Constructing Twenty-First Century Socialism in Latin America

The Role of Radical Education

Sara C. Motta

and

Mike Cole
This series assumes the ongoing relevance of Marx’s contributions to critical social analysis and aims to encourage continuation of the development of the legacy of Marxist traditions in and for education. The remit for the substantive focus of scholarship and analysis appearing in the series extends from the global to the local in relation to dynamics of capitalism and encompasses historical and contemporary developments in political economy of education as well as forms of critique and resistances to capitalist social relations. The series announces a new beginning and proceeds in a spirit of openness and dialogue within and between Marxism and education, and between Marxism and its various critics. The essential feature of the work of the series is that Marxism and Marxist frameworks are to be taken seriously, not as formulaic knowledge and unassailable methodology but critically as inspirational resources for renewal of research and understanding, and as support for action in and upon structures and processes of education and their relations to society. The series is dedicated to the realization of positive human potentialities as education and thus, with Marx, to our education as educators.

Series Editor: Anthony Green

Renewing Dialogues in Marxism and Education: Openings
Edited by Anthony Green, Glenn Rikowski, and Helen Raduntz

Critical Race Theory and Education: A Marxist Response
Mike Cole

Revolutionizing Pedagogy: Education for Social Justice Within and Beyond Global Neo-Liberalism
Edited by Sheila Macrine, Peter McLaren, and Dave Hill

Marxism and Education beyond Identity: Sexuality and Schooling
Faith Agostinone-Wilson

Blair’s Educational Legacy: Thirteen Years of New Labour
Edited by Anthony Green

Racism and Education in the U.K. and the U.S.: Towards a Socialist Alternative
Mike Cole

Marxism and Education: Renewing the Dialogue, Pedagogy, and Culture
Edited by Peter E. Jones
Educating from Marx: Race, Gender, and Learning
Edited by Shahrzad Mojab and Sara Carpenter

Education and the Reproduction of Capital: Neoliberal Knowledge and Counterstrategies
Edited by Ravi Kumar

Social Change and Education in Greece: A Study in Class Struggle Dynamics
Spyros Themelis

Education and Social Change in Latin America
Edited by Sara C. Motta and Mike Cole

Mass Education, Global Capital, and the World: The Theoretical Lenses of István Mészáros and Immanuel Wallerstein
Tom G. Griffiths and Robert Imre

Constructing Twenty-First Century Socialism in Latin America: The Role of Radical Education
Sara C. Motta and Mike Cole
Constructing Twenty-First Century Socialism in Latin America

The Role of Radical Education

Sara C. Motta and Mike Cole
We dedicate this book to the memory of Dave Cole (1973–2011) who, while on a visit to Venezuela with me (Mike), saw that another world is possible. We also dedicate the book to the critical and visionary educators in Latin American and beyond who in their everyday lives continue with dedication, endurance, and imagination to construct worlds beyond capitalism and pathways to twenty-first century socialism.
Contents

Series Editor’s Preface ix
Acknowledgments xxi

Introduction  
Pedagogizing the Political and Politicizing Pedagogy 1  
Sara C. Motta

Part I  Epistemological Hegemonies and Counterhegemonic Epistemologies in, against, and beyond the Capitalist State

Chapter 1  
Militarized Neoliberalism in Colombia: Disarticulating Dissent and Articulating Consent to Neoliberal Epistemologies, Pedagogies, and Ways of Life 19  
Sara C. Motta

Chapter 2  
Brazil and the PT as the Popular Face of Neoliberalism: A Contradictory Terrain for Education and the Politics of Knowledge 43  
Sara C. Motta

Chapter 3  
The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela: Education and Twenty-First Century Socialism 65  
Mike Cole
Part II  Counterhegemonic Epistemologies and Decolonizing Pedagogies from Below

Chapter 4
The Alternative School of Community Organization and Communicational Development, Barrio Pueblo Nuevo, Mérida, Venezuela  
Mike Cole  

Chapter 5
Epistemological Counterhegemonies from Below: Radical Educators in/and the MST and Solidarity Economy Movements  
Sara C. Motta  

Chapter 6
Decolonization in Praxis: Critical Educators, Student Movements, and Feminist Pedagogies in Colombia  
Sara C. Motta  

Part III  Constructing Twenty-First Century Socialism in Latin America and Beyond

Chapter 7
Constructing Twenty-First Century Socialism: The Role of Radical Education  
Sara C. Motta  

Annexure 1: MANE Methodology of Programmatic Construction of the Alternative Project of Reform of Higher Education  

