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Decolonizing Nation-States in Latin/x America: Twenty First Century Postcolonial Constitutionalism and the Paradoxes of (Trans)nationalism, 1989-2014

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Ricardo Sánchez Cárdenas

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ABSTRACT

Decolonizing Nation-States in Latin/x America: Twenty First Century Postcolonial Constitutionalism and the Paradoxes of (Trans)nationalism, 1989-2014

Ricardo Sánchez Cárdenas

This dissertation explores the renewed historical significance of the (geo)political[1] demand to redraft national constitutions in the Americas. Building on previous[2] work, my dissertation constructs a transnational lens to underline the intersectionality of the social struggles that catalyzed the Venezuelan Constituent Assembly process begun in 1999 and the Ecuadorian experience during 2007-2008: the first and the last processes behind what has been studied under the rubric of Latin American "neoconstitutionalism," which I argue must be analyzed in relation to a broader postcolonial genealogy of constitution-making and grassroots organization.

My historical-comparative approach points to the dual objective of documenting the contentious (geo)politics surrounding the last Venezuelan and Ecuadorian constituent assembly experiences (their origins and aftermath) while deconstructing (mis)representations of contemporary Latin/x American politics. By dismissing these experiences as simple power grab mechanisms of charismatic or populist *caudillos*, some accounts of contemporary (geo)politics in

[1] I often use prefixes in parenthesis before a word to suggest a conceptual ambivalence that ought to be further investigated and theorized. In this case, (geo)politics intends to underline the challenge to take a transnational perspective in political analysis, not merely in the militaristic fashion that we traditionally understand geopolitics but rather underlining the need to understand simultaneously a series of social struggles and power structures.

[2] Previously I have compared the Brazilian experience in 1989 during the democratic transition from military rule to the Venezuelan Constituent Assembly of 1998 which denounced neoliberalism as an obstacle to endogenous development and participatory democratization (B.A. thesis, Vassar College, 2008), and historicized the last two constituent assembly processes in the Americas, Bolivia (2006-2009) and Ecuador (2008-2009), focusing on the transformative concept of *plurinationality* –a long-standing guiding principle of the praxis of Andean indigenous peoples' social movements (M.A. thesis, Northwestern University, 2010).

the region end up portraying Latin/x Americans as passive masses unfit for democratic and/or revolutionary institutional innovation. Therefore, this dissertation focuses on different forms of (counter)cultural production related to grassroots organization and mobilization that resulted in, and were further catalyzed by, the ongoing demand to redraft national constitutions across Latin America.

My research design, focusing on the praxis of organized subaltern subjects that have played a key role in articulating the demand to convene participatory constituent assemblies and invoke the resulting constitutions in their cultural production, seeks to theorize the subaltern subjectivities at play on the redefinition of modern Latin American nations and states in the 21st century. This objective led me to identify crucial conflicts that emerged during the last Venezuelan and Ecuadorian Constituent Assemblies and informed my initial coding of primary documents such as transcripts of constituent assemblies' debates as well as the sampling for interviews with elected representatives and other key (geo)political actors, particularly Afro-Amerindian and migrant women. In the aftermath of these processes, I have been able to develop a series of ethnographic engagements in social spaces that highlight the importance of considering the role that expressive cultures continue to play in these constituent processes. I show how the importance of expressive (counter)cultures is particularly salient in the Venezuelan case.

The historical scope delineated by these national cases contributes to the analysis and theorization of power relations that characterize neoliberal (geo)politics across the Americas. In this vein, the in-depth accounts of the Venezuelan and Ecuadorian constituent assemblies are contextualized by referencing two "negative" cases where the demands to redraft national

constitutions have been blocked by political elites (Chile and Honduras) as well as the experience of Bolivia where the redrafting of the national Constitution (2006-2009) was met with violent opposition. Relying on secondary sources to reference these complementary cases, this dissertation contrasts the Venezuelan and Ecuadorian constituent processes on three different levels ripe for comparative analysis: 1) between nationalities and nation-states, 2) between postcolonial/modern nation-state actors and transnational subaltern subjects, and 3) between the embodied experiences of citizens and non-citizens.

More than assessing the institutional capacity or the extent of revolutionary transformation of the Venezuelan and Ecuadorian states as a result of these constitution-making processes, this dissertation explores the effects these processes have had in the revolutionary imagination forged by transnational organizations and mobilization of Afro-Amerindian social movements and human rights activists focused on queer and feminist struggles. Ultimately this dissertation maps the transnational circulation of (geo)political projects calling for the refounding of the nation and the reinstitutionalization of the state as mechanisms to address postcolonial inequalities. In other words, it constitutes a (geo)political (auto)ethnography (Pratt, 1991, 1992) of the challenge to reimagine the modern nation-state in 21st century Latin America by focusing on the performative gesture of convening participatory constituent assemblies in Venezuela (1999) and Ecuador (2008-2009) so as to explore the renewed historical significance of the right to "freedom of assembly" (Butler, 2013, 2015; Osterweil, 2015) and contemporary enactments of renewed forms of postcolonial (trans)nationalism.[3]

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[3] Here I seek to contribute to a line of research and reflection opened by Frantz Fanon in *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963), particularly in the chapter "On National Culture" where he analyzes (trans)nationalism as "the fundamental issue of the legitimate claim to a nation" which has mobilized social struggles in postcolonial contexts. The

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Knowledge production is always a collective pursuit as it requires collective efforts and generates epistemic communities. This is perhaps the single most important lesson that emerges from sociology as research practice and scientific theorizing. The sociological imagination developed in order to carry out this work of research and analysis is the result of both the many people I met during the process and influenced me one way or another during my lifetime more generally. All of those generous enough to share their views and experiences, in informal exchanges and more structured interviews and those who keep various sorts of archives I encountered during the last decade deserve much of the credit to whatever proves useful in this dissertation.

Research funding for this project was provided by Vassar College, Northwestern University, including from the Buffet Center for Global Studies and the Latin American Studies cluster, and Universidad Central del Ecuador (UCE). The capacity to carry out sociological research particularly requires institutional support, which I have been lucky to find in various entities and organizations I have been a part of during the last decade. For this and other reasons not only individuals nor institutions should be acknowledged but also the often convoluted, interlocking collective memories and histories that we collapse under any given conception of *society* or *people*. Needless to say, the bibliography at the end of this document is another place to find more of those whom deserve credit for providing me with building blocks to construct my

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ambivalence of "(trans)national" evokes the need to explore how "[n]ational culture is the collective thought process of a people to describe, justify, and extoll the actions whereby they have joined forces and remained strong. National culture in the underdeveloped countries, therefore, must be at the very heart of the liberation struggle these countries are waging. […] The problem is knowing what role these [wo]men have in store for their people, the type of social relations they will establish and their idea of the future of humanity" (Fanon [1963] 2004, pp. 168-169).

thinking.

I owe inspiration to the generosity of the Venezuelans I had the privilege to meet during the course of my research in Caracas and Chicago, the daily struggles of my compatriots both in Ecuador and Chicago, and those fought historically by Latin/x communities both north and south of the U.S.-Mexico borderlands. The motivation behind this work comes from the critical decolonizing potential of taking seriously the challenges posited by the praxis of the Afro-Amerindian Diaspora(s) in the project of remaking modernity. I also want to acknowledge all the students who continually renew my faith in the classroom as a space that can foster and catalyze struggles against interlocking forms of oppression, marginalization, and inequality and re-energize our collective capacity to teach and learn collectively.

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Prof. Napoleón Saltos, Prof. María Augusta Espín, Prof. Francisco Hidalgo, and Prof. Philippe Altmann, provided me with crucial support and important insights with their feedback and their own academic work during the last stage of my dissertation project. My eternal gratitude to Madeleine Frame Arenivar for the excellent editing work that makes this dissertation readable and her intellectual comradery that always helps me clarify my thinking.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AEU – Asociación Ecuador Unido

ALBA – Alianza Bolivariana para las Américas

ANC – Asamblea Nacional Constituyente

AP – Alianza PAÍS (Patria Altiva y Soberana)

ARAAC - Articulación Regional Afrodescendientes de América Latina y el Caribe

CAOI – Coordinadora Andina de Organizaciones Indígenas

CCP - Confederación Campesina del Perú

CEAACES – Consejo de Evaluación, Acreditación y Aseguramiento de la Calidad de la Educación Superior

CITEM - Coordinadora de Identidades Territoriales Mapuche

COFAVIC - Comité de Familiares de las Víctimas

CONAIE - Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador

CONACAMI - Confederación Nacional de Comunidades del Perú Afectadas por la Minería

CONAMAQ - Consejo Nacional de Ayllus y Markas del Qullasuyu

CONIMCHH – Consejo Nacional Indigena Maya Ch'ortí de Honduras

CONIVE - Consejo Nacional Indio de Venezuela

COPINH – Consejo Cívico de Organizaciones Populares e Indígenas de Honduras

CRLN - Chicago Religious Leadership Network on Latin America

ECLAC – Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

ECUARUNARI - Ecuador Runakunapak Rikcharimuy

ENIPLA - Estrategia Nacional Intersectorial de Planificación Familiar y Prevención del Embarazo de Adolescentes

EPATU - Escuela Popular para las Artes y Tradiciones Urbanas

EPPOCA – Escuela de Producción Popular y Comunicación Alternativa

EZLN - Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional

FIB - Federación Indígena de Bolívar

FTAA - Free Trade Area of the Americas

HHR - Hip Hop Revolución

ICERD - International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

MBR - Movimiento Bolivariano Revolucionario

MPD – Movimiento Popular Democrático

NAFTA - North American Free Trade Agreement

OFRANEH - Organización Fraternal Negra Hondureña

ONIC - Organización Nacional Indígena de Colombia

ORPIA - Organización Regional de Pueblos Indígenas del Amazonas

PNBV – Plan Nacional del Buen Vivir

SAP – Structural Adjustment Program

SENESCYT - National Secretary of Higher Education, Science, Technology and Innovation

SENPLADES – National Secretary of Planning and Development

UCE – Universidad Central del Ecuador

UIAW – Universidad Intercultural Amawtay Wasi

UNASUR – Unión de Naciones Suramericanas

UNE – Unión Nacional de Educadores del Ecuador

UNDRIP – United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

USFQ – Universidad San Francisco de Quito

DEDICATION

To my grandmother Lucina Velasco Quiñónez, who has always inspired the key questions in the development of my sociological imagination.

To John D. Arenivar, Ph.D. and Daniel Barreto, *in memoriam*.

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Chapter 1

Impossible subjects and 21st century postcolonial constitutionalism

Every legal constitution is the product of a revolution. […] Work for reform does not contain its own force independent from revolution. During every historic period, work for reforms is carried on only in the direction given to it by the impetus of the last revolution and continues as long as the impulsion from the last revolution continues to make itself felt.
- Rosa Luxemburg, *Reform or Revolution* (1900).

The sociological imagination enables us to grasp history and biography and the relations between the two within society. […] No social study that does not come back to the problems of biography, of history and of their intersections within a society has completed its intellectual journey.
-C. Wright Mills, "The Sociological Imagination" (1959).

The claim to a national culture in the past does not only rehabilitate that nation and serve as a justification for the hope of a future national culture. [...] Perhaps we haven't sufficiently demonstrated that colonialism is not satisfied merely with holding a people in its grip and emptying the native's brain of all form and content. By a kind of perverted logic, it turns to the past of the oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures, and destroys it. This work of devaluing pre-colonial history takes on a dialectical significance today.
- Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* ([1963] 2004, p. 149).

In trying to become "objective," Western culture made "objects" of things and people when it distanced itself from them, thereby losing "touch" with them. This dichotomy is the root of all violence.
-Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera* (1987, p. 37)

This is why there is no more potent tool for rupture than the reconstruction of genesis: by bringing back into view the conflicts and confrontations of the early beginning and therefore all the discarded possibilities, it retrieves the possibilities that things could have been (and still could be) otherwise.
- Pierre Bourdieu, "Rethinking the State: Genesis and Structure of the Bureaucratic field" (1994, p. 4).

Sociologist Julian Go (2003) has challenged the influential hypothesis that sees the United States' Constitution as fueling a "world"[4] or "globalizing constitutionalism"[5] through a meta-analysis of postcolonial constitutions drafted in the 20th century (between 1945–2000). One of the notable particularities of postcolonial constitutions, Go points out, is that "rather than merely reflecting the structure of state power or mapping out state institutions and functions" (p. 76), these tend to appear as instruments of social transformation. 21st century Latin American Constitutions provide further empirical evidence to analyze this important characteristic of postcolonial constitutionalism. This dissertation is an analysis of postcolonial constitutionalism focused on the cases of Venezuela and Ecuador so as to assess Go's important finding as well as Rosa Luxemburg's historical contention regarding the source and mechanisms of modern revolutionary transformations: "Every legal constitution is the *product* of a revolution" (1900, my emphasis). In this vein I explore the revolutionary lineage of these instances of constitution-making in order to theorize the historical perspectives for institutional transformation in line with renewed calls for decolonial[6] democratization (Kemmer, 2016) enunciated by subjects rendered impossible by the modern logic of the hyphenated nation-state.

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[4] See Klug (2000) for one example.

[5] This argument is but one iteration of a broader tendency Zine Magubane has denounced as common in comparative historical sociology: "Not only are there relatively fewer comparative-historical studies of industrialization, revolutions or democracy in the formerly colonized world, but also studies of these events in the European context tend to proceed on the assumption that the natural direction of diffusion is from Europe and North America outward to the rest of the world" (2005, p. 93).

[6] While I often use the qualifiers *decolonial*, *postcolonial*, and *anti-colonial* as closely related to one another I find it useful to conceptually distinguish them following Bolivian-Aymara sociologist Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui who has argued that: "*postcolonial* entails a [historical] desire, *anti-colonial* is a [geopolitical] struggle, and decoloniality a fashionable and obnoxious neologism" (Rivera Cusicanqui in Gago, 2015, author's translation). My use of "decolonial" is cautious since I understand Rivera Cusicanqui's antipathy for the concept as it often eclipses the postcolonial tradition built over the concept of internal colonialism yet I obviously do not share this last characterization. I rather see *decolonial* as an intellectual project that has contributed in the project of remaking modernity through historical sociological research in North American academia. However, the imperialist geopolitics of knowledge production has riddled this project with contradictions that this work seeks to reflect upon.

The research reported in this dissertation builds on these arguments in order to document anti-neoliberal struggles that gave impetus to the last round of postcolonial constitutionalism in the Americas and to theorize (trans)nationalism[7] as a framework to explore the novel concepts and symbols articulated in the most recent redrafting of the Venezuelan and Ecuadorian Constitutions and mobilized in the ongoing constituent processes we have seen emerge across the Americas in the last two decades. I do not use (trans)nationalism to refer to discrete collective identities, ideologies, or the bundles of practices and ideas that are normally collapsed under dominant conceptions of the modern nation-state. Rather, I build on social scientific analysis of these *transnational* social realities which allegedly *transcend* the national realm (Magubane, 2005; Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2007; Adams & Pincus, 2017; Steinmetz, 2017); without losing sight of the epistemological and (geo)political risk of minimizing the ongoing significance of modern state institutions, which are constantly being "made and remade" (Orloff, 2017). My objective is to posit postcolonial (trans)nationalism as a theoretical framework that can help to historicize the contentious relationships between modern states and diverse peoples that often have organized their (geo)political praxis and resulting institutions in the form of *nations* or around the notion of *nationality* in order to (re)claim self-determination vis-à-vis other

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[7] Elsewhere in this chapter and this dissertation I make explicit what I understand as *transnationalism* and its relation to postcolonialism. However it is important to note from the onset of my analysis that whenever I split words with parenthesis I seek to underscore "how seldom political [and social] theorists have taken seriously the fact that 'politics' necessarily operates in an ideological world in which words rarely have unambiguous meanings; where notions are inexact, and have political value precisely because they are inexact and hence capable of suggesting a range of possible interpretations; where intentions themselves are contradictory and consequences very often unintended; where movements follow winding and unpredictable paths, where choices are strategic and relative, not univocal and absolute. And still, this inexact world of ambiguity and half-truth, of manipulation and deception, of dreams and illusions, is not wholly patternless, for here, too, objectives are realised, rules established, values asserted, revolutions accomplished and states founded" (Chatterjee, 1993, p. vii). In this vein, parenthesis in the middle of concepts call attention to this structured ambiguity that my analysis seeks to work through regarding key concepts such as (trans)nationalism.

(geo)political actors and modern states' claims of sovereignty, which have emerged as historical formations alongside the development of modern capitalism.

The strategy of deploying the nation as a (geo)political symbol, reclaiming it from the (post)colonial state to defy (neo)colonialism and imperialism, has been particularly salient among those who inhabit the *Third World*: a subaltern geopolitical identity (Prashad, 2007) born out of the geopolitical praxis that converged at the 1955 Bandung Conference (see Phạm & Shilliam, 2016). The Third World cannot be reduced to a geographical descriptor nor merely to signify territories that were once colonized but rather should be understood as an ambiguous (geo)political project resulting from the contentious praxis of the majority-world often ignored by Eurocentric social science (Connell, 2007); a majority-world that includes the communities of so-called "minorities" in "developed" (a euphemism for former colonialist and contemporary imperialist) nations, who have themselves struggled for self-determination and transnational solidarity, self-identifying as Third World revolutionaries (see Carmichael, 1967 in Carmichael, 2007, p. 101; Enck-Wanzer, 2010; Bloom and Martin Jr., 2013) and Third World feminists (Sandoval, 1991; Mohanty et. al, 1991).

Moreover, the possibility to interact with the political actors involved with the organization of two of the most recent national Constituent Assemblies in the Americas as well as with the various sorts of archival materials produced by social subjects pushing for these (geo)political mechanisms also has entailed the chance to document broader postcolonial genealogies of nationhood or (trans)nationalism. Conceived as tools for revolutionary transformation, postcolonial constitutions point to the challenges associated with building modern institutions such as—but not limited to—those that make up the modern state as the

dominant representation of the public realm. The contradictions articulated in these constitutions then are not merely analyzed as shortcomings of the national processes that produced them but rather as expressions of the transnational tensions of the modern nation-state, which is both enactment and embodiment of the postcolonial genealogies of grassroots struggles that converged on the demand to redraft national constitutions across 21st century Latin America.

This dissertation points to these genealogies in order to assess the gains and setbacks of social movement organizations that have embraced the demand to redraft national constitutions in order to both democratize and further decolonize modern Latin American states and societies. In doing so it underscores their contributions to rethink the sovereignties (Acosta, 2010)[8]—or rather the specific claims and enactments of national self-determination—hinted at in the anti-neoliberal struggles of social subjects who often are rendered invisible in analyses of modern constitutionalism and capitalist globalization more generally. These subjects' tense relationship with the social problem of the modern nation-state formation is not only the central concern of this work but also provides the locus of knowledge production from which I attempt to craft my sociological practice more generally (see Sánchez Cárdenas, 2011).

This first chapter combines postcolonial theorizing and sociological methodological reflections regarding the paradoxes entailed in researching contemporary iterations of "re-

[8] Economist and public intellectual Alberto Acosta, former president of the 2008 Ecuadorian Constituent Assembly, argues that one of the impacts of neoliberal globalization based on the ideological dogma of "free trade" as the only path for democratic development has been the curtailment of national sovereignty, which in turn is based on popular sovereignty. Reclaiming national sovereignty, while avoiding xenophobic chauvinism, then would entail the recognition of "all forms of [grassroots] organization in society, as the expression of popular sovereignty in order to develop processes of self-determination" (Art. 96, Ecuadorian Constitution cited in Acosta, 2010, p. 46).

membering" postcolonial—thus (trans)national[9]—"imagined communities" (Anderson, 1989, 2005). The acts of re-membering (Lorde, 1983; Bhabha, 1986), (geo)political rituals[10] (Lukes, 1975; Alexander et. al., 2006) and performances associated with the claim to national self-determination (Tilly, 1993) I consider in this work clearly seek the (re)construction of democratic public institutions continually privatized by neoliberal policy reforms. Towards this goal, historical narratives that bring back the foundation of colonial symbolic violence associated with the Eurocentric nation-state formation and its postcolonial genesis have been mobilized and brought to the spotlight by subaltern subjects in modern Latin/x[11] America. More than a universal modern value or a historical end result diffusing from the most modern or developed societies to the rest of the world, modern nation-state formations—and particularly the claims for

[9] Postcolonialism as a marker of a particular historical status evokes the national liberation struggles that resulted in the nation-states that make up what came to be known as the Third World; however these struggles have always had a transnational dimension and were conceived as revolutionary struggles requiring international solidarity. Vijay Prashad's *The Darker Nations*: *A People's History of the Third World* provides historical evidence to argue: "If European nationalism took as a given that a people (who are perhaps a "race") need to be organized by a state so that their nation can come into its own, the anticolonial nationalists mostly argued that the people (who are often too diverse to classify one way or another) need to be free of colonial rule. The formerly colonized people have at least one thing in common: they are colonized. […] Instead, they had an internationalist ethos, one that looked outward to other anticolonial nations as their fellows. The Third World form of nationalism is thus better understood as an *internationalist nationalism*" (2007, p. 12).

[10] While a Eurocentric reading of Durkheim's work on the importance of rituals would presume that these would become less central for modern societies, replaced by the rule of law and rationality, we see the continual proliferation of "interaction ritual chains" (Collins, 2004) that energize modern societies' emphasis on legal regimes and rational authority. "Sacred symbols and ritual assemblies appear only on the surface to be solely part of the sacred. Looked at more closely the worship of a god or other sacred being is nothing but a symbolic means of collective self-adoration of a society and the mutual [inter]dependency of its members: 'the totem is the flag of the clan,' its 'rallying sign,' a symbolic means by which the members of the community 'mutually show one another that they are all members of the same moral community and they become conscious of the kinship uniting them' (Durkheim 1915: 226)" (Baringhost, 2006).

[11] I add "/" to Latinx, an increasingly common gender neutral term that refers to communities of color racialized in the U.S. in relation to the idea of Latin America (Mignolo, 1997), when referring to both Latin Americans and Latinxs in the US. Throughout the text I also deploy "Latin Americans" and "Latinxs" separately when referring to specific communities north or south of the U.S. Mexico border. However these signifiers are not merely descriptive but underline how my research is epistemologically framed at the contentious borders between Latin American Studies and Latino/a studies and Area and Ethnic studies more generally (See Sánchez Cárdenas, 2012).

self-determination that get articulated in national constitutions—have always entailed for postcolonial subjects a means in the ongoing struggle towards decolonizing their daily experiences while navigating (trans)national states and societies. The most radical versions of the claim to national self-determination have historically animated postcolonialism[12] (Gandhi, 1998; Young, 2001), an analytical framework that can help us rethink modernity (Bhambra, 2007) and its constitutive parts, such as the nation and the state. I will argue such rethinking ought to center on the lived experiences of subaltern hybrid subjects and the explanations these provide through their decolonial capacities for theorizing (Spivak, 1984; Moraga, 1993; Mignolo, 2007; Márquez, 2014), which are the result of their various collective struggles against the interlocking inequalities (re)produced by neoliberal imperialism and modern coloniality; power structures that are still dependent on the sovereign logic of the modern nation-state and the international community it sustains.

In order to introduce the ethnographic and comparative historical analysis in the following chapters, here I will discuss how the (geo)political demand to redraft national constitutions in 21st century Latin America came about and its effects in terms of grassroots (counter)cultural[13] expressions, which are in tense dialogue with the official discourse of the Venezuelan and Ecuadorian self-proclaimed "revolutionary" states. This chapter also seeks to highlight the significance of this (geo)political demand and the crisis of the modern state-formation it expresses for comparative historical sociology of modern nation-state building projects and the epistemological foundations of contemporary social scientific research more

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[12] See footnote 6.

[13]

generally. To do this I divide this chapter into three sections. The first section describes the entanglements between the historical and ethnographic case selection techniques I deployed so as to overcome the limitations that the prevalence of "methodological nationalism" (Wimmer and Glick-Schiller, 2002; Flores, 2009), particularly in conversation with the tradition of comparative historical sociology that posits the ethical, epistemological, and (geo)political imperative of remaking modernity (Adams et al., 2005). The second section discusses the methodological underpinnings of the epistemological challenge to decolonize our global sociological imagination (Mills, 1959; Magubane, 2005) through (auto)ethnographic reflexivity by recognizing its (post)colonial historical roots as a modern epistemological imperative. Finally, the third section concludes by developing my understanding of "embodied knowledge" as related to the paradigms of intersectionality (Hill Collins 1989, 1990, 1999; McCall, 20014; Roth, 2004; Hancock, 2007, 2016), the critique of the coloniality of power (Quijano, 2000), knowledge (Lander, 2003), and being (Maldonado-Torres, 2007), and their cross-pollination (Lugones, 2007, 2008). Together these sections articulate the importance of *(trans)nationalism* as a theoretical framework that should be deployed not only by those studying phenomena associated with migratory flows across national borders but all social scientific research and theorizing inasmuch as it purports not only to produce historicized knowledge but also to cultivate intellectual responsibility[14] (Hountondji, 1996). Such an endeavor requires historicizing our own practice as social scientists while analyzing the social world around us in historically grounded

[14] Beninese Philosophy Professor Paulin J. Houtondji posits some basic questions to cultivate intellectual responsibility: "What is the purpose of this research? Who benefits from it? How does it fit into the society producing it? And to what extent is this society able to take charge of its findings?" (1997, p. 2). The problem of transnationalism calls attention to the ethical, not merely analytical, implications of the terms we use to define specific societies and ourselves as part of them.

terms. We cannot pick and choose between these two simultaneous tasks that the reflexivity inherent to the sociological imagination requires, no matter what the specific subject and/or object of our research.

Sociological coevalness and historicizing comparisons: Archival research and methodological (trans)nationalism

When national histories are conceived as self-contained or when the separate aspects of history are treated in disciplinary isolation, counterevidence is pushed to the margins as irrelevant.
-Susan Buck-Morss, *Hegel, Haiti, and Universal History* (2009, p. 22)

The demand to redraft national constitutions through participatory constituent[15] assemblies as a mechanism to resist neoliberal globalization has been articulated by a variety of Afro-Amerindian[16] social movements ranging from the Ecuadorian Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities (CONAIE or Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador) to the Mexican Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN or Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional) during the last decade[17] of the 20th century (Otero and Jugenitz 2003). More recently, Afro-Amerindian social movement organizations like the Black Honduran Fraternal Organization (OFRANEH or Organización Fraternal Negra Hondureña) and the Regional Union

[15] The difference between a constituent assembly and other mechanisms for constitution-making, such as a constitutional commission or assembly, lies on the fact that a constituent assembly was formed with the exclusive objective of redrafting a new constitution as opposed to reforming an existing constitutional framework. See Brandt et. al., 2011, p. 232.
[16] While Amerindian indigeneity and the African diaspora are often represented as completely distinct, resulting from different historical conditions, it is important to recognize their interconnections. I use the term Afro-Amerindian when trying to call attention to this connection and I differentiate between Afro-descendent and Indigenous social movment organizations when those subjects make distinction explicit in their self-representations.
[17] I discuss at length the historical role of CONAIE in the process of redrafting the Ecuadorian Constitution in chapter 3. The case of the EZLN, organized by indigenous communities of the Mexican southern state of Chiapas, indicates the significance of such a demand for a new constitution in the Americas, given that as a movement they have clearly stated their refusal to participate in electoral politics as means to transform lived realities. Their demand for a new Mexican Constitution is contained in the Fourth (1996) and Sixth Declaration of the Selva Lacandona (2005). See also López Bárcenas, 2016.

of Afrodescendents from Latin America and the Caribbean[18] (ARAAC or Articulación Regional Afrodescendientes de América Latina y el Caribe) have also articulated this demand as a key mechanism not only to reconstitute state institutions but also to confront the ongoing structural violence, symbolic and material, confronted by subaltern subjects across the Americas and the world.

Starting in the second decade of 21st century, I found echoes of this demand during two different workshops regarding Indigenous peoples' rights I attended during 2010. The first took place during the U.S. Social Forum in Detroit, and the second at CONAIE's headquarters in Quito, Ecuador. The same (geo)political demand to redraft national constitutions in Latin America also came up in a luncheon organized by the Chicago Religious Leadership Network on Latin America (CRLN) in November, 2011 with Garifuna organizer Miriam Miranda, a leader of OFRANEH. The first two workshops featured, among others, Miguel Palacín Quispe, a leader of the Coordinating Body of Andean Indigenous Organizations (CAOI or Coordinadora Andina de Organizaciones Indígenas). He underscored the transnational dimension of the seemingly domestic affair of redrafting political constitutions vindicating the recognition of the *plurinationality* of Latin American societies and states: "We have managed to make two out of the five countries where CAOI,[19] the [social movement] organization I represent, organizes to

[18] In the context of peace negotiations between the government of Colombia and the FARC (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia) to end the longest armed conflict in the western hemisphere, ARAAC has echoed the need for a new Constituent Assembly to ensure peace and inclusion of Afro-Colombians (see García, 2015). In chapter 3 I discuss the history of how ARAAC was founded in Caracas amidst the Bolivarian revolution.

[19] Positing the incorporation of plurinationality in the defining constitutional principles of the Bolivian and Ecuadorian nation-states as an accomplishment of the historical democratization struggles of diverse Amerindian social movements, which have been important (geo)political players not only in Bolivia (CONAMAQ or Consejo Nacional de Ayllus y Markas del Qullasuyu) and Ecuador (ECUARUNARI or Ecuador Runakunapak Rikcharimuy) but also in Perú (CONACAMI or Confederación Nacional de Comunidades del Perú Afectadas por la Minería, and CCP or Confederación Campesina del Perú), Colombia (ONIC or Organización Nacional Indígena de Colombia),

constitutionally sanction the plurinationality of societies in the Americas." Later in Chicago, Miriam Miranda recounted her efforts as part of the social struggles that converged in the Self-convened Constituent Assembly of Indigenous and Black women of Honduras *(*Asamblea Constituyente Autoconvocada de Mujeres Indígenas y Negras de Honduras, July 10-14, 2011) organized by grassroots social movement organizations in response to the coup that prevented Hondurans from being able to decide at the polls whether they wanted to redraft their national Constitution (see chapter three). Taking into consideration the praxis of Afro-Amerindian communities makes it clear that the tactics and discourses mobilized for this purpose have been transnational from the very beginning of the Black Atlantic Diaspora (Matory, 2005) and Indigenous anti-colonial resistance.

Moreover, social movement organizations like OFRANEH called my attention to how these efforts continue to reverberate across national borders in the Americas, not only in and around the Andean nations that recently redrafted their constitutions but also where we find "negative cases" (Mahoney & Goertz, 2004): Latin American nation-states that have effectively blocked the grassroots demand to overhaul the existing constitutional order. By thematically relating these ongoing struggles with the experiences of constituent assemblies in Venezuela and Ecuador, I seek to craft historicizing comparisons with two of these negative cases: Chile (chapter two) and Honduras (chapter three), where social movements organizations still mobilize around the demand for a participatory constituent assembly, often making explicit reference to those that took place in Venezuela during 1999 and Ecuador during 2007-2008 (see table 1).

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and Chile (CITEM or Coordinadora de Identidades Territoriales Mapuche), Palacín articulated a clear example of transnational political activism impacting historical processes that at first sight seem narrowly national in scope, such as the redrafting of *national* constitutions.

Table 1. Case Studies

Cases of Constituent Assemblies since 1999	Positive	Negative
	Venezuela (1999)	Chile
	Ecuador (2007-2008)	Honduras
Secondary historical references*	Bolivia (2007-2009)	Haiti (1804**)

*While serious consideration of these cases is beyond the scope of this analysis, I refer to them as the first (Haiti) and last instance of postcolonial constitutionalism.
** While Haiti is technically a "negative case" since its current Constitution dates from 1987 (amended on 2012) I do not refer to this part of Haitian history but rather point to the importance of its 1804 Constitution.

The imperative behind the call to historicize social theory and scientific research more generally requires not only acts of remembering, voicing or making visible what has been forgotten, silenced or rendered invisible[20] but also entails re-membering (Lorde, 1983; Bhabha, 1986; Gandhi, 1998) what has been dismembered, re-membering what has been violently distorted, disfigured and destroyed, to borrow from the words of Marxist revolutionary and classical postcolonial theorist Frantz Fanon. Therefore, any attempt to delineate the historical genealogies of postcolonial constitutionalism, the ways in which it articulates and enacts particular forms of (trans)nationalism and state-building projects, ought to begin with the recognition of the constitutive violence, symbolic and material, that marks the historical development of the really-existing international system of modern nation-states. Bearing witness

[20] In the words of Joan Scott: "The project of making [subaltern] experience visible precludes analysis of the workings of this system and of its historicity; instead it reproduces its terms. [....] Making visible the experience of a different group exposes the existence of repressive mechanisms, but not their inner workings or logics; we know that difference exists, but we don't understand it as relationally constituted" (2005, p. 203).

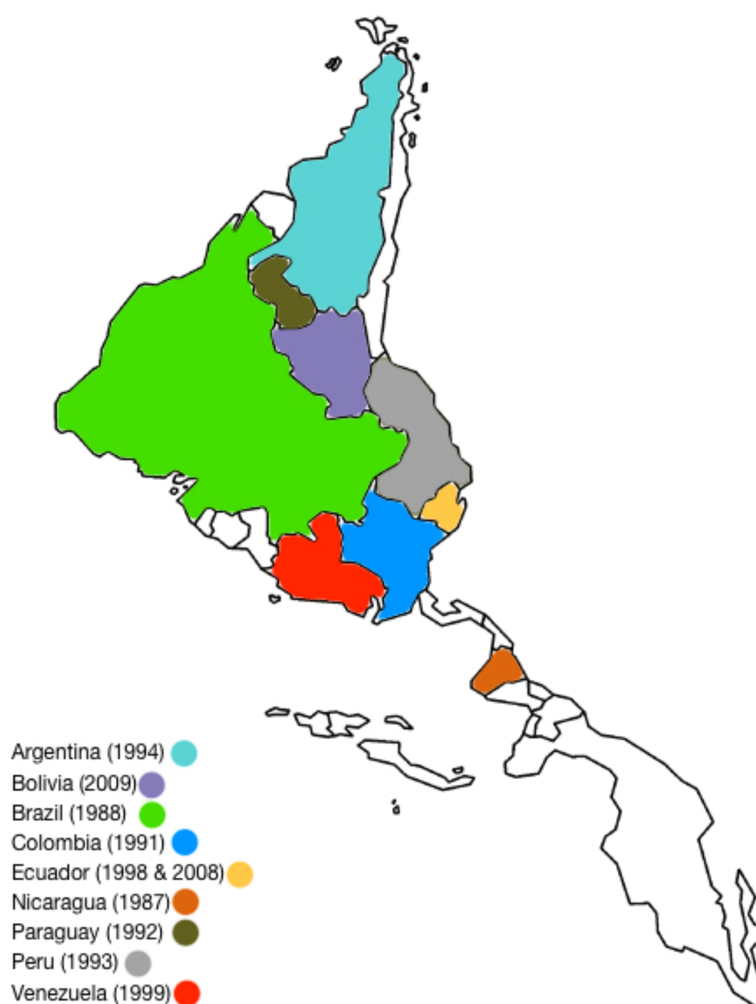
to the latest (geo)political rituals invoking the desire to redefine the terms determining the realm of the "public" calls attention to the high stakes at play in redrafting national constitutions in order to reconceptualize the socially energizing meaning of *nation*; the (geo)political consequences of these nationally mediated social energies require careful analysis of the organizational capacity of "the many hands of the state" (Morgan & Orloff, 2017), and their often contentious relations with Afro-Amerindian and other social movement organizations.

Since the Sandinista Revolution[21] in Nicaragua organized a Constituent Assembly process, which started with the electoral process of 1984, nine Latin American nation-states have convened Constituent Assemblies (see illustration 1). All Andean nation-states redrafted their national constitutions during the 1990s and all Latin American countries have revamped or amended their constitutions since 1978 (Negretto, 2012). "The Andean region has been on the front line of the current phase of constitutional transformation: Colombia in 1991; Peru in 1993; Venezuela in 1999; Ecuador in two different occasions (1998 and 2008); and Bolivia in 2009" (Bejarano & Segura, 2013). The historical significance of the Constituent Assembly that redrafted the Colombian Constitution during 1991 as well as its aftermath, both in terms of the jurisprudence that has expanded social rights and the remarkable forms of judicial activism it catalyzed, is undeniable (Lemaitre Ripoll, 2009) and its transnational impact in recent Latin American constitutionalism is well documented (Noguera-Fernández & Criado de Diego, 2011).

[21] The last armed revolutionary toppling of a military dictatorship in Latin America in 1979, the Sandinista Revolution has been argued to be a particular case of both consolidation and institutionalization, according to Selbin's comparative historical analysis of the *Modern Latin American Revolutions* (1993, p. 46-54) of the 20th century. Coming back to the presidency during the last Latin American "left turns" after losing an election to the rightist opposition, the Sandinistas are an important case study to understand the Latin American attempt to forge a radical, participatory democracy.

The cases of Peru in 1993 and Ecuador in 1998 were only partially open to the demands of grassroots social movement organizations and occurred under the leadership of neoliberal reformers Alberto Fujimori and Abdalá Bucaram, respectively, that quickly delegitimized newly conceived constitutional protections through the implementation of increasingly authoritarian and corrupt regimes.

Illustration 1: Map of Latin American countries that have convened Constituent Assemblies since 1984



No comprehensive and authoritative account of the latest round of Latin American constitutionalism can afford to overlook the case of Colombia, yet the historical framework and objectives of this dissertation haven taken it in a somewhat different direction; instead it focuses on bearing witness to the real (geo)political demands embraced by specific instances of social movement organizations articulated against neoliberal globalization. The local histories and cultural expressions of the praxis of social movement organizations that converged in or came out of the Constituent Assemblies analyzed in this dissertation underscore the importance of a (trans)national lens to grapple with the remarkable diversity of objectives and strategies their interlocking struggles continue to enact. Moreover I seek to demonstrate how paying close ethnographic attention to localized practices necessarily points social research in a transnational direction by making the researcher critically inquire into the global designs of power at play while considering archives produced and analyzed in specific places[22] or locations.

However, this dissertation begins with the Venezuelan constitutional redrafting process of 1999 for two different reasons. The first reason is historical, as the Venezuelan case serves to explore the unravelling of neoliberal electoral hegemony that had characterized (geo)politics in Latin America up to the presidential election of Hugo Chávez Frías[23] in Venezuela on December, 1998; the Constitution of 1999 was conceived as a tool for democratization while explicitly

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[22] Latina/o studies scholar Cherríe Moraga at a public performance/lecture at Northwestern University (May 19, 2011) defined critical thinking as the capacity to devise ways of considering how to go about the question "what are the relations of power operating in this room?"

[23] Late Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez recognized the significance of the Colombian Constituent Assembly in an interview with Chilean sociologist Marta Harnecker (2002): "We were very aware of what happened in Colombia, in the years of 1990-1991, when there was a constitutional assembly—of course!—it was very limited because in the end it was subordinated to the existing powers. It was the existing powers that designed Colombia's constitutional assembly and got it going and, therefore, it could not transform the situation because it was a prisoner of the existing powers" (quoted in Wilpert, 2013).

condemning neoliberalism[24] as an obstacle for democratic participation and national sovereignty, eventually articulating explicitly decolonial and anti-imperialist discourses. In other words, I will argue that contemporary Venezuelan history is key to understand the diverse historical experiences theorized through the concept of neoliberalism. I understand neoliberalism as both an intellectual and (geo)political project, which has materialized in both dominant economic policy recipes and cultural transformations that privilege market liberalization and private/individual initiative over public organization, collective identification, and communal forms of property often conceptualized as the commons (Caffentzis, 2004; Caffentzis & Federici, 2014).

The second reason has a more methodological basis, as the cases on which I focus are those where I was able to (auto)ethnographically engage with specific instances of the (geo)political rituals (see table 2) through which contemporary postcolonial constitutions were revamped, invoked, and (re)signified. While many of these engagements fall under what we traditionally conceive as "fieldwork" or participant observation, the Venezuelan 1999 Constitution prominent appearances in multiple audiovisual productions, which I analyze in chapter 2, pushed me to consider the insights of social scientists discussing the perspectives of "digital ethnography" (Murthy, 2008; Underberg & Zorn, 2013) as well as juxtaposing different types of archives. In the case of the last Ecuadorian constituent assembly and its resulting

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[24] Stephanie Lee Mudge's review of the state of the art (2008) of how neoliberalism has been researched as having three faces (an intellectual, a bureaucratic, and a political face) is useful inasmuch as we do not overlook the centrality of the lived experiences of neoliberalism in material (economic) and symbolic (cultural) terms, particularly across the borders of (neo)colonial difference (Mignolo, 2002). Most anti-neoliberal organizers I met in the course of my research underscored the sense of dispossession at the root of the impoverishment and disempowerment of their communities; a sense that is directly related with structural dependence on extractive economies, which beside the debilitating social and environmental cost produced also are based on extractive epistemologies (Grosfoguel, 2016).

