular actualmente, podemos coordinar un momento para visitar su escuela y observar sus clases?
- 6) Escoja por lo menos 5 palabras en esta lista (los colores no importan). Dígame cómo esta palabra se relaciona al trabajo que hace con educación popular. En cada caso, dígame por qué escogió esta palabra especialmente.

Acoso	Apariencia	Arte	Barrio	Cambio	Casamiento
Clase	Color de Piel	Patriarcado	Crisis Económica	Desigualdad	Culpa
Deporte	Deseo	Dolor	Ejercicio	Embarazo	Envejecimiento
Etnia	Expresión	Familia	Feminidad	Hogar	Juventud
Ley	Maternidad	Migración	Movimiento	Muerte	Mujeres
Placer	Poder	Política	Raza	Recreación	Religión
Masculinidad	Salud	Sexualidad	Trabajo	Muerto	Violencia

APPENDIX C

CERTIFICATION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS APPROVAL



University of Massachusetts Amherst
108 Research Administration Bldg.
70 Butterfield Terrace
Amherst, MA 01003-9242

Research Compliance
Human Research Protection Office (HRPO)
Telephone: (413) 545-3428
FAX: (413) 577-1728

Certification of Human Subjects Approval

Date: October 7, 2014
To: Jennifer Lee O'Donnell, Education, School of
Other Investigator: Laura Valdiviezo, Education, School of
From: Lynette Leidy Sievert, Chair, UMASS IRB

Protocol Title: Seguimos luchando: Women educators' trajectories in social movement based popular education projects in Buenos Aires, Argentina
Protocol ID: 2014-2208
Review Type: EXPEDITED - NEW
Paragraph ID: 6.7
Approval Date: 10/07/2014
Expiration Date: 10/06/2015
OGCA #:

This study has been reviewed and approved by the University of Massachusetts Amherst IRB, Federal Wide Assurance # 00003909. Approval is granted with the understanding that investigator(s) are responsible for:

Modifications - All changes to the study (e.g. protocol, recruitment materials, consent form, additional key personnel), must be submitted for approval in e-protocol before instituting the changes. New personnel must have completed CITI training.

Consent forms - A copy of the approved, validated, consent form (with the IRB stamp) must be used to consent each subject. Investigators must retain copies of signed consent documents for six (6) years after close of the grant, or three (3) years if unfunded.

Adverse Event Reporting - Adverse events occurring in the course of the protocol must be reported in e-protocol as soon as possible, but no later than five (5) working days.

Continuing Review - Studies that received Full Board or Expedited approval must be reviewed three weeks prior to expiration, or six weeks for Full Board. Renewal Reports are submitted through e-protocol.

Completion Reports - Notify the IRB when your study is complete by submitting a Final Report Form in e-protocol.

Consent form (when applicable) will be stamped and sent in a separate e-mail. Use only IRB approved copies of the consent forms, questionnaires, letters, advertisements etc. in your research.

Please contact the Human Research Protection Office if you have any further questions. Best wishes for a successful project.

APPENDIX D

CONSENT FORM

Principal Investigator: Jennifer Lee O'Donnell
Doctoral Candidate, College of Education
Study Theme: Popular Educators within Social Movement
Based Popular Education in Buenos Aires, Argentina

I volunteer to participate in this qualitative study and understand that:

1. I will be interviewed by Jennifer Lee O'Donnell.
2. The questions I will be answering address my views on issues related to my work as a popular educator and/or activist in social movement based popular education projects. I understand that the primary purpose of this research is to identify educators' and/or activists' experiences and practices with popular education.
3. The interviews will be audio and/or video recorded to facilitate analysis of the data. The video and audio recordings will never be shown to anyone nor used in conference presentations.
4. My name will not be used, nor will I be identified personally, in any way or at any time.
5. My personal information will be protected. All electronic files such as Word documents, video, and audio containing identifiable information will be password protected. Any computer hosting such files will also have password protection to prevent access by unauthorized users. Only the members of the research staff will have access to the passwords. Research records will be labeled with a code. A master key that links names and codes will be maintained in a separate and secure location. The master key and audiotapes will be destroyed six years after the close of the study.
6. I may withdraw from part or all of this study at any time.
7. I have the right to review material at any time.
8. I understand that results from this study may be included in Jennifer Lee O'Donnell's doctoral dissertation and may also be included in manuscripts submitted to professional journals for publication, or presented at congresses. Information will be presented in summary format and I will not be identified in any publications or presentations.
9. I am free to participate or not to participate without prejudice.
10. I have been informed that there are no foreseeable risks to my physical, emotional, and social being as a result of study procedures. I understand that I will be interviewed and observed on my teaching in popular education. This may require one to three hours of my time.
11. I understand that I may not directly benefit from this research; however, the researchers hope that my participation in the study may be useful to my practices as an educator and/or activist.