Notes  
References  
Index
Series Editor’s Preface

Sara Motta and Mike Cole’s monograph is a welcome companion to their edited collection on radical education and the struggles for socialism in Latin America (Motta and Cole, 2013). Their focus, as with the previous work is *praxis: action, radical critical doing-as-being* working for progressive social changes. As such this is a valuable addition to the Marxism and Education series further consolidating its aim of supporting the continuing dissemination and development of the legacy of Marx and Marxism as, to and for radical educational practices that both inform and learn in action for twenty-first century socialism. To contextualize, laissez-faire–individualized liberalism has now morphed into hegemonic *neoliberalism* while contemporary global capital remains in the throes of attempting to recover from its deepest crisis since the Great Depression of the late 1920s/early 1930s. (Kliman, 2012; Stiglitz, 2010). By the 1970s the period of post-1945 growth in Europe, North America, and beyond in advancing developed economies ended what appears to have been a relatively successful period for poor and working people with rising relative prosperity, a modicum of social mobility consequent on occupational structural changes. These relatively progressive consequences of class struggles began to reverse, especially so during the 1980s where we saw the appearance of “rolling back” the state with its combination of evermore state regulation of the working poor combined with market liberalization. The 1990s and onward have brought consolidating national and global capitalist plutocracy in the developed world spreading globally through expansively applying neoliberal strategies with severe social and economic policies of austerity to the working poor and precarious as the solution to the crisis post-2008; in effect relentless successful class struggle from above. These processes mediate, underpin, and realize structures of domination, both ideologically in myriad cultural forms and in maximizing corporate and private capital accumulation, abstracting, and hoarding value while
institutionalizing cultures of monetary profitability as the metric for everything. Nevertheless, capitalism continues in global crisis consequent on its systemic nature recently evident in the financial convulsions of 2008 and since and yet to emerge secure in a new upward spiral of accumulation. In all, as Che Guevara remarked in another context in 1967 but still apt for the present phase: *La lucha continua no terminará fácilmente!* The struggle will continue. It will not be easily concluded!¹

Set against this broad backdrop, the book marks and profiles processes, moments, and structures in humanitarian class struggles in Latin America, specifically focusing on Venezuela, Colombia, and Brazil. The emerging circumstances are consequent on wider interconnecting national and global mechanisms, notably the democratic deficit played out as institutional inefficacy for identifying and expressing the wills of the exploited downsiders, the working classes, the impoverished working, and un- and underemployed who are disempowered in precarities of contemporary political economy despite the abundant global capacity for security in food production and distribution, as well as failures for democratic health and educational arrangements to realize political and cultural well-being for all. Power from below is deflected by market-oriented neoliberal fatalist dogma and “free-market” economistic obfuscation. The potentiality of organized labor for anything approaching relations in production of *industrial democracy* is trammeled in politicized regulation for trades unions, legalized support for structured inequitable relations of capital accumulation; continual redesign of all production, distribution, and exchange represented as “modernization” while enabling intensification of exploitation with managerial forms across the public and private sectors modeled as competitive entrepreneurialism within and between production units; massive failure and evident corruption in finance capital markets; and state financial and monetary policies realizing emergent forms of financial socialism for the corporate and individual rich thereby doing little but encouraging the rates of systemic plutocratic elite consolidation. Each of these structures represents continuing socially illiberal and contrademocratic encroachment on all aspects of the commons, undermining while appropriating the social benefits of the collective and social nature of all human activities that necessarily underpin production of useful goods and assets, whether material or nonmaterial. The political economy continues to be dominated by expropriation and relentless commercialization of all dimensions of human routine normalities as well as creativity in propagating marketable commodities, and capitalized property as
acquisitive assets in individual and corporate forms (see Gindin and Panitch, 2013; Harvey, 2005).

Especially important in the Latin American focus of this book is the ongoing reach of US global financial and military hegemony. Its domains of power played out in the stock and bond markets under the guidance of the most powerful global institution mediating that influence the US Federal Reserve to realize Pax Americana. It stands in the global center, ably supported by networks of global institutions, not least International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Trade Organization (WTO). The Federal Reserve and its ever available military alter ego, the US armed forces are the real institutions that are too big to fail, the guarantors of last resort of confidence in global finance capitalism making the bankers and financial sector the main beneficiaries of economic productivity since the 1970s and thereby constituting an evermore deeply entrenched global financial rentier class empowered by its expanding property ownership rather than positive contribution to lubricating productive growth to enhance expansive well-being. These are the gross mechanisms articulating the contemporary military/industrial complex (Mills, 1956) as a military/financial global class complex that is both mediating and continuing the global crisis, extending neoliberalism and its ever-deepening potential capability for massive instability triggering meltdown, with mayhem and potential for barbarisms in its wake.

There are numerous manifestations of inhumanity as well as glimpses of immanent possibilities and some solid demonstrations of democratic socialism lurking in negation—there to be built through inspirations of the Marxist traditions of analysis, agitation, and humanitarian political movement. It cannot be repeated too often that where there is capitalism and its dedicated rationalists there will always be Marxism, its dialectical foil, interrogator, and specter, haunting and inspiring alternative possibilities for human progress, locally, nationally, regionally, and globally, to redesign social reality while taking up the challenges of shifting from commodity to all manner of possibilities of community as its renewable resource for making history and to socialize capital. The task remains an immense one of rejigging the social forces and relations of production to capitalize on the social as democratic forms: socialism for all. Thus Marxist critical analysis aims to reappropriate the democratic and humanitarian political possibilities in the social structuring of value generation to reengineer it and redirect it for sustainable growth, democratic empowerment with redistribution of resources for multileveling, open-ended creative complexities of global organic solidarity.
These progressive potentialities stand globally full square against exploitation, structural and structuring inequality, either directly in production or indirectly in the massive capitalizing in the powers of financialized forms, appropriated in rentable capacities for production, exploiting control and corporate manipulation of debt and credit as scarce resources required in lubricating productive growth (Dienst, 2011; Graeber, 2012). Thus operates huge and complex globalizing power of financial stratagems for appropriating the wealth already established. It’s fluidly monetized debt and credit both lubricate the system while leaving huge volumes of such credit possibilities standing idle but available to expand its own volume in corporate acquisitions and mergers. The effect is realizing relatively evermore narrow political contexts of control and undemocratic boundaries of its own expansion. It’s dialectical alternative faces are the toxic “assets” and omens of disaster in dissipation of confidence in the viability of more tightly connected, surveilled, and disciplined world of production and structures of intensifying global class plutocratic-elite consolidation. All appears secure so long as the financial system-in-chaos does not shift into reverse, literally undone by its own incredibility.