Constitution I was not only able to participate in similar (geo)political rituals and consider its, much less common, references in cultural production circulating through similar digital archives but also to conduct more extensive auto/ethnographic work regarding the impact of the last constituent assembly process on higher education institutional reform as I became a professor in the oldest Ecuadorian public university at the end of 2012. The post-neoliberal paradoxes of the advancement of institutional trends associated with the neoliberal university under a government that self-defines as revolutionary and socialist will be analyzed in relation to the accomplishments and shortcomings in terms of 1) the institutionalization of mechanisms to transform into public policy the Venezuelan and Ecuadorian constitutional provisions, 2) the consolidation of unprecedented concepts vindicated in the newest postcolonial constitutions like endogenous development and plurinationality in the (geo)political imaginary embraced and crafted by subaltern subjects, and 3) the transnational solidarities of anti-neoliberal democratization struggles in relation to broader genealogies of postcolonial struggles for self-determination.

Table 2. Ethnographic engagements / Instances of participant observation

(Geo)political rituals and auto/ethnographic fieldwork	Topics/Themes/Guiding concepts	Place	Date	Organizers / Other actors
Street demonstrations and rallies surrounding Referendum to reform 69 articles of the 1999 Constitution	Protagonist/participatory democracy; Afro-Venezuelan demand for constitutional recognition; *consejos comunales* and *núcleos de desarrollo endógeno* as pararell state institutions; 21st century socialism; Bolivarianism	Caracas, Venezuela	January, 2008	Chávez administration; Núcleo de Desarrollo Endógeno Fabricio Ojeda.

	as (counter)cultural project.			
Events to support the constitutional redrafting efforts of the 2007-8 Ecuadorian Constituent Assembly	Sexual and reproductive rights; feminist praxis; symbolic (trans)nationalism; plurinationality; *Sumak Kawsay*.	Quito and Guayaquil, Ecuador	August and Septembe r, 2008	Correa's administration; Inti Illimani.
Referendum to approve 2008 Ecuadorian Constitution	Universal citizenship; Third World inter/nationalism; transnational political representation.	Chicago (Albany Park), IL	Septembe r 28, 2008	Ecuadorian Consulate; AEU.
U.S. Social Forum – Indigenous Peoples Assembly	Plurinationality; indigenous transnationalism; hemispheric solidarity.	Detroit, MI, USA	June, 2010	CAOI.
Workshops on Plurinationalit y and *Sumak Kawsay*	Oppositional consciousness; alternative historical development; self-determination.	Quito, Ecuador	August, 2010	ECUARUNARI; CONAIE.
Luncheon in solidarity with Honduras	Land grabs, extractive tourist projects, Afro-Amerindian Women Constituent Assembly.	Chicago, IL, USA	November , 2011	CLRN, OFRANEH.
President Correa's weekly *Enlace Ciudadano*	Charismatic authority; participatory/representativ e democratization; hegemonic masculinity.	Quito, Ecuador	August 10, 2012 & May 11, 2013	Correa's administration and supporters.

Events surrounding last Venezuelan Presidential reelection of Hugo Chávez	Charismatic authority; participatory/representative democratization; racial neoliberalism.	Caracas, Venezuela	October, 2012	Chávez's administration and supporters; HHR
Meetings and protests regarding higher education reform.	Institutionalization; neoliberal university; eurocentric development; democratizing "revolution"; meritocracy.	Quito, Ecuador	November 2012-2014	UCE, CEAACES
Events surrounding Venezuelan Presidential election	Consolidation of grassroots support of Bolivarian Revolution; revolutionary democratization; popular/communal power.	Caracas, Venezuela	April, 2013	President Maduro's administration and supporters; EPATUs

In this sense, one of the objectives of my research has also been the theorization of the always-elusive historical concept of (post)neoliberalism.[25] The variety of discourses critical of neoliberalism that were mobilized in the debates of the Constituent Assemblies considered here makes clear both its conceptual importance and also the ongoing challenge of preserving its specificity. Those who continue to mobilize anti-neoliberal struggles to reconstitute state institutions with the goal of radically transforming how we imagine and experience modern

[25] My conceptual interest in neoliberalism was the result of an ethnographic discrepancy that became apparent when contrasting my diametrically different experiences discussing contemporary events in Latin America (mostly in Quito, Ecuador, but also in global cities like São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro in Brazil) during the 1990s and 2000s and then in the U.S. where I started college in 2004. I was baffled by the fact that most of the fellow students I met at Vassar College had not even heard of "neoliberalism" and expressed confusion when I tried to articulate the basic tenets of a notion that was part of the daily lived reality in Latin America, where IMF/World Bank-mandated structural adjustment programs were daily news during these decades. This discrepancy is also an element of complexity I consider in this work while trying to meet the challenge of honing our conceptualization of neoliberalism as a concept and what it helps us explain in historical terms.

national states in Latin/x America ought to be aware of the responsibility embodied in the constitutive acts of critical or oppositional[26] theorizing. As the initial excitement inspired by the self-defined "21st century socialist" governments begins to fade in response to sobering contradictions confronting the majority of Latin/x Americans amidst the ongoing global socio-economic crisis of late capitalism, it is important that our contemporary (geo)political debates consider not only the shortcomings of individual leaders or specific government policy schemes. It is also important also to turn a critical lens towards the founding critiques of neoliberalism as a (geo)political project, which initially pushed and guided these left-leaning or "progressive" governments in particular directions. The ambiguous praxis of political actors still working within or at the margins of the borderlands created by modern states also needs to be analyzed in relation to the specific constrains of particular national formations by the transnational dynamic of the modern/colonial/capitalist world-system (Grosfoguel & Cervantes-Rodríguez, 2002; Wallerstein, 2004; Dussel, 2006).

This dissertation, then, simultaneously documents the (auto)ethnographic work of a myriad of moral witnesses (Bhabha, 2008; see also Márquez, 2014, p. 30 & 194-208) of interlocking inequalities (re)produced by neoliberal globalization, while bridging between their critical theories of (post)neoliberalism and my own experiences and reflections as a sociologist trying to make historical sense of the economic, cultural and (geo)political dimensions of the

[26] The conceptual framework of "oppositional consciousness" as a key mechanism of "the subjective roots of social protest" (Mansbridge & Morris, 2001) also reveals its epistemological creativity when we connect it to the argument of Pierre-André Taguieff, who suggests that the macro-historical conceptualization of the problem of the color line is related to the ever-localized politics of anti-racism. Namely, he argues that "the knowledge of antiracism, as a system of representations and reserve of preconstituted arguments, is one of the conditions of the knowledge of racism, if such a thing, categorizable as such, is endowed with a determinable mode of existence" (2001, p. 31).

social structures, simultaneously structuring and structured by the everyday lives of Latin/x Americans. While reflecting on this theoretical horizon, I have spent the last few years researching two of the latest chapters in the convoluted genealogy of postcolonial constitutionalism.

> Bearing witness serves to remember these genealogies in a way that re-members, or re-embodies and re-articulates colonising forms of power. Audre Lorde (1983) uses the term 're-membering' as a means to unsettle the embodiment of white [Eurocentric] hegemony, [...] Lorde specifies a way in which different bodily relations can be engendered through re-negotiating the terms of colonial and imperial relations. (Carbonell Laforteza, 2015, p. 143)

This re-negotiation is in fact a form of contentious memorialization and cultural translation: a methodology that has been central to postcolonial theorizing (Bhabha, 1996; Gandhi, 1998) and that constitutes an important challenge to methodological nationalism (Wimmer and Glick Schiller, 2002; Otero and Jugenitz, 2003; Levitt and Glick-Schiller, 2007). Through this empirical work documenting and analyzing the (geo)political struggles and rituals of subaltern social subjects in contemporary Latin/x America, my work became increasingly concerned with methodological nationalism (and its historical entanglements with methodological individualism[27]) as an obstacle for social scientific research in general but particularly for historical sociology.

Wimmer and Glick Schiller (2002, p. 302) point to three modes of methodological nationalism. The first may be counterintuitive as it is based on negating or ignoring "the national framing of modernity" (p. 304), favoring instead the (neo)liberal vision of a global community of

[27] Andreas Wimmer and Nina Glick Schiller explore these interconnections by quickly exploring the genealogy of the notion of methodological nationalism in relation to methodological individualism as "introduced by Schumpeter and popularized by Friedrich von Hayek and later Karl Popper" (2002, endnote #1).

unbounded individuals against or without nationalism and the state institutions it allows. The second is "typical of more empirically oriented social science practices, […] taking national discourses, agendas, loyalties and histories for granted, without problematizing them or making them an object of an analysis in its own right. Instead, nationally bounded societies are taken to be the naturally given entities to study" (Ibid.) Finally, we see a double conceptual segregation that tends to downplay the role of nationalism both in the history of democracy as a form of government and the functioning of modern state institutions: "As an effect of this double segregation, nationalism appears as a force foreign to the history of Western state building. Instead, it is projected to others, to bloodthirsty Balkan leaders or African tribesmen turned nationalists" (p. 307) or Latin American "populist strongmen." The first and third modes show most clearly how the problem of methodological nationalism has always been part and parcel with what W.E.B Du Bois ([1900] 2015) called the quintessential modern problem of the color line; a conceptual metaphor that underscores the different sorts of structuring borders of racial and racialized threats (Goldberg, 2009). Moreover, the ongoing shortcomings in overcoming methodological nationalism in historical sociology are clearly related to an ongoing denial of the centrality of Du Bois's scholarship in historical sociology, detailed in Morris's (2015) book.

To speak of sociological coevalness[28] then is to articulate a framework to think through the intermingled problems of methodological nationalism and of the color line as the

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[28] Anthropologist Johannes Fabian's seminal work on "Time and the Other" (1983) has shown how the denial of coevalness in spatial and temporal terms has been a key mechanism in the historical production of others or impossible subjects. Focusing on anthropology, Fabian calls attention to the paradox that while ethnographic "fieldwork" entails an undeniable coevalness between ethnographer and informants, sharing the same space and time, anthropological analysis have historically been built on the Eurocentric denial of coevalness with peoples assumed to be "primitive," "non-modern" or "underdeveloped."

(geo)political problem draining our social energies in the 21st century. As a concept it helps us consider the "ambiguous identities" formed at the intersection between "race, nation, and class" (Balibar & Wallerstein, 1991) and postcolonial (trans)nationalism more generally. Sociological coevalness cannot be reduced merely to the recognition that all of humanity inhabits the same historical time and thus that modernity should take seriously the diverse localized histories of humans across the world; it should also entail the epistemological imperative of taking seriously the theorizing capabilities of those *impossible subjects* historically reduced to mere sources of raw data or raw materials[29] by Eurocentric knowledge and capitalist modernity. This dismissal is perhaps the best example of the symbolic violence that is often associated with Eurocentric nationalism, methodological or otherwise, which is a central feature of modern colonialism.

George Ciccariello-Maher (2010) expands on Bourdieu's concept of "symbolic violence" by providing a synthesis of one of Frantz Fanon's main theoretical contributions, and a guiding thread throughout the corpus of his work: the role that violence plays in the (un)making of the problem of the color line. Decolonial symbolic violence helps us understand the ambiguity that emerges from the founding violence of the modern nation-state in general but particularly in postcolonial contexts. The imposing of borders that define the modern state's sovereignty, the power to define who is and who is not entitled to citizenship rights, has always entailed a significant amount of actual and symbolic violence yet the reclaiming of the nation has also

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[29] "As everybody knows, in colonial days, conquered territories served as economic reservoirs from which metropolitan factories drew the resources they need. What is less well known is the fact that the economic linkage had a scientific counterpart, and that metropolitan scientific establishment also tapped raw materials from the colonies. For colonies were no less than immense strove of new information, gathered as raw data for transmission to metropolitan laboratories and research centres, the only establishments empowered and equipped to process them, interpret them, spin them out into hypotheses and theories, before integrating them into the ordered, comprehensive system of scientifically recognized and acknowledged data" (Hountoundji, 1997, p. 2).

allowed for revolutionary appropriation that characterizes postcolonial agency: "we find in Fanon's decolonial formulation of symbolic violence something of a diametric inversion of the sociologist's prison, one in which oxygen reigns and racialized-colonized subjects always find the symbolic violence which imprisons them to be within the reach of their fingertips, available for appropriation, to be wielded against its creators" (Ciccariello-Maher 2010, "Decolonizing Symbolic Violence," para. 4). Therefore, what I am calling postcolonial (trans)nationalism, its constitutive ambiguity expressed in the genealogies of postcolonial constitutionalism I explore in this dissertation, is the result of the tension between these conflicting forms of (geo)political symbolic violence, which in turn open up social structures such as the modern nation-state in an arena of struggle more than merely the inevitable iron cage of modern socio-political organization.

W.E.B Du Bois's rich, and arguably still under-theorized,[30] conceptualization of the problem of the color line continues to be of utmost significance in making sense of the multiple, yet interconnected, (geo)political borders through which transnational historical processes organize interlocking forms of inequality, which in turn translate into localized expressions of the structural violence of Eurocentric modernity and the coloniality of power (Quijano, 2000; Lugones, 2007, 2008). The localized, but nonetheless transnational practices, that surround "the managed violences of the borderlands" (Rosas, 2006) continue to justify the imperfect

[30] Elsewhere (Sánchez Cárdenas, 2012) I have argued that while nearly every sociological analysis having to do with race or racism in the U.S. quotes Du Bois's argument in "The Souls of Black Folk" (1903)—that the problem of the 20th century is the problem of the color line—they do so only as a conceptual metaphor and not as a historicizing theoretical framework that necessarily calls attention to (post)colonial power relations that are both transnational and geopolitical, as Du Bois himself makes clear in his own intellectual development and corpus of work.

terminology of center and periphery, first and Third World, which inasmuch as it continues to have explanatory purchase in an allegedly "globalized world" constitutes a sobering reminder of the ongoing (post)colonial inequalities that characterize the historical condition of racialized (trans)modernity (Dussel, 2002; Grosfoguel, 2005; Hesse, 2007) and dramatize the geopolitical significance of the lived experiences and embodied knowledges of subaltern communities forging (trans)national spaces and claiming (trans)national self-determination.

The global problem of the modern color line produces not only ambiguous but also interlocking, hybrid identities that range from the geopolitical dimension representing and embodying the "Third World" or "underdeveloped/developing nations" to the more localized phenomena of ethno-racial self-identification (not merely an individual level phenomenon, as the instruments to "self-identify" are still produced by the modern nation-state and individual identifications are always socially mediated). To understand the problem of the modern color line we need to overcome the methodological nationalism that often plagues cross-national comparisons without falling into methodological individualism or moving into an ahistorical, simply descriptive transnationalism. As I will show in the following chapters, postcolonial constitutionalism suggests the need for a methodological (trans)nationalism that both problematizes the nation-state container, by means of historicizing its multiple trajectories, while also exploring the subjectivities that result from national liberation struggles. In particular, the interconnected challenges and proposals mobilized in these ongoing[31] struggles to redraft

[31] If coloniality refers to the continuity of interlocking structures of power that have characterized colonialism (often invoked in terms of mutually constitutive inequalities of race, gender, sexuality and class), formal national liberation is one of "two stages that Fanon identifies in the decolonization process. For Fanon, the Manichean violence of the first (formal) stage—tinged as it is with racialism, intolerance, and the elimination of heterogeneity—is the necessary stepping-stone toward the creation of national identity, *just as* the black identity of which he was similarly

national constitutions shed light on the contradictory state institutional designs and policy making that have resulted in the postcolonial nation-state. As political scientist Donna Lee Van Cott already noted at the turn of the century when studying "the politics of diversity in Latin America" through the lens of Indigenous democratization struggles: "The highly symbolic act of constitution-making elevated a struggle for particular rights to the level of a discussion on the meaning of democracy and the nature of the state" (2000, p. 2). More than merely designing a legal framework, constitution-making becomes an act of theorizing the meaning of democracy and the state insofar as it potentially energizes a "revolutionary imagination" (Fernandes, 2014) capable of changing the daily practices that give meaning to collectively held (trans)national identities; it also fosters institutional innovation to reimagine the commons or community evoked by (trans)nationalism, as a spatial-temporal framework for historical sociological analysis.

Since its inception, sociology has been concerned with the global dimension of modern civilization, self-identifying as a product of the historical development of modernity itself. Yet it has too often perpetrated symbolic colonial violence (Fanon, 1961; Ciccariello-Maher, 2010), by reducing the majority of the world's histories to raw data to be theorized in the metropolitan centers, in line with the geopolitics of knowledge that defines the hierarchy of modern academia (Connell, 2007). This hierarchy is the direct result of academia's entanglements with imperialism (Steinmetz, 2013) and the coloniality of knowledge (Lander, 2002), and not of meritocracy—

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critical represented a necessary stepping-stone to self-respect and mutual recognition [...] the war of liberation creates the collective basis for national identity; it creates a national past and dreams of a national future. [...] It is only on the basis of this individual and collective identity that the second stage of more substantive decolonization—'that of the building up of the nation,' its revolutionary anode socialistic institutional transformation—can move forward, 'helped on by the existence of this cement which has been mixed with blood and anger'" (Ciccariello-Maher, 2010). In the concluding chapter I come back to this analysis in order to locate the Constituent Assembly processes I analyze in this historical framework to understand decolonization as the unfinished project of a truly global modernity.

only the most recent iteration of the white mythologies (Hesse, 2007) of Eurocentric modernity, color blind racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2006) and racial neoliberalism (Goldberg, 2009): "Indeed, neoliberalism is neither color-blind nor devoid of racism, even though it is predicated on its disavowal of racism, the attending view that the market constitutes the fairest space for upward mobility and that citizens who are entrepreneurial can reign supreme, unencumbered by the pettiness of race, ethnicity, and gender" (Dávila, 2008, p. 3). The renewed success of the (neo)liberal evaporation of these realities—their alleged "pettiness"—depends on the capacity of rendering invisible subaltern histories, based on the epistemic negation of some people's ability to have history (Wolf, 1982), effectively making them impossible subjects.

Therefore, more than a national comparison of the historical trajectories of the Ecuador and Venezuelan nations, nationalities and States, this dissertation aims at historicizing comparisons of interconnected, yet conceptually distinct, social struggles. I attempt to call into question the nation-state container as the natural or logical form to investigate modern human history as well as the related Eurocentric conceptual binaries on which this container depends. Along the lines of the argument made by Zine Magubane, I do not contend that there is anything essentially Eurocentric or misguided in comparative methods or the tradition of historical comparative sociology but that it is rather the classical "studied avoidance of any mention of colonialism" that allows us "to remain theoretically Eurocentric, despite reliance on comparative methods" (2005, p. 95).

Eurocentric knowledge practices disavow the historical continuities of (post)colonialism (Dussel, 1996; Lander, 2002; Magubane 2005; Connell 2007; Quijano, 2008) and the related processes by which it continues to structure, and be structured by, the inequalities of the

modern/colonial world-system by means of a distinguishable regime of governance that Peruvian sociologist Aníbal Quijano calls the coloniality of power. Even when dealing explicitly with race/ism (Hesse 2004, 2014), the central axis of the coloniality of power (see Quijano 1999, 2000, 2008; Lugones 1990, 2007, 2009), Eurocentric knowledge reinscribes the mythologies of methodological nationalism by performing, again and again, the constitutive Eurocentric myth of modernity (Dussel, 1995) or the "origin myths of European culture" in the words of Ann Stoler (1995, p. 14). Therefore, it cannot but overlook the subaltern subjectivities that both result from and continually inform the (geo)political praxis of grassroots postcolonial subjects. This disavowal is central to the drawing of (trans)national color lines, predicated in terms of either biological/intellectual or cultural/ethno-national differences, which have been rendered essential so as to "explain" existing geohistorical inequalities without referencing the *longue durée* of the power relations of racialized modernity and its ontological consequences (Hesse 2007) on capitalist global (re)structuring. The historical examinations of race as "an instrument to classify different peoples in the world—on a scale from superior to inferior" by conceptually turning historical differences from *Others* into "value differences (Mignolo 1995), time-space distances (Fabian 1983), and hierarchies that define all non-European humans as inferior ('savage,' 'primitive,' 'backward,' 'underdeveloped')" (Lander 2002, p. 246), thus, point to the different (post)colonial dimensions of these transnational entanglements that are often overlooked in transnationalism[32] studies and historical sociology more generally.

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[32] In my Special Field's paper (Sánchez Cárdenas, 2011), including its teaching component in the form of a syllabus, I made an assessment of the literature on transnationalism and argued that connecting the concept in sociological research with the historicizing imperative articulated in postcolonial studies could enrich the conceptual capacity of transnationalism by pointing us to the long-standing transnational praxis not only of migrant communities but particularly of indigenous communities; communities that have always overlapped but that too often are theorized as

The task of haunting the sociological imagination (Gordon, 2008) requires coming to terms with the founding "myth of modernity" that according to Enrique Dussel eclipses, rather than discovers, the Other(s)—who I theorize here as impossible[33] subjects. Along with its founding rational principle of emancipation and revolution, modernity has developed a myth to justify genocidal violence, namely against (post)colonial subjects (Grosfoguel, 2003) such as Afro-Amerindian peoples and nationalities. This origin myth dehistoricizes capitalist modernity as it overlooks what Marx theorized as "primitive accumulation" ([1867] 1887, Ch. 26), a historical process of accumulation by dispossession (Harvey 2003, 2008) that feminist scholar Silvia Federici (2004) argues is a continual necessity for the social reproduction of global capitalism, particularly by those who inhabit its margins: generally women in postcolonial societies and states. It achieves ideological legitimation by revictimizing (post)colonial or subaltern subjects, symbolically assigning them blame for the hardships confronted (e.g. failed states, failed families, etc.), as if they were failures of their own.

One of the most recent iterations of this myth of modernity is evoked when the loss, dispossession, and devaluation of countless lives is referred to as the "social cost of progress" (Galeano, 2006 [1992]) to justify endless wars around the world and the racial state of expendability (Márquez, 2014) of impoverished communities of color and (trans)national

profoundly distinct. More than a research finding, this seems to me an ethical and pedagogical imperative in order to open up dialogues between social science and other types of knowledge production, without claiming higher moral ground, which impoverishes our capacity to truly build a global sociological imagination.

[33] While related to and inspired by the masterful historical legal analysis of "Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America" that Mae M. Ngai entitled "Impossible Subjects" (2003), my conceptualization of subaltern impossibility is more related to the historical and conceptual problems that arise from Gayatri Spivak's seminal reflection around the question *Can the Subaltern Speak?* (1988). In other words it emphasizes the ambivalence that emerges from really-existing social subjects and (geo)political actors that are rendered impossible by dominant ways of "seeing like a state" (Scott, 1999), imagining national communities (Anderson, 1989), and politically organizing/mobilizing really-existing social subjects in profoundly unequal postcolonial societies.

colonial subjects (Grosfoguel, 2003), whose history has been the product of the same racist violence. In this vein, the problem with methodological nationalism and individualism is not only that it (re)produces analytical blind spots regarding transnational social structures that speak of global (geo)political designs and local histories (Mignolo, 2000) of oppression as well as herstories (Meagher, 1990; McCarthy, 1990) of emancipation. Perhaps most significantly, the (geo)political consequence of methodological nationalism lies in siding with the oppressive side of the historical development of modernity by providing rationalization for the ongoing victimization always entailed in interlocking forms of modern social inequality. This becomes clear when we understand methodological nationalism as the historical product of the reification of not only the modern formation of the nation-state but also of the structure of the so-called international community or the capitalist world-system, which has created different sorts of nations, states, and nationalities in the first place.

The imperative to historicize from a postcolonial perspective does not mean simply filling in the constitutive gaps of Eurocentric accounts of modernity. It is not enough to recognize that the very foundations of social science, and sociology in particular, are the product of the expansion of 19th century “old” colonialism and imperialism and that its development continues to be deeply tied to 20th century “neocolonialism” (Nkrumah, 1966) and “new imperialism” (Harvey, 2003). Such recognition also entails taking seriously the methodological tasks associated with learning from inter- and transdisciplinary work, which in turn require us to foster an epistemological humility in social scientific disciplines. Historical sociology still has important lessons to learn from Black Studies:

> scholarship on the African diaspora, for example [...] Methodologically [this scholarship problematizes] the act of drawing historical comparisons [...] by a search for historical parallels and a more thorough exploration of what Stuart Hall termed processes of 'transculturation' or 'cultural translation.' According to Hall, post-colonialism is a method of analysis that 'obliges us to re-read the very binary form in which the colonial encounter has for so long itself been represented. It obliges us to re-read the binaries as forms of transculturation, of cultural translation, destined to trouble the here/there cultural boundaries forever' (1996: 247)" (Magubane 2005, p. 102).

The bureaucratic field (Bourdieu, 1994) at work behind the institutions we invoke when speaking of the modern nation-state relies on its power to classify—thus reify—these cultural boundaries and therefore becomes an important obstacle to render legible the social subjects rendered *impossible* by modern legality and institutionalization (Crenshaw, 1989; Ngai, 2003; Rivera Cusicanqui, 2010; Nash, 2014).

In my first attempt to compare these latest constitutional redrafting experiences in Venezuela and Ecuador I coded the transcripts of debates of the Venezuelan and Ecuadorian Constituent Assemblies in relation to the guiding themes/topics I identified in specific (geo)political rituals where I carried out participant observation (see table 2). This led me to identify key historical junctures and the most contentious issues that came up during the last Venezuelan and Ecuadorian constituent process. I also interviewed Constituent Assembly representatives (see table 3), focusing on those most connected to Afro-Amerindian grassroots organizations, and reviewed audio recordings and video footage of interviews during the electoral campaign to elect the Constituent Assembly representatives. In the National Libraries of Caracas and Quito, I began to understand the crucial significance of Ann Laura Stoler's call to "move from archive-as-source to archive-as-subject" (2002, p. 87) so as to grapple with the

ghostly matters (Gordon, 2008) that reveal traditional archives as important results of the constitutive violence of colonial difference[34] (Bhabha, 1986; Mignolo, 2002; Stoler, 2010).

Table 3. Interviews with constituent assembly representatives

	Who	Roles and identifications	Date
Venezuela	Jorge Guerrero Veloz	Afro-Venezuelan organizer; Venezuelan consul in New Orleans under the Chávez administration.	April 15, 2010
	Atala Uriana	Wayuu poet; leader of MOPIVENE; First Minister of Environment in the Chávez administration; member of Constituent Assembly's Commission for Environment and Quality of life (elected not as an Indigenous representative but as representative of the state of Zulia.	October 12, 2012
	Vladimir Villegas	Journalist; elected representative to Constituent Assembly; served as ambassador to Brazil and Mexico but left the Chávez's administration in 2006 and founded an opposition party.	October 16, 2012
Ecuador	Mónica Chuji	Kichwa (from the Ecuadorian Amazon region) organizer; elected to the 2007-8 Constituent Assembly for President Correa's party AP; now organizes politically with the opposition to AP.	August 5, 2009
	Linda Machuca	Elected representative of Ecuadorian migrants living in the United States and North America; born in Ecuadorian province	September 12, 2010

[34] Colonial difference is in fact a concept better suited than *diversity* for the objective of rethinking and remaking modernity beyond methodological nationalism and individualism, with the objective to articulate a vision that confronts the structural dimensions of capitalist/modern inequalities. Since "differences are never just 'differences.' In knowing differences and particularities, we can better see the connections and commonalities because no border or boundary is ever complete or rigidly determining. The challenge is to see how differences allow us to explain the connections and border crossings better and more accurately, how specifying difference allows us to theorize universal concerns more fully" (Mohanty 2003, p. 505).

		of Azuay and resident of New Jersey. Now serves as Ecuadorian Consul in New York City.	
	Alexandra Ocles	Afro-Ecuadorian organizer; served as Constituent Assembly representative for the electoral alliance Ruptura 25/AP; currently serves as President of the National Assembly's Legislative Body for the Rights of Peoples and Nationalities.	January 16, 2014
Honduras	Miriam Miranda	Garifuna organizer, coordinator of OFRANEH; active in the political resistance to the coup against President Zelaya in 2009 as a response to his initiative to create a non-binding vote on the need to redraft the Honduran Constitution.	November 3, 2011

The epistemological skepticism cultivated in this methodological strategy pointed me to the need of both doing ethnography within and around official archives for clues (about what was missing, silenced, pushed to the margins) to alternative repositories or archives regarding key (geo)political rituals related to and cultural expressions referencing the Venezuelan and Ecuadorian constituent processes. From community newspapers to grassroots audiovisual production, I base a good portion of my analysis on audiovisual archives that have resulted in documentary films, musical and educational videos. Some of these materials arrived into my hands through face-to-face ethnographic engagements that led me to specific archival producers and/or guardians of audiovisual repositories. Alternatively, I have found out about documentary film projects through YouTube video archives and social media profiles created by (geo)political actors I engaged with during my time in Caracas, Venezuela and Quito, Ecuador. Trying to highlight the creative subjectivities that are found behind these alternative archives, my dissertation adds to recent efforts in postcolonial theory and transnational historical comparative

research to articulate a geopolitical and transnational reflexivity that creates an analytics and intellectual ethics in line with the possibilities hinted in postcolonial (trans)nationalism, as one expression of the emancipatory side of modernity. In this vein, more than comparing national cases and falling into one mode or another of methodological nationalism, I try to deploy a comparative-historical logic in order to underscore the different expressions and perspectives of the socio-political conflicts that marked these Constituent Assembly processes in addition to a political ethnographic account of anti-neoliberalism in contemporary Venezuela and Ecuador, while thinking through perspectives of the ongoing crisis of the modern nation-state in Latin/x America and the modern world more generally.

(Auto)ethnographic reflexivity and postcolonial theorizing: Decolonizing our sociological imagination through the praxis of impossible subjects

> […] an *autoethnographic text*, by which I mean a text in which people undertake to describe themselves in ways that engage with representations that others made of them. Thus if ethnographic texts are those in which European metropolitan subjects represent to themselves their others (usually their conquered others), autoethnographic texts are representations that the so-defined others construct *in response to* or in dialogue with those texts. Autoethnographic texts are not, then, what are usually thought of as autochthonous forms of expression or self-representation (as Andean *quipus* were). Rather they involve a selective collaboration with and appropriation of idioms of the metropolis or the conqueror. These are merged or infiltrated to varying degrees with indigenous idioms to create self-representations intended to intervene in metropolitan modes of understanding. Autoethnographic works are often addressed to both metropolitan audiences and the speaker's own community.
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> -Mary Louise Pratt, "Arts of the Contact Zone" (1991, p. 35).

The difference between a constitutional convention and a constituent assembly lies in the (geo)political gesture of "re-founding the nation" by invoking the constituent power of the people as opposed to merely reforming the rules and guidelines of already constituted institutions. Researching contemporary constituent processes in Latin America is, therefore, another historical opportunity to research how contentious definitions and embodiments of modern citizenship reveal its constitutive (im)possibilities, not merely in legal terms but also in

relation to emerging political cultures. How "citizenship, knowledge, and the limits of humanity" (Mignolo, 2006) are defined in different parts of the world may be historically contingent yet it is crucial to pay attention to the mechanisms through which these definitions structure very real, often devastating, effects on particular bodies and landscapes, affecting especially those communities that have crossed or been crossed by modern national borderlands (Anzaldúa, 1987) as well as those who never completely fit the modern/colonial design of the hyphenated nation-state and thus are pushed to its margins.

The different forms this violent historical marginalization take are the expression of the Eurocentric conceptions of citizenship and (neo)liberal humanism as well as human rights (Orford, 2007) and imperialist humanitarianism (Fassin, 2011). The univocal claim to sovereignty, with its implicit notions of rights and obligations within national borders is a central mechanism behind the violent marginalization that has characterized modern nation-states' relation to stateless subjects such as refugees and indigenous peoples living in voluntary isolation. Moreover, this marginalization has resulted in the silencing of insurgent (geo)political concepts related to the praxis of these subjects, which can help us rethink the central building block of modernity such as the nation-state.

While the paradigmatic example of the condition of statelessness is that of the "illegal alien [...] whose inclusion within the nation was [and is] simultaneously a social reality and a legal impossibility" (Ngai, 2004, p. 4) for the state, this paradox has also been experienced to varying degrees by women in general (Beauvoir, 1970; Mackinnon, 1983; Butler, 1990; Orloff, 1993; Federici, 2004), particularly queer/Third World[35] women of color (Sandoval, 1981, 2004;

[35] "What 'queer' and 'Third World' thus have in common is a politics of non- conformity and dissidence. Both arise

Moraga & Anzaldúa, 1983; Mohanty, 1986, 2003; Anzaldúa, 1990; Briggs, 1998; Richards, 2004; Kappor, 2015), and modernity's racialized peoples (Dussel, 1995; Mamdani, 1996, 2004; Mills, 1999; Márquez, 2014) more broadly. Therefore, it is unsurprising that it has been namely feminist and Afro-Amerindian peoples' social movement organizations that jump-started the demand to redraft national constitutions in order to gain not only historical symbolic recognition but also, as a result, to construct institutional mechanisms that ensure living conditions with dignity for all in the foreseeable future.

In order to account for the lived experiences of these subjects we have seen the emergence and consolidation of theoretical paradigms we now identify under the rubrics of subaltern studies (Spivak, 1988; Prakash, 1994; Coronil, 1994; Briggs, 1998), postcolonialism (Ghandi, 1998; Young, 2003; Bhambra, 2009; Go, 2013, 2016), intersectionality (Combahee River Collective, 1986; Crenshaw, 1989; Hill Collins, 1990; Roth, 2004; McCall 2005; Lugones, 2007, 2008), border-thinking (Anzaldúa, 1987, Mignolo, 2000; Grosfoguel, 2003) and, more recently, southern theories (Connell, 2007, 2014). More than pledging allegiance to one of these theoretical approaches, it is important to recognize the important insights they bring to guide our practices as social researchers more generally. Since navigating the power relations entailed in these subjects' impossibility does not only curtails our capacity to understand key objects of

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from a history of subjugation, attempting to resist and destabilise domination and the power of the status quo. Both oper- ate from the margins, questioning normalising power mechanisms and social order, while upholding a deviant, non-conformist and non-assimilationist politics. And both are associated with equally negative and disparaging discursive connotations – the one attempting to reclaim such meanings in favour of a radical politics, the other stemming from a (failed) progressive politics of development that now awaits recuperation" (Kapoor, 2015, p. 1612).

analysis regarding modernity (like the nation and the state) but can also make us complicit in reproducing this status quo.

The challenges posed by these theoretical paradigms are manifold but can be synthesized in two interrelated imperatives: 1) the ethical responsibility to seriously account for our positionality as researchers vis-à-vis the power relations structuring our practices, given that the sociology of knowledge and feminist standpoint theory have taught us that knowledge production is always situated (Stoetzler & Yuval-Davis, 2002); and 2) the (geo)political necessity to weave into our sociological analysis the historical trajectories of the collective research tools at our disposal as sociologists—tools that are the product of our professional training in a particular field of knowledge, which, just as other modes or systems of knowing, has had consequential impacts not only on the phenomena we seek to analyze but also on the modern constitution of the social world we (re)produce through our daily experiences.

While these imperatives have been increasingly recognized as guiding principles by social scientists across the globe (Connell, 2014b, p. 211), they are often reduced to a brief mention that seems to slip away when the actual empirical research takes place and is reported—both in terms of the fields and spaces as well as the temporalities and historicities we always study simultaneously, consciously or not. Moreover, such recognition is often perceived as a potentially paralyzing sociological guilt trip (Collins, 1997; Emirbayer, 2013) that will hinder rather than enrich the abilities of individual researchers (particularly those in training, as some mentors, advisors, and peers often warned me about). Yet individual researchers ought to understand,

> [w]hen I uncompromisingly examined the world to which I belonged, I could not but be aware that I necessarily fell under the scrutiny of my own analyses, and that I was providing instruments that could be turned against me. The image of the 'biter bit' simply designates one very effective form of reflexivity as I understand it—as a collective enterprise. (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 4)

This challenge of reflexivity as a collective enterprise has both epistemological and (geo)political implications, particularly if our objective is to vindicate historical sociology's commitment to remaking modernity (Adams et. al, 2006).

The sociological imagination (Mills, 1959) is a theoretical tool crucial for carrying out social scientific research. However, and perhaps most importantly, it is also an intellectual capacity necessary to navigate and survive daily modern life.[36] As C. Wright Mills noted many decades ago, it serves to theorize the intersection between history and biography in order to confront the (neo)liberal[37] tendency to privilege the individual as the fundamental variable to explain social phenomena. The uneasiness, confusion, frustration, anxiety and indifference that result from not being able to theorize or explain the interconnections between the personal troubles of our milieu and the public problems generated by complex transnational social structures (Ibid.) are in and of themselves social problems and individual issues. In fact, it is not merely difficult but impossible to grasp individually all the details and complexities of global

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[36] "The sociological imagination enables its possessor to understand the larger historical scene in terms of its meaning for the inner life and the external career of a variety of individuals. It enables him to take into account how individuals, in the welter of their daily experience, often become falsely conscious of their social positions. Within that welter, the framework of modern society is sought, and within that framework the psychologies of a variety of men and women are formulated. By such means the personal uneasiness of individuals is focused upon explicit troubles and the indifference of publics is transformed into involvement with public issues" (Mills, [1959] 2000, p. 4).

[37] While neoliberalism and liberalism as historical formations should be distinguished (as is particularly pressing in the Ecuadorian case that I discuss in chapter 3), there is an important ideological and affective continuity between them: the conceptual and (geo)political disposition to privilege the individual over collective agency, thus limiting the promise of the sociological imagination.

human history, and there is precisely where the emancipatory promise of sociology as a form of modern praxis lies: in the hope that our collective efforts to explain and navigate the overwhelming social forces that we ourselves and past generations have conjured[38] upon modern societies, which increasingly seem out of democratic control, translate into the social capacities for both collective/institutional and individual action, reflection, and theorizing.[39]

Working at the borderlands of disciplinary social sciences, D. Soyini Madison has argued that *Critical Ethnography* shows how "theory, when used as a mode of interpretation, *is* a method, yet it can be distinguished from method (and indeed take a back seat to method) when a set of *concrete actions* grounded by a specific scene are required to complete a task" (2005, p. 14). The sociological imagination should in fact help us to further theorize this relationship between research practice and theory; the simultaneity that marks this relationship reminds us to remain conscious of the histories and geographies on which the object and the subject of analysis become what they are through the interrelated practices they embody. To define the object of analysis then also entails the need to scrutinize the intersubjectivity at play between the researcher's interests and his or her professional training, disciplinary commitments and the, often unspoken, affects these generate. In this vein, reflexivity should be understood as that which mediates the relationship between theory (even if it is unconsciously held as common sense or doxa, to quote Bourdieu's theory of habitus) and method. When reflexivity is lacking, it

[38] "Modern bourgeois society [...] has conjured up such gigantic means of production and of exchange, is like the sorcerer who is no longer able to control the powers of the nether world whom he has called up by his spells" (Marx & Engels, 1848).
[39] This conceptual triad (action, reflection, theorizing) make up what Joshua Kahn Russell calls "the praxis wheel," an illustration of the principle "praxis makes perfect," part of the project "Beautiful Trouble: A Toolbox for Revolution" ("The Project," n.d.).

imposes a divorce that never quite materializes but that can be expressed in the artificial separation often drawn between "theoretical" and "empirical" research. This distinction produces the confusion generated by "theoreticism and methodologism" alike hindering the possibility for the intercultural translations necessary to fulfill the epistemological promise of "total social science" (Wacquant in Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 26-35) on a global scale.

In this vein I deploy postcolonial theories in this work as a method of interpretation—as a means to demonstrate how carrying out specific methodological tasks can enrich the critical impetus to engage in the practice of theorizing, rather than merely applying imported theoretical canons. Theorizing the (auto)ethnographic foundations of sociological attempts to historicize and conceptualize simultaneity (Portes et. al, 2007) as a central feature of modern societies is, therefore, a guiding objective of my work, both in empirical and theoretical terms.

More than a "multi-methods approach" per se, I have deployed an (auto)ethnographic[40] methodological strategy in order to contextualize historical comparative analysis of archival materials from primary[41] and secondary[42] sources relating to the process of challenging (neo)liberal globalization through the redrafting of national constitutions in the Americas since the dawn of the 21st century. In doing so I want to problematize the commonsense distinction between ethnography and autoethnography, which often categorizes the former as more

[40] I did not think of my research as autoethnographic during my fieldwork, mostly focused on archival research and semi-structured interviews. However, the analysis of the field notes I kept during the revision of primary archives revealed important meditations regarding not only my positionality vis-à-vis research subjects and "informants" but also regarding the affective transformation entailed in my professional training as an Ecuadorian sociologist in U.S. private universities.

[41] Constitutions, constituent assemblies' transcripts/reports, documents and cultural objects produced, collected, and distributed by social movements and grassroots organizations that have participated in constituent assembly processes since 1999 in Latin America.

[42] Media representations and scholarly analysis of the historical vindication of the need to redraft national constitutions in 21st century Latin America.

sociological inasmuch as it seems better protected from the trap of methodological individualism. I believe the confusion often comes from a tendency in contemporary sociology to see ethnography as merely a methodology for doing research without historicizing and theorizing the central role (auto)ethnography has played in the creation of the imperial gaze (Connell, 1997, p. 1523) or modern/colonial symbolic violence (Fanon, 1961; Bourdieu, 1977; Ciccariello-Mayer, 2010) that is constitutive of the nation-state container and the practices of social scientific research that privilege it as the unit of analysis.