If you have questions or comments regarding this study, please feel free to contact Jennifer Lee O'Donnell at 4541-7659 or jlodonne@educ.umass.edu. You may also contact her chairperson, Dr. Laura Valdiviezo, at 001-413-545-7043 or lav@educ.umass.edu. The Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at the School of Education, Dr. Linda Griffin, is also available to answer questions at 001-413-545-0236 or lgriffin@educ.umass.edu. Should you have further questions regarding your rights as a participant, contact the Human Research Protection Office (HRPO) at 001-413-545-3428 or humansubjects@ora.umass.edu

Investigadora Principal:

Jennifer Lee O'Donnell

El Tema de Investigación:Candidata de Doctorado, Colegio de Educación
Educadoras Populares en Educación Popular de
Movimientos Sociales en Buenos Aires, Argentina

Acepto participar en esta investigación cualitativa y entiendo que:

1. Seré entrevistado por Jennifer Lee O'Donnell.
2. Las preguntas que contestaré serán acerca de mis puntos de vistas en relación a mi trabajo como una educadora y/o activista en educación popular de los movimientos sociales en Buenos Aires. Entiendo que el propósito primario de esta investigación es comprender las experiencias y prácticas de pedagogía de educadoras y/o activistas en educación popular.
3. Las entrevistas serán grabadas para facilitar el análisis de los datos. El vídeo y audio nunca será mostrado a nadie ni utilizados en presentaciones en congresos.
4. Mi nombre no será utilizado, ni seré identificado personalmente, en ninguna manera ni en ningún momento.
5. Mi información personal estará protegida. Todos los archivos electrónicos como documentos de Word, vídeo y audio que contienen información de identificación serán protegidos con contraseña. Cualquier equipo que aloje dichos archivos también tendrá protección de contraseña. Sólo los miembros del personal de investigación tendrán acceso a las contraseñas. La información de la investigación estará codificada. Una clave principal que une los nombres con los códigos se mantendrá en un lugar separado y seguro. La llave maestra y archivos de audio y vídeo serán destruidos seis años después del cierre del estudio.
6. Puedo retirarme de este estudio en cualquier momento.
7. Tengo el derecho a revisar material en cualquier momento.
8. Entiendo que los resultados de este estudio pueden ser incluidos en la tesis doctoral de Jennifer Lee O'Donnell y también pueden ser incluidos en manuscritos sometidos a diarios profesionales para la publicación, o presentado en los congresos.
9. Soy libre de participar o no participar sin consecuencia.
10. Se me ha informado de que no hay riesgos previsible físico, emocional y social para mí, como consecuencia de los procedimientos de estudio. Entiendo que se me entrevisté y observé en mi trabajo en la educación popular. Esto puede requerir una a tres horas de mi tiempo.
11. Entiendo que puedo no beneficiarme directamente de esta investigación; Sin embargo, los investigadores esperan que mi participación en el estudio puede ser útil a mis prácticas como una educadora y / o activista.

Si tiene preguntas o comentarios con respecto a este investigación, contactar Jennifer Lee O'Donnell. El número de teléfono de Jennifer Lee O'Donnell es 4541-7659 y su email es jlodonne@educ.umass.edu. También puede contactar al tutor de Jennifer Lee O'Donnell, Dr. Laura Valdiviezo, al 001-413-545-7043 o lav@educ.umass.edu. El Rector de Asuntos en la Escuela de Educación, Dr. Linda Griffin, está disponible para responder sus preguntas. Su número de contacto es 001- 413-545-0236 y su email es lgriffin@educ.umass.edu. Por último, en caso de tener más preguntas sobre sus derechos como participante, contacta la Oficina de Protección de la Investigación Humana al 001-413-545-3428 o humansubjects@ora.umass.edu.

APPENDIX E

SONG

The Malinche's Curse


From the sea they saw them arrive
my feathered brothers and sisters
they were the bearded men
of the awaited prophecy.
The voice of the monarch was heard
saying that the god had arrived
and we opened the door to them
out of fear of the unknown.
They were mounted on beasts
like demons of evil
they carried fire in their hands
and they were covered with metal.
Only the valor of a few
put up any resistance to them
and when they saw the blood running
they were filled with shame.
Because gods don't eat,
nor do they enjoy what they've stolen
and by the time we realized
everything was over.
In that mistake we gave up
the greatness of the past
and in that mistake we became
slaves for 300 years.
The curse remained with us
of offering the stranger
our faith, our culture,
our bread, our money.
Today we continue exchanging
gold for glass beads.
Today, in the middle of the 20th century
blond people keep coming to us
and we open our homes to them
and we call them friends.
But if there arrives an Indian,
tired of walking the mountains
we humiliate him and we see him
as a stranger in his own country.
You, hypocrite, you who appear
humble before the stranger
but become arrogant
with your peasant brothers.
Oh, Malinche's curse,
sickness of the present,
when will you leave my land?
When will you make my people free?