The progressive struggle therefore is as much about transforming the democratic mechanisms of the national states as of resisting the globalizing plutocratic state forms. At stake are the articulations and outcomes of class struggles to realize progressive humanitarian political economy highlighted in the United States by the fact that virtually all the rewards of policies taken to tackle the 2008 crash have gone to the wealthiest, particularly the megarich, the pattern repeated across the globe.

*Power and representation:* In this context the vitality of the politics of representation is never more evident for class-struggle relational forms of language use and progressive imaginaries coming into radical *educative* play as reality, materially effective *language usages as rhetorical forms*. These are representations as instantiations of powers, which encourage movement, identity formation in struggle and critique. Currently, a straw in the wind perhaps, a tiny shimmering moment in the dialectical fortunes of the representation of Marxism itself with its potential for critique of all forms of mystification arises in many apparently unlikely places. Thus was Pope Francis’s recent denial of his own harboring Marxist sympathies indicating perhaps that like God, material truths about Marxism emerge in mysterious ways? Among any number of hermeneutic possibilities such pronouncements provide encouragement to Christian socialists of Roman Catholic persuasions, encouragement too for rejuvenating
Liberation Theology activists in Latin America and beyond working in their global entity and its deeply ambiguous mission for the poor!

Noteworthy too for this Preface is its drafting in the wake of the passing of two global figures in class struggle for progressive state formation, Hugo Chávez and Nelson Mandela. Each has been powerfully influenced in complex and distinctive ways by Marxism in his own struggles for and in progressive education and emergent socialist possibilities. Each remains an inspirational and inevitably deeply controversial figure with respect to his historic impact and symbolic legacies, which are now being struggled over in Latin America and Africa, respectively, as well as globally for constructing radical cosmopolitan political narratives and strategies for representing the possibilities of a better twenty-first century world. They have left much to work on and with moving forward. However, while looking in Latin America for inspiration in the afterglow of such distinctive figures das ist nix so einfach (it is not so simple) for educating the educators. Such are class struggles in pedagogy of critique. And necessarily so for addressing relational forms, not least when considering the complex ramifications of financial and trading partnerships in Latin and South America dominated by the US economy despite or perhaps because of new trading arrangements. What’s more, when we consider the express purposes in critical Left hegemony are to identify the burgeoning power of neoliberalism, it is well to keep in mind its inauguration in South America by the Friedman inspired Chicago Boys in the 1970s Chile working on behalf of expansive Monroe Doctrine, as Manifest Destiny (Martínez and Díaz, 1996) Militant Pax Americana is always already overshadowing in its continental and global reaches.

Ongoing themes: Motta and Cole’s work raises many time-honored Marxist themes and complexities in analysis for workers and progressive movements where tensions in specificity of political practices arise. Thus, when does positive individuality manifest as distinctly progressive practices compared with relations of possessive individualism? When are state forms liberating and democratic? When is egalitarianism to be cast as neoliberal and when deemed socialist? When is socialist egalitarian ambition significant merely as hollow words only, as narrative and ineffective when it comes to outcomes and active means to achieve them in substantive forms? Where lay the significance of sociohistorical aspiration, as hopes and visions that contribute to progressive momentum, even if never to be absolutely realized, as such. Thus there are different ways in dialogue and materials practices of approaching the histories and politics of enhancing social reciprocities involved in generalizing social egalitarianism
where there are points of antagonism between social democracy and radical socialist politics. Each moment is an important site of boundaries in critical transactions and struggle, merging with and between Marxism and humanitarian liberal forms and relations of state and civil society. Not least on the unresolved individual, family forms, individual and communal collective property, as well as their takes on meritocracy, claimed in all modernized states as part of its democratic foundations and aspirations.

*Inspirations in complexity echoing Ernst Bloch:* A vital recurring element in the educational dimensions of class analysis and class struggle is the need to pay attention to renewal of hope in collectivist, nonindividualist forms of what Ernst Bloch referred to as *concrete utopian* thought and practices, and doing so without thereby reproducing debilitating idealist contemplative practices—utopianisms and their products as ends in themselves (Bloch, 1959a; Thompson and Zizek, 2013). The point, of course, is to change the world not just in thought but also in reality, which reality necessarily includes thoughtful experience in cultural forms, too, as living tools in and for mind(s) in action; the ontological imperative critically tempering while working dialectically through the epistemological analytical resources of critical materialist inspiration. Bloch’s work and potential for contemporary service is especially pertinent in the context of the Marxism and Education series, given its ongoing commitment to dialogical openness and to the collective self-forming project in complexity of educating the educators and to thus regarding Marxism most vitally as necessarily an *educational* project, itself emergent in the course of struggling across each of the interconnected dimensions of the social.  