Following Mary Louise Pratt's definition of an autoethnographic text (1994) and recognizing the centrality of both the methodological and theoretical foundations of classical sociology on ethnographic methods (Connell, 1997) and the coloniality of knowledge (Lander, 2002), I contend that our work, no matter what its specific object of study, is always enmeshed in (auto)ethnographic representational debates and struggles. Auto/ethnography cannot be understood without understanding its foundational role in colonial and imperialist (geo)politics (Said, 1979, 1993; Steinmetz, 2007)—regardless of whether social scientists and intellectuals are conscious or not of this historical fact. If we historicize (auto)ethnography as a research practice that, along with the comparative method,[43] has been central to sociological theorizing since its modern inception (Connell, 1997, 2007), we have to also recognize that (auto)ethnography is not merely a methodological approach for representing social reality but rather a constitutive epistemic conflict of modernity; a contradiction that forces us to make ethical and political

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[43] "Durkheim ([1895] 1982, p. 147) argued convincingly that this approach was the basis of the whole enterprise: 'Comparative sociology is not a particular branch of sociology; it is sociology itself, insofar as it ceases to be purely descriptive and aspires to account for facts.' The comparative method meant assembling examples of the particular social 'species' under study and examining their variations" (Connell 1997, p. 1523).

decisions having to do with the contentious geopolitics lurking behind modern knowledge production: questions about how we delimit the scope of our object of study, how we represent the subjects of our research and how we engage the contentious readings of sociological work and subjectivities that mark the affects and dispositions of the habitus or culture(s) of our times.

> Ours is a time of uneasiness and indifference—not yet formulated in such ways as to permit the work of reason and the play of sensibility. Instead of [personal] troubles—defined in terms of values and threats—there is often the misery of vague uneasiness; instead of explicit issues there is often merely the beat feeling that all is somehow not right. Neither the values threatened nor whatever threatens them has been stated; in short, they have not yet been carried to the point of decision. Much less have they been formulated as problems of social science" (Mills, [1959] 2000, p. 11).

Reflexivity should start at the outset of our formulation of social problems rather than as merely an afterthought for the final report of our research. Following Pierre Bourdieu, I understand *reflexivity* not merely as an individual task of introspection to which only the individual social researcher using ethnographic methods should be subjected. As a concept it should provide the tools for different sorts of readers to be able and motivated to further investigate—verify and elaborate on—the various dimensions of the power relations that are inevitably entangled with social scientific research and different modes or types of knowledge production more generally. These power relations (re)produce the affects and habituations embodied in social scientific research and by the social subjects and political actors it interacts with as a collective enterprise.

Thus, this dissertation does not only dedicate a section of this methodological chapter to the intersection between the biography of the author and the historical period and historical case studies I analyze comparatively, but rather I propose that no matter our specific research interest, all social scientists ought to contribute to "confront[ing] the dilemmas of participating in the

world [sociologists] study—a world that undergoes (real) historical change that can only be grasped using a (constructed) theoretical lens" (Burowoy, 2003, p. 645). Moreover, I will argue that postcolonial theories provide theoretical lenses not only to study those obviously *postcolonial* settings, often identified with signifiers such as "Third World" or "periphery" of the capitalist world-system or the euphemism "developing world," but also to weave a sort of historical reflexivity that can foster sociological research and theorizing through dialogues across the globe, privileging subaltern standpoints as they entail an epistemic privilege (Harding, 1991, 1992, 1998, 2009; Rolin, 2009) that cannot be overstated.

Between my travels to the National Libraries and other official archives in Caracas and Quito, it became clear to me that it was not only necessary to carry out interviews and participant observation in key social spaces explicitly related to the previously proposed object of analysis. It was increasingly clear that it was also crucial to understand how to foster transnational collaborative (auto)ethnographic engagements so as to multiply them across different types of borderlands and generate what Gloria Anzaldúa (1987, 2015) theorized as *nepantla*[44] and *autohistoria*[45]. Living in Chicago for my graduate training I had the opportunity to participate in

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[44] Originally a Nahuatl concept to describe an "in-between culture" that developed in the 16th century amidst the Spanish colonization and the resistance of the Mexica people, Gloria Anzaldúa theorized it at the turn of the century as a sort of praxis that generates an important subject: *nepantleras*. "Anzaldúa was a nepantlera—a term she coined to describe a unique type of vi- sionary cultural worker.1 Nepantleras are threshold people: they move within and among multiple, often conflicting, worlds and refuse to align themselves exclusively with any single individual, group, or belief system. […]for nepantleras use their movements among divergent worlds to develop innovative, potentially transformative perspectives" (Keating, 2006, p. 6).

[45] "Anzaldúa never offered a systematic definition of the concept of *autohistoria-teoría*, she did utilize the notion throughout her writings, interviews, lectures, and teaching (Keating 2008, 5–6). One brief discussion of the concept appears in a footnote in her 2002 essay "now let us shift … the path of conocimiento … inner works … public acts": "*Autohistoria* is a term I use to describe the genre of writing about one's personal and collective history using fictive elements, a sort of fictionalized autobiography or memoir; and autohistoria-teoría is a personal essay that theorizes" (Anzaldúa 2009b, 578).5 From this brief articulation, Anzaldúa appears to point to the manner in which the act of giving meaning to oneself provides a platform for collaborative forms of meaning-making" (Pitts, 2016, p. 357)

the first electoral process open to Ecuadorian migrants in the context of the 2007-2008 Constituent Assembly (see table 2) as well as in the founding of a community organization in Albany Park around the principle that "no human being is illegal!" (recognized in Art. 40 of the 2008 Ecuadorian Constitution). I was also able to interview Jorge Guerrero, an Afro-Venezuelan grassroots organizer and diplomat, who spoke to Northwestern and other Chicago-area university students (see Consulado de Venezuela en Chicago, 2010). Chilean-born, Chicago-raised hip-hop duo[46] Rebel Diaz would call my attention to the crucial importance of Latin/x praxis north of the U.S.-Mexico border and the memorialization of the (geo)politics south of/in the borderlands, particularly the Venezuelan Bolivarian revolution (see Rebel Diaz, March 23, 2013). During the 2011 May 1st march in Chicago I met the mother of the Rebel Diaz MCs, a Chilean activist exiled during the Pinochet neoliberal dictatorship (thus migrating in the opposite direction of the "Chicago boys" economists) who now organizes with *La Voz de los de Abajo*,[47] a community organization that was active in the transnational solidarity and resistance to the 2009 coup in Honduras (see chapter 3) alongside with other Latin/x organizers in Chicago who conceived these struggles against U.S. intervention in Latin America as part and parcel of ensuring the rights of migrant workers and families across the Americas.

In this vein, the transnational scope of my research project is not the result of an ambitious preconceived comparative-historical methodological strategy but rather the empirical

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[46] Initially Rebel Diaz also included Chicago native, Afro-Boricua emcee Lah Tere (see lahtere.com, 2015).
[47] This group was instrumental in contacting Garifuna leader Miriam Miranda who spoke about "Land, Murder, Violence, Human Rights and Race in Post-Coup Honduras" at a luncheon organized by CRLN (Chicago Religious Leadership Network on Latin America) that took place on Tuesday, November 3, 2011 at Old St. Patrick's Church (700 W. Adams, Chicago). There she spoke of the different social movement organizations in Honduras that make up the Frente Nacional de Resistencia Popular (FNRP), which this past May 1st repeated in a manifesto the need to re-found the Honduran state through a participatory constituent assembly "as a means to transform [unequal relations of power in] society."

yield of my attempt to document ethnographically unprecedented constitutional uses, procedures and provisions expressed in contemporary Venezuela and Ecuador. These include diasporic Afro-Amerindian challenges to the (geo)political economy of (anti)neoliberal (anti)racism in Venezuela discussed in relation to the historical struggles of Haitians and Chileans and the ongoing failure of the Chilean state to recognize the self-determination of the Mapuche indigenous nationality or redraft the Constitution inherited from the last military dictatorship (chapter 2); the (geo)political perspective of the concept of "plurinationality" (sanctioned in the Bolivian and Ecuadorian constitutions) as result of the historical patterns of grassroots (trans)national organization and mobilization of Andean and Amazonian indigenous communities, which in turn has been picked up in the rights claims of "transnational families" recognized as subjects of rights in the Ecuadorian Constitution and permanently invoked by Latin/x migrants and Afro-Amerindian peoples across the Americas, as evidenced by Afro-indigenous women's initiative to organize a grassroots constituent assembly in Honduras and by the Bolivian feminist initiative to write an alternative Feminist Constitution during the last constituent process in Bolivia (chapter 3); and an attempt to theorize comparatively the role of charismatic authority and leadership (following Weber) in the articulation of postcolonial anti-neoliberalism as well as to assess comparatively how the Ecuadorian and Venezuelan higher education reforms catalyzed by the last constituent processes reveal important differences between these (trans)national experiences (chapter 4).

While we can imagine many possible forms for collaborative (auto)ethnography, it has become increasingly clear that the richness of the results increases with the diversity of those collaborating (Buford May and Pattillo-McCoy, 2000, p. 85). Such *diversity* gains a new

significance when we imagine what ethnographic collaboration entails on a global scale (Buroway et. al, 2000). However, it can also be emptied of meaning if diversity is understood as an ahistorical formal technique or requirement to merely expand or increase the *diversity* of bodies (Berrey, 2015) and/or standpoints in segregated social spaces like historically white institutions. To avoid this (geo)political trap associated with neoliberal multiculturalism (Melamed, 2006) and racial neoliberalism (Goldberg, 2009) I frame my historical sociological analysis of contemporary Latin American (geo)politics through a narrative that makes explicit how my research interest in historicizing postcolonial (trans)nationalism has evolved in direct response to the calls for reflexivity[48] as necessary not only in (auto)ethnographic but all types of social scientific research inasmuch as they are inscribed in the modern geopolitics of knowledge production marked by the coloniality of knowledge. The "enfleshment"[49] of dominant knowledge production paradigms requires not only to take seriously the task to study our biographical selves as a precondition for emancipatory forms of sociological collaboration –what Marcus Hunter (2016) has called "small axe"[50] sociology- but also to historicize the complicity

[48] "Reflexivity is the process by which ethnographers recognize that they are 'part-and-parcel of the setting, context, and culture they are trying to understand and represent' and that they confront a variety of interpretive issues in 'showing the realities of the lived experiences of the observed settings' (Altheide & Johnson, 1994, p. 486)" (Buford May and Pattillo-McCoy, 2000, p. 84).

[49] "Enfleshment refers to the mutually constitutive (enfolding) of social structure and desire; that is, the dialectical relationship between the material organization of interiority and the cultural forms and modes of materiality we inhabit subjectively. This is similar to the process that De Certeau refers to as 'intextuation' in *The Practices ofEveryday Life* (1984) or the transformation of bodies into signifiers of state power and law. We are suggesting, however, that power is not simply oppressive but works relationally and that schooling promotes and provokes relations of power that are both normalizing and resistant" (McLaren, 1995, p. 47).

[50] Finding inspiration in Bob Marley's cultural praxis and drawing on a close reading of both on W.E.B Du Bois' life and founding contributions to modern sociology, Marcus Hunter defines *small axe sociology* as "the capacity of marginalized and oppressed peoples actions, attitudes, and histories to produce new knowledge and identify patterns and causes of inequality" (2016, para. 8).

with the oppressive epistemological status quo when we allow our presence and work to be engulfed in the mindless celebration of (neo)liberal diversity.

As I hope to make explicit in the following chapters, my comparative assessment of the (geo)political impact of the last Venezuelan and Ecuadorian constituent processes under democratically elected, self-proclaimed "revolutionary" governments in the last decades cannot be fully comprehended without critically considering my condition as a Latin/o American sociologist trained in USAmerican elite institutions of higher education. As an undergraduate student in Poughkeepsie, NY I was constantly reminded that I should be grateful for having the opportunity to have been accepted to Vassar College with a generous financial aid package granted to me in the name of diversity. This institutionalized reminder took on many forms but conflicted with the racializing experiences that eventually led me to identify as a "Latino" student –rather than the international student from Latin America, which initially was my "diversity" credential/compartment. My initial desire to become a sociologist in order to aid in *fixing* the social problems I had witnessed throughout my life in Ecuador and, later on, in the largest southern cities of Brazil, was distorted by a naïve understanding of the possibilities of scientific production that would somehow naturally flow out of institutional spaces committed various forms of social diversity. Moreover, such a desire was going to be totally transformed when I realized that Latin America was not a place I temporarily left behind in order to study its historical development from a distance, which is often associated with scientific objectivity. Being drawn to student organizing that followed in the steps of tradition of critical ethnic studies, particularly Latino/a Studies, I discovered I ambivalently embodied the conflicting (geo)political projects invoked (as well as silenced) when someone says "Latin America."

Once in graduate school, the demands associated with professionalization added a new layer of racialized and racializing anxieties, particularly salient every time someone would call on me to confirm their views on Latin America as if my scholarly expertise was obviously linked to my birthplace or somehow genetically inherited. The tokenizing diversity that makes scholars of color often appear as representatives of their entire underrepresented communities increasingly felt more excruciating as my research interest seemed to be confirm these homogenizing and exoticizing tendency. In order to navigate this truly paralyzing anxiety (while doing my research) I understood that part of the task at hand was to theorize how geographical spaces become embodied and postcolonial histories "enfleshed," in order to be able to not merely explain or understand specific social problems in a coherent fashion but also to be able to counter the constitutive impossibility of Eurocentric knowledge of modernity: its incapacity to understand that the only way to understand historical development and modern humanity is through the prism of subaltern experiences and knowledge, which cannot be merely *included* through an additive logic in existing paradigms but requires the critical subversion of the power relations that have led to ignoring, dismissing, and appropriating the contribution of impossible subjects in the making of modernity and the (geo)political project of emancipation we continue to associate with it.

The enfleshment of knowledge: Socio-legal mobilization, anti-neoliberal memorialization, and decolonial/revolutionary democratization.

If the state is what "binds," it is also clearly what can and does unbind. And if the state binds in the name of the nation, conjuring a certain version of the nation forcibly, if not powerfully, then it also unbinds, releases, expels, banishes.

-Judith Butler, "Who sings the nation-state?" (2010, p. 4-5)

The condemnation of neoliberalism as an obstacle to meaningful democratization of modern states and societies has been a guiding force in the push of subaltern (geo)political actors to redraft national constitutions in Latin America as well as Third World protest (see Rao, 2010, p. 154) more generally. Although it is reasonable to be suspicious of the grandiloquence of *neoliberalism* as a presentist concept that may obscure the *longue-durée* of modernity, subaltern resistance to modern coloniality invokes *neoliberalismo* to both denounce the exacerbation of long-standing inequalities as a result of neoliberal structural adjustment and to demand institutional transformation that not only brings the state back in (Evans et. al, 1985) but fundamentally vindicates the public realm as necessary to rethink the historical genesis and structure of the bureaucratic field (Bourdieu, 1994). The many hands[51] of modern Latin American states require careful and simultaneous consideration of the the modern socio-organizational formations that have (de)legitimized (post)neoliberal (geo)political regimes of authority/domination (Weber), which in turn cannot be understood away from related forms of global capitalist exploitation and oppression (Marx) as well as localized meaning making ritual practices (Durkheim) that either justify or challenge the existing power relations that structure existing social inequalities across the Americas. This dissertation seeks to historicize postcolonial constitutionalism as means to underscore the theoretical interventions behind the vindication of *protagonist/participatory democracy* and *endogenous development* as well as *universal* citizenship and *plurinationality* as (geo)political imperatives articulated in the 1999

[51] I first found the conceptual metaphor of "the many hands of the state" useful in a homonymous seminar that took place between May 14-17, 2014 at Neubauer Collegium for Culture and Society, affiliated with the University of Chicago. Throughout this work I refer to the specific contributions of the resulting edited volume (Morgan & Orloff, 2017) I draw on in this dissertation.

Venezuelan and 2008 Ecuadorian Constitutions respectively. The ambivalent embodiments of these concepts in specific instances of socio-legal mobilization and anti-neoliberal memorialization will be analyzed as key contemporary expressions of the contentious geopolitics that characterize the genealogy of postcolonial constitutionalism.

The increasingly salient demand to redraft national constitutions in Latin America reveals the political implications of the insight provided by Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble* when she argues that "the performative invocation of a nonhistorical 'before' becomes the foundational premise that guarantees a presocial ontology of persons who freely consent to be governed and, thereby, constitute the legitimacy of the social contract" ([1990] 2006, p. 4). The mechanisms through which grassroots participation was expanded in the last round of the democratic sanctioning of new national constitutions in Venezuela (1999), Ecuador (2008) and Bolivia (2009) entailed performative challenges to the reification of the modern social contract, historically codified in racialized (Mills, 1999; Goldberg, 2002), gendered and sexual (Pateman, 1988, 2016) terms. Moreover, their political and historical significance cannot be understood divorced from various traditions that:

> expose the contingent acts that create the appearance of a naturalistic necessity, a move which has been part of cultural critique at least since Marx, [and which] is a task that now takes on the added burden of showing how the very notion of the subject, intelligible only through its appearance as gendered, admits of possibilities that have been forcibly foreclosed by the various reifications of gender that have constituted its contingent ontologies. (Butler, 2006, p. 45-6)

This analysis of the most recent Venezuelan and Ecuadorian constituent assemblies explores them as (geo)political rituals where constituent acts of subaltern subjects exposed the "contingent acts that create the appearance of a naturalistic necessity" of a certain legal order and denounced

the various forms of inequality legal systems legitimize. Therefore, this dissertation is concerned theoretically with the racialized and gendered dimensions of the "contingent ontologies" that different reifications of gender and race produce as (geo)political systems of *class*ification as well as of identification, which in turn can be either functional or subversive to the reproduction of the power relations characteristic of capitalist globalization and its neoliberal gaze.

This recent call for Latin American nation-states to "refound" themselves and the (geo)political contradictions unfolding as a result are telling of the constitutive ambiguity of the modern state, "which is why it makes sense to see that at the core of this 'state'—that signifies both juridical and dispositional dimensions of life—is a certain tension produced between modes of being or mental states, temporary or provisional constellations of mind of one kind or another, and juridical and military complexes that govern how and where we may move, associate, work and speak" (Butler, 2010, p. 4). While it makes reference to the historical *institutionalization* of these juridical/military complexes, particularly during the neoliberal "armed retreat of the state" (Gill, 2000), this dissertation focuses on the consolidation of alternative modes of being or constellations of mind that have proliferated in the aftermath of recent constituent processes in Latin/x America, both within and at the margins of the logic of modern state.

The constitutive ambiguities of the modern nation-state can be navigated beyond Eurocentric binaries if we conceptualize modernity/coloniality in terms of the *enfleshment* of knowledge entailed in contentious (geo)political and pedagogical projects. While "embodied knowledge" can be misunderstood as essentially linked to a particular body politic or set of bodies, the enfleshment of knowledge underscores the geopolitical process through which localized histories and embodied experiences come together in the complex webs of human

history, which can be mapped through the particular junctures that point to *potentially* universal (geo)political interactions and the power relations that have curtailed such potential. "[P]ower must be seen in relation to the production of affective investment – i.e. to the production of knowledge as the object of desire. This demands a critical attentiveness to the sentience of human subject formation and the process by which meaning is transcoded through the body –a process we refer to as 'enfleshment'" (McLaren, 1995, p. 47). Therefore, besides the specific instances of socio-legal mobilization and anti-neoliberal memorialization that marked the last Venezuelan and Ecuadorian constituent assemblies, the following chapters analyze the epistemological and symbolic dimensions of what I call postcolonial (trans)nationalism and the (geo)political perils of "institutionalizing the margins" (Nash, 2014).

While students of Third World nationalism have noted the historical roots of its *internationalist* appeal in postcolonial liberation struggles (Prashad, 2007, p. 12; see also section 2 of chapter 3 of this dissertation), my conceptualization of postcolonial (trans)nationalism seeks to underline the necessity to historically ground discussions on transnationalism on these struggles, both when our objective is to overcome the limitations of methodological nationalism and when we want to understand the particularities of specific (geo)political processes such as the last Venezuela and and Ecuadorian constituent assemblies. If nationalism, among other things, can be understood as a symbolic mechanism to build geopolitical identification with the modern state, then the constitutive ambivalence of postcolonial (trans)nationalism underscores the significance of the symbolic recognition of impossible subjects in the newest constitutions of the Americas.

The importance of the symbolic dimension of redrafting a national constitution was invoked by Émile Durkheim in his late study of the *Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, where he wonders: "What basic difference is there between Christians' celebrating the principle dates of Christ's life [...] and a citizens' meeting commemorating the advent of a new moral charter or some other great event of national life?" ([1915] 1995, p. 429). What Durkheim calls a moral charter is a political constitution inasmuch as it does not only define how political institutions will function and relate to one another but also performs the constitutive ritual of defining and giving shared meaning to "us," a collective national identity that potentially forges different forms of (geo)political subjects. Hence it is important to analyze the most recent constituent assemblies as (geo)political rituals that not only produced new 21st century constitutions in Venezuela, Ecuador (and Bolivia) but that also underscored grassroots participation and alternative ways of embodying and deploying the fundamental right and freedom to assembly, increasingly under siege in our times (Osterweil, 2015; Butler, 2015, 2016). The capacity to (re)signify interlocking forms of social identification and state-sanctioned classification across the Americas hinted in these constituent assemblies seem to have entailed the capacity of different groups of racialized and gendered bodies to organize and mobilize during the last decade since there has been an unquestionable eruption in the formal (geo)political sphere of Venezuelan and Ecuadorian democracies of subjects whom have been historically marginalized and rendered expendable and, thus impossible, under the logic of the hyphenated modern nation-state.

While during my fieldwork I encountered plenty of indirect references to the importance of reflecting on the body and embodiment as a crucial social problem related to constitution-

making and (geo)political transformation. For example, the common practice among working class Venezuelans to carry the little blue copy of the Bolivarian Constitution in their pockets that the majority of Venezuelans received following the 1999 Constituent Assembly, or the expression used by many informants, both in Ecuador and Venezuela, regarding the need for new constitutions to "become flesh" (*hacerse carne*) in order to seize the potential of the novel concepts and provisions they introduced. However, it was only after the death of President Hugo Chávez in 2013 that I was forced to go back to explicitly confront the analytical challenges of the knowledge. Not only because of the overwhelming number of bodies (see ABCnews.com, 2013) that for seven days of mourning waited to say goodbye to the deceased body of a remarkable leader in a funeral attended by over four dozen heads of state but particularly because of the many cultural expressions that memorialized President Chávez's legacy in Venezuela and around the world. Upon his untimely death, as a result of a particularly aggressive form of cancer, these cultural expressions more explicitly treated the body as a central element to both understand and transform existing social relations of power by connecting concerns between the faith and sacrifice of Hugo Chávez's body with those of impoverished "masses" around the world that had been inspired by his self-proclaimed Bolivarian Revolution.

A revealing example comes from the praxis of Intifada, a Puerto Rican MC who titled his hip hop tribute to President Chávez "¡Vamos! Baquiné pa'l Comandante" (2013). The videoclip is filmed in 23 de Enero, a *barrio* of Caracas with a militant revolutionary history where I carried out interviews during January 2008 and April 2014 (discussed in chapter 2). *Baquiné* is the term used by Puerto Ricans[52] for the music that commonly accompanies the Afro-Amerindian

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[52] The ritual practices surrounding the wake of an infant are commonly known across the Spanish-speaking

diasporic practice of a festive wake following the death of a child. The social importance of this ritual to confront the painful reality of high child mortality (see Sheper-Hugues, 1989) and the daily violence of the coloniality of power more generally underscores the importance of recognizing the humbling limits of science as a modern system of knowledge production. In his song, Intifada declares: “Some hear my verses / but they don’t put their ears on the line. / It is not that I disrespect theory my friends / the fact is that all science is mere artifice / when confronted with the tears shed by the masses”[53] (2013, min 3:50-3:58, author’s translation). Several books appear in the videoclip (ranging from Angela Davis’ *Autobiography* at min 2:10 to Jules Verne’s *The Mighty Orinoco* at min 2:20 to former Chilean President Salvador Allende’s addresses during his short-lived democratic socialist government at min 2:42), where the singer appears either as a school teacher in a class full of young students or in front of street murals covered with stencils used to memorialize the late Venezuelan President with the phrase “*Juntos Somos Chávez*”. In this way Intifada suggests that scientific theorizing should be subordinated or take a backseat to learning from embodied forms of knowledge that often overwhelm the scientific method, in this case symbolized by the tears shed for the late Venezuelan President.

The festive wake chant by Intifada celebrates the call to multiply by distributing the ripe fruit of the revolutionary social struggles that were embodied by Hugo Chávez’s leadership; in doing so, it points to children, to the next generations, who would conceive of citizenship beyond

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Americas as *velorio de angelito* but also takes regionally specific names that reveal its Indigenous and African diasporic roots. In Colombia and Ecuador, the ritual takes the name of *chigualo*, and in Caribbean nations like the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Jamaica and Cuba it is known as *baquiní* and in Puerto Rico as *baquiné* (see Bantulá Janot & Payá Rico, 2015, p. 349-350).

[53] “algunos oyen mi verso / pero no han puesto el oído. / No desprecio la teoría compañeros / lo que pasa es que toda ciencia es artificio / frente al llanto de las masas”

the citizen/alien dichotomy: "I got my citizenship / don't call me a foreigner / I got it from the kids of 23 de Enero. / Call me a *nationalist* / I am guilty as charged / since my cry is made for war and my tongue is like a sabre"[54] (min 4:03-4:14). In Intifada's performance of postcolonial (trans)nationalism *citizenship* becomes a concept that weaves diverse (geo)political attachments with Latin/x American grassroots struggles. Nationalism, rather than signifying uninational allegiance appears as an anti-colonial challenge to destroy imperialist dependency in order to foster interdependence or solidarity among those confronting structural colonial/modern limitations to meaningful democratization. More important than a coherent synthesis of its seemingly contradictory impulses, postcolonial (trans)nationalism articulates diverse (geo)political projects unified by their grounding on the principle of subaltern self-determination.

The demand to redraft national constitutions in the 21st century opens up the possibility of exploring competing conceptions of citizenship through the analysis of novel rights claims that seem to fall beyond the conceptual and historical realm of modern liberal conception of *citizenship* itself. In the following chapters, I discuss the intersections between the struggles of Afro-Amerindians for constitutional recognition of collective rights and self-determination, feminist struggles to ensure sexual and reproductive rights and migrants' vindication that "no human being is illegal" as expression of the renewed significance of theorizing "Latin/x America" as a democratizing (geo)political project. While initially this research project proposed to explore the transnational dimension of this project through the prism of the counter-hegemonic regionalism institutionalized in initiatives like ALBA (Harris & Azi, 2009; Muhr,

[54] "tengo mi ciudadanía / no me llames extranjero / me la dieron los chamitos en el 23 de Enero / digánme 'nacionalista' / de ese crímen soy culpable / porque mi grito es de guerra y mi lengua es como un sable"

2010) and UNASUR (Briceño-Ruiz & Rivero Hoffman, 2015), during the course of my research I decided to analyze it in relation to grassroots cultural expressions and transnational dialogues, which allow us to explore not merely the institutional and structural perspectives of self-proclaimed "revolutionary" governments and democratizing processes more generally but also the consolidation of new (geo)political (counter)cultures that can provide a foundation and horizon for truly decolonizing democratization. In this vein, I will argue that one of the most important theoretical contributions of the latest constituent assembly processes in the region has been the critical conceptual decoupling of "democracy" and "free market" that has characterized neoliberalism as a hegemonic intellectual and (geo)political project while vindicating the need to make democratization *revolutionary* inasmuch as it commits to the imperative of decolonization, following the tradition of anti-colonial struggles (waged both against both global and internal forms of colonialism) and the desires invoked when we invoke the paradigm of *post*colonialism.

The chapters of this dissertation

Having discussed the theoretical preoccupations, methodological considerations, and epistemological foundations of this dissertation in this introductory chapter, chapters two and three provide historical accounts of two constituent processes while pointing to the ongoing relevance of the (geo)political demand to redraft national constitutions in Latin/x America. In chapter two, I discuss the Venezuelan Bolivarian Revolution and its gesture towards the re-founding of the republic in order to catalyze subaltern protagonist participation in contemporary (geo)politics as well as to overcome neoliberalism as an obstacle to meaningful democratization. Hugo Chávez's charismatic leadership has marked Latin/x America as a whole, particularly his

uncompromising pursuit of the historical Bolivarian ideal of Latin American regional integration as necessary for continuing with the ongoing task of decolonization. I explore the historical narratives of pre-constituent, constituent, and post-constituent moments or temporalities through which many Venezuelans often make sense of the emergence of Chavismo as a mode of (geo)political identification—which I argue is born out of the critique of racial neoliberalism, most clearly symbolized in the memorialization of the popular uprisings of the *Caracazo* in 1989. To do so, chapter two moves back and forth between the official discourse mobilized by the charismatic leadership of President Hugo Chávez and grassroots (counter)cultural production that engages with and trans-forms the constitutional provisions approved in the 1999 ANC and the postcolonial historicity expressed in Chávez's pedagogical interventions more generally. In this vein, I discuss the important references to Haitian revolutionary history in Chavista discourse and subaltern memorialization as well as the growing push by social movement organizations to redraft the national constitution in Chile, often showcased as the success story of neoliberal structural adjustment. Moreover, chapter two shows how these geo-historical references appeared in the different archival and ethnographic materials analyzed to historicize the transnational significance of the contentious (geo)politics that unfolded around the unprecedented referenda deployed to draft the 1999 Bolivarian Constitution.

Chapter three turns to the case of the redrafting of the Ecuadorian Constitution under the charismatic leadership of economist Rafael Correa and his Citizens' Revolution. It explores the intersections between critiques of modern racism and the gendered effects of neoliberal structural adjustment, which converged in the Ecuadorian ANC and particularly in the contentious conceptualization of innovative conceptions such as *plurinationality* and universal citizenship,

which seek to radically re-think diversity beyond neoliberal multiculturalism's tendency toward compartmentalization. Despite the attempt to structure chapter three using similar temporalities as in chapter two (pre-constituent, constitutent, post-constituent), in fact most Ecuadorians understand the last "constituent process" as more constrained to the debates that took place during the National Constituent Assembly itself than is the case in Venezuela. This difference led me to focus[55] on the most contentious issues that were mobilized by the opposition in their failed attempt to defeat the final draft of the 2008 Montecristi Constitution in the polls. In order to contextualize the possibilities and shortcomings of the Ecuadorian constituent process, I compare it with the ongoing struggle to redraft the Honduran Constitution, which has led Afro-Amerindian social movements to organize grassroots "constituent assemblies" to resist increasing state violence against their leaders as well as energize anti-neoliberal resistance. I conclude chapter three by contrasting some of the provisions of the 2008 Ecuadorian Constitution with the grassroots "Feminist Constitution" that was drafted in Bolivia in parallel to their official Constituent Assembly process, the third case of 21st century postcolonial constitutionalism in the Americas. This subaltern constitution perhaps most clearly articulates the patent limitations of the modern nation-state to include the impossible (geo)political demands that come out of subaltern democratization struggles.

Chapter four builds on the historicizing accounts of the previous two chapters in order to provide a comparative analysis of the Venezuelan and Ecuadorian constituent processes. The first section of the chapter contrasts the social origins and (geo)political performances embodied

[55] These debates are also the focus of the documentary "Nariz del Diablo" (Yépez, 2012), which is one of the few cultural productions I was able to find that explicitly references this Ecuadorian constituent process. I was able to not only interview the director but also to review the visual archive from which the documentary was produced.

in the charismatic leadership of late Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez and Ecuadorian President Rafael Correa by referring to two markedly different pedagogical approaches. The second section takes the comparison to an institutional level by exploring higher education reform in Ecuador and Venezuela in order to assess the impact of the postneoliberal premises vindicated in the new constitutions of these Latin American nations on the crucial right to education. Finally, these two levels of comparative analysis are used to theorize what can be thought as two different articulations of the relationship between revolution and democratization which emerge from the contentious contemporary (geo)politics of these two Andean nations and Latin/x America more generally: namely the more limited project of institutionalizing "democratic revolutions" or the imperative of consolidating social forces capable of sustaining "revolutionary democratization" projects with the explicit aim of decolonization.

Chapter five concludes by highlighting the need to avoid overstating the proposed comparisons in order not to fall into the trap of methodological nationalism. If we understand the (geo)political demand to redraft national constitutions as symptomatic of the modern nation-state, the key building block of capitalist modernity, then the possibilities and limitations that appear from serious consideration of contemporary Venezuelan, Ecuadorian, and Latin/x American (geo)politics point to the ontoepistemological challenge of institutionalizing the margins. In other words, this dissertation concludes by arguing that 21st century Latin/x American postcolonial constitutionalism has produced more than simply legal frameworks; it has reenergized the question of subaltern impossible subjectivities as the necessary departure point to remake modernity and rethink the sociological and revolutionary imaginations as tools to reclaim modern emancipatory project(s), contemporary anti-imperialist *cimarrones* in the name and

image of the Black fugitivity (Hesse, 2014b) inaugurated by the maroon precursors that first forged both Haiti and Latin/x America as emancipatory (geo)political horizons in the (re)making of modernity.

Chapter 2

The modern constitution of the problem of the color line: Democratization struggles against racial neoliberalism in Venezuela (and Chile and Haiti)

It is my purpose to consider with you the problem of the color line, not simply as a national and personal question but rather in its larger world aspect in time and space.

-W.E.B Du Bois, *The Present Outlook for the Dark Races of Mankind* ([1900] 2014, p. 111)

No hay individualidades todo poderosas que puedan torcer el rumbo de la historia: absolutamente falso ese concepto. No hay caudillos beneméritos y plenipotenciarios que puedan señalar y conducir y hacer el camino de los pueblos, mentira. Se trata de una verdadera revolución y de un pueblo que la galopa, eso sí es verdad, y este acto de hoy, esta primera sesión de la soberanísima Asamblea Nacional Constituyente a la cual tengo la inmensa honra de asistir, y agradezco a ustedes su invitación; esta instalación de la Asamblea Constituyente es un acto revolucionario.[56]

-Hugo Chávez Frías, (Address during the inauguration of the Constituent Assembly, Caracas, Venezuela, 8/05/1999)

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[56] "There is no almighty individualities that can twist the path of history: this is an absolutely false concept. There is no distinguished and plenipotentiary leader that can point to and conduct and forge the journey of the peoples, all lies. This is an actual revolution and a people galloping it, this is the truth, and this act today, this first session of the very sovereign National Constituent Assembly, in which I have the immense honor of participating, thanking you for the invitation; this installation of the Constituent Assembly is a revolutionary act" (author's translation)

The global problem of the color line (Du Bois, [1900] 2014) often manifests on two different levels, which I use in this chapter to organize my historical analysis and research findings regarding the most recent Venezuelan constituent process. The most basic level comprises the antiracist challenges to localized social forces and embodied affects[57] structuring the modern habitus[58] and its dispositions to reproduce daily experiences of social stratification—sociological shorthand for the interlocking inequalities, articulated simultaneously at the local, national, regional, and global scales, which structure the ongoing violence over racialized and gendered bodies and landscapes; bodies and landscapes that are produced by what Karl Marx theorized as primitive accumulation of capital, which far from being a previous phase of capitalist development constitutes one of its most important mechanism for the reproduction of capitalist societies. On the other hand, these challenges and inequalities are necessarily structured by the transnational dimension that determines the (geo)political positionality[59] of

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[57] Drawing on Spinoza, Deleuze, and Massumi, Jon Beasley-Murray has argued that "an affect is the index of the potency of a body or an encounter between bodies. The more potency a body has, the more affectivity; in other words, the more capacity to affect and be affected. Therefore, encounters between bodies can be divided between good and bad: the good ones increase the potency in a body and are characterized by the creation of positive affects (like happiness); the bad ones decrease potency in the body and thus are characterized by the creation of negative affects (like sadness). [...] Deleuze makes an important distinction between affect and emotion: while emotions are private and personal, an affect is a collective impersonal intensity" (Fernández-Savater, 2015, author's translation).

[58] "... habitus is a concept I borrow from Bourdieu. We can think of habitus as 'congealed' or 'frozen' affects. These are quotidian, routine encounters of bodies on which most of the time we do not spare a conscious thought, to the extent that they occur almost unconsciously. Yet, despite or because of this, habitus has a potency of its own. Thus we can also distinguish between positive habitus (for example, those who help us constitute what is common to all, community) and negative habitus (the self-destructive, that which subtracts potency)" (Ibid.)

[59] Perhaps a better concept for "geopolitical positionality" is Bourdieu's notion of symbolic capital as developed by Puerto Rican sociologist Ramon Grosfoguel: "Bourdieu developed the concept of 'symbolic capital' for microsocial analysis, but the term is also a powerful tool when used to conceptualize symbolic strategies at a global scale related to the 'manufacturing of showcases.' [....] Since the 1950s, the United states has show-cased several peripheral countries where communist regimes represented a challenge [...] Compared to other countries, all of these showcases received disproportionately large sums of U.S. foreign aid, favorable conditions for economic growth such as flexible terms to repay their debts, special tariff agreements that made commodities produced in these areas accessible to the metropolitan markets, and/or technological transfers. [...] they served a crucial role in the production of an ideological hegemony over Third World peoples in favor of developmentalist programs. Developmentalist ideology is a crucial constitutive element in the hegemony of the 'West'; the capitalist world-

(trans)nationally imagined communities vis-à-vis other nation-states as the only modern purveyors of formal citizenship rights. In this chapter I attempt to characterize the most recent iteration of the global problem of the color line (racial neoliberalism) by connecting its institutional manifestations to the history of the Venezuelan Constituent Assembly process and specific expressions of grassroots cultural creativity. Contrasting the racist representations of President Hugo Chávez Frías and his supporters, who identify as *Chavistas* and/or *revolucionarios*, with the proliferation of antiracist praxis carried out by social movement organizations, this chapter thus explores the historical significance of the process that resulted in the 1999 Bolivarian Constitution and the post-constituent struggles to implement its provisions on the basis of the promise to ever expand grassroots, popular or subaltern participation.

As we will see in the case of the Bolivarian revolution in Venezuela it is important to reflect on how these levels of analysis simultaneously emerge and are absent in debates regarding postcolonial constitutionalism and are expressed in different yet interconnected visions and aspirations enacted in specific instances of anti-neoliberal struggles. One of the objectives of this chapter is to show how the memorialization of specific instances, events or chapters of postcolonial revolutions re-members the transnational connections between ongoing (geo)political projects like the one encoded in the Bolivarian Constitution in Venezuela and others in recent Latin/x American and Third World history more generally. In the following sections I discuss how my analysis of the (official and unofficial) archives surrounding the drafting of the Venezuelan Constitution of 1999 drew me also to Haiti and Chile as important

system gains credibility by developing a few successful peripheral cases. These are civilizational and cultural strategies to gain consent and to demonstrate the 'superiority' of the 'West'" (2003, p. 3).

references in the study of postcolonial struggles to re-constitute nations and states, as well as the contemporary condition embodied in the neoliberal persistence of coloniality.

If the Haitian Revolution inaugurated the 19th century for postcolonial American revolutionary history and "might be said to mark the initiation also of antiracist[60] movements" (Goldberg 2009, p. 10) more generally, the abruptly interrupted Chilean attempt to build democratic socialism with the election of Dr. Salvador Allende as president in 1970 can be considered a premature closure for the 20th century revolutionary[61] hopes for democratic state building in Latin America. On September 11, 1973 the infamous Pinochet military dictatorship inaugurated one of the most repressive regimes in modern Latin American history with the bombing of the Presidential Palace of La Moneda in Santiago; an iconic postcard of the genesis of neoliberalism (Dorfman et al., 2003; Harvey, 2005) in a country that since then has been in the vanguard of neoliberal shock doctrine (Klein, 2007; Winterbottom & Whitecross, 2009) and public policy schemes since then.

Since 1973 Chile has become the social laboratory for neoliberal modernization under the intellectual tutelage of the (in)famous Chicago Boys (Valdés, 1995; Subversive Action Films, 2010; Dalgic, 2012): economists trained at the University of Chicago by scholars like Milton

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[60] This argument is made by Goldberg in order to distinguish conceptually and historically between antiracialism and antiracism: "Antiracialism is to take a stand, instrumental or institutional, against a concept, a name, a category, a categorizing. It does not involve standing (up) against (a set of) conditions of being or living, as it is not always clear what those conditions might in fact be for which race is considered to stand as a sort of shorthand. [...]Antiracism, by contrast, conjures a stance against an imposed condition, or a set of conditions, an explicit refusal or a living of one's life in such a way one refuses the imposition, whether one is a member of the subjugated population or the subjugating one. [...]The Haitian Revolution (1791-1803) seeking independence from enslaving French rule might be said to mark the initiation also of antiracist movements" (2009, p. 10)

[61] The successful Cuban Revolution in 1959 fueled revolutionary struggles across the Americas, and the U.S.-backed Southern Cone military dictatorships of the second half the 20th century were a direct response to this revolutionary impulse in the context of the so-called Cold War. Salvador Allende's untimely death on September 11, 1973, is said to have found him alone with an AK-47 gifted to him by Fidel Castro during his November 1971 visit to Chile, as the presidential palace "La Moneda" was being bombarded by the Chilean military.