Maldición de Malinche


Del mar los vieron llegar
mis hermanos emplumados
Eran los hombres barbados
de la profecía esperada
Se oyó la voz del monarca
de que el dios había llegado.
Y les abrimos la puerta
por temor a lo ignorado.
Iban montados en bestias
como demonios del mal
Iban con fuego en las manos
y cubiertos de metal.
Sólo el valor de unos cuantos
les opuso resistencia
Y al mirar correr la sangre
se llenaron de vergüenza.
Porque los dioses ni comen
ni gozan con lo robado
Y cuando nos dimos cuenta ya
todo estaba acabado.
Y en ese error entregamos
la grandeza del pasado
Y en ese error nos quedamos
trescientos años esclavos.
Se nos quedó el maleficio
de brindar al extranjero
Nuestra fe, nuestra cultura,
nuestro pan, nuestro dinero.
Y les seguimos cambiando
oro por cuentas de vidrio.
Hoy, en pleno siglo veinte
nos siguen llegando rubios
Y les abrimos la casa
y les llamamos amigos.
Pero si llega cansado un indio
de andar la sierra
Lo humillamos y lo vemos
como extraño por su tierra.
Tu, hipócrita que te muestras
humilde ante el extranjero
Pero te vuelves soberbio
con tus hermanos del pueblo.
Oh, maldición de Malinche,
enfermedad del presente
Cuándo dejarás mi tierra?
cuándo harás libre a mi gente?

APPENDIX F

MANIFESTATION ANNOUNCEMENT



**LOS BACHILLERATOS POPULARES
SEGUIMOS LUCHANDO**



Por una Educación Pública y Popular

Pese a nuestros reclamos históricos, todavía muchos Bachilleratos Populares no estamos reconocidos ni financiados por el Estado.

Frente a la falta de respuestas, exigimos a las autoridades del gobierno de la Provincia de Buenos Aires, Ministra de Educación Nora De Lucía; y del gobierno la Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires, Ministro Esteban Bullrich y Director de Gestión Estatal, Max Gulmanelli:

- RECONOCIMIENTO INMEDIATO DE TODOS LOS BACHILLERATOS POPULARES DE CAPITAL FEDERAL Y PROVINCIA DE BUENOS AIRES.
- SALARIOS PARA LXS DOCENTES.
- BECAS PARA LXS ESTUDIANTES.
- FINANCIAMIENTO INTEGRAL

MARTES 11/6 - 14.30 hs
Movilización al Ministerio de Educación de la CABA
(Paseo Colón 255)

Coordinadora de Bachilleratos Populares en Lucha
bachilleratospopularesenlucha@yahoo.com.ar

<http://www.facebook.com/coordinadorade.bachilleratospopulares>

APPENDIX G
COMUNICADO

Published on Friday, December 7, 2012

Those who have signed below are ex-professors and members of a collective bargaining group from popular school Mococo Seri - also known as Mococo. We are making public our profound disagreement with the policies that were unilaterally made by la Fundación Destino (FD) - ejecting comrades, imposing authority, violating coordination agreements reached in plenary meetings, wiping out the legitimate participation of trans, lesbian, women, feminist, and activist teachers in favor of the current self-appointed group in charge which consists almost exclusively of men.

FD's legal entity was needed by the baccalaureate in order to be recognized by the Ministry of Education of the City of Buenos Aires. Though it was made explicit from the beginning, the call to build collectively and horizontally was ignored, as were those who put their body and soul into our organization, by not heeding the voices of trans pedagogy. Since October 22, they have managed hundreds of thousands of pesos in subsidies from the national government without critical input from those who labor daily in the popular institution. We condemn the patriarchal, arrogant practices that violate the bodies of lesbian, trans people, women, feminists, and libertarian activists. We have worked a year to ensure access to popular education with a gender focus. Because education can only be born out of respect for diversity of thought and human rights practices, because we do not endorse paternalist welfare that curtails autonomy, we sign our resignation with strong dissent:

(Here nine names were listed in accord with this *Comunicado*)

December 7, 2012

*Because the original could easily be searched and found online, I did not include the Spanish version to keep the anonymity of the participants.

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