At many points Motta and Cole identify moments, processes, and structures of such hope across their national cases with regard to alternative sustainable futures. They are indicated by struggle, working critically with, on, and through the possibilities of Venezuelan Chavismo, for instance, in the contemporary *Bolivarian* project and focused program, as well as in complex and delicately and possibly contradictory themes in the cultural politics of democratic socialism for Venezuela, Columbia, and Brazil. Hope and realistic transformative practices operate not only through the politics of the state but such politics are strategized by appreciation of the states of politics, too. Together these are always already complex cultural dynamics, performative and iterative in forms, while critically, the practices of making history must occur in and against potentially oppressive cultural institutional and state forms also, and such forms themselves
ever available to be transformed in struggle. In Gramscian terms, this is the context of struggle for hegemony, leadership in models of hope and realistic aspirations for sustainable futures of sustainable progressive change. In Freirian terms, conscientization with and through such practices is important as we may note reactionary potential in such traditional forms, too. Nevertheless, there also arises potential and hope in progressive wisdom and the good senses of established practices, too. Thus traditions in social organization and production as well as religious forms and cosmological practices may be both strategically ambiguous and ambivalent in real historical contexts of struggles working both for and against sustainable progressive movements. The ongoing issue is to distinguish the one from the other. Nevertheless, working through cultural politics is not in contradiction to working on, in, and against the state to transform the state. It is not a matter of these being evidently separable or stark alternatives. Class analysis and struggles are open and complex, and always both/and, rarely if ever a simple either/or, so far as progressive praxis in hope as against its privatization are concerned. This is so and inevitably the case for the emergence and strategic potential for successful leadership, as ever complex, uncertain, and incomplete for educating the educators, them/ourselves in struggle.5

Lessons to be learned: Motta and Cole’s work demonstrates that crucial lessons can be learned for the cultural forms of progressive socialist politics for the developed world from the experiences of the developing world, for instance, in rethinking the private/public relation, to challenge and resist the hegemonic privatization of life. Or, on depoliticization in cultures of fatalist possessive individualism where the dominant political cultural forms are fundamentally reinforcing structures of acquiescence. In the popular refrain of irresponsibility among the developed world’s middle classes, for instance, we don’t like or believe in neoliberalism in moral and ethical terms but what can we do? This TINA (there is no alternative) of moral and ethical pragmatic futility drains progressive political energy into a sump of cynicism, while simultaneously drawing personal comfort from impotence through personalized nonidentification with dominant powers, frequently wrapped in rhetorical sophistication in all manner of critical fun, too. These modes reinforce the essentially contemplative relation to the ongoing crises of the commons as pleasurable consumption arenas. Thus the public sphere is left to the market and its capacity for action relevant only in individualized contexts of acquisition of immediately local leverage. All of which sits happily with liberal conservative “meritocratic” mantras, articulating middling- and upper-classes hegemonic consumer
hypocrisy as “parental responsibility” in education, for instance, and undermining possibilities of democratic and socially comprehensive systemic educational possibilities. These are fertile pastures for cultural petty neoliberalism, expressed in all manner of familiar forms from celebrity culture to various types of de- and antimutualization of financial and all other possible “services” whose social rationalities cynically trade on and appropriate the materiality of social capital emergent in the relational nature of all kinds of material and cultural production.

This volume provides many worked critical case examples, problematics, and struggles to be addressed currently occurring across Latin America illustrative of both personal and collective identity themes as unavoidable and vital terrains of struggle that inspire possibilities of alternative socially progressive practices. Their articulation of ideology critique with materialist immanent critique reminds us too, that belief and fully articulated knowledge is not required for action to retain power by the already well capitalized. In fact, formation of self-repressive social structures of power and opportunity for capitalizing on empowerment in acquiescence are extremely effective modes of liberal self-control with system reinforcing implications. In such contexts what is not said, not done are just as important as what is said and done in the emergent structures of (dis)empowerment by the positionally ill-placed themselves. Thus powerful elites of the plutocratic classes, at each level, are daily beneficiaries of such nonaction that is so important for practical demoralization of critical energy for educating the educators.

By the same token, much of the educational struggle in and for hegemony is not simply against intellectually committed neoliberals, to persuade them away from beguiling market ideology. It is worth reflecting that while fully informed intelligentsia with programmatic perspectives and formulations are most important but they are relatively rare. At least as important are also the “don’t knows” and all who glimpse the complexity but look away with irresolvable capacity to confidently envisage other feasible possibilities, along with the “not bothered,” “can’t be bothered,” and all those whose actions are fully preoccupied with more pressing priorities for survival in precarity that provide structural neoliberal with solace. Alternatively, petty and more substantial philanthropy also works the same magic at all levels of institutionalized acquiescence. Competitive possessive individualism as responsible self management becomes the dominant self-reproducing “realistic” while mistaken response to the commonsense existential projects representative of that’s the way life is. In Gramscian terms of counterhegemonic organic intellectual practices, the potential for
good sense in common collective actions, cooperation and mutuality are the other side of the coin of individualist practices of all kinds, expressed in all manner of folk wisdoms, and so on. Many direct and indirect indications of these things come though in this volume. So while abstracted individualism operates to regulate, discipline, and control populations, they are also open to and for transgression, ridicule, challenging, and storytelling in magical modes for alternative socialist forms of real solidarities. All this operates at each level of the community as social mind, lived and recognizable right up to critical representations of the “necessity” of the state guaranteeing the market, in neoliberal and classical liberal parlance. These are interconnecting sites of struggles, inevitable contestation within and with which to combat abstracted individualism, for instance, over the meaning of the term “liberal fascism” as it may be applied to and by opponents and adherents of the US Tea Party and/or in relation to US surveillance policies as exposed by Edward Snowden.