Friedman, and who gave impulse to the imperialist diffusion[62] of what later would be known as the "Washington Consensus" (Williamson, 1993, 2007; Panizza, 2009). Policies such as the privatization of public goods and services, trade liberalization and the flexibilization of labor and environmental protections became staples of the "consensus" imposed throughout the world by multilateral institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank in the form of "structural adjustment programs" (SAPs). Showcased as a success story of neoliberal development, Chile is still governed under a constitution drafted by the Pinochet dictatorship (although the regime was formally ended in a 1988 referendum[63] followed by numerous constitutional reforms) and that fails to recognize Afro-Amerindian peoples like the Mapuche,[64] who are still criminalized for resisting the Chilean sovereignty claims under the logic of settler colonialism. This legacy is but one of many indicators that makes Chilean society one of the most unequal[65] in the Americas, the most unequal region of the world, despite a positive performance in terms of poverty reduction and economic growth during the last decades.

The 21st century opened with new revolutionary perspectives to overcome neoliberalism across the Americas through grassroots resistance, emerging in Venezuela as early as 1989 and

[62] It is ironic that trade liberalization and privatization is often associated with freedom and democracy (Friedman, Von Hayek and others), while Latin American history teaches us that really existing neoliberal reforms require "shock doctrines" (Klein, 2007; Winterbottom and Whitecross, 2009) inaugurated under the auspices of one of the bloodiest dictatorships of 20th century Latin America.

[63] The Chilean 1988 Referendum has been memorialized in the 2012 film "No" by director Pablo Larraín.

[64] "Per the Nueva Imperial Agreement, in 1991 President Aylwin sent to Congress his proposal to amend the first article of the Constitution in order to recognize the 'indigenous peoples' that form part of the nation. However, in congressional discussions and consultations with constitutional experts, the amendment was opposed on the grounds that it violated the Constitution, in which the concept of 'people' is univocal. It was thus argued that two or more peoples cannot fit into the idea of the Chilean nation (Bengoa 1999). As a result, the amendment project was archived. It was revived in 1999, and the reform came to a vote in the House of Deputies in 2000. [...] the reform failed to garner the two-thirds majority necessary for it to pass. Several Mapuche movement actors depicted the situation as evidence of continuing racism in Chile" (Richards, 2004, p. 136).

[65] Reporting on the latest statistics analyzed by the World Bank, the BBC points to Chile as the sixth most unequal country in Latin America and third in South America on the basis of Gini coefficients (Justo, 2016).

sustained throughout the 1990s across Latin America, eventually leading to the election of Hugo Chávez Frías on December 6, 1998. President Chávez's election inaugurated the electoral "turn to the left" in the region and became the first concrete response to the ongoing (geo)political demand to redraft national constitutions through participatory mechanisms with the explicit aim of reversing neoliberal regimes and foreign policy recipes. The presidential election of Hugo Chávez in Venezuela—and then of Evo Morales Ayma in Bolivia in 2005 and Rafael Correa Delgado in Ecuador in 2007—based on a campaign to "refound the nation" through a participatory constituent assembly, denouncing the perverse historical tendency towards racialized and gendered exclusions common in modern constitutionalism across the Americas.[66] Starting with Venezuela in 1999, we see the electoral emergence of renewed critiques of neoliberalism and sociopolitical subjectivities that challenged the hegemonic conceptions of democracy conceived as both an ideal type of (geo)political regime and as the economic and cultural basis for individual and collective rights demanded by Latin/xs in the Americas over the last four decades. Moreover, the Venezuelan case underlines the importance of confronting simultaneously the symbolic (political and cultural) and material (economic and social) dimensions of the marginalization and impoverishment often hidden behind the Eurocentric historicity of modern constitutionalism.

In this chapter I discuss archival and ethnographic evidence of how the Venezuelan Constituent Assembly of 1999 is both the product, and further catalyst, of transnational (geo)political struggles and grassroots organization that cannot be understood without

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[66] In "the history of all America, including the United States. [...] All first constitutions, without exception, left out women, the indigenous, blacks, and the poor in general" (Galeano 2006).

understanding the ongoing significance of what one of the founders of modern sociology, W.E.B Du Bois (Morris, 2015) theorizes throughout his work as the problem of our times: the quintessentially modern/colonial problem of the color line. I analyze how the social conflicts often imputed to the allegedly polarizing tendencies of Chávez "populist" or charismatic leadership are better explained in relation to the "the political economy of racism" (Herrera Salas, 2005). From the patently racist representations of Hugo Chávez Frías and his supporters after he was first elected to the unprecedented electoral success his initiatives enjoyed until his last presidential reelection in October 2012, the problem of the color line serves to theorize the "class/race polarization in Venezuela and the electoral success of Hugo Chávez" (Cannon, 2008) and assess the utility of concepts such as "ethnopopulism" (Duno Gottberg, 2011) in order to understand the relationships being built among those who self-identify as *Chavistas*.

The first section of this chapter narrates how the research question on "constituent processes" emerged out of the first round of ethnographic engagements I experienced in Caracas during January 2008. It draws historicizing comparisons between official and grassroots representations mobilized in the memorialization of the Bolivarian Revolution as a historical catalyst of (geo)political creativity across the Americas and the world. Such creativity is manifested transnationally both at the level of the organizational capacity of Afro-Amerindian social movement organizations as well as in expressive cultures that I encountered during both my archival and ethnographic research[67] in Caracas, Venezuela, but also in global cities (Sassen,

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[67] As discussed in chapter one, I follow the call to do ethnography at the archive in order to look for the silences and ghosts of official (post)colonial archives like those found in government institutions and national libraries. In this case I started by trying to identify key historical references in the transcripts of the debates of the Constituent Assembly but opted to privilege grassroots memorialization of (trans)national struggles that particular geopolitical actors associate with the contemporary struggles of the Bolivarian Constitution of Venezuela.

1995, 1998, 2008) like Chicago, where I was able to grasp the transnational reach of Afro-Amerindian praxis. I compare Indigenous and Afro-Venezuelan social movement organization and participation in the Venezuelan constituent process and in diasporic artistic expressions[68] like the four elements of Hip Hop (Fernandes 2010, 2011) to attempt to historically contextualize the process leading to, and following, the redrafting of the Venezuelan Constitution in 1999.

In the second section I comparatively analyze the negative representations that circulated in international media outlets following the democratic election of Hugo Chávez Frías in Venezuela on December 6, 1998 and Dr. Salvador Allende in Chile on September 4, 1970. Drawing on the work of Latin/x studies scholars Frances Aparicio and Susana Chávez-Silverman (1997), I will argue that these representations not only have (geo)political consequences both for Venezuelans and Latin/x Americans fighting racism both at home and abroad; but also the simultaneous mobilization of counter-hegemonic collective representations to (re)claim collective self-determination through (trans)national sovereignty has resulted in institutional and discursive innovations, which I witnessed particularly around (geo)political rituals like the last presidential reelection of Chávez in October 2012. During my second month-long visit to Caracas on this momentous occasion, the centrality of musical expressions pointed me again to decisively oppositional discourses and novel forms of grassroots organization that embody what Venezuelan sociologist Edgardo Lander has described as a "diffuse process of cultural decolonization" resulting from "historic levels of [political] participation and

[68] The central significance of Afro-Venezuelan diasporic praxis was most forcefully called to my attention during the interview I had with Jorge Guerrero Veloz, member of the *Red de Organizaciones Afro-Venezolanas* and Venezuelan Consul in New Orleans at the time, in Chicago (2010). His book *La Presencia Africana en Venezuela* (2009) is also an important reference in this respect.

organization" (2007, p. 28) among subaltern, historically marginalized sectors of Venezuelan society.

I conclude in the third section by discussing the memorialization of an integrated Latin/x America that vindicates a postcolonial narrative and re-centers the lessons of the Haitian Revolution and other revolutionary (anti)heroes like José Tomás Boves. A decisively decolonial re-membering has guided both the Chávez administration's foreign policy on one hand and also impacted the (trans)national organizing capacity of artist collectives that vindicate the need to "rethink who we are." Comparing the Preambles of the 1805 Haitian Constitution of 1805 and the 1999 Venezuelan Constitution I provide an assessment of the perspectives of postcolonial constitutionalism as a tool to build innovative regional institutions able to materialize the internationalist solidarity resulting from specific instances of (trans)national liberation struggles across the Americas. The Venezuelan case shows how the resulting subjectivities embodying the complexities entailed in overcoming (neo)colonial and imperialist dependency cannot be reduced to the (re)victimization encoded in the denial of the historical agency of masses, represented as mindlessly seduced by populist demagogues, and rather should be historicized by contrasting grassroots and official accounts of the state and (trans)national transformations Venezuelans perceive as impacting their daily livelihoods.

I discuss these objects of analysis using time frames that defy the linearity of Eurocentric historicities and that are the empirical yield of three rounds of ethnographic engagements in Caracas (in January 2008, October 2012 and April 2013—during which I experienced the aftermath of: the failed attempt to reform the Bolivarian Constitution in December 2007, the last presidential election won by Chávez in October 2012, and President Chávez's untimely death in

March 2013 and the subsequent democratic election of President Nicolás Maduro Moros in April). My empirical analysis draws on (geo)political rituals I participated in and observed during these key moments or explored through both official archives, such as transcripts of the debates of the 1999 Venezuelan Constituent Assembly, and online repositories of audiovisual and other digital archives (re)produced by social subjects memorializing the struggles around the Bolivarian Constitution of Venezuela. The key dates discussed are chosen given their repeated appearance during secondary analysis, particularly in interviews with social scientists and public addresses of key political figures, but also in cultural production that invokes the Bolivarian Constitution in particular and the Bolivarian Revolution as the more general (geo)political *proceso*. Each section in this chapter employs a historical interval to serve the goal to reimagine, by re-membering, the historical possibilities that the last constituent assembly process and resulting constitutional text catalyzed and continues to mobilize in terms of (trans)national identification as Venezuelans and Latin Americans—but also as *Bolivarians* and *Chavistas*, explicitly (geo)political identities. These politicized forms of identification are significant inasmuch as they have posited the challenge to restructure the social and political institutions charged with democratizing the ongoing (post)colonial expendability[69] that marks the daily

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[69] Here I build on John D. Marquez's notion of racial expendability, which he theorizes to "suggest how expressions of black-Latino/a solidarity quite often emerge from outside the realm of resource competition, that is, as the result of a shared susceptibility to obliteration with legal impunity that has manifested in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries particularly in the form of state-sanctioned police brutality, a condition I explain as irreducible to and yet associated with a method of economic exclusion or exploitation. Such expendability is the result of how blackness and latinidad have been produced as either racial (blackness) or ethnoracial (latinidad) signifiers of deficiency and criminality within the assemblage, organization, and governing of bodies that constitute the South as a racial/colonial formation" (2014, p. 32). To speak of postcolonial expandability then is to underscore the onto-coloniality of the history of race and racism.

experiences of the majority of world peoples under capitalist modernity and the repressive apparatuses of modern nation-states.

The problem of the color line—or racism in plain words—was the common denominator of these three rounds of fieldwork and manifested in three different social spatial dimensions, apparent in both my ethnographic and archival research: 1) the antiracist praxis of Afro-Venezuelans that still seek constitutional recognition (as has happened in recent years in other countries like Colombia, Ecuador, Brazil, Nicaragua, and Bolivia in the last two decades) while producing cultural social movements as a means to further their daily struggles against (post)colonial inequalities; 2) the racist representations of Hugo Chávez and his supporters by both international and domestic opposition groups; and 3) the Chavista legacy of reconfiguring the historical memorialization of liberation struggles, such as those embodied in the 19th century figure of Simón Bolívar, and in particular stressing the significance of Haitian revolutionary history for the ongoing antiracist struggles of Latin/x Americans and Third World peoples more generally. The following three sections will also discuss these three dimensions in connection with the power operation through which racial neoliberalism continues to be an obstacle for meaningful democratization and the decolonial remaking of modernity.

The politicization of postcolonial inequalities in Venezuela: Defying racial neoliberalism in Latin/x America, 1989-1999

> Contra el dogma liberal invoco lo que podríamos llamar el "invencionismo robinsoniano" contra ese dogma neoliberal que pretende borrar del mapa, por ejemplo, lo que es la fuerza de la nación, lo que es el derecho de una nación, de un país o de una república a darse su propio modelo económico [...] Como aquí en Venezuela se hizo popular una expresión, yo la voy a recoger: "La mano peluda, invisible del mercado." No arregla sociedades el mercado. No hace repúblicas el mercado. No impulsa desarrollo colectivo el mercado, porque el mercado se basa en ese dogma del individualismo que ha llevado al mundo a que seamos unos salvajes, luchando unos contra otros… [aplausos]. Contra ese dogma del mercado no podemos responder nosotros con otro dogma, tampoco el extremo del Estado. No, contra ese dogma no saquemos más dogmas, inventemos modelos propios, la mano invisible del mercado con la mano visible del Estado y una combinación, un punto de equilibrio que permita más allá del

mercado y más allá del Estado, porque esos son instrumentos, hay un fin último: el desarrollo del hombre, el desarrollo de la mujer, el desarrollo del niño, el desarrollo humano [aplausos], ese sí es el fin último, no el mercado por sí mismo ni el Estado por sí mismo[70]

-Hugo Chávez Frías, *Asamblea Constituyente de Venezuela* (08/05/1999, session # 2)

Venezuelan political scientist Carlos Antonio Rengel has argued that it is useful to understand the most recent constituent process in Venezuela by distinguishing three different moments: a pre-constituent, a constituent, and a post-constituent temporality. The pre-constituent temporality symbolically begins on February 27, 1989, inasmuch as this date witnessed a dramatic social explosion in response to an SAP imposed by national and international governing political elites. "The Venezuelan people (as a historical subject) were 'reawakened' in an irreversible fashion towards the struggle for a new sort of politics and a transformation of the State. In the midst of the massacre and repression that resulted from this rebellion against the governing elites, the Venezuelan people produced a historic breaking point and a latent interest in the political resurfaced, which grew stronger in subsequent years" (2015, p. 118, author's translation), particularly among those historically marginalized from the arena of public institutions and policy making in previous years. This renewed interest in (geo)politics is expressed in both the official and the grassroots memorialization of "27F, 1989" as a symbol of rupture that invited widespread reflection on the past as well as the future, in opposition to the

[70] "Against liberal dogma I invoke what we could call 'robinsonian inventionism,' against neoliberal dogma which pretends to erase from the map, for example, the force of a nation, the right of a nation, of a country or a republic of provide its own economic model [...] In Venezuela there's an expression that I am going to use here: 'The hairy, invisible hand of the market.' The market does not fix societies. The market does not make a republic. The market does not further collective development, because the market is based on the dogma of individualism that has brought the world to this state, where we behave like savages, fighting one another [applause]. Against this market dogma we cannot respond with another dogma, nor an extreme State. No, against this dogma we won't bring more dogmas, we will invent our own models, a combination of the invisible hand of the market with the visible hand of the State, an equilibrium that allows us to go further than the market and further than the State, since these are instruments for an ultimate end: the development of men, the development of women, the development of children, human development [applause], this is the ultimate goal, not the market in itself nor the State in itself" (author's translation).

performative gesture of the (geo)political narratives proclaiming the "end of history" (Fukuyama, 1992) that flourished in the aftermath of the fall of the Berlin Wall during this same world-historic year.

While the *Caracazo*, *Venezolanazo* or *Sacudón*, as the grassroots protests that unfolded on February 27, 1989 are remembered in Venezuela, is often referred to as the first anti-neoliberal uprising in Latin America (Figueroa Ibarra, 2008, p. 110), there are important antecedents both in contemporary Venezuelan history as well as in "Third World responses to the debt crisis" (Walton and Ragin, 1990) more generally. The so-called "lost decade" due to the financial crisis faced by Latin American states during the 1980s and 1990s was the economic backdrop to the "armed retreat of the state" (Gill, 2000), and is an important component of neoliberalism inasmuch as it helps to understand the dominant logic behind the contemporary restructuring of the many hands of the modern nation-state. In 1987, state repression was the response to Venezuelan university students' mobilization, which resulted in the assassination of a student leader. In 1988, Venezuelan state repression was deployed against a group of rural fishermen, which resulted in widespread protest in Apure state. According to Venezuelan sociologist Margarita Lopez Maya (1999) and Mexican-Ecuadorian sociologist Miguel Ruiz (2012), these events dramatize the unravelling of the Venezuelan state that followed the events of February and March 1989. The (geo)political crisis of the Venezuelan state had a clear moral dimension (Thompson, 1971), as the street protestors denounced the erosion of any resemblance of a democratic relationship between the majority of Venezuelans and the state. If the distribution of oil income up to that point had preserved the myth of Venezuela as an "exceptional democracy" (Ellner & Tinker-Salas, 2007), however precarious, during most of the

"Punto Fijo"[71] two-party regime (in the context of a Latin America plagued by military dictatorships throughout the 20th century), the Caracazo violently shattered the racialized myth of social harmony: "lasting from February 27 to March 3, 1989, [*el Caracazo*] was an urban social uprising in response to which the government used massive force, legitimized by a state of exception, a legal figure that under the active Constitution was without limits. By official account, 277 people died; by unofficial estimate, over 1,000 people were killed" (Coronil & Skursi, 1991, p. 291) and countless more were disappeared.

Yet the very strength of the government repression gave birth to grassroots organizations like the Committee of the Relatives of the Victims (COFAVIC, or Comité de Familiares de las Víctimas). COFAVIC was able to document and prosecute human rights violation cases through the Inter-American justice system during the 1990s with "positive results" including "the constitutional prohibition to judge human rights violations under military codes of law included in the 1999 Constitution as well as the vindication of human rights protections during states of exception and the prohibition of forcible disappearances of people" (COFAVIC, February, 29, 2016). However, twenty-seven years later, including a failed attempt in 2013 to set up a Truth and Reconciliation Commission, grassroots organizations like COFAVIC still denounce impunity as no one has been charged with responsibility for the hundreds of human rights violations during the Caracazo. Last February, one of the many Venezuelan hip hop songs that memorialize 27F, 1989 wondered: "I can have a million memories of those moments. But can I

[71] "The Punto Fijo system originated with the fall of the dictatorship of Marcos Pérez Jiménez in 1958, when AD, COPEI, and the Democratic Republican Union (URD) signed a pact at Punto Fijo to share power and oil wealth, regardless of which one of them won the elections. As a result of this arrangement, Venezuela developed into a model democracy for the hemisphere, withstanding the pressures of a guerrilla war, military rule in its southern neighbors, and the booms and busts of the oil industry" (McCoy, 1999, p. 64).

ask how many really were killed. May I ask who was within reason. Or should I wait until a politician gives me an explanation" (Tyburcio & Ávila, 2016, min 3:23-3:45, author's translation). Although President Chavez recognized state responsibility and responded positively to the demand to provide economic reparations to the documented cases of human rights violations, the song also indicts[72] his administration for not being able to overcome the impunity that surrounds this instance of state repression.

The same song goes on to explain the outburst of the Caracazo as "at that moment the people rose up and got sick and tired of being beaten to the ground [*recibir coñazo*] this is why I am a son of *el Caracazo*." (Tyburcio & Ávila, 2016, min 3:23-3:45). In another hip hop song "Hijos del 89,"[73] Muchocumo, a young Venezuelan hip hop crew organized around the HHR (Hip Hop Revolución) collective, also questions the idea that the revolt was merely a riot resulting from hunger; rather they present the event as "rewriting a new history, made by the forgotten, the ever marginalized, the offspring of '89" (2005, 0:46-0:53 min, author's translation). The social force unleashed "like a river" in Venezuela in 1989, although "without direction or leadership" nonetheless is re-membered by these young artists as a crucial blow to capitalism. What began as a lashing out against the "theft of our [life] energy, of never being taken into account, [which pushed] the very logic of the body leading us toward violent actions" continued to spark a movement, as "the conversations [*la conversadera*] started in every ghetto.

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[72] The song continues: "But neither Left nor Right. Not opposition nor revolution. That was the poor against the poor; the rich just stayed in their mansions. Yet at that moment the people rose up and got sick and tired of being beaten to the ground [*recibir coñazo*] this is why I am a son of *el Caracazo*" (Tyburcio & Ávila, 2016, min 3:23-3:45, author's translation).

[73] The same song goes by a different title, *Chávez hijo del 89* as track # 20 of the Soundcloud.com playlist entitled Hijos del 89 (Lumbre de las Mayorías) produced by the collective HHR-El Cayapo, which I discuss later in the chapter.

In his [Hugo Chávez's] mind this revolution explodes, he attempts a coup, which was not a total failure, was merely a 'for now'" (Ibid., 1:57-2:07). *La conversadera* or the conversations taking place in the *barrios* of Caracas would result by 1991 in the Barrio Assembly of Caracas "as a center for the inauguration of social power in the country and as a coordinating agent for popular struggles" (Denis cited in Ciccariello-Maher, 2013, p. 100). In this narrative Hugo Chávez is the consequence rather than the cause of the ongoing revolution, as his charismatic (geo)political leadership came to the public spotlight soon after, on February 4, 1992, when on a national TV broadcast he took responsibility for the national military movement that tried to overthrow the government responsible for the state repression of the Caracazo. More than an irrational outburst of riots that hit the cities of one of the most urbanized countries in the region, the events that unfolded starting on February 27, 1989 have taken on an unprecedented symbolic dimension vindicated by grassroots political actors as a social movement "towards a new culture"[74] and by President Chávez himself as "inaugurating the new history,"[75] a new historical juncture in the struggle to remake modernity.

The revolt against a neoliberal SAP with austerity measures mandated from the IMF to the government of Cárlos Andrés Pérez was not merely the rejection of a set of economic and social policies but also a push back against the dominant neoliberal discourse that would consolidate throughout the world during the 1990s: "With the shift to free-market policies and

[74] Gino González, educator, composer and singer of traditional Venezuelan music, in his song "1989 Lumbre de las Mayorías" argues that out of the decay of the dominant (geo)political and economic system that unraveled in February, 1989, a new culture is emerging: "but how marvelous / today we advance with joy / towards the new culture / happily we embark / nineteen eighty-nine / our juncture begins" (2015, 3:40-3:49 min, author's translation).

[75] "1989 Lumbre de las Mayorías" begins and ends by featuring a memorable address by President Hugo Chávez regarding the uprising of the Caracazo. Underscoring that he himself was formed as result of the 1989 uprising, his voice is the conclusion of the song characterizing the Caracazo as a "world-wide surprise, the Venezuela people rose up, inaugurating the new history" (2015, 5:33-5:41 min, author's translation).

the dismantling of populist developmentalism, dominant discourse began to present the people not so much as the virtous foundation of democracy, but as an unruly and parasitical mass to be disciplined by the state and made productive by the market" (Coronil, 1997, p. 378). Against the grain of this dominant discourse, which as we will see has always been built on racial projects, the election of Hugo Chávez Frías in 1998 constituted a (geo)political challenge to this neoliberal argument. His winning campaign not only demanded to bring back the state but to fundamentally transform it and build new institutions that respond to an-other logic, one articulated by those subjects rendered impossible by capitalist exploitation and Eurocentric disavowal of alternative conceptions of the public, the *demos*, or the *people* as the source of the constituent power allegedly embodied in the "democratic" modern nation-state. But although President Chávez recognized state responsibility for the Caracazo and responded positively to the demand to provide economic reparations to the documented cases of human rights violations, the burden of memorializing the looming threat of state sanctioned repression against the claiming of rights by those historically pushed to the margins of modern-legal rationality still mostly lies on those social subjects singing the histories of grassroots democratization struggles.

A key date not only for Venezuelan contemporary history but also to understand the global design, regional histories and local stories that we need to consider in order to further theorize (anti)neoliberalism, 27F, 1989 was the first date in the chronology of the Bolivarian Revolution proposed by Chávez during the inauguration of the National Constituent Assembly (ANC, or Asamblea Nacional Constituyente).[76] His inaugural address to the elected

[76] "As I was saying there are dates that already are and will stay in our history, signaled during this decade as reference of the path we have been constructing or rather that the pueblo has been building: February 27, '89, February 4, '92, November 27, '92, December 6, '98, February 2, '99, April 25, '99, July, 25, '99, August 3, '99 and

representatives emphasized the importance of historicizing the task of redrafting a national constitution, making sense of recent history in relation to a broader (trans)national history, particularly that of the 19th century Independence Wars embodied by the figure of Simón Bolívar in the northwestern region of South America.[77] "However, if we venture for a moment into contemporary history and reflect upon this; not anymore on [the struggles of] 1811. No. Now let's look closely at the last decade; if you allow me, I would call it the constituent decade, the revolutionary decade, the Bolivarian decade.[78] It is the last decade of this century, that here in Caracas began on February 27, 1989" (Chávez, 1999 in ACV 1999, p. 12, author's translation). In this way, the 1999 Constituent Assembly was inaugurated as a site where the formal institutionalization and the grassroots memorialization of the Bolivarian revolutionary legacy appeared as necessarily connected, although distinct, ways of understanding contemporary Latin/x American politics and its left turns. Both in symbolic and material terms, the Venezuelan popular uprising of 1989 is understood among those who identify as Chavistas to have "marked a

now we are here August 6" (Chávez, 1999 in ACV 1999, p. 12, author's translation). The 1992 dates refer to failed coup attempts against the government responsible for the 1989 Caracazo casualties, the first of which was led by Hugo Chávez and for which he was imprisoned for two years. His landslide electoral victory on December 6, 1998 and the start of his government on February 2, 1999 are represented as milestones toward the end of the "refounding of the nation" while stressing the participation and protagonism of social subjects historically marginalized from modern constituent and constitutional debates. On April 25, 1999 Venezuelans participated in the first referendum of their democratic history to accept the proposal to revamp the national Constitution and in July they elected representatives to a Constituent Assembly, which started its formal sessions on August 3rd.

[77] Simón Bolívar, the mythical Liberator, was born in Caracas on July 2 became a leader of anticolonial struggles across the Andean region, from what today is Venezuela to Bolivia (named in his honor), and including Colombia and Ecuador.

[78] The *Bolivarian* signifier allowed Chávez and his followers to historicize their own actions in relation to a larger postcolonial history while it also pointed to the geopolitical project that Simón Bolívar came to embody: the desire for a united Latin America. In the early 1980s, Hugo Chávez organized the Movimiento *Bolivariano* Revolucionario (MBR 200) with other army officers, and he eventually proposed to change the name of the country to the "Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela," a change that was at first resisted by the Constitutional Assembly, for fear of international reaction to the invocation of Bolívar's project for unity, and has continually been demonized for the same reason (see for example Gott, 2000).

path" (see Illustration 2) for the (geo)political process of the ongoing Bolivarian revolution. At the same time, Chavista officials and grassroots organizers often articulate multiple, even contradictory, understandings of what that path actually entails, which in turn generates both productive tensions and contentious contradictions.

The verses of Venezuelan hip hop artists Juan and Vita adopt the same chronology proposed by Chávez. They argue that it is crucial to not:

> Forget who we are, where do we come from, because to a state of slavery they could push us back. Like that year '89 when we made everyone shake and made power structures shudder. Only 3 years later, with the same rebelliousness, the people, armed, rose up against so much tyranny. Until the next '98 when we chose by majority vote to reclaim a piece of the state from the bourgeoisie. Until now and since then a transformation was jumpstarted and it began in '99 by changing the Constitution. Taking away from the owners their role as representatives and giving ourselves as a people more participatory roles. (2015, 0:58-1:28 min, author's translation)

When contrasting the transformation in the official historical narrative sanctioned by the state through Chávez's charismatic leadership and the grassroots memorialization in expressive cultures, one realizes the strategic temporal subversion of history as a linear progression from past to present to future; a Eurocentric conception of history expressed to varying degrees in most—if not all—really-existing modern nation-states and imperialist forms of chauvinistic patriotism.

Two examples of street art I encountered in Caracas evoke this double sided, Janus-like face, looking towards the past and the future simultaneously, articulated around the contemporary memorialization of 27F, 1989 in Venezuela. Both are stencil graffiti made from iconic photographs of the Caracazo (see Illustration 2). The first uses the image of a motorcycle carrying various men including a Black, seemingly dead, body, symbolizing the hundreds of

casualties that the racialized (and racializing) government repression caused, is accompanied by text with a clear indictment: 27F *Ni olvido ni perdón* (Neither forgotten nor forgiven). The second image shows a youth from the back, covering his face with his white t-shirt pointing toward an empty avenue of Caracas with a modernist building emblematic of the Venezuelan capital. In the stencil he points to a red socialist star and the caption reads: "27F marked the path." The substitution of a socialist red star in the graffiti for the modernist building in the original photograph evokes Walter Benjamin's Thesis IX of his critical conception of history (1940), which makes casts doubt on the very notion of historical *progress*—instead of emancipation—as the main historical engine of modernity as a (geo)political project. "Jumpstarting the decolonial engine" (Ciccariello-Maher, 2010) of emancipation, beyond the Eurocentric conception of liberty common to most Western political philosophy (Hesse, 2014), *Chavistas* embrace the task of historicizing contemporary (geo)political struggles, memorializing the underside of modernity in order to reimagine (trans)nationalism as set of tools to overcome really existing racial (neo)liberalism as a barrier to meaningful democratization.

Besides the reference to 27F, 1989 as a key date in order to transition and connect social struggles from early 19th century to those that marked late 20th century Venezuelan history, President Chávez's address on the second session of the Constituent Assembly also points to key figures in Latin American modern social intellectual history, relating it to a broader anticolonial genealogy embodied in some of the 1999 Constituent Assembly representatives:

> We cannot copy prefabricated models, still argues the old Simón [Ródriguez], the Robinson[79] of America; the American Rousseau, as he was called by Simón Bolívar one

[79] Samuel Robinson was the name taken by Simón Rodriguez, during his exile from Spanish America. The Venezuelan educator is remembered as the tutor and mentor of Simón Bolívar (see Kohan, 2015) and constitutes a key figure in Chavista understandings of the social importance of education for socio-political transformation. One

> day. We cannot continue copying foreign models. This is one of our tragedies; our governing methods have to be original, original our institutions, original, either we invent or we fail. [...] This revolution comes from here, it has a beautiful sign, an autochthonous sign, it looks like us. It has our faces. It looks like the [Indigenous] face of Atala Uriana and Nohelí Pocaterra, it looks like the *mestizo* face of the originary Indian America, it looks like us, like Aristóbulo's color, this revolution looks like us. It is not the result of imported dogmas from other peoples."[80] (Chávez in in ACV 1999, p. 9, author's translation)

At the grassroots level, the (geo)political ambitions behind the invocation of Bolívar and other key historical figures manifests a desire for mutual solidarity through memorialization in public spaces, such as the mural paintings and street art more generally I first witnessed in Parroquia 23 de Enero. From murals in solidarity with the Palestinian resistance (see Sánchez Cárdenas, 2008, p. 84) to multiple portraits of Latin American 20th century revolutionary icons like Ernesto "Che" Guevara or Ali Primera (see Intifada, 2013, min. 00:01-04 and 00:32), and particularly the figure of Simón Bolívar; walking from the Caracas subway stop up the hills of 23 de Enero one is constantly confronted by an alternative historical narrative, artistic representations constantly resignifying historical symbols by linking the legacy of anticolonial struggles with contemporary social struggles such as those unleashed since 27F, 1989.

The same cultural collective that produced the previously discussed graffiti stencils deploying iconic photographs of the events of 27F, 1989 represents Simón Bolívar as the father

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of the first *misiones* or social programs carried out by the Venezuelan government since 2003, *Misión Robinson* was charged with the objective of ending illiteracy in the country. See chapter four for a discussion of the centrality of "reading" as an activity Chávez constantly called his supporters to do.

[80] "No estamos copiando modelos, sigue clamando el viejo Simón, el Robinson de América; el Rousseau americano, como lo llamó Simón Bolívar un día. No podemos seguir copiando modelos. He allí una de nuestras tragedias, originales han de ser nuestros métodos de gobierno, originales nuestras instituciones, originales o inventamos o erramos. [...] Esa revolución viene de allí, tiene un signo hermoso, tiene un signo autóctono, se parece a nosotros. No tiene otros rostros. Se parece al rostro de Atala Uriana Pocaterra o de Nohelí Pocaterra (aplausos), se parece al rostro mestizo de la América india originaria, se parece a nosotros, se parece al color de Aristóbulo, se parece a nosotros esta revolución. (Aplausos). No es importada de otros dogmas y de otros pueblos." (Chávez en ACV1999, p. 9).

of American rebelliousness or "*padre de la rebeldía americana*" (see Illustration 3) in a poster distributed across the streets of Caracas (Guerrilla Comunicacional, 2010b). The poster positions Bolívar's foundational role while noting three revolutionary ruptures since national independence during the "200 years of struggle" that characterizes the postcolonial nation-making of Venezuela. Pasting Bolívar's face covered with a t-shirt like the rebellious youth of the *Caracazo* iconic photographs underscore the centrality of the event as the beginning of the ongoing Bolivarian revolution. The text "Independence, Federation, Caracazo, Revolution" memorializes the ongoing "struggle" from the Independence wars led by Bolívar to the Federalist civil war in the mid-19th century, evoking both the centrality of the struggle for land reform in postcolonial democratization and the leadership of Ezequiel Zamora[81] (Chávez Frías, 2015), another key figure in Chavista discourse. 27F, 1989—the Caracazo—occupies a place of its own as opening up a new cycle of struggles memorialized as the Bolivarian Revolution. The historical intervals in the poster, from independence struggles to the Bolivarian Revolution, invoke as well a well-known quote from Latin American popular culture, referenced often in the discourse of President Chávez: the concluding verse of *A Song for Bolívar* ([1950] 1973) by Chilean Nobel laureate Pablo Neruda. The concluding verse, written as if Bolívar himself were to recite them, promises "I wake up every hundred years when the people rise up."

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[81] Upon Hugo Chávez's death, the Venezuelan government under the leadership of President Nicolás Maduro, published and distributed what would be Chávez's political will in a book entitled *El Libro Azul* (2013) or "The Blue Book." The *Arbol de las Tres Raíces* or Tree of the Three Roots is presented as a metaphor to discuss the historical foundations of the Bolivarian Revolution. The three roots are articulated around the praxis of Simón Bolivar, Simón Rodriguez (Bolivar's tutor and mentor) and Ezequiel Zamora, known as the "General of the Sovereign People," who invented "strategies of peasant insurrection" at the start of the twentieth century, which resulted in the re-organization of the Venezuela as a federal republic. The "Zamoran root" (p. 50-53) underscores the vindication of *Tierras y hombres libre or Free lands [for] free people* that highlights the central problem of land distribution in postcolonial societies.

Left: **Illustration 2** (Guerrilla Comunicacional, 2010a). Right: **Illustration 3** (Guerrilla Comunicacional, 2010b).

These dual forms of remembering and historicizing the horizons for revolutionary transformation in contemporary Venezuela, coming from both grassroots actors and government officials, point to how historical landmarks can energize collective memorialization and catalyze subaltern (geo)political participation. The (trans)national struggles articulated in Chavista discourse seem to energize subaltern (geo)political participation; the vindication of the historical agency of those who have pushed back against (neo)colonial forms of subjectification to reclaim self-determination; beyond Eurocentric notions of "Western liberty as whiteness" (Hesse 2014, p. 307), the anti-imperialist emancipation vindicated by Chávez and his supporters highlighted the endogenous capacities to take control over their own subjectivities, rooted in the escapist pathways or *escapology* codified both in Indigenous resistance and the "*Negrura cimarronea*" or "marooning Blackness" identified by the hip hop song "Caracazo," track 4 of a twenty-one-song

digital playlist (El Cayapo-HHR, 2015) that puts to music the important historical lessons symbolized by the 27F anti-neoliberal uprising.

The guiding principle of endogenous historical development, later sanctioned in the 1999 Bolivarian Constitution, started to emerge, highlighted the task of theorizing our own sociopolitical and historical realities in order to envision innovative institutional arrangements that would ensure the presence and participation of racialized social subjects like the Afro-Amerindian Constituent Assembly members Chávez mentions in his speech. This performative gesture started to redraw the (trans)national boundaries and open up the historical opportunity to reimagine a mestizo or queer[82] nationalism capable of overcoming its tendency towards Eurocentric racism and what Ecuadorian social theorist Bolívar Echeverría has conceptualized as *blanquitud*[83] (2012) or whiteness. Through a critical reading of Max Weber's *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1905), Echeverría argues that there is an unspoken –although Weber himself muses that the Puritan ethic of Capitalism may have ethnic roots and be connected to certain racial traits- yet constitutive racism characteristic of capitalist modernity; "a 'racism' that demands the presence of *blanquitud* [or whiteness] of an ethical or civilizatory order as condition to [be considered part of] modern humanity, but that in extreme cases, as in

[82] Here the seminal contributions to think through the historical conceptual challenge of a queer mestiza nationalism come from Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1987) and Cherríe Moraga's "Queer Aztlán: The re-formation of the Chicano Tribe" (1993). I come back to these discussions in the concluding sections of this work.

[83] While *blanquitud* could be translated as whiteness, inasmuch as it has been conceptualized as an ideological formation with material consequences linked to the history of modern colonialism, "in other words, while it is tempting to see whiteness as skin color, whiteness is a structuring and structured form of power that, through its operations, crystallizes inequality while enforcing its own invisibility" (Vidal-Ortiz, 2014). In this sense Bolívar Echeverría distinguishes *blanquitud* from *blancura* (the quality of being white) and *blanqueamiento*, which further underscores the former as the ethical imperative behind capitalist development in a historical process that produces the latter two categories.

the case of the German Nazi state, comes to require the presence of a *blancura* [or whiteness] of an ethnic, biological or 'cultural' order" (Echeverría et. al, 2007, p. 16). Afro-Amerindian peoples have resisted both *blanquitud* and *blancura* when interpellated by and interpellating modern Latin American states in the realm of formal (geo)politics.

While hip hop artists invoke a maroon negritude to memorialize the 27F 1989 anti-neoliberal urban uprising, 1989 is also the year when indigenous peoples and nationalities inhabiting the less populated states and rural areas of Venezuela managed to organize at the national level around the National Indian Council of Venezuela (CONIVE or Consejo Nacional Indio de Venezuela), which would become a key actor in the 1999 Constituent Assembly Process. Noelí Pocaterra, a Wayúu[84] activist, was one of three indigenous representatives[85] that the organizational rules of the Constituent Assembly contemplated to be reserved for indigenous communities in Venezuela. Before and after her participation in the 1999 Venezuelan ANC, Pocaterra also took part in different capacities in the United Nations' efforts that resulted in the General Assembly approval[86] of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

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[84] According to the 2011 Census, 2.7 percent of the 22 million Venezuelans self-recognize as part of an indigenous group. The Wayúu people are the largest indigenous group in Venezuela. The state of Zulia, which according to the 2011 Census is home to about 61 percent of all Venezuelan indigenous peoples, is part of the Wayúu traditional territory that extends into Colombia.

[85] "On March 10, [1999], Chávez fulfilled a campaign promise by designating 3 seats for indigenous delegates in the 131-seat constituent assembly. [...] On March 21-25 CONIVE sponsored a National Indigenous Congress that brought together representatives chosen in local and statewide congresses throughout the country. It was the largest assembly ever convoked in Venezuela on indigenous peoples' own initiative [...] Participants elected delegates to represent three geographic regions in the constituent assembly: Noelí Pocaterra, a Wayúu, represented the west; José Luis González, a Pemón affiliated with the FIB, represented the east; and Guillermo Guevara, a Jivi and coordinator of ORPIA [Organización Regional de Pueblos Indígenas del Amazonas or Regional Organization of Indigenous People of the Amazon], represented the south" (Van Cott 2003, p. 55-56).

[86] The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) was adopted by the General Assembly on September 13, 2007, by a majority of 144 states, with 4 votes against (Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States), and 11 abstentions (Colombia being the only Latin American nation to do so).

Atala Uriana, who I interviewed in October 2012 at the Hotel Alba Caracas,[87] was another Wayúu representative, yet was elected in representation of the Venezuelan northwestern state of Zulia, after serving as Minister of Environment during the first months of President Chávez's administration. In total, five of the 131 representatives to the 1999 Venezuelan Constituent Assembly were indigenous people, "the largest number of [indigenous] voting delegates in a constituent assembly" (Van Cott, 2003, p. 57) up until that moment in the Andean region. In fact, CONIVE had unprecedented influence on the constituent process:

> Indigenous organizations participated with an extraordinary level of access in the construction of Venezuela's new constitution. Chávez's own declarations in support of the indigenous cause, along with his designation of three seats for indigenous peoples within the constituent assembly, brought an indisputable energy to the movement. By convoking a range of forums and internal consultations, CONIVE galvanized this movement and gathered the necessary force to push their proposals forward amidst opposition from the assembly's more conservative representatives. [...] The constitution set forth an ambitious agenda to grant an array of entitlements to indigenous peoples under their supervision, such as communal land titles and their own educational institutions. Chapter 8 of the Bolivarian Constitution recognizes and guarantees the respect of indigenous culture, languages, customs, and traditional lands, while requiring that the government work with indigenous communities to implement these rights. (Indigenous University of Venezuela, 2010, p. 195-196).

A decade of grassroots organizing at the (trans)national level created the conditions to leave an important mark in the 1999 Venezuelan Constituent Assembly process, despite the fact that Venezuela has the smaller indigenous population (less than 2% of the population, see table 4) in the Andean region (see Infolatam, 2014).

[87] Hotel Venetur Alba Caracas existed before 2006 as the luxurious Caracas Hilton. Located near the subway stop of Bellas Artes, the hotel was nationalized by the Chávez administration as part of a government program to demoratize tourism and make it more accessible to Venezuelans as well as other peoples interested in visiting the country. Venetur website sites Hugo Chávez's to link the development of the Venezuelan tourism industry as linked to "raising up the national soul, the national spirit" (see Chávez, 2010 in Venetur.gob.ve, 2017).