Motta and Cole demonstrate complex themes playing out and being resisted in Latin American experiences. What we find are many instances and worked critical exemplifications drawn from struggles for securing democratic-socialist practices running counter to neoliberal defaulting to abstracted individualism. There is much to learn from and with socialist feminist and indigenous peoples’ perspectives on the social as collective and in each perspective esteeming the individual in the local histories of identity, of recognizing humane performance of kindness, ecological respect, and uninhibited generosity as social cementing. In Bloch’s terms these constitute ongoing, living partial fulfillment of concrete utopian practices as speculative materialism.

Dialogical forms in “faith” may also be counterrevolutionary if they settle for therapeutics, helpful as necessary balms and support for putting up with the intolerable but fatalist if embraced as ends in themselves where the historical materialist, critical realist object is to understand and address causal mechanisms of oppression, both “inner” and “outer,” personal, cultural, as well as political and economic with all their attendant ramifications. Dialectical materialism can/should only be manifest in real negation of negations. Most valuable in this context Motta and Cole’s interests serve to articulate the personal, the political with and as the economic: the political as the fully articulated dialectical materialism of personal practices, making history, emergent at all levels of its manifestations and makings.

Nor can we rule out the downside of potential for social controlling through repressive tolerance manifest in co-opting application of
liberalism in the social-capital spaces of freedom that controls. That is
to say where the mission, perhaps inadvertently despite both positive
humanitarian intentions, slips into real forms of combat surgery mode;
patching up and returning the wounded to the futile struggle with-
out effective attention to the objective political, economic, cultural
contexts, namely, of addressing the causal mechanisms of conflict. It
runs the risk of contributing thereby to moving the context of strug-
gles to coping with while disempowering, deflecting from consciousness
of alternatives and from reality of being alive to the possibilities of gen-
erating new living forms for improved conviviality.

All easier said than done, of course, and never “completed.” The
historical reality is always of an array of open horizons of possible
modes of conviviality and therefore of intensifying sites of demands
for and denials of equity in face of recognized inequalities. Perhaps
Bloch is of value to conclude this welcoming Preface with some bot-
tom lines:

The emotion of hope goes out of itself, makes people broad instead of
confining them, cannot know nearly enough of what it is that makes
them inwardly aimed, of what may be allied to them outwardly. The
work of this emotion requires people who throw themselves actively
into what is becoming, to which they themselves belong. (Bloch,
1959a)

In such terms, Marxist activist traditions derive continual stimulation
from reflection on previous experiences in contexts of the present,
realizing that history is alive and continually being written and acted
out positively with hope in humanitarian forms to update awareness
and knowledge of all the ramifications of the social relations of capi-
talism, its potential for transformations, and their restless modes of
multiform availability. The focus is on class struggles over emergent
social wealth built essentially through cooperative human endeav-
ors in face of evident inequitable appropriation and distribution that
operates by filtering and funneling its primary credits into plutocratic
elite and corporate financialized controls, all of which are presented
as systems that are too big for us to be able to tolerate the conse-
quences of their failure. Uncertainty remains, as ever, at its center
and with Marx we can appreciate the complexity of finance capital.
It is both currency and fluency of social reality as “production,” as
significant for contemporary neoliberalism was in nascent forms in
nineteenth-century market ideology and institutionalized practices
for class struggle from above. Today, it continues to be represented in
political economy as civilized “responsible” domination. Thus, contemporary neoliberal forms defend its position in part through the very unknowable, complex uncertainties at its center. So too is it at the center of Marx’s formulation of finance capital as a fictitious capital (Marx, 1863–1883).

More broadly for class struggle in and for reality today, we might reflect again on the nature of artistic practices, sciences, religions, and indeed all humanity as foundation-free practice in face of the unknowables concerning what our individual and collective doing does and what our individual and collective knowing (mind) knows. It is now a Left intellectual cliché, but one perhaps worth dwelling on from time to time, to recognize that the French Revolution was many years in the sociocultural making, as indeed was the Russian. Part of the legacy of Marxist traditions in analysis and action is attention to complexities in addressing the problems of capitalism, recognizing that while they are systemic and structurally global, the solutions while necessarily systematic too, must be simultaneously personal and political for socialist development and renewal. Moral and ethical themes are vital, and it is only with democratic transformations that we will be able to address the depths of the system’s flows and flaws. In these terms, educating the educators as class struggle is unavoidable and inevitable. Emancipation has to be owned, realized, and made by working people themselves. This volume both keeps the ongoing project alive and kicking while adding contextualized critical descriptions and explanations, contributing in material complexity to practices of hope and expectation for real movements in social transformation. The struggles for twenty-first century socialism continues.