In this vein it is worth turning briefly to the case of related struggles, yet very different in their interpellation to the state, fought by Mapuche social movement organizations in territories where the Chilean state claims unequivocal sovereignty over Mapuche territory through openly repressive mechanisms to this day. At the July 2016 annual session of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Aucan Huilcaman vowed to carry out a Mapuche Constituent Assembly during October 2016 (see Walmapu Futa Trawun, September, 26, 2016; and Porras, September, 30, 2016) based on the principle of self-determination recognized in the UNDRIP (2013); he invited the UN Expert Mechanism to oversee the process, deemed illegitimate by the Chilean State, on July 14, 2016 at the IX Session of the Expert Mechanism on Indigenous Peoples Rights (EMRIP) (Huilcaman in Aso Kimun, 2016).

Table 4. Indigenous and Afro-descendent populations in five Latin American nations

Country and census dates	**Net population**			**Percentage of total population**	
	Indigenous peoples	Afro-descendants	Total	Indigenous peoples	Afro-descendants
Venezuela (República Bolivariana de) 2001 2011	506 341 726 543	N/A 936 794	21 548 687 27 052 262	2.3 2.7	N/A 3.5
Ecuador 2001 2010	830 418 1 018 176	604 009 1 041 559	12 156 608 14 483 499	6.8 7.0	5.0 7.2
Chile 2002 2012	692 192 1 714 677	N/A N/A	15 116 435	4.6 11.1	N/A N/A

			17 819 054		
Argentina 2004-2005 2010	603 758 955 032	N/A 149 493	38 747 148 40 117 096	1.6 2.4	N/A 0.4
México 2000 2010	6 101 632 16 933 283	N/A N/A	97 483 412 112 336 583	6.3 15.1	N/A N/A

Source: Census data compiled by ECLAC from national census data in Del Popolo and Schkiolink, 2013, p. 286. In the case of Chile, the national census was reviewed (see also Namucura, 2013).

This initiative was born out of the frustration generated by the lack of official response to the demands of a broad coalition of social movements –including student-led organizations- that pressures for a national constituent assembly to redraft the national constitution, invoking experiences like that of Bolivarian Venezuelan. Grassroots actors highlight the need to include participatory mechanisms that would overturn the "race-blind" procedural and philosophical sources of a limited representative "democracy" that continues to imposes racial boundaries inasmuch as it defines the requirements for Chilean citizenship in mono-national terms—boundaries commonly found in Eurocentric constitutionalism characterized by the univocality used to define the imagined "We the people" in terms of individual citizenship rights- and criminalizes those who refuse to accept the colonial authority of the Chilean state. In diametrical opposition to the performative gesture of the 19th century Haitian Constitution and 21st century postcolonial constitutions in the Americas, the national subject of modern constitutionalism is often restricted by a concept of sovereignty that requires state sanctioned homogenization so its

populations fit the impossible hegemonic ideal of a fixed national unity. Chile's appearance as a success story of modern development and democratization has allowed it to remain unresponsive to increasing international pressure to recognize its social diversity and plurinationality required to truly democratize its state.

Since 1991, many unsuccessful legislative efforts have taken place in Chile to recognize indigenous peoples as part of the nation-state:

> Passing progressive legislation [in Chile] is often difficult, partially because of the existence of nine designated 'institutional senators,' a provision worked into the Constitution by Pinochet. The failure to establish constitutional recognition of indigenous peoples, as Aylwin (2000) notes, reflects the historical denial of the multicultural and pluri-ethnic character of Chilean society. Failing to ratify the International Labor Organization's Convention 169, meanwhile, serves to limit the extent to which indigenous peoples can achieve their demands for cultural and collective rights. (Richards 2004, p. 137)

The current Chilean Constitution was drafted under the Pinochet government that deposed Dr. Salvador Allende, the first socialist to be democratically elected in the Americas in 1970, although it was heavily reformed after the return to formal democracy in 1989. However, this mechanism has proven unsuccessful to transform the colonial relationship between the Chilean state and the Mapuche people.

Behind both the facades of institutional stability usually showcased in "successful" instances of (neo)liberal modernization, as in the case of post-1989 Chile's "transition from authoritarian rule,"[88] and the political polarization blamed on "populists"[89] like Venezuelan

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[88] Here the reference is to the seminal work on democratization studies *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies* (O'Donnell & Schmitter, 2013 [1986]), the "little green book" that was influential in the Chilean leaders like former President Ricardo Lagos (see Arson & Lowenthal, 2013 in O'Donnell & Schmitter, 2013 [1986], p. viii) who have overseen the democratization efforts that have followed the 1989 referendum where Pinochet was defeated.

[89] For those who defend the model of democratization associated to cases like post-1989 Chile and theoretical frameworks like that of the previously referenced *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule* (O'Donnell & Schmitter,

President Hugo Chávez who push against that model, we find (geo)political conflicts over localized resources and communal forms of existence, subaltern representation and participation in state making, and—perhaps most importantly—the challenge to reinvent public institutions as well as the (un)learning of social dispositions that have historically sustained them. In the case of Venezuela, exploring the latest constituent process in three different temporalities allows us to recognize that revolutionary ruptures like the one of 27F, 1989 entail full fledged, full-frontal challenges or confrontations to the status quo—or active *cimarronaje*, in the theoretical framework proposed by Jesús "Chucho" García—, which jumpstart the pre-constituent moment.

Aristóbulo Isturiz is an Afro-Venezuelan politician[90] who served as the second vice-president of the Constituent Assembly and currently acts as Vice-President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela since January 2016. Jesús "Chucho" García's work, more organically related to Afro-Venezuelan social movement organizations, argues that the recent praxis of Afro-Venezuelans can be understood as part of broader postcolonial historicities to theorize the anticolonial struggles by centering on the lived experiences of Afro-descendant peoples:

> "The [historical] data led me to classify *cimarronaje/marooning* as either passive or active. Passive marooning refers to those ways in which Africans and their descendants fought against their enslavement in colonial contexts by taking advantage of available institutional re-sources, such as the law and the Catholic church. [...] Active marooning refers to enslaved people fighting directly against the system of slavery in order to

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2013 [1986]) argue that "the original *Transitions* project was grounded in the norms of liberal democracy, [therefore] there is reason to be discouraged in today's circumstances. The profound deficits in representation and consequent collapse of party systems in Venezuela, Ecuador, and Bolivia have given rise to new forms of populism that explicitly reject liberal, representative democracy in favor of direct and vertical linkages between the leader and "el pueblo," the renewed invocation of polarizing antagonisms within society, and the gutting of checks and balances on executive power" (Arson & Lowenthal, 2013 in O'Donnell & Schmitter, 2013 [1986], p. xii)

[90] Isturiz's political career has been more linked to traditional political parties than grassroots social movements. Grassroots organizers from the Afro-Venezuelan movement questioned that his participation in the Constituent Assembly did not translate into any meaningful consideration of their proposals for the 1999 Constitution, which were instead later considered in the failed attempt to reform the Constitution via referendum in December 2007 (see García, 2011).

> reclaim their freedom at any cost. This active resistance to the different modalities of colonial oppression by Africans and their descendants filled many archival files, which clearly indicated that active marooning signified a sustained politics as well as a concept of anticolonial liberation. As such, the African contribution to the Venezuelan nation was both moral and political." (2004, author's translation)

Elsewhere García has characterized "passive" as "juridical maroonage" and "active" as "full-frontal" *cimarronaje* (in Duque, 2009, min. 00:10:26-00:10:52) underscoring a use of "marooning" that evokes Aimé Césaire's use of maroon as a verb, "to maroon" or *marronage*[91] in French. These two dimensions are useful to understand a common tension expressed between postcolonial constitutions and the contentious histories expressed in the moral/cultural and political/ethical constitutive acts at play behind a written constitution and the resulting post-constituent institutional innovation and policy implementation.

While it will become clearer in the next section how the praxis of Afro-Amerindian social movement organizations was central to the Venezuelan constituent process, their imprint on the resulting Constitution is not obvious at first sight. While an entire chapter is dedicated to respond to historical demands of Indigenous Venezuelan peoples and nationalities and their (geo)political demands, Afro-Venezuelans are still not mentioned, thus formally absent from the 1999 Bolivarian Constitution. What may seem a failure to institutionalize the particular demands of Afro-Venezuelans, however, has been accompanied by a remarkable consolidation of the capacity to organize and mobilize (geo)political demands at a (trans)national level. In the next section I review

[91] "*marronage* is no longer about simply escaping [them, the slave-owners]. It is also about reflexive possibility and poiesis. Césaire makes rebellion and the remaking of culture –the historical maroon experience–into a *verb* [that] names the New World poetics of continuous transgression and cooperative cultural activity" (Clifford, 1988, p. 181 in San Juan, p. 152).

Afro-Venezuelan intellectuals' characterization of these accomplishments while noting an increasing suspicion among Venezuelan Indigenous intellectuals regarding the institutionalization of former grassroots leaders as undermining their capacity to organize and mobilize; a capacity constructed in the constituent decade of 1989-1999.

The different fates of Afro-Venezuelan and Indigenous social movement organizations during the constituent decade of 1989-1999 and their post-constituent praxis in relation to the Venezuelan state underscore that the Bolivarian revolution, led by President Chávez until March, 2013, rather than merely deploying a strategy of "divide and conquer" to produce (geo)political polarization, has catalyzed the politicization of long-standing (post)colonial inequalities that have been (re)produced by modern development. These processes of politicizing historical inequalities are never merely the result of spontaneous revolts or the genius of messianic leaders but rather *junturas*,[92] particular moments or historical junctures and the movements of particular bodies that collectively become and create symbols to sustain long standing histories of (geo)political decolonial struggles.

The intersections between dates like February 27, 1989 and the first days of August, 1999 and the particular biographies marked by them, both living and ghostly present, invoked in President Chávez's official addresses and other forms of grassroots memorialization, were the most significant findings of my first round of fieldwork around a particular urban space (*Parroquia* 23 de Enero) that took place in January 2008. Exploring the (geo)political debates

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[92] While *juntura* can be literally translated as juncture, as in bone juncture, it is repeatedly used in many of the twenty-one songs in the playlist "Hijos del 89 (1989 Lumbre de las Mayorías)" (El Cayapo-HHR, 2015) to express a coming together in assembly. I discuss more in detail the theoretical contributions of their cultural production in the third section of this chapter.

leading up to and following the democratic promulgation of the 1999 Constitution through cultural objects and symbols conceived as tools for revolutionary struggles became my method to research and conceptualize the perspectives to transform *both* the state and society, reimagining *nation*(s) as complicated symbols deployed to build and sustain public institutions in post-constituent moments. In the next section I discuss another, more recent, key date in the memorialization of the Bolivarian revolution, as well as my ethnographic engagement with the (geo)political rituals and expressions that marked the last presidential campaign of Hugo Chávez in October 2012.

Military ghosts, businessmen appearances, and constitutional (dis)order: The tropicalizations of Hugo Chávez and Chavista institutional/cultural creativity, 2002-2012

La Constitución añeja
nueva la vamos a hacer
y el pueblo se irá montando
a caballo en el poder.[93]
- Inti-Illimani, "Rin de la Nueva Constitución" (1970)

If the popular rebellion and the disproportionate Venezuelan state repression that responded to it between February 27 and March, 1989 marks the key event in the pre-constituent moment leading up to the Constituent Assembly process that took place between April and December, 1999, many Venezuelan historians and social scientists I interviewed would quickly point to the attempted coup d'etat in April 2002 and the *paro nacional*—general "strike" or lockout—that curtailed the operational capacities of PDVSA or Petróleos de Venezuela S.A., the state-run Venezuelan oil company, between December 2002 and February 2003, organized by business sectors like FEDECAMARAS[94] and old (geo)political elites (Golinger, 2006), as the

[93] "The aged Constitution / we will make anew / and the people will begin / to ride power as on a horse"
[94] The largest Venezuelan Business Federation, and an ally of previous governments, Fedecámaras was actively

turning point for the post-constituent moment. “There is perhaps only one event more revealing than a coup, and that is a coup that, while initially successful, is eventually reversed. Any coup serves to draw back the veil of polite society (however threadbare) to reveal the lines of force that traverse it, and a reversed coup is an even more powerful revelation of where, precisely, social power lies” (Ciccariello-Maher, 2013, p. 166). The different tests confronted by Venezuelans during this complicated historical juncture to secure the possibilities of the post-constituent moment are often discussed as a moment of consolidation for subaltern grassroots (geo)political participation, first in defending the constitutional order and then as integral part of innovative government programs named *misiones bolivarianas* or Bolivarian missions.

During my second visit to Caracas during October 2012, many Venezuelans with whom I shared my research project linking constituent assemblies with grassroots organization and mobilization highlighted the failed coup d’etat that took place between April 11 and 13, 2002 as a breakthrough in the Bolivarian Revolution’s impulse to grassroots mobilization and democratic participation in Venezuela. The 2002 failed coup marked the moment when electoral, and mostly “passive,” support for the social transformations being proclaimed in the 1999 Constitution would become activated by unprecedented grassroots mobilization, which then became expanded (geo)political participation in the building of new institutions and government programs, known as *Misiones*, which try to bring to daily lives the unprecedented social and political rights claimed by grassroots political actors since the constituent process of 1999, emphasizing not only

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opposed to the 1998 Bolivarian Constitution (Ellner, 2000) and had one of its leaders, Pedro Carmona, serve as the illegitimate president while President Chávez was kidnaped between April 11 and April 13, 2002.

the delivery of social services but the protagonist participation of those who are going to benefit from these welfare programs.

Organizers at *Parroquia* 23 de Enero drew a parallel between their experience of state repression before the approval of the 1999 Constitution and when constitutional order was briefly interrupted in April 2002. Among them, former leaders of armed leftist guerrilla groups—whose existence dates back to the resistance of the last military dictatorship in Venezuelan history, which ended on January 23, 1958—expressed concern that social conflicts would turn violent once again. State repression for them had been a constant since the last dictatorship and under the Punto Fijo regime that Chávez and his supporters memorialize as the Fourth Republic. They specifically recognize the provisions encoded in the Bolivarian Constitution of the Fifth Republic to protect them, the impoverished majorities from the *cerros*, from the sort of brutal repression that they suffered in their flesh during 1989. In fact, the first decree of the de-facto government of Pedro Carmona Estanga was to nullify the 1999 Constitution; Carmona Estanga, a business leader of Fedecámaras, was declared president on April 12 after, he claims, he was asked by the military to form a transitional regime. While the military ghosts of 20th century dictatorships in Latin America were still in the background, businessmen like Carmona were starting to take the main stage as the paradigmatic embodiment of neoliberal (geo)politics.

To the student of Latin American history, the events of April 11, 2002 inevitably invite parallels with the military coup led by Augusto Pinochet against the democratically elected government of Salvador Allende[95] on September 11, 1973. Accused of responsibility for the

[95] President Chávez himself warned about the similarities with the "script" applied to the democratic socialist government of Dr. Salvador Allende in Chile (See Gil Pinto, 2012, min. 00:58-01:07). In conversation with Chilean sociologist Marta Harnecker, Venezuelan General Wilfredo Ramon Silva identified a connection between the

multiple casualties that resulted from confrontations between opposition and Chávez's supporters and private snipers around the Miraflores Presidential Palace in Caracas during the protests, President Chávez was asked to resign by long-standing political and business elites and many army generals. Foreign journalists later would denounce evidence that suggest that the casualties were part of a plan orchestrated by (geo)political opposition actors since the (in)famous video where some army generals ask for President Chávez to resign was recorded earlier on Friday, April 11, before the first shooting will take the first of seventeen lives that were lost in the immediacies of the Venezuelan Presidential Palace in Caracas that day.

The documentary film[96] "The Revolution will not be Televised" (Bartley & Ó Briain, 2003) highlights, starting with its title, how private media outlets became a key (geo)political opposition actor to President Chávez's administration, which during the April, 2002 failed coup played a protagonist role. First documenting the vibrant *Chavista* grassroots (geo)political participation that followed the 1999 Constituent Assembly, then the abrupt transformation of this subaltern participation from study groups of the Bolivarian Constitution to widespread uncertainty after public media outlets were shut down and then outrage and street protests to demand respect to the constitutional order violated with the abduction of President Chávez that April, 2002 weekend, the documentary ends up showing how his cabinet starts leaving when the

military training on psychological operations he had received at the former U.S.-based School of the Americas (SOA), where the military coup against the Allende government had been a case study, and the events that unfolded in Venezuela in 2002 (see Harnecker 2004, p. 40).

[96] "The Revolution will not be Televised" (Bartley & Ó Briain, 2003) was made by Irish filmmakers with privileged access to the presidential palace during the days of the failed coup. While many Venezuelan documentaries (Palácios, 2004; Díaz, 2012; Gil Pinto, 2012) as well as other forms of audiovisual memorialization (Iskra, 2015) document the violent rupture of constitutional order between April 11-13, 2002, this documentary is remarkable because of the unexpected access to the spaces of power occupied by very different sort of political leadership over those 48 hours; its footage often appears in other Venezuelan productions.

generals threaten to bomb the presidential palace if Chávez refuses to resign the Presidency. To avoid the bombing, Chávez decides to hand himself over as prisoner to the military; all civilians still in the palace leave, likely remembering the bombing of the Chilean Presidential Palace of La Moneda in Santiago almost three decades before. Venezuelan rapper Iskra has produced the most recent memorialization of the events of April 11, 2002, which makes this historical connection explicit (2015, min. 5:04-5:10) and denounces the role of corporate media outlets as the weapon deployed by an alliance between businessmen and long-standing political and military domestic elites as well as powerful imperialist (geo)political actors. The importance of public and grassroots community media outlets, of communication between Hugo Chávez and those self-identifying as protagonists of the Bolivarian Revolution was highlighted at this historical juncture and resulted in a boom of alternative community media and creative grassroots communication techniques (Duffy & Everton, 2007; Moen, 2009; Fernandes, 2011; Fuentes-Bautista & Gil-Egui, 2011; Schiller, 2011, 2013), which have been the backdrop of the remarkable postcolonial memorialization instances here analyzed.

On April 13, 2002, the 1999 Bolivarian Constitution would make its triumphal return in a fashion that is reminiscent of Weber's argument regarding the transferability of charisma[97] from a leader to public office, or in this case, to the Bolivarian Constitution and –I would add- vice versa. After almost two days of street protest, the rank and file of the military, particularly some branches closest to Hugo Chávez, had joined the popular rebelliousness and managed to rescue him from his captivity and bring him back to Miraflores. At dawn on April 14, 2002, President

[97] I expand this discussion of the Weberian conceptualization of charisma and its relation to socio-historical change in the first section of chapter four.

Chávez addressed the nation, calling for a return to calm and peace; he asked his supporters to go home and also addressed his political opposition while holding the little blue copy of the Bolivarian Constitution: “all of you that oppose me, you have the right to oppose me, I will try to change your opinion, certainly, but you cannot oppose this Constitution. This is like the *Popol Vuh*, a book for all of us. The *Popol Vuh*, the book of the Mayas, the book of community, the book for all, you have to recognize all of this” (Bartley & Ó Briain, 2003, min. 1:11:33-1:11:51). His (geo)political appeal to the legitimacy of the 1999 Bolivarian Constitution by referencing the *Popol Vuh* or the “Book of the People” as it would literally translate from Maya K’iche points to how modern constitutionalism should not be reduced to a legal tradition, but rather how the importance of a “living Constitution” is its capacity to conjure postcolonial collective memories, shared foundational myths and basic rules for the rights and obligations that organize daily social and (geo)political interaction. The key to the post-constituent moment was to ensure that oppositional (geo)political actors respected the 1999 Constitution as the result of a truly constitutive historical moment for Venezuelan self-determination;[98] something that only happened after the 2007 constitutional reform referendum, when opposition actors actively campaigned to maintain the 1999 Bolivarian Constitution without the changes proposed by President Hugo Chávez, the National Legislature, as well as social movement organizations who identify with the Bolivarian Revolution.

[98] Bolivian social theorist René Zavaleta Mercado speaks of “constituent moment” in relation to the principle of “self-determination of the mass” or people that is defined as: “the act of self-determination as constituent moment entails at least two tasks. There is, in effect, a foundation of power, that is irresistibility turned into incorporated dread; there is, on the other hand, the foundation of liberty, meaning, the implementation of self-determination as a daily routine” (2009 [1981], p. 142, author’s translation).

In fact, the Constitution showed its "living" properties during the 2002 attempted coup through its constant appearance in the protests that unfolded as protestors held high their copy of the "little blue book"—the same little blue book that many Chavistas that I met during my research brought out when recounting their (geo)political objectives or memorializing the historical roots of the Bolivarian Revolution. This first time this repeated use of little blue copies of the Constitution came to my attention was in the documentary "The Revolution will not be Televised" (Bartley & Ó Briain, 2003) yet it was a constant during my three field work visits to Caracas. Before the actual events of the coup, the Irish filmmakers interview Chávez's supporters in the poorest areas of Caracas regarding their relationship with politics. One of them explains: "For us, politics meant before that a group became rich while we were experiencing hunger since resources would never reach here. But now we are very interested in politics since the sort of politics we are living right now is [both] democratic and *participatory*" (min. 22:30-22:50, my emphasis). This quote echoes a guiding principle of the 1999 Constitution, which defines democratic society as also "participatory and protagonist,[99] multiethnic and pluricultural" (Preamble, República Bolivariana de Venezuela*,* 1999). The emphasis of this definition of participatory democracy is not merely on participation understood as an abstract value but rather also the necessity of fostering subaltern *protagonist* participation so to build a revolutionary

[99] While the 1999 Venezuelan Constitution defines democracy as "participatory and *protagónica*," stressing that subaltern (geo)political participation should have a leading role in government decision-making. Hugo Chávez would make this more explicit on an interview broadcasted by Argentine public TV channel where he posited the problem of democracy as the political front where 21st socialism is confronting modern capitalist common sense regarding (neo)liberal representative democracy: "more than participatory, protagonist [democracy], the popular power [*poder popular*], self-government, a broader self-determination" (Chávez in TV Pública Argentina, 2010, min. 07:22-07:31) would be required to overcome limited notions of democracy.

democracy inasmuch as it can carry out profound structural transformations both home and abroad.

Back in 1970, when Salvador Allende became the first socialist President ever elected in a democratic election, his government coalition Popular Unity (UP or Unidad Popular) presented a government program that included the call to reform the Constitution, musicalized to Andean rhythms by Inti Illimani[100] in their album *Canto al programa* (1970). Yet his three-year government never moved from the pre-constituent moment. As Chilean sociologist Marta Harnecker notes in conversation with Venezuelan officials that participated in the reversal of the attempted coup of April 2002, the Bolivarian Constitution in Venezuela allows for the progression of a revolutionary process inasmuch as it can be used to foster it; while in Salvador Allende's Chile the existing Constitution was invoked to block the transformations proposed by the Allende administration. While their outcomes differ, the trigger of both the Chilean and the Venezuelan coups was the attempt to secure state public control over the income from primary commodities, copper and petroleum respectively, on which dependent capitalist development in Latin America more generally have based its grip. Venezuelan state-owned yet privately managed state oil company PDVSA until then was revamped by Hugo Chávez both before and after the failed coup attempts that spanned between April 2002 and February 2003.[101] His

[100] Inti Illimani is a band, which became iconic both of the hopes and cultural creativity that the "Chilean Way to Socialism" seemed to have catalyzed around the election of Salvador Allende, and is still in existence. I saw them perform both in Chicago and in Quito, Ecuador, where they actively supported President Correa's campaign to approve a new Constitution in 2008.

[101] After the failed coup attempt in April, 2002 when an opposition street demonstration was utilized to produce violent confrontation with street demonstrations that simultaneously took place around the Miraflores Presidential Palace, PDVSA technocratic administration carried out a workers' lockout that catalyzed existing economic anxieties yet "[i]n the aftermath of the two-month strike, worker cooperatives and community organizations provided services in areas such as the distribution of gasoline, maintenance, and the supply of food and work clothes in order to generate employment beyond the confines of the oil industry. At the same time, PDVSA extended its

attempt to subordinate the workings of PDVSA to the ambitious government programs devised to eradicate poverty and confront long-standing inequalities had set him in a collision course (Wilpert, 2003) with the oil industry professional elites, accustomed to the privileges of monopolizing the technical know-how in a (trans)national economy heavily dependent on oil revenues.

The charge of authoritarianism that was commonly applied to Hugo Chávez, portraying him as the paradigmatic Latin American 21st century "populist" strongman, was fueled since 2007 by the media hype around a few of the 63 changes[102] proposed in the failed attempt to reform the Bolivarian Constitution. The fixation on the proposal to allow for the possibility of indefinite reelection downplayed proposed changes that entailed a decisive deepening on the democratization of the modern Venezuelan state's relation to subaltern subjects. Paradoxically, the 1999 Constitution already contemplated democratic mechanisms through which social subjects and opposition political actors can recall elected officials and rescind laws approved by the Legislature as well as modify or redraft the national constitution (Arts. 71-74) through citizens' initiative. In other Latin American countries like Honduras, the lack of these mechanisms have led to the first successful coup (see chapter 3) of the 21st century in response to this grassroots demand. In fact, while the failed coup attempt of April 2002 (and the destabilizing strike of PDVSA that took place later that year) evidenced a total disavowal of the 1999

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social programs particularly for neighboring communities" (Parker, 2005, p. 44-45).

[102] Including extending the length of presidential terms and allowing for the president to run for reelection, defining the state as "socialist," reducing the work day to 6 hours (Art. 90), extending the right to social security to informal workers, and including "sexual orientation" as cause for discrimination among others. Many of these other proposals were eventually approved through other mechanisms devised in the 1999 Constitution. Fittingly, I encountered Chávez's 1992 powerful phrase "*por ahora*" used again in public signs as a response to the 2007 electoral defeat.

Constitution by business and military elites, after that point Venezuelan opposition groups began to use these mechanisms to challenge official Chavismo[103]—and continue to do so to this day, now in opposition to the leadership of President Nicolás Maduro Moros. It is important to remember that under President Chávez leadership, Venezuelan went to the polls for four different presidential elections and seven different referenda; the referendum that approved convening a democratic and participatory National Constituent Assembly in 1999 marks the first democratic referendum in Venezuelan republican history.

While most of the hip hop songs discussed in relation to the memorialization of 27F, 1989 explicitly connect this date to April 13, 2002, popular singer Gino González's song "1989: Lumbre de las Mayorías" (2015) most effectively captures the revolutionary poiesis that connects one with the other: "The seeds of screams [of political protest] / if they collectively flourish / will transform silence into / a beautiful song. If we argue our impulses / we ensure our future / as long as we continue to listen / to that February of 1989 / and also April 13th" (2015, min. 3:04-3:27, author's translation[104]). The social explosion and widespread protest of 1989 in Venezuela, "the seeds of screams," opens up two dimensions necessary to subaltern (geo)political participation. First, the conviction that the "instinct" or "impulse" to rebel is legitimately mobilized as the result of collective organization. Second, the capacity to both institutionalize and consolidate this revolutionary impetus with "arguments" regarding the

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[103] Beginning in 2004, when Venezuelans deployed the constitutional provision enabling the revocation of any elected official through a referendum on President Chávez himself—but the referendum saw President Chávez victorious with a 59% of the votes for the "No" option to cutting short Chávez' ssecond term. The only referendum where official Chavismo came out defeated by a narrow margin was the consultation on two sets of proposed reforms to various articles of the 1999 Bolivarian Constitution that took place on December 2007.

[104] "La semilla de los gritos / sí en colectivo florece / el silencio se convierte / en un canto bien bonito. Si argumentamos los ímpetus / se asegura el porvenir / siempre y cuando nos resuene / aquel febrero de mil / novecientos ochenta y nueve / también es trece de abril".

strategic path towards alternative imaginable (geo)political futures; providing in this way the harmony necessary to make music out of the sounds, bodies, and landscapes experienced in daily life.

In one of the many *Librerías del Sur*—state funded libraries that distribute mostly subsidized books and films edited and printed by the public presses like Fundación Editorial El perro y la rana (FEEPR)—that I entered, I encountered a CD entitled *Todo 11 tiene su 13* [Every 11 has its 13]. One of the songs in that compilation that memorialized the April, 2002 events, is entitled "Alerta" by Bituaya, a group composed by Venezuelan musicians that organized a award-winning cultural park called Tiuna El Fuerte[105] in El Valle, a *barrio* located in the southern part of Caracas. This song first called my attention as it evoked a chant that I had heard both in street demonstrations both in Caracas and also in Quito, Ecuador: "*Alerta, Alerta, Alerta que camina / la espada de Bolívar / por América Latina.*" In Bituaya's song, the reference to the sword of Bolívar is gone and the warning is only regarding that "Latin America is walking", is moving; a repeating verse stresses the countries that have changed their constitutions in recent decades (Venezuela, Ecuador, and Bolivia), while also noting Latin American countries that went through armed revolutions in the 20th century, particularly Cuba and Nicaragua. The only historical figure of the 19th century Independence wars led by Bolívar mentioned is that of

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[105] Fort Tiuna is one of the most iconic military installations in the modern city of Caracas, located between Coche and El Valle, and is named after an Indigenous leader of the Caracas peoples that resisted the Spanish 16th century colonial invasion. It was also the last location where Hugo Chávez was first detained during the April 2002 coup attempt. Venezuelan sociologist Irama la Rosa, whom I interviewed in the same area during January, 2008 introduced me to Tiuna el Fuerte, a cultural grassroots collective built on a parking lot between this barrio and an affluent neighborhood of the city. Inaugurated in 2005, Tiuna el Fuerte, that in a play of words highlights the revolutionary legacy of Amerindian Resistance embodied in Tiuna, has become a cultural park, with a variety of social projects such as a Hip Hop School (Tiuna el Fuerte, 2009). It was awarded the first International Award for Public Art (2013), a joint initiative by two magazines *Public Art China* and *Public Art Review* (USA) in 2011.

"Negro Primero" (or First Black), the nickname of Pedro Camejo, who was the first Black official in Bolívar's army, and who initially fought against Simón Bolívar under the command of Tomás Bóves.[106] Showing the importance of what I have called embodied geographies of knowledge, Bituaya represents the historical emergence of Venezuelan *people* vs. regiional elites by stressing Latin/o America as the space where grassroots social movements urban *barrios* and rural *campos*, instead of simply individual national heroes like Simón Bolívar give meaning to revolutionary struggle.

Ten years later, Area 23, a hip-hop crew from 23 de Enero, have memorialized more explicitly "the injustice" of April 11 and the "people's awakening" (2012, min. 0:06-0:10) on April 13, 2002. They identify 23 de Enero, among other *barrios* (min. 0:33-0:38), as the locus of an emerging historical subject, this time capable of demanding respect for the first Constitution to be democratically approved in the polls. In 1989, those impoverished living in the informal settlements of the *barrios* up in the hills or *cerros*—internally displaced from rural areas to cities like Caracas—first came down to "[make] the city tremble" (min. 0:25-0:28) and demand change. Now, identifying as Chavistas they would do it again, "with sadness on their face, hope in their faces, and a rifle of consciousness *llamado Soberano*" (3:40-3:48), to demand the restoration of democratic order under the Chávez presidency and the 1999 Constitution. Chávez's charismatic leadership has been built on naming the people or "*el pueblo*" as "*Soberano*" or sovereign, having a profound pedagogical impact in those who would take to the

[106] Bóves led "royalist" troops, only in the sense that they at times claimed allegiance to the king of Spain strategically in order to challenge the social and economic privilege of white land and slave owners who defended national "independence." The complicated story of General Bóves has been memorialized in a novel and a motion picture that first came to my attention through a video production produced by Hip Hop Revolución (an artistic collective I discuss at length in the following section of this chapter).

streets in order to reaffirm their constituent power and unwillingness to let go of the constitutive historical moment the Bolivarian Revolution unleashed.

Area 23's song ends by suggesting the reversal of the coup against President Chávez is a blow to global imperialism given by grassroots mobilization, condemning the corporate media for not covering the anti-coup protests and identifying the specific sector of the military that rescued President Chávez from his captivity. The song also identifies international solidarity as an important factor: "*El Bravo* [*pueblo*] self-defends from the Tiuna Fort.[107] Liberating skydivers that didn't hesitate, they marched, they attacked, [and] they rescued our sky. Now with so many voices [of solidarity] heard around the world, Venezuela doesn't fear the forces of empire" (2012, 02:58-03:23, author's translation[108]). If before the Venezuelan people was represented with the notion popularized by Chávez of "*el Soberano*," here the song references the national anthem which begins by celebrating "*Gloria al Bravo pueblo*" or "glory to the resilient people," explicitly connecting *barrio* mobilization, with the capacity of a group of the rank and file of the Venezuelan military to rescue Chávez as well as with the need for grassroots transnational solidarity in order to confront the global imperialist reach of capitalist power.

Latin American critical social theories, building on the work of Gramsci, posit the significance of the "popular-national" dimensions, or "*lo nacional-popular*" (Faletto, 1979; Portantiero & de Ipola, 1981; Zavaleta Mercado, 1986; Portantiero, 1991), of social and (geo)political struggles that result in the social forms and formations we invoke when talking about modernity, its (neo)colonial underside, and nation-states as the building blocks of the

[107] See footnote 104.
[108] "Paracaidistas libertarios que no se detuvieron, marcharon, atacaron, rescataron nuestro cielo. Ahora con tantas voces [de solidaridad] que se oye en el mundo entero, Venezuela no le teme a las fuerzas de un imperio."

international community or the capitalist world-system. The grassroots memorialization of the Bolivarian constituent process, its pre-constituent roots in the *popular* uprising of 1989 and the post-constituent challenges codified the events that unfolded during 2002, re-claims the nation[109] away from the state and closer to the praxis of those historically at the state's margins. This (geo)political performance became embodied in the discourse articulated by late Venezuelan President Chávez and the grassroots conversations it seems to continue to catalyze:

> "The key word in Chavez's speeches, to which he returns again and again in the most diverse contexts, is pueblo (people), which is a synthesizing term taking in the popular and the national. He often uses the concept el soberano (sovereign) synonymously with el pueblo. This reiterated appeal to the popular and the national (in which he defends sovereignty by invoking the founding myths of the nation) generates contrasting interpretations and reactions among different sectors of Venezuelan society. For the upper-middle and upper classes and a large proportion of the country's intellectuals, the recurrent appeal to sovereignty is a source of division and animosity, instigating a separation between rich and poor that threatens democratic stability as well as their own personal security and property. [...] The popular sectors to a large degree interpret this discourse in opposite terms. In this second, popular reading, the divisions within Venezuelan society and the exclusion of the majority are not simply a product of Chavista discourse. On the contrary, Chavismo's recognition of the wide gap between rich and poor and its appeals to the majority (el pueblo, el soberano) have a powerful integrating effect. [...] The appeal to the national and to the founding leaders of the nation, far from being perceived as anachronistic, contributes to a powerful sense of identity. There has been, however, much more than what has been disqualified as a "merely symbolic" integrating effect. For a large number of the underprivileged, new historical levels of participation and organization have been achieved and, perhaps most significant, a diffuse process of cultural decolonization appears to be taking place among them (Lander 2005, p. 33-34).

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[109] Argentine sociologist Juan Carlos Portantiero and Emilio De Ipola have argued, building on the work of Antonio Gramsci, that we can understand the "national-popular" (*lo nacional-popular*) and the "state-national" (*lo nacional-estatal*) as configuring one of the central tensions of modern capitalism; "a conflict between two central principles of social aggregation." The hyphenated nation-state is the materialization of the dominant principle which conceives of "the State as [social] 'order' that structures both nationality and citizenship and acts towards the masses as the [legitimate] space where specific conflicts can find resolution in the name of a totality. [...] Obviously, this unity is not eternal [...] If the Nation-State appears incapable of continue to apply its corporatist logic on the political realm [...] we find the presence of disaggregation of the 'national popular' from the 'state-national'; an act of expropriation performed by the people of the national perception that was alienated in the State" (1981, p. 4-5, author's translation).

As frustrated and hopeless Venezuelan sociologist Edgardo Lander sounded when I interviewed him in 2015 given the (geo)political perspective of "progressive" leftist governments amidst the current economic crisis, this process of diffuse cultural decolonization continues to be evident in popular expressive cultures, including its appropriation of public space and alternative forms of organizing daily life; as localized and specific as these cultural engagements with (geo)political struggles against imperialism are, they seem a crucial step in order to ensure a truly popular capacity for self-determination as a precondition to not only claim but also secure (trans)national state sovereignty and (pluri)national self-determination against the current of privatizing tendencies of neoliberal globalization.

Hugo Chávez Frías became the first vocal opponent to neoliberalism to be democratically elected President across the Americas during December, 1998. In the closing speech of his first presidential campaign (Dec. 2, 1998) he already articulated one of his main anti-neoliberal discursive strategies: memorializing historic battles of independence (19th century) and national liberation (20th century) struggles—particularly those led by Simón Bolívar in 19th century South America—in relation to his calls for (geo)political revolutionary action. In this early address to his supporters, Chávez referred to Pedro Camejo, "Negro Primero," inviting those not yet convinced by his candidacy to follow the example of the Afro-Venezuelan Independence martyr[110] and join the side of the Bolivarian Revolution (Ibid., 1999, min 55:00-58:58). Pedro

[110] The image of Pedro Camejo is memorialized on the 5 bolívares bill. In a recent example of the racist undertones with which those who oppose the Chavista government, now headed by President Maduro, attempt to ridicule their political opponents, a video denouncing the worrisome inflation and currency devaluation rates currently confronting the still oil-dependent and heavily import-based Venezuelan economy by identifying what can be bought with a 5 bolivares bill is titled "El Negro primero da risa, luego lástima" [The first Black causes laughter, then pity] (Runrun Studio, 2015). It is interesting to note that amidst the economic crisis, the video shows that books subsidized by the state are still affordable, which is symptomatic of the centrality that the Chávez administration put

Camejo embodies the ambiguities of the (geo)political promise of subaltern decolonial participation inasmuch as it cannot be reduced to electing between representatives but rather forging new social realities through their very participation as historical subjects, capable of (re)producing knowledge and enacting social transformations to overcome racial (neo)liberalism—understood as a double disavowal or evaporation, comprising the apologetic notion of "the end of history" and the inevitability of capitalist globalization and its economic imperatives and social realities while celebrating the dominant discourse of "multiculturalism" that reduces racism to discrimination and the (geo)politics of the subject to identity politics rarifying common sense understandings of race and racism.

David Theo Goldberg introduces the concept of racial neoliberalism calling for a "cartographic comprehension of racially emergent and rationalized threats" (2009, p. 29), which are a central component of neoliberal governmentality (Foucault, 1979 in Lemke, 2001; Dean, 2009; Dilts, 2011) and the institutionalization of the modern state and its racial contract (Mills, 1999; Goldberg, 2002). His conceptualization reveals the possibilities—both theoretical and political—of theorizing race and racism from a global perspective and at postcolonial scale as well as the utility of neoliberalism as a concept to carry out some of these tasks. Although a key part of what neoliberalism entails are the socio-economic policy prescriptions in the form of SAPs we associate with the praxis of international institutions as the World Bank or the IMF, the historical key to understanding the imprint of neoliberalism lies in its relentless drive towards the privatization of the commons (Caffentzis, 2004; Caffentzis & Federici, 2014), what is socially

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on revolutionary cultural (re)production through democratizing editorial and education policies. I expand on this aspect in chapter four.

recognized as public—common spaces, collectively-owned lands, public services responding to basic human needs like water (Bakker, 2007), but also inter-subjectivities, their political discourses, historical memories and their cultural manifestations.

In this vein, I deploy Goldberg's concept of racial neoliberalism to understand the historical process through which neoliberal privatization requires the mechanism of historical evaporation, particularly of the social formation of race that:

> is purged from the explicit lexicon of public administrative arrangements and their assessment while remaining robust and unaddressed in the private realm. Race faded into the very structures, embedded in the architecture of neoliberal sociality, in its logics and social relations. Race lost its social sacrality while retaining its personal cache and privatized resonance, even in the public sphere. (2009, p. 341)

Neoliberalism is first and foremost then the drive towards the privatization of everything, which more than an end goal ought to be understood as both an economic and a (geo)political mechanism. However, privatization should not be understood as merely the opposite of the collectivization or nationalization of private property but rather as it entails the development of all sorts of drives and desires to ahistorically justify and/or disavow the inequalities its dominant logic (re)produces; racial neoliberalism highlights how this logic is at play in modern racism as a constitutive element of the declining public sphere. Neoliberal privatization does not need to make the public irrelevant nor its embodiment in the modern state disappear but rather entails the (re)production of a privatized and privatizing logic as the only possible rational choice in order to "compete in an increasingly globalized world" thus foreclosing the conscious confrontation of the actual problems humanity faces; the historical result of this fragmentary logic that has been instrumental to the rule of (trans)national elites over the majority-world.

Since there are no feasible private solutions for social problems,[111] privatization only distorts our capacity to understand the structural dimension of historical problems like racism. The historical tendencies conceptualized by Goldberg under the rubric of "racial neoliberalism" are also present in the sociological literature on colorblind "racism without racists" (Bonilla-Silva, 2001, 2006), which in turn has been associated with an alleged "latin-americanization" of racial inequalities in the U.S. (Bonilla-Silva and Ray, 2011). Bolivarian Venezuela's left turn towards postneoliberalism has been accompanied by a reversal of these tendencies of pushing racism to private realm, particularly during and after 2002 and the related overt racist attacks and representations of President Hugo Chávez and his followers.