Anthony Green
December 2013
Acknowledgments

This book was a long journey in its making. Navigating the personal journeys of its authors, it inevitably changed and now in its completion it is, we hope, a relevant, timely, and meaningful contribution to the praxis of constructing pathways to twenty-first century socialism. Written by critical educators in dialogue with critical educators in Brazil, Colombia, and Venezuela, it aims to open horizons of emancipatory possibility in our practices as scholars, teachers, activists, and carers.

For both of us it was a difficult journey. For me personally (Sara), it was a journey of facing and transgressing my fears that I didn’t have a right to have a voice and to speak as a political subject. This journey took me to my depths and to walking through the shadows of soul wounds that I have carried and that are the result of the logics of patriarchal colonial capitalism in my life and that of my mother-line. The practice therefore of writing the book was a practice of unlearning some of those parts of my subjectivity that remained alienated and in pain, and of learning to produce myself differently. Its process of production was thus a pedagogical process which pedagogized the political in my everyday life.

There are numerous people that I would like to thank for supporting me in this process; my Brazilian soul family who inspire with their dedication, commitment, and compassion, Sandra Gadelha de Carvalho, Ernandi Mendes, Pedro Vítor Gadelha Mendes, Maíra Gadelha, and Ana Clara Mendes; my beautiful Colombian soul sister Norma Lucía Bermúdez Gómez who creates and nurtures with her poetic politics and emancipatory embrace; my mentor, sister, and friend Katinka Sostens for all that she enabled me to transform and change; my loving soul brothers Jamie Heckert, Andrew Robinson, and Jonathan Mansell for teaching me trust with their tenderness enabling my diving into deeper depths of critical knowing in thought and practice; my soul sister Jennifer Martinez for helping me recognize
and heal the wounds; my soul sister Sarah Amsler with her energy, criticality, and caring; my hermana Chilena Maria Loreto Urbina for her sheer determination and loyal commitment; my mother Felicity and auntie Carolyn for all that they taught me and in recognition of all their pain; my two daughters, Sujey and Jaiya Mera-Motta, for teaching me to love; and my beloved Andrew for standing by my side literally and metaphorically through this journey.

For me (Mike) the gestation of the book accompanied a mix of extreme experiences: excessive stress in the form of a difficult divorce; tragedy, with the sudden death of my son; the great joy of getting married again with the added bonus of the pleasure of a lovely stepdaughter; and heart-warming relief in recovering from a life-threatening illness.

We would also both like to thank Sarah Nathan and Mara Berkoff at Palgrave Macmillan, New York, for their patience, understanding, precision, and commitment; and Anthony Green, editor of the Education and Marxism series, for his unwavering support and for the integrity of his scholarship.
Introduction

Pedagogizing the Political and Politicizing Pedagogy

Sara C. Motta

This book is written as a means to rupture the apparent end of history and closure of emancipatory horizons proclaimed by the prophets of neoliberal capitalism. It is written by, and through engagement with, critical educators who are committed to forging worlds beyond capitalism in thought and practice. Patriarchal colonial capitalism has at its heart an epistemological project that is deeply pedagogical. Such an organization of social life and relationships seeks to enact monological closure through producing alienated and instrumental rationalities and technologies of governance that silence all other knowledges and ways of producing our society. Such an epistemological project produces itself through the creation of its underside—the unruly, uneducated, and irrational others whose experiences, wisdoms, knowledges, and ways of life are delegitimized and violently denied.

The epistemological politics that are at the heart of reproducing the hegemony of patriarchal colonial capitalism have explicitly taken center stage in the representations, practices, and prescriptions of neoliberal globalization. From Tony Blair in the United Kingdom declaring that the modernized Labour Party would put “education, education, education” at the heart of their Third Way agenda, through to Álvaro Uribe in Colombia declaring his intent to implement an “educational revolution,” education (and by implication epistemology) has become politicized.

This educational project is an increasingly globalized project that reinforces the unequal and uneven relationships between countries, and within countries between communities and ways of life, deepening
the lines of exclusions that characterize this stage of capitalist development. At its heart is a continual reproduction and expansion of neoliberal capitalism into every element of social life, along with the deepening of economic inequalities, social and cultural exclusions, and unsustainable ecological practice. As part of this global production of power Latin America is reproduced as the epistemological underside of capitalist coloniality; represented as the passive receiver and consumer of knowledge and research, designed and developed by unelected transnational actors (often of the global North) from international financial institutions, international agencies of development, and representatives of transnational capital.

The neoliberal project fosters practices, policies, and rationalities that seek to deepen a monological and inherently antidemocratic closure of political possibility. As De Angelis and Harvie describe (2009, p. 10),

We can sum up some of these processes under the terms “quantification,” “standardisation” and “surveillance.” In all cases, chores are imposed and barriers erected that cut across and interrupt the flows of communicational, affective and creative relationships.

Importantly, however, this does not involve the eradication of the state (even as it involves the defunding of public education) but rather its restructuring into a deeply antipopular and disciplinary state. As Rose (1993, pp. 294–295) argues, “we are dealing with a new form of governmentality” that has two distinct kinds of control. The first being quasimarket mechanisms epitomized as competition, localized entrepreneurial initiatives, delivery of value for money, and competitive tendering; the second being direct state controls in the form of imposed targets, outputs, efficiency gains, and performance criteria. As Coté, Day, and de Peuter argue (2007, p. 319), “These allow populations to be divided and managed, and our daily lives to be more intensely immersed in capitalist exploitation and state-based rational-bureaucratic control.”

Thus externally implemented systems of ranking and evaluation are imposed on educators in ways that create disciplinary mechanisms and self-disciplining subjects that devalue local, indigenous traditions of pedagogy, education, and epistemology. Instead the logics of a marketized vision of education, in which education is viewed as a commodity to be accessed by consumer-students, infuses teacher training programs, school curriculum, and university strategic plans. The objective of education, as the rhetoric is reinforced, is to provide
the skills necessary to ensure successful entrance into the globalized competitive workforce as laborer and thereby have the income to partake in the market as successful consumer.

In this paradigm the educator, particularly acute in the global South, is deintellectualized, deprofessionalized, and depoliticized, presented as a mere transmitter of skills and neutral knowledge. The resulting mechanisms of evaluation and standardization discipline the teacher-subject in pernicious ways, including devaluation of their teaching and expertise, deterioration of working conditions, and increasing precariousness cumulating as the threat of loss of employment. Indeed in some cases, those educators that are viewed as dissenting to this neoliberal paradigm can suffer death threats and the actual loss of life as teacher-unionists are targeted by militarized neoliberal parastate forces (see chap. 1). Such processes attempt to eradicate the subjective, social, and cultural conditions for the emergence of critical educators and pedagogical-political projects committed to fostering the self-emancipation of oppressed communities.

In the name of modernization, the state has become more deeply embedded in the privatization of education through the defunding of public education and the deregulation of educational markets to enable private investment in educational institutions. This is often justified by attacks against teachers and teacher unions who are presented as privileged interest groups that have “sucked the public purse dry” through their self-interested demands on the educational system. It involves developing a discourse that naturalizes the market as the regulator of social goods as opposed to the state. In the name of democratic access to education, processes are enacted that erode public education, augment social fragmentation, and deepen inequalities.

This educational and epistemological project also seeks to produce certain student subjectivities that ensure the naturalization and reproduction of neoliberal globalization. The ideal neoliberal student is a consumer-student prepared to become indebted (through private finance) to ensure their access to education and by implication success, inclusion, and dignity in the neoliberal economy as producer and consumer. Such a process of subjectification is embedded in instrumental rationalities that produce social and cultural terrains of competition and separation. In this the individual (student, student’s family, and/or teacher) is represented as primarily responsible for social and economic success or failure. This acts to mystify the structural nature of such exclusion, particularly the consequences of standardized curriculum that speak over local needs combined with
reduced public funding for education and an economic model that produces structural unemployment.

Such a discourse is often internalized into poor student subjectivities fostering a structure of emotions in which happiness, self-worth, and success become focused on access to educational services. Thus failure is often experienced as self-failure and internalized in processes of blaming, shaming, and devaluation. Not only does this link in the oppressed to the parasitic processes of global financialization of capital but it also culturally and subjectively fragments and individualizes poor communities. These people and their families and communities end up carrying the burden of the privatization of education, often accessing poor quality technical courses that lead to precarious unregulated employment or no employment at all. They are left indebted, facing the disciplinary mechanisms of debt-collection agencies. Such logics of disarticulation of political possibility and critical imagination within the subaltern are a pernicious, dehumanizing form of enacting the politics of knowledge of neoliberal globalization. These processes deny the subaltern the cultural, intellectual, and affective knowledges and wisdoms through which to transform the realities of exclusion and oppression.

Yet the processes of privatization and marketization of education, in which access for many subaltern communities remains a myth and when it is possible results in indebtedness and no certainty of decent employment, has created fractures in the epistemological politics of neoliberal globalization. As the promises of inclusion, modernity, choice, and development remain unmet for many people, fault lines have become cracks of political possibility out of which have emerged movements and governments that politicize the pedagogical and pedagogize the political.

Such epistemological and educational alternatives and decolonial practices have most viscerally and forcefully emerged in the Latin American context. Here the neoliberal projects’ attempt to disarticulate alternative epistemological and ontological horizons of the political has been resisted. This is manifest in the election to power of various governments falling under the broad rubric of the “pink tide.” Examples include those of Luiz Ignácio (Lula) da Silva of the Workers’ Party (PT) in Brazil, Hugo Chávez in Venezuela, and Evo Morales in Bolivia. There has also been the development of social movement and community struggles—for example, the recovered-factories movement in Argentina, the movimento dos trabalhadores rurais sem terra (Landless Rural Workers’ Movement, MST) in Brazil, the water movements in Uruguay, the indigenous movements
in Ecuador and Bolivia, the urban land committees in Venezuela, and feminist nonviolent movements in Colombia. It should be noted, however, and will be detailed in subsequent chapters, that the pink tide is complex and contradictory. For example, the popular hopes generated by the election of Lula in 2002 have been dashed and disappointed by the PT governments’ insidious embrace and deepening of neoliberalism and its epistemological logics and politics in educational practices, policies, and representations (see chap. 2).