While February, 1989 signified the "shattering" or *el sacudón* of the myth of an "exceptional democracy," the days and months immediately preceding and following April, 2002 destroyed what was left of the associated myth of "racial harmony" that is often implied in hegemonic understandings of Latin American *mestizaje*. In 2002-2003, overtly racist remarks regarding President Chávez and his followers multiplied in order to legitimize the overthrow of his government (see figures 1-9 in Gottberg, 2011), shattering this (neo)liberal mythology most currently phrased in terms of tolerance and diversity. Luis Duno Gottberg has argued that more than "the mere invention of a 'belligerent populist leader.' [… The racist] intensity of the current [political] exchange speaks to the depth of the contradictions revealed by the loss of elite hegemony, which has unleashed social forces that had been previously contained within the framework of an oligarchic democracy and the myth of racial harmony" (Ibid., p. 273). He

[111] This follows from the promise of the sociological imagination (1959) as a mental capacity that allow us to navigate the frustration and anxiety that results from the ideological dimension of the processes of individuation that have characterized capitalist modernity.

proposes the concept of "the culture of ethnopopulism" in order to make sense of contemporary Venezuelan racial politics, identified in the discursive distinction between "civil society" groups opposed to Chávez's leadership and racialized "mobs" or *hordas* as Chavista supporters have been constantly represented in corporate media outlets. This theoretical framework, as discussion on *populism* often does, overlooks the geopolitical dimension of racism and thus tends to reduce to "racial politics" or "racial dimensions" what is in fact a central dynamic of the (geo)political economy of modernity. The framework of *tropicalizations* (Aparicio and Chávez-Silverman, 1997), which builds on the seminal work of Edward Said on the constitutive relation between "culture and imperialism" (1993) and thus on (trans)nationalism, can help us make sense of this significant dimension of contemporary Venezuelan politics.

Drawing on the work of Puerto Rican poet Víctor Hernández Cruz and Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz, Frances Aparicio and Susana Chávez-Silverman introduce the notion of tropicalizations in order to overcome "the unidirectional thrust implicit in Said's theory of orientalism, in which the Arab world is represented under the dominant western gaze, constructed by European discourses exclusively (and thus deprived of agency with regard to its own history and collective cultural identity)" (1997, p. 2). Notwithstanding its limitations, Edward Said's seminal concept calls attention to the geopolitical roots of the sort of epistemological and ontological violence[112] which subaltern studies continue to confront on a

[112] Edward Said argued that "Orientalism can be discussed and analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient -dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient" (1978, 3). The epistemological violence of ontocoloniality (Hesse 2007) lies in the production of statements and views, "knowledge" that authorizes the continuation of (post)colonial domination, often euphemistically referred to as "economic or political restructuring" (i.e. neoliberal structural adjustment).

daily basis. In the context of Latino studies, Aparicio and Chávez-Silverman suggest "tropicalism" would be the etymological correlative to Said's orientalism (1979): "the system of ideological fictions (Said 321) with which dominant (Anglo and European) cultures trope Latin American and U.S. Latino/a identities and cultures" (Aparicio and Chávez-Silverman, 1997, 1). These entanglements between the systems of classification and identification invoked by the notion of "Latin/x American" in turn are revealing of the imperialist relations that have characterized the historical development of the Americas. "More recent instances of U.S. intervention in Latin America make manifest the strong political interests of the U.S. globally, interests that—as Pike has pointed out—were masked by reproducing negative images, by *tropicalizing*, in effect, the target countries and their leaders" (Aparicio and Chávez-Silverman 1998, 8). The case of Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez Frías provides us with a paradigmatic example when we link the racist representations that he personally endured with those of his followers more generally. Moreover, in conjunction with the praxis of Afro-Amerindian social movement organizations, Hugo Chávez himself had come to publicly identify as Afro-descendant and denounce white supremacy and its central role in modern imperialism.

While the racist overtones of the (geo)political opposition to Hugo Chávez became particularly apparent during the open confrontations to his democratic legitimacy that characterized 2002 and 2003, they have not ceased to inform the discourse that seeks to undermine the support of Chavismo, even without the physical existence of late President Chávez. In March 2012, a cartoon (see Illustration 4) published in the newspaper *Tal Cuál* was denounced by various Chavista officials as violating constitutional antidiscrimination protections. The cartoon, by Roberto Weil, presents Chávez as fooling his infantilized supporters

into thinking that dirty water is better with his speech-bubble rhetoric: "Enough of white supremacy… now we have Afro-descendant water." This cartoon combines the transnational trope of populist demagoguery tricking the majority of Venezuelans and Latin/x Americans with the common anti-Black association of blackness with foulness.

Illustration 4. Racist cartoon representation of Chavismo.

(Source: Espaciopublico.ong, 2012).

The second time I visited Caracas, in October 2012, I stayed in a middle class apartment building in front of a shopping mall in the Sabana Grande neighborhood. Two foreign freelance journalists, one from the U.S. and another from the Netherlands, who were covering what would be the last reelection of Hugo Chávez, shared with me a little three-bedroom apartment rented by a middle class[113] Venezuelan who lived with his family on the same floor of the building. Upon

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[113] I use the notion of "middle class" in a descriptive fashion, both as common self-identification of a significant part of a given society and the related characteristic of being relatively well-off in terms of the income distribution of that society; yet it is important to note that when the class is reduced to a scale of income or wealth, the explanatory purchase of the concept, pointing to structural positions as in the Marxist conception of class (Cueva, 1983), is curtailed. This is certainly not to dismiss the notion of "middle" as theoretically insignificant. In fact, I follow Mary Pattillo's call for "a theory of the middle" (2008, p. 304-307) that highlights how "[p]ower is often conceptualized in binary terms –an oppressor and an oppressed –ignoring the reality of multitiered inequalities that create middles, which are both." After noting the efforts of Marxist theorists like Erik Olin Wright who sees "the middle class is

my arrival and once I started to express interest in the changes brought about by the Chávez administration in Venezuela, my "landlord" showed me an example of what he disliked about the self-proclaimed Bolivarian Revolution. Visibly upset, he showed me a little bust of Simón Bolívar that one of the journalists had just bought, and asked: "Do you see? They do not even respect our history, now they want us to believe that Simón Bolívar was a mulatto." While at closer glance it was apparent that a darker hue than usual had been used on the bust, his problem was not actually with the hue used to paint the effigy but rather with an alternative racial project to the (neo)liberal racial formation that has traditionally characterized Latin/@ American patterns of inequality. The racist responses elicited by President Chávez's leadership and the initiatives carried out by his supporters more generally should come as no surprise as President Chávez's rhetoric and more generally the Bolivarian endogenous model of historical development has expanded, both symbolically and legally, the social, political, economic, and cultural rights of all Venezuelans including those Afro-Venezuelans and indigenous inhabitants "regularly berated by the upper and middle classes, who are opposed to the process of political change, as 'vermin,' 'mixed breeds,' 'Indians,' 'barefoot,' and 'rabble'" (Herrera Salas 2007, p. 99). When using these same insults to refer to the President,[114] opposition (geo)political actors seemed unwittingly to have strengthened the identification of impoverished and marginalized Venezuelans with his charismatic leadership and honed their cultural capacity to subvert hegemonic *tropicalism* with revolutionary *tropicalizations*.

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defined by contradiction, for 'they are like capitalists in that they dominate workers [and] they are like workers in that they are controlled by capitalists and exploited within production'" (p. 307), Patillo forcefully argues that "the middle is the place where the actual face-to-face work of inequality transpires."

[114] "Indian, monkey, and thick-lipped" have been some of the more illustrative expressions of this racial contempt that the opposition has directed against Chávez (Sánchez, 2002, in Herrera Salas, 2007, p. 109).

Throughout this chapter I have highlighted the uses and constant reference that grassroots Chavistas make to the 1999 Bolivarian Constitution, the little blue book that Hugo Chávez compared to the Mayan "Book of the People" and that many grassroots organizers carry with them. The organization of study groups that resulted from the initial grassroots participation in the 1999 Constituent Assembly process has also been the subject of two types of racist *tropicalizing*. At the more local level, to call into question the competence of the "ignorant mobs" to deal with constitutional matters, which in 2002 appeared on an opposition internet blog as the racist representation of a monkey holding the 1999 Bolivarian Constitution (see image 9 in Duno Gottberg 2011, p. 288). And at the transnational level, the racist trope of the mindless or ignorant masses often hides behind simplistic dismissals of "populist demagogues" or "strongmen" that inform many discussions of contemporary Latin/x American (geo)politics. In contrast to these dismissive and racist characterizations, however, stand the various invocations of the historical significance of the 1999 Constitution in folk and hip hop music, street art, and other forms of expressive cultures I have used as primary sources to historicize the Venezuelan constituent process.

Many of the audiovisual archives I have analyzed in this chapter resulted from my second visit to Caracas when I encountered the grassroots audiovisual project "*Nosotros con Chávez*" or "We [are] with Chávez" after looking into the cultural production of graffiti, that besides expressing support for the reelection of President Chávez self-defined the revolutionary subject in Venezuela as "*hijos del '89 en revolución*" (Borges Revilla, 2012) throughout the streets of the "racial geography of Caracas" (Ciccariello-Maher, 2007). The project was organized by various revolutionary artists that had created the socio-cultural collective Hip Hop Revolución

(HHR), but also reached out to more popular Venezuelan singers and folk musical traditions like *Joropo*,[115] characteristic of the *llanos* or lowlands, a traditionally rural area in a highly urbanized country (see table 5).

The *musica llanera* song that carries the name of the campaign, "Nosotros con Chávez," by Gino González,[116] characterizes those who make up the "*Nosotros*," more than exalting the individual virtues of Chávez or justifying their support as the usual characterization of charismatic "populism" would expect. González celebrates the indigenous collective grassroots impulse behind the historical significance of President Chávez, while contesting the racist dismissal of Chavistas as "ugly" (Duno Gottberg, 2011, p. 284-5) or "*cara e' culpable*" (González, 2012, min. 1:15)—looking "guilty" or suspicious, at best until proven innocent; a transnational trope that invokes the constitutive racism behind modern forms of state- and market-sanctioned violence. In the third and fourth stanzas, the "*Nosotros*" of the title is defined

[115] Not only is the history of Joropo transnational, since the *llanos* where it is played cut through the Venezuelan-Colombian border, but the first time I was exposed to *musica llanera*, it brought memories of *son jarocho*, a diasporic musical tradition from Veracruz, Mexico that I first heard during my ethnographic research on May 1st memorialization in Chicago. The similarities in some instruments and the centrality of dance in these two traditions called my attention. Later on I found out they both shared a similar fate as the "African-based forms of music, dance, corporal movement—samba and capoeira in Brazil; rumba and son in Cuba; candombe, milonga, and tango in Argentina and Uruguay; merengue in the Dominican Republic—[which] were rejected by white elites and middle classes in the 1800s as primitive, barbaric, and bordering in the criminal; in the 1900s these same dances were embraced as core symbols of national cultural identity" (Andrews 2004, p. 9). Joropo was banned by colonial authorities in what today is Venezuela during 1749—a prohibition that was overturned, however, by the King, based on his viewing of the dance performed by two enslaved Afro-Venezuelans from the Barlovento region. The King decided rather that the dance "shows rural innocence, similar to other dances of Veracruz we have witnessed and have already exonerated" (López Contreras en Vivencias Llaneras del Abuelo, 2012, author's translation). The fandango, a diasporic practice born in Al-Alandaluz, a Muslim-controlled part of the Iberian Peninsula until 1492, had been outlawed by the Spanish Crown in 1640, which required seeking permission for similar musical practices in the American colonies. See the interview with Venezuelan researcher Rafael Salazar on the Afro-diasporic origins of Joropo (Borges, 2014). See also Leymarie, 2015, p. 201-212.

[116] The musical video of the song is staged in a rural cooperative, self-defined as a Cayapa (González, 2012, min 2:36, min 3:34), a concept loaded with ambiguity as it refers to both the Indigenous Venezuelan institutional legacy of forms of organizing collective labor around festive forms of social solidarity while it can also be deployed to negatively refer to a collective abuse by the many of a lone individual.

Table 5. Urban population in Venezuela, Latin America & the Caribbean, and World

	Urban population					Population in the largest city		Access to improved sanitation facilities			
	Thousands		% of total population		% growth	% of urban population		% of urban population		% of rural population	
	1990	**2015**	**1990**	**2015**	**2015**	**1990**	**2015**	**1990**	**2015**	**1990**	**2015**
Venezuela, RB	16,740	27,683	84	89	1.4	17	11	89	98	45	70
World	2,258,356	3,943,073	43	54	2.1	17	16	79	82	34	50
Latin America & Caribbean	314,221	505,589	70	80	1.4	25	23	80	88	36	64

Source: The World Bank

with a plurality of insults with which elites and middle classes characterize impoverished sectors of Venezuelan and Latin American societies more generally: “We are, to the powerful / scum, the mob, lumpen, apes / gangs, tattered / drunks, bums and slackers / vermin, drudges / monkeys, dogs / we are Chavistas / we are the street // We are the poor / We are all with Chávez” (2012, min. 1:35-2:01).[117] Marginalized by capitalism, racialized by the powerful, those impoverished from the *barrios* support Chávez as means to vindicate their condition as historical subjects; in other words to make their own, new history to overcome the coloniality of power and knowledge, which in turn requires “deep thinking”[118] and theorizing.

[117] “Somos pa’ los poderosos / chusma, turba, lumpen, monos / malandros, zarrapastrosos / borrachos, vagos y flojos / los sarnosos, las cachifas / los macacos, el perraje / nosotros somos chavistas / nosotros somos la calle // Nosotros somos los pobres / Todos nosotros con Chávez.” Like many of the other songs analyzed here, it then includes three key dates for the development of the revolutionary capacity of the Venezuelan people: 27F, 1989; February 4, 1992; and 13 (of April, 2002).

[118] Track 19 of the HHR-El Cayapo’s soundcloud digital playlist entitled “Hijos del 89/1989 Lumbre de las Mayorías” (2015) begins with Hugo Chávez’s voice declaring: “This is why capitalists and imperialists do not want

The musical videos in the digital archives available online I have analyzed can be characterized along three lines: historical footage, be it media coverage of events like the Caracazo or fragments of public addresses by Hugo Chávez and his followers, fictional narratives in the form of motion films' clips or other artistic representations, and the embodied performance of historical narratives that have often marked hip hop as a diasporic cultural movement, as well as other grassroots musical traditions like Joropo. The historical narrative in most of these songs connects key dates and events memorializing the lived experiences of impossible subjects, while celebrating the charismatic leaders that often jumpstart revolutionary subaltern participation inasmuch as they come to embody postcolonial lineages of socio-political struggles. These dates provide a historical imprint of the social subject that lies behind the racial and gendered epithets appropriated to highlight both the symbolic and actual violence of racialization coupled with localized experiences of material deprivation and marginalization as well as impoverishing (geo)political forms of economic and cultural dependency. To be clear, I am not suggesting there is an inevitable historical progression from the impossible subjectivities generated by coloniality/modernity to charismatic authority to heightened subaltern participation; however, I do suggest there is an important circuit between the historical figure of late President Hugo Chávez Frías, subaltern decolonial forms of grassroots participation across Latin/x

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us to think. They want to deny [the freedom of] thought. They want to deny us the possibilities of deep thinking, of education. Hence their insistence on telling us what to do. 'Do this! Do that! Do it!' Do what? Towards what end?" (min. 0:01-0:0:22, author's translation). Conscious reflection, endogenous theorizing, "deep thinking" becomes a precondition to become "Historical Subjects" or "*Seres históricos*" (title of Track 14) that through their participation are able not only to celebrate their often disavowed revolutionary history but subvert conceptions of history that render them impossible subjects in the first place. Track 13 entitled "*La Historia*" develops this argument.

America and the ever-looming possibility of the (geo)political short-circuits characteristic of racial neoliberalism and Eurocentric modernity.

Memorializing the Revolution: Re-membering Haiti to unite Latin/x Americans, 2014-1814

The most curious aspect of this story is that no one has said a single word to recall the fact that Haiti was the first country in which 400,000 Africans, enslaved and trafficked by Europeans, rose up against 30,000 white slave masters on the sugar and coffee plantations, thus undertaking the first great social revolution in our hemisphere. Pages of insurmountable glory were written there. Napoleon's most eminent general was defeated there. Haiti is the net product of colonialism and imperialism, of more than one century of the employment of its human resources in the toughest forms of work, of military interventions and the extraction of its natural resources.

-Fidel Castro Ruz, *The Lesson of Haiti* (January 14, 2009)

The previous two sections discussed the historical development of Afro-Amerindian social movement organizations in Venezuela as an important component of the constituent process unleashed with the election of President Hugo Chávez in December 1998. Alongside I analyzed the evolution of President Chávez's charismatic discourse and government policies in relation to the memorialization of anticolonial and anti-neoliberal struggles, particularly through expressive arts and grassroots communications such as musical performances, audiovisual recordings and street art in the form of murals and graffiti. While the different outcomes in terms of constitutional recognition of Indigenous peoples and Afro-Venezuelans is telling of the ongoing relevance of hegemonic understandings of *mestizaje* underlying modern Latin American nation-states, it is clear that a central lesson of the praxis of Afro-Amerindian social movements is the strategic importance of linking efforts to organize local communities through the mobilization of (trans)national appeals and/or challenges to the state; at times, grassroots efforts can take the limited form of strictly national legal reforms, yet they increasingly seem to be mediated by the enactment of international law as well as long-standing traditions of diasporic

solidarity and indigenous resistance. In this section I conclude by discussing another instance of grassroots participation behind the cultural production I used in the previous sections to historicize the Venezuelan Bolivarian Revolution, which illustrates how President Chávez's historicizing discourse and postcolonial charisma should be understood in relation to collective forms of re-membering that seem to characterize the diffuse process of cultural decolonization that seems to have resulted from increased (geo)political participation of subaltern subjects and subjectivities in Venezuela and increasingly in other parts of the continent.

During my second and third visits to Caracas I sought to carry out participant observation of (geo)political rituals where the 1999 Constitution would be explicitly invoked and this diffuse process of cultural decolonization performed. This effort led me to the distinct yet parallel paths of institutionalization and consolidation both in terms of public policy and also in terms of (trans)national grassroots organization. The presidential elections in October 2012 and April 2013 pointed me to these dimensions of Venezuelan social conflict and the transnational circulation of contentious representations of the Bolivarian (geo)political project. Specifically, the efforts of grassroots Chavismo as well as the contradictory efforts of official Chavismo under the Presidency of Nicolás Maduro Moro[119] to sustain the dual appeal of the Bolivarian social programs or *misiones* to 1) organize communities around specific social problems and collective needs identified through grassroots mobilization and 2) to resolve these through direct (geo)political participation. More recent efforts to construct socialist communes around the

[119] President Nicolás Maduro was elected in April 2013 to replace late President Chávez with a narrow margin of the total votes, which resulted in an ongoing attempt by opposition actors to force him out of office before 2019, when his constitutional term would end. Born in the borderlands between Venezuela and Colombia, Maduro has even been accused by some opposition leaders of not having been born in the country.

country in order to overcome dependency on oil revenues signal both a material necessity in face of decreasing oil prices but also the eruption of more radical understandings of direct democracy as a tool for further decolonization.

The collective Hip Hop Revolución, or HHR, which produced the 2012 "*Nosotros con Chávez*" campaign that I analyzed in the previous section, was born out of a transnational initiative of hip hop artists from more than nine countries in the Americas to convene an international summit regularly in Caracas.[120] In 2009, the original HHR collective decided to carry out a national census to identify artists around Venezuela, which resulted in the state-sponsored Popular Schools of Urban Arts and Traditions (EPATUs or Escuelas Populares para las Artes y Tradiciones Urbanas) project, which linked over 50 collectives and over a thousand young people in 17 Venezuelan states. Other educators and community media activists linked to these artists would organize around the unofficial *Misión Boves*, which I analyze in this concluding section to underscore the creative tensions unleashed by Chávez's leadership between public institutions and grassroots subaltern actors organizing at the borderlands of formal state institutions.

In the audiovisual EPATU *Manifiesto* (2010, author's translation), "SCHOOL" is defined as building spaces for militant teaching and learning—radical cultural "PRODUCTION" that builds on "POPULAR" knowledges insofar as it is based on lived "experience and invention" and built out of "the TRADITIONS […] of our Black, Indian, and *llanero* ancestors."[121] With

[120] Beginning with the first "Encuentro de Hip Hop político" in 2003, then the first "Cumbre Internacional Hip Hop Caracas" took place during the World Youth and Student Festival in 2005, and continued annually until its sixth edition in 2011.
[121] "Somos ESCUELA, nos asumimos como militantes y aprendices rebeldes, inventando siempre desde la base y lo POPULAR, porque fundamentamos nuestros saberes sobre la experiencia y la invención, haciendo PRODUCCIÓN

their manifesto, they make explicit their objective of the recuperation of public space, and call on inspiration from subaltern lived experiences rooted in racialized ancestors and modern urban spaces. Overcoming the Eurocentric dichotomy between modern and traditional, which too often forecloses the unexplored possibilities of so-called "classical" sociological theory, these young Venezuelans propose fusions where their artistic praxis bridges between traditional roots in popular and Afro-Amerindian cultures and transitional urban/modern genres such as Hip Hop; they summarize their ultimate goal as forging "respect for the indigenous/endogenous [*originario*], the social [welfare], the grassroots, for the appropriation of the spaces that belong to us"[122] by different sorts of privatization schemes.

Freddy López "Fredlock," a national coordinator of the EPATU project, explains how it found inspiration in the transnational history of "Hip Hop, that is the result of African and Latinx communities living in the U.S. raising their voices to protest their oppression" (VTV 2010, min. 1:52-2:12, author's translation). Moreover, he highlights that while the schools are not exclusively dedicated to Hip Hop, it was the departing point of their efforts for 3 reasons: 1) Hip Hop popularity among Venezuelan *barrio* youth; 2) the potency of Hip Hop's four artistic elements: the words and singing (rap), the musical production (DJs), the body and dancing

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y generando espacios de pensamiento y discusion, apuntando hacia adentro, hacia lo endogeno, invitando a los nuestros a investigar, discutir, accionar y colectivizar, haciendo ARTE, el incluyente, el que nace del pueblo, el que en los museos no se ve, el que aun no se quiere mostrar, el arte de crear en colectivo con la palabra, la pintura, con el cuerpo, el sonido y el espíritu, acompañando las TRADICIONES, porque la rabia de nuestros ancestros negros, indios, llaneros, originaron nuestras artes y las integraron en un solo movimiento, cúmulo de herencias que se transmiten sobre el bombo de un tambor, la lírica de una décima, los tiempos de un joropo y en los pies de un bailador que se funden con las expresiones URBANAS que incentivan el respeto a lo originario, a lo social, a la raiz, a la apropiación de los espacios que nos pertenencen, para lograr el derrumbe del sistema que nos oprime, haciendo revolución como unica alternativa para el avance y la construcción, lo hacemos mediante comunicación, la popular, la rebelde, la que no se vende" (EPATU, 2010).

[122] Last footnote (#130) includes the entire EPATU manifesto in the original language.

(breakdancing), and painting (graffiti and mural art); and 3) the impressive organizational capacity that hip hop collectives had already built around Venezuela when the project started (Ibid., min. 3:24-4:32). A guiding thread in the lyrics of the songs produced by artists that have worked in way or another with the EPATU project is precisely the uncompromising celebratory recognition of this organizational capacity as a result of a long-standing postcolonial history, embodied by leaders like Hugo Chávez or Simón Bolívar yet not reducible to their individual, often contradictory, biographies.

Another historical character memorialized repeatedly in the HHR collective's cultural production is José Tomás Boves, namesake of the *Misión Boves* that is directly related to the cultural praxis introduced in the previous section. Often demonized as an antihero by official Latin American history for battling against Simón Bolívar's Independence army, Boves is vindicated by these grassroots cultural productions as embodying the emergence of a third social force[123] often eclipsed in the colonizer/colonized simplistic dichotomy that pretends to sum up anticolonial struggles: a force without which neither post-colonial emancipation nor modern revolution more generally has ever been successful, the force of the subaltern *wretched of the Earth*.

The simplistic rendering of postcolonial history between colonial and anticolonial fronts only reproduces what Frantz Fanon termed colonial Manicheism,[124] which builds on the

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[123] Gino González, folk *llanero* composer and singer who created the leading theme for the *Nosotros con Chávez* campaign, also sings to Tomás Boves as the "third force" in the emancipatory struggles of the 19th century: "For example in Venezuela, 1814 / Nobody denies how bloody these days were / Yet this is not what makes it so important / Rather it is the character that the [Independence] war took that year [1814] / since there emerged a third force, distinct from the two in combat" (González, 2009, min. 0:59-1:20, author's translation)

[124] "The natives' challenge to the colonial world is not a rational confrontation of points of view. […] The colonial world is a Manichean world. It is not enough for the settler to delimit physically, that is to say, with the help of the army and the police force, the place of the native. As if to show the totalitarian character of colonial exploitation the

temporal-spatial compartmentalization historically imposed by the coloniality of power and its denial of coevalness. The historical figure of José Tomás Boves, who was born in Oviedo, Asturias on September 18, 1782 and died in the battlefield of Urica, Venezuela on December 5, 1814, has been used to re-member the struggles of those who waged class warfare against two enemies: the far-away colonizer enemy embodied in the Spanish King, and the local elites, who often vindicate national sovereignty rendering it a chauvinistic privilege disconnected with other subaltern claims to self-determination.

Through intertextuality that combines the initial verses of singer Gino González's "El corrio de José Tomás Boves"[125] (2009) with a scene from a recent motion picture made about his life titled *Taita Boves* (Lamata, 2010) and a public address where Hugo Chávez vindicates the significance of the Independence struggles of 1814, the HHR campaign "*Nosotros Con Chávez*" (2012) argued that these historical figures are not subjects in themselves but rather are important because they embody turning points in the ongoing struggles of subaltern, impoverished peoples becoming historical subjects, able to transform their own history. Linking the Popular Rebellion led by Boves in 1814 to the anti-neoliberal uprising of the 1989 *Sacudón* (Ibid., min. 04:16), González underscores the importance of memorializing grassroots struggles not only through successful heroes and battles but also through the symbolic ruptures carried out by those rendered impossible by Eurocentric history; which often entails open (violent) confrontation with oppressive social and (geo)political forces. In the cultural production of HHR, the emergent

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settler paints the native as a sort of quintessence of evil. […] To begin with, the affirmation of the principle "It's them or us" does not constitute a paradox since colonialism, as we have seen, is in fact the organization of a Manichean world, a world divided up into compartments" (Fanon, 1963 [1961], p. 41).

[125] An analysis of Gino González song is provided in Misión Boves, 2009 and can be heard in the public radio Alba Ciudad website (albaciudad.org). González's lyrics are musicalized with the traditional Joropo entitled *Pajarillo*.

revolutionary subjects are not only described as “Hijos del ‘89” but also “nietos de Boves”[126] (El Capayo-HHR, 2015).

Even though Boves would die fighting against Bolívar’s *Patriota* army on December 5, 1814, in 2012 President Chávez challenged (February 12, 2012) the official historiography that characterizes Boves as a royalist *caudillo*: an allegedly “unusually cruel” strongman but great military genius who inspired enslaved Afro-descendant and other impoverished subaltern masses working the fields of the Venezuelan *llanos* to violently rebel against the white *patrones* supposedly fighting for “liberty” against European colonial power. Chávez vindicated the 1814 victory of Bóves’ army as a crucial moment teaching Bolívar and many others of the *Patriota* camp, up until that moment composed mainly of *criollo* land-owning elites; according to Chávez, the history embodied in Bóves’ army teaches us:

> that the Venezuelan people wanted a real revolution, not a dumb-show revolution, since the rich here, the rich of Caracas, the landowners of Aragua, did not want to free their slaves, they did not want social equality of Brown, Black, Indian peoples; even Bolívar had not at this point made it explicit he wanted to follow this line. What happened then? Well, Brown, Black, and Indian peoples, the poor, and the poorest decided to go fight with whom offered them [complete] emancipation, and this person was called José Tomás Boves; he was not a royalist! He was waging class warfare. It was a class war. (HHR, 2012, min. 2:45-3:37, author’s translation)

The intersection between class and race in Hugo Chávez’s discursive formulation is not reduced to a simplistic either/or reading nor a list of their interlocking features or points of intersection but rather a complex re-historicizing of how the dominant (geo)political process of classification

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[126] The Soundcloud.com 21 track playlist (El Capayo-HHR, 2015) analyzed earlier connects the memorialization of the *Caracazo* (Track 4) to the postcolonial lineage of indigenous resistance invoked as fallen or “caídos Guaicaipuros” (min. 00:07-00:08) and historicized as “*tantas décadas dando baños de sangre. El miedo parió a rabia en negrura cimarronea, […] agárrense malditos que aquí están los nietos de Boves*” or “so many decades giving [us] blood baths. Fear [then] gave birth to rage into maroon blackness. […] Beware, you damned, here we are, Boves’ grandchildren” (min. 00:11-00:21).

has relied on a process of racialization, which never creates fixed identities but rather processes of subaltern identification forged in the contradictions that emerge in and through social struggle.

As Hugo Chávez would re-member various other times, convincing Bolívar to fight alongside these impossible subjects and their radical claims for self-determination would require not only the local struggles of the popular rebellion of 1814 (Uslar Pietri, 1962) but also the material and moral support of Haiti.[127] Not only the ground zero of postcolonial/revolutionary modernity in the Americas, Haiti is also a painful reminder of the (geo)political cost of challenging modern empires and imperialism. As Latin/x American modern leaders "from Toussaint L'Ouverture to Fidel Castro" (James, 1962) to Hugo Chávez have emphasized, this challenge is, rather than a stance of mindless scapegoating in reference to the anti-imperialist power of the moment, a heroic act of cultural invention/innovation that looks at both the repressed memories of imagined (trans)national communities and the perspectives of more just, egalitarian and diverse forms of social relations and (geo)political organization rooted in traditions that were dismembered by the modern coloniality of power.

In a text written shortly after the catastrophic January 2010 earthquake in Haiti, Chávez (January 17, 2010, author's translation) first argues that peoples across the Americas have a historical debt with Haiti, without the history of which the horizon of an independent Latin America would be unthinkable, and announces an international solidarity campaign spearheaded by Venezuela. The second section justifies Chavista economic policies in relation to the long-

[127] "Haiti: that of Bolívar, the one of Los Cayos expedition (1816) which received the unconditional support of the Illustrious Pétion, who only demanded freedom of the enslaved. Not for nothing our Liberator called him [Pétion] 'the author of our freedom.' There, in touch with the 'most democratic Republic of the world'—his words—, Bolívar ended up building the strength of his revolutionary spirit. Therefore, for us, Haiti is sacred land" (Chávez, January 17, 2010, author's translation).

term horizon of overcoming oil dependency and a rentier economy, a structural transformation that requires global change and remains a shortcoming of official Chavismo. The third and concluding section synthesizes the message of the text, highlighting the strategic dual objective of "dismantling the existing Bourgeois State and speeding up the pace of building the new social and democratic state, of rights and justice, as conceived in our Constitution. [...] we are in a moment of transition. Its consolidation depends, will always depend, on our capacity to materialize the prominence of communal power: of all the expressions of popular power" (Ibid.). The theoretical and historical problem of the *pueblo* becomes the key category to understand the (geo)political problem of transitioning to a new socioeconomic mode of transnational organization; rather than populist demagoguery, Chávez seems to be inviting collective reflection (teaching and learning) regarding grassroots actors' capacity to not only run a modern nation-state but to reinvent through active participation the very "idea of Latin America" (Mignolo, 2007) and its contemporary (geo)politics.

The push to refound state institutions and reimagine (trans)national communities (Anderson, 1999, 2005) has characterized Latin American (geo)politics since at least the anticolonial struggles of the Haitian Revolution (1791-1804)—which show that self-determination cannot be simply legally decreed, and yet that there are important stakes in affirming (trans)national sovereignty. The significance of the performative force of a Constitution then lies not merely in its specific legal provisions but also its capacity to articulate collective identities around a common notion the characteristic *We the People* performed by modern nationalities and states.

The Haitian Constitution of 1805 problematizes the traditional univocality of this gesture, distinguishing between those drafting the constitutional text and the *people*, by listing the specific names of those who claim to speak in name of the "people of Haiti"[128] (Chávez Herrera, 2011, p. 5): a group of "Black Jacobins" (James, 1938) explicitly claiming to represent the largest formerly enslaved population in the wealthiest colony created by European colonialism and protocapitalism.[129] From its very beginning, postcolonial constitutionalism recognizes the imprint of colonial difference (Mignolo, 2008). Anne Gulick analyzes "the 1805 Haitian Constitution's Challenge to Political Legibility in the Age of Revolution" as performing a counter-hegemonic "We are not the people" (2006) contrary to the founding gesture in the *We the People* formulation of western constitutionalism, including its iconic references the U.S. and French Constitutions. Not only did the 1805 Haitian Constitution recognize the colonial fractures that necessarily characterize a postcolonial society—the problem of the color line—but while seeking recognition from the international community (the modern world system of nation-states) it challenged the political (il)legibility of historical subjects not only rendered invisible by Eurocentrism but also rendered impossible subjects within the framework of modern legal instruments such as constitutions (see Mignolo, 2006, p. 321). Postcolonial constitutionalism, then, is marked by this founding gesture of Haitian revolutionary history.

[128] "Both in our particular names as well as in the name of the people of Haiti" (Chávez Herrera, 2011, author's translation).

[129] Here I use "protocapitalism" as shorthand for Marx's classical recognition of the central role of colonialism in the development of modern capitalism: "The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the aboriginal population, the beginning of the conquest and looting of the East Indies, the turning of Africa into a warren for the commercial hunting of black-skins, signalised the rosy dawn of the era of capitalist production. These idyllic proceedings are the chief momenta of primitive accumulation" (1867, Ch. 31).

C.L.R. James' seminal work on the Haitian Revolution provides important historical insight to ground any discussion of postcolonial constitutionalism and/or decolonial democratization struggles: "Toussaint [L'Ouverture], in about 1801 or 1802, came to a conception for which the only word is genius. He wrote a constitution for San Domingo and he didn't submit it to the French Government. He declared in the constitution that San Domingo would be governed by ex-slaves" (2009, 40). The epistemological rupture that asserts the right of the historically subordinate social subjects to self-determination is often overlooked when we speak of *transitions from authoritarian rule* (O'Donnell et al., 1986) or *waves of democratization* (Huntington, 1993). More than simply pacts among (geo)political elites or the mechanical consequence of Western "democracy promotion" and the expansion of capitalist globalization, the constituent moments of any real semblance of modern democracy—as the modern (geo)political project of securing a government for and by the people—result from the revolutionary impulse of grassroots interpellation of those social nodes where power takes shape, namely the modern state and markets as well as the nations and/or nationalities that allow for their current functioning.

Prof. Julio Vivas at the Universidad Bolivariana de Venezuela synthesized the historical connection between the contemporary (geo)politics confronting the Bolivarian revolution and anticolonial grassroots struggles in the following terms:

> "This revolution is nothing else than the ongoing struggle of Venezuelan people for self-determination. To understand it we must go back to 1492. The history of Venezuela is that of all Latin America, of a violated sovereignty ... even worse when there is oil under our soil. [...] It is essential to recover the historical memory of this, of the indigenous revolts against the Spanish empire, of the Venezuelan poor against neoliberal looting [...]" (Interview, January 7, 2008)

The Afro-Amerindian resistance to European colonialism's looting and enslaving of millions of human beings, which includes the Eurocentric denial of historical agency and subjectivity to the majority world, is connected to contemporary forms of neoliberal looting. Neoliberal "accumulation by dispossession" (Harvey, 2005) has not only deepened racialized (post)colonial inequalities but also disavows grassroots (geo)political resistance and resilience as well as its resulting forms of socio-cultural creativity, dismissing them as irrational outburst or explosions, too often reduced to structural or institutional explanatory variables by social scientific research, thus failing to fully grasp the racial dimension of (post)neoliberalism: the two-side coin of interlocking systems of classification that enable modern capitalist development and creative grassroots resistance to the coloniality of power that has resulted in subaltern forms of identification.

The consolidation of both state and market institutions that respond to the market logic of modern capitalism as well as modern challenges to their inevitability have traversed the historical continuities of the (geo)political relations assembled in what Fanon described as the tension between the "western bourgeois racism of contempt" and the Eurocentric "bourgeois ideal of men being essentially equal."[130] Such (neo)liberal tension has been "resolved," however precariously, in the form of structural adjustment schemes and their technocratic discourse, which is central to *born again racism*. "Born again racism is racism without race, racism gone

[130] "The Western bourgeoisie has prepared enough fences and railings to have no real fear of the competition of those whom it exploits and holds in contempt. Western bourgeois racial prejudice as regards the nigger and the Arab is a racism of contempt; it is a racism which minimizes what it hates. Bourgeois ideology, however, which is the proclamation of an essential equality between men, manages to appear logical in its own eyes by inviting the sub-men to become human, and to take as their prototype Western humanity as incarnated in the Western bourgeoisie" (Fanon, 1963 [1961], p. 163).

private, racism without categories to name it as such. […] a racism acknowledged, where acknowledged at all, as individualized faith, of the socially dislocated heart, rather than as institutionalized inequality" (Goldberg, 2009, p. 23). The mobilization of grassroots social energies, public policy and (geo)political postures in Venezuela since the *Sacudón* of 1989, as the cultural workers analyzed in this chapter have memorialized, render visible the structural and institutionalized dimension of racialized inequality and thus has catalyzed transnational antiracist praxis not only in Venezuela but across the Americas and the world.

Upon President Chávez's death on March 5, 2013, the Chilean-born, Chicago-raised and Bronx-based hip hop duo Rebel Diaz produced a tribute to his legacy as leader of the Bolivarian Revolution with a song entitled "Work like Chávez" (Hernandez, 2013). The bilingual rap song stresses that "in Caracas, the [Bolivarian] process moves forward" (min. 0:27-0:36, author's translation). The song underscores some of the most significant accomplishments of Chávez's administration to overcome the socioeconomic inequalities exacerbated by neoliberal structural adjustment throughout the last decades of the 20th century in the form of text superimposed in the music video during the chorus: "Do the mathematics / Hugo Chávez was the baddest / I gotta work like Chávez."[131] Rebel Diaz summarizes the accomplishments of Bolivarian Venezuela's postneoliberalism along three lines: the deepening of subaltern (geo)political participation, a tangible improvement in the lives of impoverished and dispossessed Venezuelans, and the

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[131] The text in the music video during the first chorus of the song highlights "15 internationally monitored and recognized elections" won, a "+60% increase in social spending," a "2,000% increase in the minimum wage," and a constitutionally-enshrined right to free healthcare (min. 1:17-1:35). The second chorus features the constitutionally sanctioned right to free education, a 150 percent increase in university enrollment, the creation of more than 100,000 cooperatives, a 50 percent decrease in the infant mortality rate, and the construction of more than 700,000 public housing units (min. 2:15-2:34).

consciousness among subaltern sectors of the population of their right to demand their basic rights to health, education, and shelter as well as to link their struggles with others around the world.

Rather than simply bringing the state back in to push back against neoliberal privatization, the Venezuelan revolutionary process highlights the importance of *popular* power as the result of (geo)political grassroots participation, that as we have seen, found in the last constituent assembly a space where institutional mechanisms were devised but also where processes of postcolonial memorialization were energized to continue (geo)political efforts to provide alternatives to the pressing (trans)national problems currently faced by Venezuelans—as well as most nations dependent on modern capitalist addiction to fossil fuels. Cultural transformation as a key dimension of revolutionary consolidation underscores the utility of contrasting official and subaltern discourses; the charismatic leadership of Hugo Chávez Frías (to which I return in Chapter 4) cannot be understood apart from specific instances of subaltern praxis such as those encoded in popular expressive arts. The resignification of the historical legacies of (geo)political leaders like Chávez in the early 21st century, and Simón Bolívar or José Tomás Boves during the 19th century, as the consequence rather than the cause of subaltern struggles vindicates the pedagogical dimension of collective subjects on individual leaders, rather than vice versa.

Chapter 3

(En)gendering Constituent Assemblies in Plurinational Societies: Democratization struggles in Ecuador (Honduras and Bolivia)

After decades of invisibility and silence, our country again astonished the world with the vigor and the radical nature of its popular mobilizations, which were surely seen from abroad as spasmodic, irrational convulsions, product of an accumulated, latent discontent. In reality, however, they were remarkably coherent expressions of a collective consciousness with deep historical roots, announcing an alternative vision for Bolivian society. Bolivians have periodically asserted similar alternate national visions in the past at critical junctures when the exclusionary state has fallen into crisis.
-Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, "Reclaiming the Nation" (2004).

In the Ecuadorian case, the concept of plurinationality has been proposed by the Indigenous Movement in order to overcome the [historical] condition of racism and exclusion, and violence that characterizes the modern nation-state for indigenous peoples, yet plurinationality can also open up possibilities to articulate from the state ways to recognize different social diversities, those regarding gender for example.
-Mónica Chuji Gualinga, "Diez conceptos básicos sobre plurinacionalidad e interculturalidad" (2008, author's translation).

To confront the persistent opinion regarding indigenous peoples being opposed to development, we say that this notion is totally false, since an environmental crisis such as the one our planet is experiencing requires an overdue questioning of the model of development that has been imposed as well as the consequences of the unmeasured consumption of fossil fuels and the systematic destruction of rivers to satisfy the energetic addiction of wealthy countries in the world and the blind followers of this obsolete model. We highlight our [historical] condition of Indigenous peoples and refuse the tag of "ethnic minorities" assigned to us by the [Honduran] nation-state as well as the private media; this compartmentalization is a denial of our historic rights as peoples, an attempt to transform us into mere ethnic minorities without a single right.

-Declaration of the Encounter of Indigenous Peoples of Honduras for the Defense of Our Territories (COPINH, 2010, author's translation).

Two social forces marked the turn of the century for Ecuadorians, in particular, and Latin/x Americans more generally: the resurgence of Afro-Amerindian (geo)political organization and grassroots mobilization as well as the profound social impact of heightened (trans)national migration and forced displacement as a result of armed conflict or extractive economic activities. The processes of grassroots organizations jumpstarted in the 1970s and 1980s by Andean and Amazonian Indigenous social movement organizations resulted in a series of sustained *levantamientos* or uprisings, which demanded the refounding of the state through a constituent process recognizing the diversity of social subjects that make up Ecuador, both in practice, through mechanisms of meaningful (geo)political participation, and in theory, articulating *plurinationality* as the constitutional framework to reimagine the meaning of citizenship and the institutions that mediate it in a democratic society. The economic crisis of the "lost decade," as the 1980s came to be known in Latin America, in Ecuador lasted through the rest of the century, resulting in chronic political instability and pushing a record number of over a million Ecuadorians to become transnational migrants in the early 2000s.

While many of this migratory wave left the country towards historic destinations in the U.S.,[132] Ecuadorian migrants increasingly shifted their travels towards Spain[133] and, to a lesser

[132] "Throughout most of the 1980s and 1990s, international migration from Ecuador was highly concentrated in the southern provinces of Azuay and Cañar, from which most made their way to New York City" (Kyle and Siracusa, 2005, p. 159) and other global cities like Chicago. These Ecuadorian migrant communities continued to grow as a result of "the panic to leave" that resulted from the economic crisis (Jokish and Pribilsky, 2002) at the turn of the century when international emigration became widespread throughout the country and at all socieconomic levels. While any undocumented population is difficult to estimate, the Ecuadorian diaspora is calculated to include more than two million people, approximately half of whom live in the U.S. "Between 1999 and 2000 alone, 400,000 Ecuadorians joined their one million compatriots already in the United States" (Kyle and Siracusa, 2005, p. 60). See also Kyle, 2000; Pribilsky, 2007.

[133] "Departures to Spain escalated from 5,000 people in all of 1994 to more than 7,000 per month in 2000. Before April, 2003, Ecuadorians entered Spain legally as tourists without visas, but generally almost immediately sought employment rather than tourism, thus making their status illegal" Kyle and Siracusa, 2005, p. 60). The most recent calculations suggest over 950,000 Ecuadorians migrated between 1999 and 2007, mostly to Spain and Italy (El

extent, other European destinations in the first years of the 21st century. An iconic sight during the first years of the century in the southwestern end of Quito's old international airport, later memorialized in a mural sculpture titled *El Adios*, or The Farewell, by Fernando Rivera and Francisco Ramírez (see ExpresARTE, 2012), was the silent congregation of families to see off the airplanes that took their relatives towards the global north. "Near-complete state collapse in the late 1990s has brought a dubious success: it has caused the rapid development of mass migration to the United States and Europe of broad sectors of Ecuadorian society, producing more than US$ 1 billion per year to the Ecuadorian economy in remittances. Migrants' remittances [...] are second only to the country's oil revenues" (Kyle and Siracusa, 2005, p. 161), and have become crucial for sustaining an economy without a national currency since Ecuador adopted the U.S. dollar in 2000.

Not only would Ecuadorian migrants become the second most important source of foreign revenue but they also would be recognized as (geo)political actors by the government of the *Revolución Ciudadana* or Citizens' Revolution after the 2006 election of President Rafael Correa Delgado. When President Correa asked Ecuadorian migrants for their support in the referendum to approve the 2008 Constitution he underscored the unprecedented capacity for emigrants to elect and be elected government representatives. Moreover, he argued that for Ecuadorians to say "we are all migrants" is not merely a metaphor or a nice slogan since "we all have in our families someone that is far away, that we miss deeply" (Correa, 9/16/2008, min. 0:48-0:59). Vowing to work at the same time to create the conditions for Ecuadorians to return to their home country, President Correa also offered diplomatic support to ensure the wellbeing of

Telégrafo, 2016).

those who decide to stay in their host countries: "strengthening our links with our brothers and sister living abroad, [as well as] applying the principle of reciprocity with immigrants entering the Republic of Ecuador, including with the right to vote" (Ibid., min. 5:28-5:45).[134] This history has resulted in a powerful perception among Ecuadorians of being part of a country of migrants. At the same time, these developments have taken place in a country where indigenous social movements managed to develop a sort of "veto power" to certain government policies aligned with the neoliberal Washington Consensus during the last decade of the 20th century.

These social forces have their imprint on the declaration of the Ecuadorian State as *plurinational* (Art. 1) in the 2008 Constitution, as well as the vindication of the right to nondiscrimination specifically for one's "migratory condition" (Art. 11). Moreover, Art. 40 explicitly recognizes "the right to migrate. No human being will be identified or considered as illegal as result of migratory status." This article is the first of three articles that make up section three of chapter three of the 2008 Constitution (Title II), entitled "Rights of persons and groups with priority attention" from the state. The following chapter, titled "Rights of communities, peoples, and nationalities" includes 5 articles, the longest of which (Art. 57) was in part set to music by Alex Alvear[135] (2013) to accompany protests against President Correa's government's announcement that it would allow for oil exploration and exploitation in the Amazonian

[134] An important commitment as Ecuador hosts the largest community of refugees in Latin America, the overwhelming majority of whom are Colombians escaping the violence of the longest standing internal armed conflict in the Western Hemisphere (See ACNUR/UNHCR, 2016; Clark, 2003).
[135] Alvear is a musician and musical producer that became a migrant himself in 1985, when he left to Berkeley, CA both to continue his studies and to escape the repressive environment under the neoliberal government of León Febres Cordero (1984-1988)—which had briefly kidnapped him, confusing him with a member of the Alfaro Vive Carajo guerrilla group. Although his musicalization of Art. 57 protests the decision to exploit some of the oil in the Yasuni national reserve, he also collaborated with the Ecuadorian Ministry of Culture and Heritage to produce a song collectively performed by Ecuadorian artists living around the world, "De Donde Vengo" (Valencia, 2015).

Yasuni[136] National Park, despite the previous recognition of the existence and rights of "territories of peoples in voluntary isolation" in the Park (see Ibid.). The condition of statelessness emerges as a common historical condition between the fate of migrants and refugees and Afro-Amerindian peoples—particularly peoples in voluntary isolation—who were clearly recognized as subjects of rights in the last Ecuadorian Constituent Assembly.

Susana Sawyer's ethnographic account of "indigenous politics, multinational oil, and neoliberalism in Ecuador" (2004) shows how plurinationality emerges as a strategic move by which indigenous nationalities' social movements in the Ecuadorian Amazon articulated (geo)political demands and performed protests and demonstrations in the national capital of Quito during the last decade of the 20th century: "By unhinging the hyphen between nation and state, subaltern groups redeployed nation-as-symbol, turning it into a site of struggle for forging an alternative politics of difference with material effects" (p. 222). However, this "unhinging" and its material effects remains contested inasmuch as subaltern subjects continue to be marginalized from the means to full institutional organization and participation in the imagining and re-membering of the collective (trans)national identities embodied in the classification of modern states, as international players as well as competing forms of (trans)national identification.

The rethinking of these crucial aspects of modernity is analyzed in this chapter in reference to the most recent[137] constitutional redrafting processes in the Andes, in Ecuador in

[136] I discuss the Yasuni-ITT initiative promoted initially by the RC and President Correa as well as its demise in the third section of this chapter.
[137] While the Bolivian Constitution is the most recently approved in the Americas, the Ecuadorian Constituent Assembly is the most recently to be organized. Around ten Latin American nations have convened Constituent Assemblies or Constitutional Conventions since 1984 (Nicaragua in 1984, Guatemala in 1985, Brazil in 1988,

particular but also providing a glimpse into the case of Bolivia as well as Honduras, a Central American nation where the attempt to redraft the national constitution led to a coup d'état against President Manuel Zelaya in 2009. This chapter also seeks to contribute to the effort of "making feminist sense of neoliberalism" by exploring the ambivalence and contradictions that emerge from "the institutionalization of women's struggles for survival in Ecuador and Bolivia" (Lind, 2002), especially, and Latin/x America more generally. In this vein I understand the demand to redraft national constitutions as a breaking point between traditional neoliberal regimes that preceded these Ecuadorian and Bolivian Constituent Assemblies and the allegedly "post-neoliberal" constituent moment their supporters claim these documents institutionalize. However, I stress that "post" is best understood as a moment where is possible to further refine our understanding[138] of what *neoliberalism* really entails rather than as a complete reversal of the intellectual project, public policies, and social realities[139] associated with the concept. While I focus on particular provisions of the 2008 Ecuadorian Constitution and the process around its

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Colombia and Paraguay in 1991, Peru in 1992, Argentina in 1994, Ecuador in 1998 and 2008, Venezuela in 1999 and Bolivia in 2006). Only Ecuador has carried out a Constituent Assembly process twice in a decade, making it a particularly interesting case as it allows comparison between the two Ecuadorian Constituent Assembly processes and with others in the region, and reminds us of the limitations of methodological nationalism (that is, privileging one or another national experience without understanding their transnational implications and influences).

[138] Here I am inspired by Mary Louise Pratt's conception of *postcolonialism*, which in turn builds on the work of "Graciela Montaldo [who] has said that in Latin America in general, postmodernism 'serves primarily as a way of thinking about the scope of our modernity' (1977, 628). The analogous point might be made for the term *postcolonial*. If so, the prefix *post* refers to the fact that the workings of colonialism and Euro-imperialism are now available for reflection in ways that they were not before" (2008, 460). Space for reflection is a (geo)political achievement, as the grassroots struggles documented in Chapter 2 show.

[139] These three dimensions proposed to think about neoliberalism (as an intellectual project, as government policy schemes, and as socio-cultural lived experience) evoke the three "worlds" or "faces" model to conceptualize neoliberalism suggested by Stephanie Lee Mudge (2008). Overlapping in the first two, what she defines as intellectual and bureaucratic fields, the third she terms "political," which I agree is key to understanding neoliberalism, but that I underscore has to include the contentious realms of subaltern lived experiences often not included in the dominant definition of what counts as political. For a profound treatment of the political culture neoliberalism seems to have created from below see Gago, 2014, forthcoming in an English translation entitled *Neoliberalim from below: Popular Pragmatics and Baroque Economies* (September, 2017).

approval in the polls, I draw comparisons to Bolivia and Honduras, where the concept of *plurinationality* has also played a central role, encapsulating the challenge posed to (neo)liberal understandings of democracy as the (geo)political regime characterizing modern nation-states while highlighting the ongoing forms of marginalization it authorizes.

The Bolivian history leading to the latest Constituent Assembly experience is well documented as a key case to study the racialized tensions related with expanding political participation of historically marginalized social subjects in open resistance to the privatizing tendencies of neoliberal globalization. The remarkable levels of attention and analysis of modern Bolivian (geo)politics are the result of many factors, including but not limited to: the significant capacity for organization and mobilization shown by Bolivian society during the anti-neoliberal struggles around the privatization of natural resources at the turn of the century, often memorialized as the Water and Gas Wars (Assies, 2003; Perreault, 2006; Spronk, 2007; Spronk & Crespo, 2008; Hicks et. al, 2009; Perreault & Valdivia, 2010; Larner & Laurie, 2010; Simmons, 2016); the vibrant anti-colonial public sociology (Buroway, 2005) scene[140] that accompanied the anti-neoliberal praxis of social movements during the last decades (Tapia 2005, 2007, 2008; Prada Alcoreza, 2003, 2014) with the impulse of their predecessors' crucial

[140] The history of *Grupo Comuna* shows the important role that social scientists and intellectuals more generally have had in contemporary Bolivian History, particularly as interpreters of the social movements confronting the crisis of the Bolivian State during the first years of the 20th century. Its members included "a motley array of intellectuals from very different backgrounds" including "Raúl Prada, member of the group *episteme* which sought to use French post-structuralist anthropology to intervene critically in the contemporary Bolivian political scene; Luis Tapia, a scholar of counterculture informed by the writings of Antonio Gramsci and the Bolivian sociologist René Zavaleta Mercado; and finally, two critical Marxist intellectuals who had just been released from prison [in 1999] following their involvement in an Indianist guerrilla group called the EGTK [*Ejercito Guerrillero Tupak Katari*], Raquel Gutiérrez Aguilar [a Mexican sociologist whose dissertation work was on grassroots struggles in Bolivia] and Álvaro García Linera" (Baker, 2015), who eventually became the Bolivian Vice-President elected with President Evo Morales in 2005. See García Linera et al., 2000 and Gutiérrez Aguilar et al., 2002 for two seminal examples of the intellectual production of *Grupo Comuna*. See also Stefanoni, 2008.

contributions (Zavaleta Mercado, [1979-1983] 1990; Rivera Cusicanqui [1984] 2003); and the potent symbolic gesture of having an elected (geo)political leadership that self-identifies as Aymara or Quechua (see Albro, 2006; and Mignolo, 2006) in a country and a continent marked by the historical marginalization of Afro-Amerindian peoples and nationalities. The breadth of ethnographic accounts (Grey Postero, 2007; Schavelson, 2009, 2012; Fabricant, 2012), documentary film (Parellada, 2008), and scholarly research (Kohl & Farthing, 2006; Dangl, 2007; Kaup, 2012, García Linera, 2014, Gutiérrez Aguilar, 2014) more generally—including publications sponsored by the office of Bolivian Vice-President Álvaro García Linera, such as an *Encyclopedia* (Pinto Quintanilla, 2013)—regarding the Bolivian Constituent Assembly allowed me to rely on these secondary sources to craft a historical comparative analysis while focusing my empirical research on the primary sources I considered for Ecuador as a positive case of contemporary postcolonial constitutional redrafting and Honduras as a negative case where the demand to overhaul the national Constitution has been effectively blocked by (geo)political elites.

In this chapter I discuss how the concept of plurinationality was theorized before, during, and after the last Ecuadorian and Bolivian Constituent Assemblies amidst the organizing and mobilization of Afro-Amerindian, feminist, LGBTQ and migrants' social movement organizations across the Americas. The first section focuses on Ecuadorian self-recognition as a plurinational state and the necessary conceptualization of plurinationality in relation to the praxis of Afro-Amerindian social movement organizations, including the moral witnesses and organic intellectuals who work alongside them. I compare my ethnographic engagements with the (geo)political deployment of the concept of *plurinationality* made by Ecuadorian and other

Latinx migrants in Chicago and (geo)political actors in Quito with the growing research documenting the impact of the Afro-Amerindian Diaspora and their transnational praxis, particularly in the Andean[141] world. The significance of the postcolonial constitutional recognition of the need for the modern state to respect, even ensure, the self-determination of multiple *nationalities* goes beyond the Eurocentric pretension of representation as the basis for meaningful democratization; different social conflicts that have emerged as a result in the Ecuadorian case will be discussed in relation to the conceptual contribution that the framework of Andean plurinationality entails.

In the second section I discuss the central role of Afro-Amerindian women particularly and feminist activists more generally during the most recent Constituent Assembly process in Ecuador; not only during the initial vindication of the need for participatory Constituent Assembly processes but also in pushing the limits of the modern nation-state, enacting their (geo)political rights often in overt defiance to the modern state's institutionalizing logic. Focusing on specific gendered debates that characterized the 2007-2008 Ecuadorian Constituent Assembly and its aftermath, this section draws comparisons with the unauthorized, grassroots Self-convened Constituent Assembly of Indigenous and Black Women of Honduras (Asamblea

[141] A social fact (Durkheim, 1895) constantly confronted in my ethnographic research is the ambiguity of the notion of the "Andean world." A socio-historical identity product of the modern geographical and (geo)political classification of the modern world, it "can come with a geographic understanding that includes all countries crisscrossed by the Andes [mountain range]; it can be a normative constitutional understanding and refer to those Andean countries that have undertaken constitutional reforms since the 1990s; even a more limited normative vision focused on the Bolivian and Ecuadorian Constitutions, that establish norms related to a new paradigm; and also it can also mean in socio-political terms, engaging all countries in the Andean region where we struggle and resist the [modern] nation-state and its legal framework. In this last sense, we will deploy the concept of 'Andean world'" (Ávila Santamaría, 2011, p. 25, author's translation).

Constituyente Autoconvocada de Mujeres Indígenas y Negras de Honduras) that took place in July 2011.

The concluding third section begins by contrasting the 2008 Ecuadorian Constitution with the unofficial grassroots Political Feminist Constitution of the State (Constitución Feminista Política del Estado) (Mujeres Creando, 2009), which resulted from Bolivian feminist critiques of the ongoing patriarchal logic still maintained in the official Political Constitution of the Plurinational State of Bolivia of 2009, specifically their provisions regarding education. Reflecting on what I refer to as the gendered paradoxes of postcolonial (trans)nationalism and the *queer* (geo)political and theoretical perspectives hinted in the last Ecuadorian constituent process and its reverberations across Latin America, I briefly discuss my ethnographic engagements within a historic Ecuadorian public university going through profound changes in order to respond to the provisions envisioned in the 2008 Constitution. I do this by critically assessing the arguments articulated by Economist René Ramírez Gallegos, head of the National Secretary of Higher Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (Senescyt), who has dubbed the ongoing process "The Third Wave of Transformation in Ecuadorian Higher Education: Towards the constitutionalization of the *Buen Vivir* society" (2013). The (geo)political tensions that emerge from contrasting these "constituent" documents have to do with the theoretical, epistemological and political problem of the social subject(s) and political actors leading contemporary revolutionary transformations.

Transnational citizens and plurinational states: Indigenous peoples as first postcolonial nationalities and migrant workers as embodied contradictions of neoliberalism, 1986-2009

In 1986, there were many days of cohabitation of the different [nationalities] united by a colonial lack of [mutual] awareness, between peoples who found as their only reason [to unite] the violence against our own identity. Without

a doubt, as peoples, for many centuries we have been treated as the most dispossessed, and some still try to make us so, unconscious of whom we really are. [...] In that Congress an alliance was formalized and gave birth to what is today the *Confederación of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador* CONAIE. [...] The encounter of different voices regarding the identification as nationalities, the demand to break away from the liberal state, constituting a great *minga*[142] to build the plurinational option, was part and parcel of the birth of the unity of our voices.

-Luis Macas, "Building from history: the resistance of the Indigenous Movement in Ecuador" (2009, p. 83, author's translation)

On September 28, 2008 and January 24, 2009, Ecuadorians and Bolivians respectively approved the final drafts of the newest Constitutions in the Americas through democratic processes unprecedented in their republican histories, including but not limited to referenda and other electoral mechanisms. The 444 articles that Ecuadorians approved in the polls were drafted between the November 30, 2007 and July 24, 2008,[143] while in Bolivia the Constituent Assembly process started on August 6, 2006, one month after the democratic elections of representatives to the Assembly took place, and lasted until December 9, 2007. Ecuadorians elected 130 representatives to the Constituent Assembly on September 30, 2007, including 6 representatives of its citizens living abroad. The 255 representatives elected by Bolivians then elected Silvia Lazarte, a Quechua woman and farmworker union leader from Cochabamba, as the President of the Bolivian Constituent Assembly. Historical spaces where different anti-neoliberal struggles converged with widespread hopes for a different sort of state, capable of mediating between various peoples and nations by empowering those rendered invisible by the hyphenated modern nation-state, these Constituent Assemblies also witnessed patent expressions of the profound

[142] A traditional social institution commonly associated with Indigenous communities in the Central Andes, the *minga* is a form of reciprocal and collective labor "volunteered" for the commons or the commonwealth of the community. However, important variation has been reported as to how *mingas* are perceived in different communities. Anthropologist Mary Weismantel's study of "Food, Gender and Poverty in the Ecuadorian Andes" noted that in Zumbagua (a small community where President Rafael Correa was a Catholic volunteer in his youth), the word *minga* evoked forced labor in the hacienda and other activities imposed by either the government or church representatives, instead of being considered a tradition rooted in the community (1988, p. 81).

[143] The date was symbolically chosen to commemorate Simón Bolivar's birthday, July 24, 1783.

inequalities that characterize Latin/x America and the world more generally. Silvia Lazarte experienced this firsthand, receiving racist insults such as "*chola*[144] *ignorante*!" (García Recoaro, 2014, p. 182) from her own peers representing the opposition parties in the Bolivian Constituent Assembly.

These Constituent Assemblies marked the end of a cycle of socio-economic crisis marked by the armed retreat of the state (Gill, 2000), often characterized by the violent privatization and commodification of public goods and services and, consequently, (re)producing long-standing grassroots resistance to the historical dispossession that marks the daily lives of those who Frantz Fanon theorized as "The Wretched of the Earth" (1961). These constituent processes clearly find their pre-constituent impulse in the resistance that took the shape of street protests and other forms of grassroots organization and mobilization that during the 1990s pushed Andean indigenous social movements to the forefront of anti-neoliberal resistance (Yashar, 1999; Van Cott, 2000, 2002, 2003; Sawyer, 2004; Gustafson, 2009; Becker, 2010; Fabricant, 2012; Mattos Vazualdo, 2013). "In Ecuador and Bolivia, in particular, indigenous movements have spearheaded these society-wide protests" and the resulting demand to redraft national constitutions as a mechanism to push "forth a *new* postliberal challenge that calls on states to incorporate *heterogeneous* notions of *who* is a citizen, *how* citizenship is mediated, and *where* authority is vested" so as to "accommodate the claims of the individual alongside with claims for the collective. As such, they

[144] Anthropologist Mary Weismantel has explored the intersections between race and sex in the Andes in part through the historical character of the *Chola*: "In South America, the image of the chola is a sunny one: a brown-skinned [Quechua or Aymara] woman who sits in the plaza at midday selling ripe fruit and fresh flowers. Beloved denizen of the traditional Latin city, she appears in the popular imagination in a gathered skirt and a big hat, laughing and gossiping with her companions" (2001, p. xxi). Although "beloved" in popular imagination, the epithet is clearly paternalistic and denigrating used in the context of a political assembly.

are fundamentally rethinking the homogenizing and liberal precepts of contemporary citizenship regimes *and* the state" (Yashar, 2005, p. 285) along with their codification in modern constitutionalism.

Opening a third decade of constitutional reform in Latin America (see BBC, 2007), Ecuador became the only country to convene more than one Constituent Assembly in a decade. In 1997 an interim President[145] was forced to convene a Constituent Assembly process after the first of many abrupt interruptions in the constitutional democratic order that began in 1979 after the last military dictatorship in Ecuador. Although it was ultimately used as a mechanism to rebuild legitimacy to carry out further neoliberal reforms, the demand for a Constituent Assembly arose from the historical demands of CONAIE and other social movement organizations, that since 1990 had vindicated the need for Ecuador to be recognized as a "plurinational state" (see *Los 16 puntos* or the Sixteen Demands of the 1990 Indigenous uprising) and ensure social protections opposed by market-driven reforms. While these grassroots actors manage to secure some participation in the drafting process and make their imprint felt in the 1998 Constitution, concepts like plurinationality and the recognition of Afro-Ecuadorians and Indigenous communities as subjects of collective rights were diluted in a neoliberal framework which has characterized dominant notions of multiculturalism. Nonetheless, social movement organizations like CONAIE

[145] Fabian Alarcón, who presided over Congress at the time, broke the Ecuadorian constitutional order by blocking what would have been the first woman President in Ecuadorian history. President Abdalá Bucaram, toppled in 1998, had been elected with Vice-President Rosalía Arteaga, a lawyer from Cuenca, the third largest city in the country. See Lind (2003, p. 188) for an account of the feminist critiques of this and other decisions of Alarcón's brief interim government. For discussions on the political instability that marked Bucaram's six-month government see De la Torre 1996, Cuvi 1997.

consolidated grassroots dialogues that generated proposals for a new constitution and further theorized concepts like plurinationality and interculturality (CONAIE, 1998).

As historic CONAIE leader Luis Macas has argued, the framework of plurinationality is a result of the dual process of grassroots organization of indigenous peoples to develop mutual awareness among diverse communities and peoples as *nationalities* as a precondition to develop the capacity of rethinking and remaking the state:

> The 1990 uprising […] was the result of the problem of land and territories, because of discrimination, because of racism, which are still problems we face to this day. Now is the time to discuss what is the State, what is the purpose of the State, what we have to do, *compañeros y compañeras* [in relation to the State]. We are often called "organizations"; according to the law, we, CONAIE, is defined as a corporation. But we, *compañeros y compañeras*, have to be clear that, in order to be able to debate with anyone, we are nations. We are nations because we have territory, because we have a language, because we have a history of our own, and we have our own spirituality and that is why in the new Constitution we are saying loud and clear, we need to articulate a plurinational State." (3rd CONAIE National Congress in Cueva, 2009, min. 24:34-25:44, author's translation)

Despite the (geo)political opposition to CONAIE's proposal for the constitutional recognition of the Ecuadorian State as plurinational, on the grounds that this would weaken the authority of the State and foment the "balkanization" of the country, the 1998 Constitution compromised to recognize the Ecuadorian State as "pluricultural and multiethnic" (Art. 1). A paradoxical indictment since, as the 2008 Constitution would articulate, the notion of *plurinationality* seeks to reconstitute transnational links that predate modernity and are in fact foundational to the modern "idea of Latin America" (Mignolo, 2007) vis-à-vis the fragmentation of Latin America and the Caribbean into many postcolonial nations instead of a Federation of States similar to North America.

However, the framework of plurinationality has been deployed by Afro-Amerindian social movement organizations like CONAIE not only to envision a future democratic state but, perhaps most importantly, to make sense of their own history of grassroots organization and mobilization. From the early efforts evoked by Luis Macas to generate the organizational capacity for unprecedented *levantamientos* or uprisings (see Becker, 2010, chapter 2) that paralyzed the country during the first half of the 1990s[146] to the creation of the political party Pachacutik, evoking an Andean concept for revolution, plurinationality is a (geo)political project weaving the democratizing struggles of Afro-Amerindian peoples. "In the Pan-Andean Quechua language, *pacha* means 'time' or 'land,' and *kutik* means 'a return.' Hence, the word signifies change, rebirth, and transformation, both in the sense of a return in time and the coming of a new era" (Ibid., p. 12). Self-recognizing as historical subjects of an ongoing revolutionary transformation, plurinationality becomes both a vindication of this condition, historically denied by the racial state and Eurocentric modernity, and a radical framework to rethink the social diversity, or rather the logic of the colonial/modern difference that characterizes postcolonial social formations.

Mónica Chuji Gualinga, a Kichwa woman from the Amazon region of Ecuador who led the commission on natural resources and biodiversity of the Constituent Assembly that convened in Montecristi during 2008, emphasizes the significance of the recognition of a plurinational state in Ecuador in similar terms. The demand for constitutional recognition of plurinationality was linked to the necessity of convening a constituent assembly since a mere process of constitutional

[146] "This series of three uprisings, the 1990 levantamiento, the 1992 caminata, and the 1994 movilización, gained Ecuador the reputation as home to the strongest Indigenous movements and one of the best-organized social movements in the Americas. Despite their significant gains in raising the public profile of their concerns, however, activists had made very little headway in concretely altering government policies" (Becker, 2010, p.41).

reform, as she characterizes the 1998 process, cannot reconstitute state institutions in need of decolonization as a precondition for meaningful democratization. Noting that the concept of *plurinationality* is not unique to the Andean context but that it is part of the narratives of many European countries such as Spain and Switzerland, Chuji nonetheless asserts the roots of the concept as it has emerged in contemporary Latin American politics:

> “[While] this is a reality that is apparent in Europe, here the spirit of ‘plurinationality’ is also defended but from a different viewpoint. In other words, here we have nations that preceded the Ecuadorian nation-state that have been discriminated against; here we have a colonization that is evident even in the mentality that portrays the popular class, [historically marginalized] social sectors, and even grassroots organizations [*gremios*] as political actors that in a given moment come to the streets to merely throw rocks, they are never seen as actors capable of development.” (Interview, July 30, 2009)

Hence, the historicizing imperative behind the framework of plurinationality is based both on the recognition of *nations* and *nationalities* that have a broader history than that of the modern nation-state and on the agency of diverse communities and peoples questioning the impossibility for them to become (geo)political actors capable of historical development, not merely resistance and agitation.

The concept of plurinationality also invites reflection regarding the distinction between citizens and nationals (see Becker, 2003, p. 126-8), which haunts most of Ecuadorian constitutionalism. While Ecuador has had more than twenty constitutions in less than two hundred years of republican history, it was only after the last military dictatorship in 1979 that its constitution dropped the literacy requirement for the right to vote. As many have noted, the overwhelming majority of Ecuador’s previous constitutions have been characterized by stringent citizenship requirements, which ensured the hegemony of a mostly white, male elite: “Unstated

but explicit was the requirement that citizens be white males" (Becker, 2010, p. 47) since the first Constitution of 1830. "With some minor variations (in subsequent constitutions, the age requirement varied between eighteen and twenty-one years, the property requirements were eliminated in 1861, the marriage requirement was dropped in 1897, and women were included in 1929, but the literacy requirement was retained until 1979), this has been the determining factor of citizenship until the late twentieth century" (Ibid., p.48). Hence Afro-Amerindian peoples and women in general born in Ecuador have been recognized as *nationals* yet their full citizenship[147] would not be constitutionally sanctioned until 1998 and more coherently articulated in 2008.

However, and notwithstanding the achievements[148] that resulted from the participation of social movement organizations in the 1998 constitutional drafting process, the resulting Constitution quickly lost its legitimacy as the first government to be elected under its rule did not manage to finish the period for which it was elected. The government of Jamil Mahuad, who was elected with the support of financial elites in the country, started on August 10, 1998 but was toppled on January 21, 2000 by a group of military officials supported by indigenous social movement actors like CONAIE. Mahuad had intensified neoliberal economic reform in the country

[147] "Women and Indians faced similar cultural barriers and legal obstacles that denied them access to citizenship rights and prevented their full participation in the political life of the country. The history of exclusion and repression facilitated alliances that crossed race, class and gender boundaries" (Becker, 2003, p. 126).
[148] The 1998 Constitution made Ecuador the first country in the Americas, and third in the world, to include sexual orientation as a protected category (Fetterhoff, 20101) and legislative reforms regarding homosexuality (Lind, 2012, p. 542-543) that followed, recognizing its institutionalized discrimination. Among the achievements of indigenous social movement organizations was the recognition of the country as "multicultural and pluri-ethnic" (a negotiated stance from the opposition to recognize the state as "plurinational" as well as the right to bilingual education that resulted in a parallel educational system where CONAIE was able to impact the institutionality of the Ecuadorian State (see Barié, 2003). There was also important participation of women's rights and feminist organizations, although not directly as representatives in the Assembly, which "[i]n the end [entailed that] thirty-four out of the thirty-six proposals submitted by women were incorporated in the 1998 constitution" (Lind, 2012, p. 544, see footnote 12).

in order to adopt the U.S. dollar as the national currency, thus renouncing the monetary sovereignty of the country. Moreover, his government legitimized what would later be memorialized as the *atraco bancario* or "banking/financial robbery" in Ecuador when thousands of customers of private banking institutions saw their savings evaporate during a simultaneous banking freeze and rapid devaluation of the national currency that preceded the dollarization of the national economy, while the banks' wealthy owners were granted asylum in countries like the U.S.

In 2003, Lucio Gutierrez, one of the military leaders of the coup d'état against Jamil Mahuad would become the Ecuadorian President in alliance with social movement organizations like CONAIE and other leftist parties; an alliance which was quickly dissolved because of a drastic turn to the right-leaning economic policy and geopolitical alliances,[149] setting the stage for another presidential destitution by Congress on April 20, 2005. This series of events further legitimated the perceived necessity to redraft the national constitution once again to attempt to reconfigure the authority of the state as representative of the public and to mobilize *citizens* who viewed formal politics and elections with increasing suspicion.[150] Gutierrez successor, vice-president Alfredo Palacios would name a heterodox minister of economy and finance, whose childhood as a boy scout and youth as a Catholic volunteer in an impoverished Andean indigenous community made

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[149] On an (in)famous official visit to Washington D.C., Lucio Gutierrez, accompanied by Nina Pacari (long-time Pachacutik activist and Kichwa lawyer) who was the first indigenous woman to serve as Minister of Foreign affairs), surprised his leftist allies when he declared himself the "best ally" of the Bush administration in the region. His geopolitical move was a clear attempt to distance himself from comparisons with then Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez, which had been thrown around during the electoral campaign that resulted in his presidency.

[150] For a discussion on the vicissitudes of citizen participation and the sense of electoral weariness that characterized Ecuadorian formal politics at the turn of the century see Quintero, 2002. For a more general discussion and assessment of possible "determinants" of invalid voting in Latin America see Power and Garand, 2007. The database produced by Chilean non-profit organization Latinobarómetro produces annual survey data regarding the confidence on existing democratic institutions as well as normative support for democracy, among other indicators, across Latin America. In future work I hope to analyze in more detail the evolution of this perceptions regarding the changing meanings of democracy in relation to revolutionary transformation discussed in this dissertation.

him very different from the average Ecuadorian politician. He only lasted in this post for six months due to disagreements with President Palacios yet during his brief term as minister allowed him to begin a personal friendship with Venezuelan President Chávez. Once again the late Venezuelan president would be invoked in an election around the Americas[151] would be invoked in an attempt to discredit outsider candidates like Correa; in the end, his refusal to disavow his friendship with Chávez probably helped him become the first Ecuadorian president of the 21st century and the only one to have won reelection since the return of democratic rule in 1979.

In January 2007, economist Rafael Correa Delgado, Ph.D. was elected with the campaign promise to promote a participatory Constituent Assembly. A young, Europe (at the Université Catholique de Louvain in Belgium) and U.S.-trained (at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign) academic, Correa became presidential candidate of a new party formed with the exclusive purpose to "refound the nation" and "reclaim the state" from the corruption and chaos that neoliberal reforms seemed to catalyze in the country. As a young party member argued to me in informal conversation, the Constituent Assembly was in fact the mechanism to finish building and consolidating a political party that combined many different, often incompatible, social groups and interests. Frictions with long-standing social movement organizations that had been resisting neoliberalism for at least three decades appeared from the very beginning of Correa's first presidential campaign in 2006[152] but were bypassed as the demand for a constituent assembly

[151] Accused of de-stabilizing the region by bolstering presidential candidates around Latin America with oil revenues, Hugo Chávez's stature as a regional leader has been used by conservative (geo)political actors to instill fear through Cold War-like anti-socialist and anti-communist rhetoric. In countries like Mexico, Peru, Brazil, and others in the region, and most recently in a campaign add made for the U.S. 2016 presidential Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton in order to discredit his Republican contender Donald Trump.
[152] Burned once by an alliance with a presidential candidate (Lucio Gutierrez in 2003) who did not come from CONAIE or Pachacutik, that significantly weakened the Indigenous movement, they were wary of supporting another unknown candidate. Dialogues to organize primary elections to elect a candidate of unity for Leftist political

seemed to be the political consensus, confirmed by 81.7 percent of voters (in a country where voting is compulsory, both a right and an obligation for most[153] Ecuadorians over 18) in the 2007 referendum on the question organized shortly after Correa was elected president. But the struggle to "refound the nation" through a participatory constituent assembly capable of recognizing the plurinational and intercultural character of Ecuadorian society, so as to build a state that is able to ensure this character with the symbolic and material reparations needed to fix the constitutive inequalities of modernity, has been equated with the *Nariz del Diablo* or "Devil's Nose" railroad pass for its complexity—an engineering feat conquered during the Liberal government of Eloy Alfaro to complete the railroad that connects the capital Quito, in the Andes mountains, and Durán, near the largest city and historic port Guayaquil, at the turn of the 20th century.[154]

Eloy Alfaro, the leader of what Ecuadorians remember as the *Revolución Liberal* or Liberal Revolution, twice president (1895-1901 and 1906-1911) during two Constitutional processes (1896 and 1906) that together sanctioned the division between the state and the Catholic Church,[155] became a key historical reference in President Rafael Correa Delgado's Citizens' Revolution. Eloy Alfaro's birthplace in the coastal province of Manabí, Montecristi, was chosen to draft the 2009 Constitution. Ecuadorian historian Juan Paz y Miño has argued however, one hundred years after

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parties did not materialize an alliance between Correa's supporters and Pachacutik (see Ecuador Inmediato.com, June 06, 2006).

[153] The 2008 Constitution expanded voting rights for young Ecuadorians over 16, members of the armed forces, and migrants residing abroad without making it mandatory for these groups. Senior citizens and other vulnerable groups are also excluded from the legal requirement to cast a vote in public elections.

[154] "The biggest complication faced by the construction of the Trans-Andean railroad was the Devil's Nose, a mountain with almost perpendicular walls. To overcome this obstacle a zigzag railroad was built that climbs more than 500 meters in less than 12 km with steep ascents and descents. It today remains an impressive piece of engineering" (Tren Ecuador, 2016). *El Nariz del Diablo* is also the name of a documentary (Yépez, 2012) that explores the renewed grassroots political participation during the 2008 National Constituent Assembly.

[155] Among other reforms, these Constitutions ended the marriage requirement for citizenship rights for women and the created a public education system and other institutions to foment cultural production and collective national identity to improve integration in a small yet very diverse and fragmented country.

the politically and religiously motivated lynching of Eloy Alfaro in a public plaza in Quito, that "to vindicate the *Alfarista* Liberal Revolution in the present cannot be a matter of mere political symbolism but rather a continued commitment to fulfill unfinished tasks to ensure the *Buen Vivir*, a model for historical development included in the 2008 Constitution"[156] (June 12, 2010). To commemorate the centennial of the assassination of Alfaro and seven of his closest collaborators leading the radical wing of early 20th century Ecuadorian Liberalism, President Correa referenced the famous Pablo Neruda poem (discussed previously in Chapter 2) that presents Simon Bolívar's struggles for independence reviving once every century, "when [the] people wake up": "One hundred years after Bolívar's war of Independence, the people rose again under the leadership of Eloy Alfaro. [...] One hundred years after the last presidency of Eloy Alfaro, the people are awake again; the awakening is contagious and irreversible" (in El Universo, January 15, 2012, author's translation). While President Correa's literary reference seems to be in line with Paz y Miño's argument, a careful examination shows a failure to highlight the grassroots agency that is only partially expressed in a presidential administration. In other words, Correa's Citizens' Revolution's self-proclaimed status as the heir to Alfaro's legacy underscores its own privileging of modernization as a democratizing state project.

President Correa's government has invested heavily in recovering the Trans-Andean Railway, mostly as a tourist attraction and to further this symbolic connection with Alfaro's Liberal Revolution. At the turn of the 20th century (1895-1925), "[f]or Ecuadorian liberals, and for a wide range of other groups, a railway between the port of Guayaquil and the capital city of Quito would

[156] "Reivindicar a la Revolución Liberal Alfarista en el presente no es solo una cuestión de simbología histórica, sino que requiere avanzar y completar las tareas que todavía siguen pendientes para la conquista del Buen Vivir que es un postulado de la Constitución de 2008."

be Ecuador's *obra redentora*, or redemptive work, the cornerstone of a broad program of economic, political, social, and even moral reform. The Ecuadorian railway was more important for national incorporation than were many other Latin American railways, which more often were built to move export products from their zones of origin directly to a port rather than to integrate national territory" (Clark, 1998, p. 1). Fallen into disuse during the neoliberal governments at the end of the 20th century, the Ecuadorian railway's redemptive promise would be reinvented by Correa's emphasis on overcoming economic dependency on primary goods and extractive industries, shifting the focus of the Ecuadorian economy to an-other comparative advantage (Ramírez Gallegos, 2010) or use-value (see Carrión & Sánchez, 2014). According to Economist René Ramírez Gallegos, an important collaborator of Correa's administration, "the greatest comparative advantage Ecuador has is its biodiversity. […] In this vein, the new [government] strategy is to build, in the medium and long terms, a biopolis: a society based on 'bio-knowledge', producing community-based eco-tourist services and agro-ecologic products" (Ramírez Gallegos, 2010, p. 69). Then and now, both as public works project and (geo)political symbol, the Trans-Andean railway is revealing of the tensions between the emancipatory promises of modernity and the shortcomings of the redemption offered by modernization schemes.