Arguably within this multiplicity of experiences are the contours and practices of a reinvention of socialism of the twenty-first century. Such emancipatory horizons and practices are deeply democratic, plural, and decentralized. They develop processes in which communities learn to govern themselves. They foreground the multiplicity that is at the heart of this reinvention and the necessity to speak and theorize in the plural. In speaking with, through, and about new forms of popular politics they suggest—sometimes implicitly, sometimes explicitly—that what is being experienced and built in Latin America is not a model that can be transported from one place to another but emerges from concrete places, bodies, traditions, cosmologies, spatialities of power, forms of capital and the state, and histories of struggle. In short, these emancipatory processes are historically, geographically, and politically placed and by necessity plural. There is no overarching model of transformation as is common in twentieth-century conceptualizations of socialism, rather a series of practices, experiences, and struggles that enable the asking of questions and open experimentation with pedagogical practices from which emerge practices of political transformation and social emancipation.

At the heart of this reinvention is an epistemological politics in which the pedagogical takes center stage. “Pedagogical” is used broadly in this book to refer to an articulation of learning aims and processes in social, ethical, spiritual, and affective as well as cognitive relationships. Hence our conceptualization moves the term beyond its hegemonic articulation and representation as a set of methods that ultimately reinforces a practice of education as a practice of domination. Within our conceptualization, pedagogical practices help to constitute the processes of unlearning dominant subjectivities, social relationships, and ways of constituting the world and learning new ones. More concretely, they enable the conditions of emergence of a reinvented emancipatory politics, the immanent development of their emancipatory visions, and can offer fruitful ways to overcome movements’ difficulties and contradictions to foster their sustainability and flourishing.
The epistemological politics of this reinvention has particular ethical and political commitments. First, as Ceceña (2012, p. 118) explains, it develops knowledge for and by those excluded either from, or else on the margins, of political power and theory production. Second, it speaks from the placed body and embodied experiences of oppression (Gutiérrez, 2012, p. 61). Third, it fosters the emergence of subjects historically rejected and ignored by capitalist colonial modernity (Mignolo, 2009). In Ceceña’s words,

Speaking about and from these knowledges involves putting them, from the beginning, on a different plane from the practices of power that have condemned popular learning...It is necessary to dislocate the planes, moving from a Euclidean plane to another (or to others) with multiple perspectives that break up and expand the dimensions of understanding, opening them to the penetration of other cosmologies.

Building from radical and subaltern educational traditions and cultural practices such as indigenous cosmologies, liberation theology, and popular education, such a politics of knowledge is produced by multiple subaltern subjects in multiple spatialities and places of alienation and oppression. This politics embraces multiple forms of knowledge, including the affective, embodied, oral, cognitive, and cultural. It experiments with collective and horizontal pedagogies that enable communities to produce themselves, communities, and social relationships differently. These practices are the descendants of Simon Rodriguez’s project of epistemological emancipation. Escobar elaborates on this project (cited in Cendales, Mejía, and Muñoz, 2013, p. 7),

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

Such subaltern and radical educational heritages, traditions, and practices dethrone the knowing subject of patriarchal capitalist coloniality, which (emphasizes) his mastery of others and production of the word as separate from the world. In contrast, emancipatory pedagogy fosters processes of mass intellectuality and creativity thereby enabling communities to reauthor themselves, their practices, and to reweave their worlds anew.
Such a politics of knowledge and politicization of the pedagogical occurs both in formal educational settings, often on the margins of dominant processes of neoliberal restructuring, although in the case of Venezuela at the center of educational reform and reimagining. It also occurs in the messy spaces where subjects, bodies, epistemologies, and spatialities meet through critical educators in schooling, adult education, and university education. This transgresses the borders and boundaries of education separated from life, and learning dissociated from ethical and political commitments, instead, cocreating pedagogical projects with communities in struggle. Within this the school is reimagined as a site for the development of thinking, autonomous, and innovative subjects, able to collectively produce their self-liberation. Teacher training is reconnected to pedagogical-political projects and a conceptualization of the educator as being committed to an emancipatory pedagogical practice embedded in the struggles and needs of oppressed communities. In the higher education (HE) space, Giroux (cited in Coté et al., 2007, p. 319) describes critical educators collectively as those who “discard the careerism, professionalism and isolation” that structure managerialist logics of educational performance. Hence, spaces are opened for the possibility for other relationships, subjectivities, and rationalities via critical pedagogies of the classroom, broader university space, and the community.

These epistemological-political-pedagogical projects, practices, and struggles often confront the mechanisms of monologue of neoliberalism. In the Latin American case, the Left turn in governments has often had the impact of disorientating and debilitating politically such processes of construction. As is demonstrated in the analysis of the PT governments in Brazil (see chap. 2), their political practice has fostered the conditions of governance, as opposed to facilitating the development of the social power and autonomy of popular subjects. Indeed as Alvaro Reyes notes (2012, p. 12), “The arrival of these counter-hegemonic parties and projects in national office has effectively functioned to dissipate the very organizational autonomy and emancipatory impulses that made the rupture with orthodox neoliberalism possible.” In other cases such as in Colombia (see chaps. 1 and 6), these projects, practices, and pedagogies are nurtured as practices of exteriority to the reproduction of militarized, populist neoliberal hegemony. Importantly, this context has resulted in some of the most complex and transformative pedagogical-political projects of decolonization.

The intention of this book is to explore the epistemological politics and the role of the pedagogical in this reinvention of a multiple, immanent, and becoming twenty-first century socialism. We do