The important investment in public infrastructure has also been presented by the Citizens' Revolution as a continuation of the effort to link all Ecuadorians, understood to be separated not only by lack of this connectivity but also by ongoing historic inequalities. Similar justification motivated the creation of the first public newspaper, TV, and radio stations, which were inaugurated to broadcast the debates of the 2008 Constituent Assembly process. *El Telégrafo* became the first publicly owned newspaper on March 17, 2008, after it was expropriated from

Fernando Aspiazu, a banker involved in the corruption scandals that marked the Ecuadorian financial crisis at the turn of the century. During March 2013, *El Telégrafo*'s print edition came accompanied by three *Cuadernos de Divulgación Popular* or Popular Outreach Notebooks commissioned by an Interinstitutional Commission created by Correa's government to commemorate the centennial of the lynching of Eloy Alfaro. Historical accounts containing fictional characters, the notebooks are based on composites resulting from historical research into the parallels often drawn between the contemporary Citizens' Revolution led by Rafael Correa since 2006 and the Liberal Revolution embodied in the historical memory of Eloy Alfaro. The first one, entitled "*Apuntes sobre el Caso Alfaro*" [Notes on the Alfaro Case] (Alcarás, 2013a) recounts key facts regarding the lynching of Alfaro in Quito, framing its narrative as a detective story. The second, entitled "*Las Vidas que Cambió la Revolución Liberal*" [The Lives Changed by the Liberal Revolution] (Alcarás, 2013b) comprises biographic vignettes that highlight the revolutionary impact of the praxis of the *montoneros* or grassroots armies articulated under Alfaro's leadership at the turn of the 20th century. Finally, the third *cuaderno* presents contemporary dialogues regarding how the ongoing Citizens' Revolution is memorialized in relation to the Liberal Revolution; its title "*Memorial de Dos Revoluciones: Diálogos entre siglos*" [Memorial of Two Revolutions: Dialogues between centuries] (Alcarás, 2013c) historicizes the conversations taking place in contemporary Ecuador through the last couple of centuries.

The (geo)political significance of theorizing in historically grounded terms becomes patent in one of the fictional dialogues among a discussion group in downtown Quito in the third *cuaderno*: after synthesizing the modernizing of the Ecuadorian State during the Liberal revolution, Gustavo, a Historian is questioned by a young student on the relationship between "the

long and dark night of neoliberalism" (as President Correa has famously termed the last few decades in Ecuador before his election) and liberalism as a (geo)political philosophy. Gustavo's answer distinguishes between Liberalism in the Eurocentric tradition and in Latin American lived histories:

> The traditional, let's say European, liberal doctrine also established market freedom and trust in the individual as agent of production and economic development. In Latin America this economic component of classical Liberalism was never applied since our peoples required the impulse and economic protection from the State. […] [In Europe] they said that the best for a national economy were free markets, they argued that protection for agriculture and local production should be stripped away, their prophets saw a global market that, alone and by itself, would self-regulate, social justice would naturally follow, and if it did not come, then too bad, bad luck. This economic nonsense is what they called neoliberalism, or the new liberalism" (Ibid., p. 16).

In response, another character in this dialogue highlights that the Radical Liberalism of "*el Viejo Luchador*," as Eloy Alfaro is re-membered in Ecuadorian history, was characterized by the vindication of women's right to vote, the Trans-Andean railway, the creation of the Civil Registry and normal education institutions: turning privileges into rights by nationalizing certain realms of public life that until then were controlled by the Catholic Church. "It was a tough fight he had to endure, not only an armed struggle, but also a battle of ideas. That is why the Constitution was changed twice [under Eloy Alfaro's leadership]" (Ibid.).

These revolutionary achievements are embodied in the six biographic vignettes of "The Lives that were Changed by the Liberal Revolution" presented in the second *cuaderno* (Alcarás, 2013b). A peasant turned revolutionary fighter under Alfaro, a young Ecuadorian female educator studying on a government scholarship in London, an embittered member of the oligarchic elite who denounced the "intolerable abuses of *Indio* Alfaro," an Indigenous worker on the Trans-Andean railway, an indignant foreign representative of the Catholic Church, and a young

intellectual reformer product of the newly founded public education system, are the lives recounted in this text. The first-person narrators of these vignettes reveal how the historical leadership of Eloy Alfaro is contentiously re-membered by conflicting experiences in times of revolutionary change resulting from the modernization of the Ecuadorian postcolonial state at the turn of the 20th century, particularly for those subjects rendered impossible.

While four out of the six testimonies read as positive accounts of the embodied impacts of the Liberal Revolution, another social cleavage is apparent in the different degrees of ambiguity expressed toward the modernizing public policies carried out under the leadership of Alfaro. Whereas the celebration of the democratizing effects of new public education institutions not subordinated to the authority of the Catholic Church is unequivocal in the stories of Sofía Merizalde Carbo (Ibid., p. 8), as the embodiment of the newly gained women's right to education, and Félix Chiriboga Gallegos (Ibid., p. 25), as a vanguardist literary figure formed in the nascent liberal public education system, the other two positive testimonies still highlight the shortcomings of the emancipatory promise of liberalism. José Zambrano, "*el alma motubia*[157] *de la Revolución*" [the Montubian soul of the Revolution], a peasant from the Ecuadorian coast turned rebel fighter, speaks directly to Alfaro as military leader, whose charisma "like music" empowered long-standing social struggles: "Then we understood that we were fighting in order to own our labor, to

[157] Montubio is the latest ethnic category to be recognized in the 2008 Ecuadorian Constitution (along with indigenous peoples and nationalities and Afro-Ecuadorians) and it has been said to entail historically a hybrid form of subaltern *mestizaje* associated with rural identities (Roitman, 2008, 2009) in the Pacific coast of Ecuador. White mestizo racism (Roitman & Oviedo, 2016) has traditionally deployed *montubio* as an insult to "uncivilized" rural people that seemed quiet, ashamed, and overwhelmed by the daily rush of urban settings. Peasant social movement organizations vindicate the concept developing ethnoracial capital (Ibid.) to mobilize political demands, which has also been associated with literary and ethnographic forms of representation of subaltern groups of the Ecuadorian coast (de la Cuadra, 1996 [1937]; Murra, 1946; Crespo, 1959), impoverished and displaced fueling Ecuadorian urbanization as well as coopted by coastal elites to articulate encompassing regional identities (Roitman, 2013) in conflict with the political power of the Andean highlands were the Ecuadorian capital of Quito is.

be masters and rulers of our future. To be free to get married wherever we wished, so that our offspring learn how to say with words what we only know how to say with guns, so as to earn the right to own, without any complexes, our very lives" (p. 6). The need for armed revolt foreshadows the decisive battle of ideas and words; modernity is the possibility of continuing long-standing struggles through means other than armed violence.

Simón Mayancela, an Indigenous worker who is said to embody "the true force of the [Trans-Andean] railway," perhaps most explicitly expresses the ambiguities that emerge from confounding modernization projects with modernity as the motley array of co-existing historical formations:

> "We are *guandos*.[158] We carry everything: iron, wood, steel, dynamite. We go forward slowly and we also go a little behind. Like a dance. A very long dance that lasts years. A dance with death. To the sides of the road we water the fields with our dead. [...] Others, also black peoples that came for far away, fall from sorrow, with their eyes wide open and drowned in the dark skies. [...] I was also there when we Indians decided to meet the *costeño* who the bosses called 'Indian Alfaro'. We wanted to see if he was really an Indian. I was there when boss Alfaro shook all of our hands and called us his *compañeros*. Then I understood. Only a free man can shake your hand like that. Only those whom have fought for their freedom can be truly free." (Ibid., p. 16, author's translation).

National unity in this account is the result of a plurinational recognition of diverse subaltern racialized subjects (*Montubios* from Coastal Ecuador and *Indios* from the Andean highlands) for whom *progress* has entailed a heavy toll on particular bodies and environments marked by colonial difference; yet in the name of national interest, creating a sense of dignity and unity through great public works.

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[158] *Guando* is a Kichwa word meaning literally "that who takes in a stretcher" but refers to those who carry out a set of activities related to funeral services.

The documentary film about the 2008 Constituent Assembly process, *Nariz del Diablo* (Yépez, 2012), featured on EcuadorTv (a public TV station also founded in 2008 with the objective to broadcast live the Assembly's deliberations), further contributes to the re-membering of the legacy of Eloy Alfaro in light of the contemporary (geo)politics of the Citizens' Revolution. The film backdrops the Constituent Assembly process with footage of the monumental building of a government complex named *Ciudad Alfaro* (see Sánchez Cárdenas, 2015, p. 18-27) or Alfaro City, after the historical figure of Liberal Revolution. "The Devil's Nose" title evokes a place in the Andes that has been memorialized in modern Ecuadorian literature in a well-known short story "El Negro Santander" (Gil Gilbert, 2014, [1933]). The title thus "reminds readers about national plurality and puts Ecuador in the map of the African diaspora, which has a transnational character. [...] the short story disrupts traditional meanings: 'the construction [of the railway] would be the destruction, madness [of the narrator] would be the real sanity, and the Other [...] becomes the fundamental pillar of plurinational Ecuador' (Handelsman, 2001, p. 57). Plurinationality in this analytic vein does not entail merely an alternative conception of the modern state but a (geo)political challenge to the dominant logic of the hyphenated nation-state, making explicit its racialized nature:

> "The idea of a plurinational and intercultural State in Ecuador was born as a counter-proposal to the failed model of the republican nation-state—that was founded in 1830 in Ecuador and that was characterized by cultural domination of a white-mestizo group, self-proclaimed heir of Spanish customs in America—and the racial supremacy of this group that ever since has tried to impose whiteness as the road to [hegemonic] mestizaje." (Antón Sánchez, 2013, p. 339)

Rendering visible the crucial Afro-Amerindian contributions to the building of the material foundation of Latin/x American modernity, the genealogy of the conception of plurinationality reveals the constitutive conflicts that are often obscured by Eurocentric nationalism.

More recently, Alicia Ortega has argued that Gil Gilbert's "El Negro Santander" short story "stages a piece of mountain as the territory where a modern nation is being imagined and constructed at the conjunction of confronted races" (2004, p. 22-23, cited in Velazquez Castro, 2014). Modern racial classification has entailed contentious forms of grassroots (racial) identifications that cannot be overlooked to understand postcolonial (trans)nationalism. From this early 20th century expression in Ecuadorian literature to the 21st century historical fiction distributed by public media outlets created by the Citizens' Revolution, the ghosts of Jamaican immigrants that worked and died alongside workers displaced from Andean indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian communities to build the Trans-Andean railroad manifest to re-member the centrality of migration, internal and transnational displacement, in the making of modernity and the violence over bodies and landscapes historically entailed in modernization projects. Moreover, "Ortega concludes, 'Black knowledge [...] opens up the official narrative towards a disabused history able to desacralize monuments and symbols of the nation while evidencing the human cost of a modernity that inscribes its violence in bodies and landscapes'" (Ibid.). Namely, those articulated at the crossroads and borderlands (re)produced by modern interlocking systems of social classification that are the result of the modern/colonial formations of race and gender.

The numerous Afro-Amerindian popular uprisings or *levantamientos nacionales* in Ecuador, starting with that during Inty Raymi[159] of 1990 (Macas, 1990; Moreno Yánez & Figueroa,

[159] The Inti Raymi is an Andean festivity that takes place during the solstice around June 22-24. In Kichwa "*Inti*

1992), followed by the multiple *levantamientos* of 1994 (Guerrero, 1996) and then in 2001 (Acosta et al., 2001), are key moments for the articulation of the demand to redraft the national Constitution and the theorization of plurinationality as a challenge to racial neoliberalism. Grassroots social movements built the social impetus that made possible not only the election of Evo Morales in Bolivia and Rafael Correa en Ecuador on the platform of revamping the national constitution but also set the stage for the conflicts and threats that emerged to different degree in Ecuador and Bolivia. The self-conceived "anti-neoliberal" uprisings in Bolivia and Ecuador during the last decade of the last century led the way to enshrine in their respective constitutions both a self-recognition as plurinational states, calling into question the racialized nation-state, the vindication of Nature as subject of rights as well as the fundamental right to water,[160] signaling the rejection of the privatization and commodification of basic human needs and natural resources. The linkages between these overlapping grassroots struggles and the ambivalent political/institutional transformation carried out by various progressive governments in South America reveal contentious attempts to re-articulate collective attachments to the modern nation and the state; attempts to overcome the exclusionary logic of atomized individuals that require *free* markets were these political rituals that sought to constitute shared notions of what the nation truly is and can be while institutionalizing answers to the question of how the state should work in the mediation of

Raymi" means "sun festival" and in Inca times it was known as *Wawa Inti Raymi* or the festival of the child sun as it is the shortest day of the year; it was celebrated as the Inca New Year. The Ecuadorian indigenous uprising of 1990 signal the importance of popular culture in the forging of (geo)political movements and identities.

[160] The Cochabamba Water Wars (Assies, 2003; Spronk & Crespo, 2008) at the turn of the century marked a moment of rupture that was evoked in discussions in both the Ecuadorian and the Bolivian (Spronk & Crespo, 2007; Hicks et. al., 2009) constituent assemblies. Around attempts to (de)commodify water (Bakker, 2007; Spronk, 2007; Goldman, 2007; Larner & Laurie, 2010) there has been important struggles out of which anti-neoliberal movements have fashioned their critiques to privatization schemes and important audiovisual production has ben produced (see Bollaín, 2010 and Chapon, 2010).

social as well as geopolitical relations, if it has opted to remedy long-standing inequalities forged by both oppression and exclusion.

Transnational families, contentious gender projects and Third World feminist praxis, 2011-2001

If European nationalism took as a given that a people (who are perhaps a "race") need to be organized by a state so that their nation can come into its own, the anticolonial nationalists mostly argued that the people (who are often too diverse to classify one way or another) need to be free of colonial rule. The formerly colonized people have at least one thing in common: they are colonized. […] They had an internationalist ethos, one that looked outward to other anticolonial nations as their fellows. The Third World form of nationalism is thus better understood as an *internationalist nationalism*.

-Vijay Prashad, *The Darker Nations* (2007, p. 12)

On January, 29, 2009, during the yearly World Social Forum (WSF) social movement encounter that took place in the Brazilian city of Belem, Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez interpellated Ecuadorian President Rafael Correa Delgado at the "Social Movements meet presidents" forum (ALAI, February, 02, 2009) organized by Vía Campesina[161]: "One has to evolve in one's thinking; today, I declare myself a feminist. I am a feminist. And I say more, I believe, with all due respect, that a true socialist has to be a feminist, or else something is wrong. [Applause from the crowd]. Are you a feminist, Rafael?" he asked President Correa. There was clear hesitation but Correa responded affirmatively to Chávez's question; his discomfort, years later he would explain, is with a particular branch of "feminist fundamentalism" that allegedly promotes what he dismissively called "gender ideology" during one of his weekly addresses to the nation in January 2014 (see ALA/Correa, 2014).

[161] Vía Campesina is a transnational social movement founded in 1993 by peasant organizations from Latin America, Asia, Afria, Europe and North America. It is a coalition of over 148 organizations that advocate for food sovereignty. The concept, which was included in the Venezuelan, Bolivian, and Ecuadorian 21st centuries constitution was coined by Vía Campesina's praxis in defense of family-farm-based sustainable agriculture. While gender was not an explicit consideration at the start of the movement, since the Conference of Tlaxcala (Mexico) in 1996, Vía Campesina has an active Women's Commission.

More than five years later, on December 13, 2014, a YouTube channel named "Feministas Ecuador" would use the footage from this encounter to protest Correa's government's decision to end the program National Inter-sectorial Strategy for Family Planning and Prevention of Adolescent Pregnancy (ENIPLA or Estrategia Nacional Intersectorial de Planificación Familiar y Prevención del Embarazo de Adolescentes)—one of the most iconic of many attempts to turn into public policy the constitutional guidelines approved in 2008—and replace it with the new Plan Familia Ecuador. In 2009, Correa nodded his head and responded positively to Chávez, yet in the 2014 protest video clip the clear hesitation in his corporal language is highlighted by adding thought bubbles imagining his immediate regret: "and now, how do I explain this to my Opus Dei friends?" (Feministas Ecuador, 2014, min. 0:55). The ultra-conservative Catholic group/institution[162] was mentioned as a reference to Dr. Mónica Hernández, a close adviser of President Correa, who first came into the public spotlight as the author of a letter (October 28, 2014) ruthlessly critiquing the methodological guidelines of ENIPLA, and later was appointed as chair of Plan Familia, the program which replaced ENIPLA with the objective to bring back family values in the battle against high rates[163] of adolescent pregnancy, a key motivation in these programs. The conflicts and contradictions that emerge in

[162] The ultra-conservative Catholic group is born out of the official foundation of the first and only Personal Prelature, which different from Dioceses or special territorial Prelature does not have a territorial jurisdiction. Founded in Spain by Mosemaría Escrivá de Balaguer, a priest that was canonized in 2002 by Pope Jhon Paul II, its teachings call its membership (lay people and secular priests) to bring holiness into ordinary life as a path to sanctity. Thus its critics suggest that when in public office or in positions of power Opus Dei sympathizers impose their religious views over citizenship and human rights sanctioned by (inter)national laws. In Honduras, the Opus Dei has been accused of being an important (geo)political undemocratic ousting of President Manuel Zelaya in 2009 (see Cano, 2009).

[163] During the last decade, pregnancy rates among women with ages between 15 and 19 have remained high in Ecuador (see INEC, 2012), even compared to other countries in Latin America, which to this day is the world region with highest adolescent pregnancy rates (see Mesa, 2016).

these processes cannot be understood apart from the contentious (geo)politics expressed from the very beginning of the Constituent Assembly process and particularly during the electoral campaign for the referendum that eventually approved the Ecuadorian Constitution drafted in Montecristi, Manabí.

The initial bold moves to deploy gender neutral language in the proposed constitutional text, to recognize different types of families, and to expand the scope of sexual and reproductive rights to include the right to sexual enjoyment as well as freedom to make informed choices about one's body were tempered by President Correa's ambivalent response to the pushback of the higher echelons of the Catholic Church in Ecuador and evangelical Christian and other conservative civil society institutions and groups. As shown in the film *Nariz del Diablo* (Yépez, 2012), LGBTQ and women's health and reproductive rights were at the forefront of the Constituent Assembly process both because of the direct participation of human rights activists and because of the moral panics[164] the opposition stirred during and after the Constituent Assembly process in their ultimately failed attempt to defeat the (geo)political project of the Montecristi Constitution of Ecuador. Minimizing, dismissing or demonizing radical or "extreme" feminist contributions to the new Ecuadorian Constitution began as an opposition strategy that by 2014 had made its way to the core of Correa's administration, which has effectively foreclosed the possibility of decriminalizing abortion and respecting the right to egalitarian marriage and adoption practices.

[164] Here I follow "Stuart Hall [who] has called a 'moral panic': the production of an issue as a "crisis" that begins to function as an allegory for multiple social cleavages, conflicts, and antipathies" (quoted in Briggs, 2002, p. 58l; see also McRobbie and Thornton, 1995).

While Dr. Hernández has denied current active involvement with Opus Dei (Interview in *El Comercio,* March 6, 2015), her arguments against ENIPLA are clearly in line with the pseudo-scientific logic mobilized by Opus Dei militants to demonize and dismiss decades of critical initiatives to theorize the concept of gender as "gender ideology" that allegedly endangers social stability by questioning its foundation on the institution of the heteronormative nuclear family. Hernández—now heading an initiative exclusively overseen by the President's office, as opposed to a multi-sectorial effort across government institutions as ENIPLA was—defines "gender ideology" as a "current of Radical Feminism, not scientific but rather ideological." This binary logic is followed by an indictment of materials produced by ENIPLA that allegedly "gave partial and incomplete information of contraceptive methods, regarding STDs […]" (Hernandez, October 28, 2014, p. 1-2). In her letter, Dr. Hernandez goes on to object to ENIPLA's messages about pregnancy and alleged lack of focus on the family as the primary resource. But perhaps her most paradoxical argument is against the "mentions that open an understanding of homosexuality as something natural—despite my ruthless defense that NOBODY in this country, in other words not even an LGBTI person, can be discriminated against—" (Hernandez, October 28, 2014, p. 1-2). The awkward anti-discrimination stance of Dr. Hernández in this context is telling of how gender and sexuality are central to the articulation of power dynamics and not merely individual "roles" or "identities"; but the contradiction of not accepting homosexuality as "natural" while vindicating the right to nondiscrimination is veiled by an appeal to scientific authority[165] rather than religious dogma.

[165] I had the honor to be the tutor of the research project that resulted in Ecuadorian sociologist Maria Paula Granda's honors undergraduate thesis entitled: "*El macho sabio: racismo y sexismo en el discurso sabatino del Presidente Rafael Correa*" or "The wise *macho*: racism and sexism in President Correa's weekly discourse" (2016).

A similar argument was mobilized in 2008 to oppose the project of the new Constitution sponsored by President Correa's administration; gendered and sexualized moral panic become one of the main obstacles encountered by the Constituent Assembly and the electoral campaign for the referendum to approve the Montecristi Constitution. The opposition campaign first ridiculed the attempt to include the right to "sexual pleasure" as part of the chapter on sexual and reproductive rights in the Constitution, and then more generally denounced the end of the (heteronormative) family because of the recognition of various forms or "types of family"—a provision that arguably would open a legal path for marriage and adoption rights for queer/gay unions. President Correa dismissed these accusations not by vindicating an extended version of LGBTQ rights but rather arguing that the recognition of multiple types of families only renders visible the social impact of migration on the structure of Ecuadorian families. The religious overtones of the indictment of the first draft of the Ecuadorian Constitution led to capitulation on completely gender neutral language, ultimately failing to maintain it in Art. 67, which defines marriage in legal terms. Nonetheless, the recognition of multiple types of family in the same article and the gender neutral definition of civil unions (Art. 68) represented an important advance in the constitutional protection of queer love given that homosexuality was only decriminalized in Ecuador in 1997.

When Constituent Assembly representative Maria Soledad Vela, who was elected as a member of President Correa's political movement Alianza País (AP), proposed to the Constituent

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Her analysis of a sample of Correa's weekly report of activities nationally broadcasted on national radio and TV and the title highlights how the hegemonic masculinity he has come to embody is related to his performances as a wise professor that cannot be mistaken, particularly if those challenges do not fit his standard of scientific truth. Granda's research was featured in a popular digital newspaper article (Plan V, 2016).

Assembly's taskforce on Fundamental Rights and Constitutional Guarantees to include the right to "take informed, free, and responsible decisions, without coercion, violence or discrimination of any kind, regarding one's sexual life, including one's gender identity, sexual enjoyment, and sexual option"[166] (Vela, 2008, author's translation), heated debates focused on the implications of constitutionally sanctioning the right to "sexual enjoyment" were ridiculed in the national corporate media and even by many elected Assembly representatives, mostly men. International media outlets like the BBC covered the groundbreaking proposal by echoing the most patriarchal responses by opposition Assembly Members to then represent Ecuadorian society as essentially *conservative*.[167] Such representation suggests feminist activists such as Maria Soledad Vela or feminist organizations such as the Consejo Nacional de Mujeres del Ecuador (National Council of Women of Ecuador),[168] which actively supported the proposal, are not a product of *conservative* Ecuadorian society but rather from external social forces. Moreover, these tropicalizing tropes (see chapter 2) distract from the careful social analysis required to understand why the proposal to

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[166] "Derecho a tomar decisiones libres, informadas y responsables, sin coerción, violencia o discriminación de ningún tipo, sobre su vida sexual, incluída la identidad de género, el disfrute y la opción sexual. Toda persona podrá decidir con quién, cuándo y cuántos hijos tener, de acuerdo a sus condiciones emotivas, psicológicas, económicas y culturales."

[167] See Daniel Shweimier's article, "Sex on Ecuador's Political Agenda". The Spanish title of the same article quotes Leonardo Viteri, an opposition Assembly member from the PSC (Partido Social Cristiano), with an openly patriarchal interpretation of the María Soledad Vela's proposal: Ecuador: "orgasmo por ley" (2008).

[168] The Consejo Nacional de Mujeres del Ecuador was institutionalized by executive decree in October 1997, responding to grassroots pressure and international commitments such as the Beijing Platform for Action issued by the United Nation's Fourth World Conference on Women. In May 2009, President Correa issued a decree following the mandate of the Constitution approved in September 2008 to replace the Consejo de Mujeres with the Comisión hacia el Consejo Nacional de Igualdad de Género (Commission towards the National Council of Gender Equality) and to design public policies that fulfill the constitutional mandate of gender equality. Earlier grassroots debates already suggested that the name change would be important for an institution intended to coordinate grassroots feminist demands and public policy and to guarantee public policies based on gender equality. The Asamblea de Mújeres de Quito (Women's Assembly of Quito) stated that a fundamental point of debate for the construction of institutions capable of assuring the constitutional mandate regarding gender equality was determining the scope of institutions like the Consejos. See AMQ, 2009.

constitutionally sanction the right to "sexual enjoyment" did not pass the final draft, and what groundbreaking proposals were enshrined in the Montecristi Constitution.

A closer reading of the debates surrounding this issue reveals that the reaction was not merely due to the challenge of gendered privileges to sexual pleasure, minimally read by many sectors as meaning "legally mandating female orgasm,"[169] but a reaction to the fact that many power structures were opened up to scrutiny during the constitutional re-drafting process. While most of the proposals of the *Consejo Nacional de Mujeres del Ecuador,*[170] which supported Maria Soledad Vela's articulation within the plenary of the Constituent Assembly, made it to the final draft of the Constitution, the vindication of the concept of sexual enjoyment was dropped; a sobering reminder that the "highly symbolic act of constitution-making" (Van Cott 2000) can result in important legal limitations yet simultaneously open important social debates previously silenced. These limitations have to be understood both in terms of its localized effects that translate into complex lived experiences as well as (trans)national structures that have (geo)political consequences across the Americas and the world.

The extended notion of "family" that appears in more than one article of the 2008 Ecuadorian Constitution was defended in the political campaign prior to the referendum in the polls by the many Constituent Assembly members from the government party (AP) in relation to the plight of migrant communities. Political forces that actively campaigned to defeat the constitutional project denounced the constitutional recognition of the family as a social institution

[169] Even members of AP, the current government party that sponsored and had a majority in the Constituent Assembly, ridiculed Vela's proposal. Her fellow party member Guido Rivas joked that men will have to take care not to be sued for not "adequately satisfying women." See Pérez, 2008.

that can take diverse forms (Art. 67) as the destruction of "traditional family values" and the opening of the possibility for the legalization of homosexual families. The government's response to such critiques, sometimes verging on equally homophobic attitudes,[171] emphasized the interconnections between the recognition of diverse types of families with other constitutional provisions such as Art. 40, which obliges the Ecuadorian state to honor "peoples' right to migrate. No human being will be identified or considered *illegal* because of her or his migratory condition" (emphasis added). Section 6 of the same article mentions the state's responsibility to protect "transnational families and the rights of their members." In this context the reconceptualization of the social institution of the family was posited as a structural consequence of the migratory phenomenon that has affected Ecuadorian social fabric to the extent that migrants' remittances are the second source of national income after oil exports (Acosta, 2005), and nearly every Ecuadorian has a loved one that is a migrant. The gendered dimensions of the migratory phenomenon make "transnational families" render visible structural vulnerabilities shared by social groups organized in ways that deviate from the heteronormative nuclear family model, such as female-headed households. However, the government discourse emphasizing the diversity of families resulting from the impact of massive migration as a by-product of neoliberal structural adjustment economic schemes managed to overtly challenging the patriarchal and homophobic premises on which

[171] Various LGBT organizations criticized President's Correa's address to the nation on past August 10, 2010, in which he analyzed the first year of his government under the legal framework of the new Constitution. There he denounced as political demagoguery the threats articulated in the opposition campaign, including the legalization of egalitarian marriage. In part, he criticized opposition claims that the Constitution would legalize gay marriage as being unfounded, although defending their right to have their civil unions recognized by thestate. Since then various frustrated open letters to President Rafael Corea have circulated LGBTQ publications and newsletters (see, for example, Cárdenas, 2014, p. 22); despite the fact that most of these letters recognize the unprecedented advances in the struggle for queer basic human rights during his administration, including a historical meeting of President Correa in 2013 with LGBTQ organizations (ANDES, 2013), yet they condemn the reiterative reinforcement of heteronormativity in his discourse and the ongoing denial of full-fledged equality under the law.

powerful (geo)political actors built their opposition to the Montecristi constitutional project; in this vein, government actors like President Correa himself have been complicit in reproducing the gendered structural violence that underlies contemporary migratory flows (Sassen, 1998; Pribilsky, 2007; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2007; Bair, 2010; Pérez, 2012) as well as the central dynamics of ever global(izing) modern societies.

Missing the historical link between "traditional family values," hegemonic masculinity, capitalist uneven development, and gendered violence that disproportionately affects women of all ages as well as adolescents and children is what is at stake when reducing sexism (or racism) to mere discrimination. The recognition of this linkage seemed to powerfully emerge amidst the 2008 Constituent Assembly process and its aftermath. Take for instance the audiovisual campaign "Reacciona Ecuador, el machismo es violencia" (React Ecuador, *machismo* is violence), which was mandatorily broadcast by all TV and radio stations in the country during 2011. On March 8th, 2011, to officially commemorate International Women's day,[172] the Ecuadorian government announced the media campaign[173] as part of broader national Agenda for Gender Equality. This public policy can be read as the fulfillment of the mandate democratically endorsed by the majority of Ecuadorians when the new Constitution was approved in 2008. The

[172] Also known as the International Day of Working Women, it was first commemorated on the anniversary of a strike by the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union in New York. Although the strike was partially successful, the worker safety demands the factory owners refused to meet caused the deaths of 146 migrant workers in a fire two years later ("Triangle Shirtwaist Fire," n.d.). The highly politicized history of the commemoration of these events speaks of important intersections between various sorts of socioeconomic struggles with a geopolitical scope.

[173] "The Campaign 'Reacciona Ecuador, el machismo es violencia,' led by the Comisión de Transición hacia el Consejo de Mujeres e Igualdad de Género, is directed at Ecuadorian society, and particularly men. Its objective is to sensitize [Ecuadorian] people in order to catalyze change regarding patriarchal [*machista*] behaviors that violate women's human rights" (Comisión de Transición, 2010).

challenge to posit *machismo*[174] as a gender project sustained through structural violence echoes the larger (geo)political demand to redraft national constitutions in the Americas so as to recognize, demystify, and denaturalize interlocking forms of structural violence. By acknowledging, for example, as "productive labor the non-remunerated work for self-sustenance and human care that takes place within homes,"[175] the new Ecuadorian Constitution can be seen as an expression of alternative gender projects (Connell, 1995, p. 73) emerging from grassroots (geo)political struggles.

A closer look at the TV spots that make up the campaign "Reacciona Ecuador" reveal it as a particular expression of the (geo)political tensions and promises that continue to appear at the intersections of feminist grassroots struggles/traditions and public policies focusing on gender equality, attempting to materialize the constitutional provisions pertaining to reproductive rights and to sexuality in contemporary Ecuadorian society. We can divide the first eleven TV ads of the campaign "Reacciona Ecuador" in three different groups according to their length and narrative style. The first type includes three spots of about 35 seconds and feature short statements that end with a powerful interpellation to hegemonic notions of gender roles: "*¿y qué?*" (so what?). The second type emphasizes the performative dimension of gender roles and provides an alternative historicity, affirming a possible future tangentially different to the brutish

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[174] As a theoretical category, machismo has been deployed in culturally chauvinistic/racist and elitist ways that posits it as characteristic of Latinos and particularly the poor within Latin (American) societies. In this work I have analyzed it as a gender project and at times I have translated it as patriarchy to challenge this characterization and suggest transnational as well as geopolitical dimensions. For a historical genealogy that reveals the relatively recent usage of terms like "macho" and "machismo" in Latin American nations and the U.S. see Gonzales-Lopez and Gutmann (2005).

[175] Art. 333 of the Ecuadorian Constitution also posit the state responsibility to promote a "labor regime that works in harmony with the needs of human care […] and impel co-responsibility and reciprocity between men and women in domestic work and other family obligations."

and violent reality of machismo. In these three TV spots, with duration of up to one minute, subject-formation processes are most clearly enacted in an attempt to question the reification of machismo and to challenge the localized consequences of structural gendered violence. Finally, the third group of spots uses appalling statistics that provide quantitative indication of how often gendered structural violence takes place with impunity in the country. The ads of this third type are the most numerous (five) yet have the shortest length (about 20 seconds).

One of the spots from the first group of ads features women challenging the still overwhelmingly heteronormative expectation to get married as well as the underlying logic of women's dependence on men that the institution of marriage has historically entailed. Various women of different ages and appearances ask "so what" if they don't follow normative gender roles: among others, a married woman driving a car states "*yo gano más que mi esposo, y qué?*" (I make more than my husband, so what?), followed by a young woman riding a bike who asks "*yo no me quiero casar, y qué?*" (I don't want to get married, so what?); in this way a certain diversity of viewpoints is evoked but *women's* agency as a whole, yet in all its diversity, is vindicated as a transformative tool. *Women* appear to be a coherent social-subject capable and already in leadership roles that defy machismo more generally. Women of different ages yet clearly performing middle-class roles[176] evoke a sense that there is no single *woman* standpoint but that actual women's experiences intersect often as they are constrained by the structural violence encoded in machismo, and also result in instances of resistance capable of denaturalizing the

[176] The lighter-skinned complexion of the women of this ad perform the racialized nature of class inequalities in Ecuador, which are not overtly dissected in this campaign against gendered structural inequality, an important limitation that intersectional analysis can reveal. This limits the capacity of articulating (geo)political alternatives centered on gender and capable of delineating the transnational scope of grassroots struggles for equality and against inequality and discrimination of various sorts.

gender binaries on which heteronormativity is built. Another ad features various men who also defy machismo by stating they can be and act in ways that debunk hegemonic masculinity, such as doing housework and care work more generally. Men with children declare to be "affectionate with their children, *y qué?*," younger men proudly proclaim to be faithful, to not drink alcohol, and to be able to cry. The third of this kind of TV spot combines scenes of men and women from the other two in a sort of conversation where the challenge to say "*Yo no soy machista, y qué?*" appears as a point of convergence where this political imperative becomes the responsibility of both men and women.

The first ad of the second group portrays a woman confronting a situation of domestic violence, which ends with the collective declaration of women of diverse racialized/ethnic backgrounds who state in unison "*if it happens to one of us, it happens to all of us*." While the claim becomes homogenizing when potentially diverse lived experiences of domestic violence are conflated, it is only problematic if not subjected to the sort of scrutiny required by intersectionality paradigms. The "solidarity and more consciousness" this ad tries to catalyze can obscure historical inequalities that may distort experiences of domestic violence yet it becomes an invitation for political action insofar as solidarity is performed as collective survival under gendered structural violence. Another ad of this second kind presents a parody of the social construction of heteronormative gender roles, which through hyperbole points to the roots of machista violence in the way children are socialized within nuclear families. The revolutionary potential of feminist critiques is clearest in this example insofar as it calls for a re-envisioning of the role of institutions like the family as well as larger systems of (re)production based on particular gendered division of labor. This particular example reveals, with the seemingly straightforward assertion that

"machismo is something that children learn," and therefore is not *natural*, how gender projects are enacted at different stages of human life.

The other two ads of this second kind articulate the challenge to the reification of male-dominance by playing on the linear temporality of the notion of *progress*. One of these scenes is introduced with a caption that reads "Ecuador 2045" and shows a group of children in a museum regarding "the Evolution of Man in Ecuador." In front of a skeleton holding a beer mug and a whip, the museum guide explains that it is an "Ecuadorian of the *machista* type who lived in an age where to be a *man* entailed consuming the most alcohol, mistreating his wife and treating women without respect more generally." After the museum guide emphasizes that the machista *type* could be part of any socioeconomic class, but that since Ecuadorian society reacted and evolved, we will never again repeat that history, the oldest in the group sadly reflects: "how backward [*atrasados*] we were back then…" The third spot performs this notion of machismo as characteristic of backward times by presenting a caveman who constantly reacts violently, objectifies and disrespects women both at work and in the streets. At night when he gets home, we see him as a modern-looking middle-class man in a suit, who after failing to open a can explodes in anger: "your absurd violence is prehistoric" the ad concludes. Together these TV spots dangerously evoke Eurocentric narratives of (under)development which essentializes social ills as characteristic of "backward" peoples, yet they can also be read as a (geo)political challenge since they take place in the Third world or global South and render visible a praxis that challenges gendered structural violence.

The third type of ads of the "Reacciona Ecuador" campaign shows statistics that provide another way to grasp such gendered structural violence. Shorter in length, these ads display

shocking figures such as the number of sentenced cases (300) in relation to the number of suits for sexual crimes filed (10,672) in Ecuador during 2008, and the percentage (64) of news reports regarding homicides of women that resulted from machista violence. Figures about sexual violence against children and adolescents within the family circle expand the social scope of gendered violence, while the breadth is evoked with the fact that eight out of ten women in Ecuador declare to have suffered sexual, physical or psychological violence, and more than 250,000 cases of interfamily violence were filed in the last three years in Ecuador. Although the ads run short of more broadly conceptualizing gendered structural violence with a lack of data on historically marginalized social groups, they do suggest a strong case for social institutions like the family to be subjected to public scrutiny. Moreover, they dramatize the significance of both the struggle towards as well as the constitutional recognition of collective rights vindicated by historically marginalized social groups.

The campaign "Reacciona Ecuador" can be read as a national public policy attempt to deal with intra- and inter-cultural[177] gender inequalities. However, when it is analyzed in the context of the debates catalyzed by "the highly symbolic act of constitution making" (Van Cott) that took place in Montecristi, the transnational implications of its contentious (geo)politics become readily apparent. The constitutional sanctioning of a range of reproductive and sexual

[177] While I have privileged the concept of plurinationality throughout this chapter, interculturality is a related category that, Mónica Chuji (2009) has argued, complements the (geo)political project of plurinational states. If plurinationality allows us to conceptualize the modern state as mediating relations between many nationalities and peoples, inter-cultural relations interpellate so-called "civil society" to recognize that these nationalities are not merely to be recognized but rather requires the forging of intersubjectivities to grapple with the fact of the radical diversity coexisting at different scales of the social worlds that constitute *sociedades abigarradas* or motley societies, as Bolivian-Aymara sociologist Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui translates social theorist René Zavaleta Mercado classical characterization of Latin American postcolonial societies, and the baroque modern ethos that Ecuadorian political philosopher Bolívar Echeverría argued emerges in this type of historical social formation.

rights as well as the constitutional vindication of the (geo)political imperative of equality more generally provides tools and narratives to be mobilized by a myriad of social subjects to challenge gendered structural violence of various sorts. However, subaltern mobilization to challenge historical hierarchies that reify existing power structures can fall prey of reinforcing the structural tendencies towards exclusion and marginalization if the interlocking problems related to heteronormativity and racism are reduced to (anti)discrimination and prejudice.

Exploring carefully the contradictions and ambivalences with which the Ecuadorian state responded to the feminist praxis clearly surfaced in the 2008 Constituent Assembly and its aftermath reveals that studying the state as the institutionalization of gender power relations is fruitful inasmuch as it makes clear that "the state is not all of a piece" (Connell, 1988, p. 128)—or that it deploys many hands (Morgan & Orloff, 2017)—as well as that "[p]ower in the state is strategic because there is more at issue than a simple distribution of benefits. The state has a constitutive role in forming and re-forming social patterns" (Connell, 1988, p. 130). This role, however, does not merely lie in the hegemonic capacity of the nation-state to enforce socioeconomic organization through a system of classification but also in the forms of identification it contentiously catalyzes. Feminist praxis both within, at the margins of, and beyond the Ecuadorian state is an important lens to understand the centrality of gender and sexuality in the democratization of interlocking power structures that was encoded in the project to redraft the Ecuadorian Constitution.

The documentary film *Nariz del Diablo* (Yépez, 2012) recounts the story of the 2008 Ecuadorian Constituent Assembly by focusing on leading characters who embody subaltern subjects, such as young women activists, LGBTQ human rights activists, and *campesino* union

organizers, who supported and actively participated in the Assembly. When I interviewed José Yépez, director of the film, after a screening at Universidad Central del Ecuador (UCE), regarding the reason he focused on these characters, he pointed to the objective of memorializing the main conflicts that emerged in the debates of the Montecristi Constituent Assembly. More than an arbitrary decision regarding certain charismatic figures, the audiovisual archive[178] of thousands of hours of recordings were edited into *Nariz del Diablo* to recount not only these subaltern subjects' imprint on the current Ecuadorian Constitution but also the deeply ingrained yet contested socio-historical subjectivities that mark our common sense of (trans)national belonging; an important cultural factor in sustaining the legitimacy of any modern state that is often overlooked.

Indigenous women organizing to participate in the 2008 Constituent Assembly open the section of the documentary focused on grassroots participation and debates (Yépez, 2012, min. 29:14).[179] Singing in Kichwa and holding signs that read in Spanish "*Para mantener los derechos de las mujeres ganados en 1998*" (To sustain the women's rights earned in 1998) (Ibid., min. 29:54), during the previous constitutional redrafting process, Afro-Amerindian women organized to articulate their demands and impact the Constituent Assembly members' labor in Montecristi. Feminist organizers in a meeting in Quito, after presenting their proposals to the Montecristi Constituent Assembly, stressed that the three issues brought up were a way to articulate the confluence of long-standing struggles:

> When we [decide to] go to the Constituent Assembly, it is not like we just came up with the idea to go, or because "every citizen ought to go." In fact, we come from

[178] On my interview with José Yépez he raised interest in looking to house the more than 3000 hours of footage on the constituent assembly his collective Memoria Ciudadana gathered during the constituent process. I am yet to systematically review the archive but have been working with him for UCE to take care of the archive. In the future I hope to compare more explicitly this sort of archives that I know exist in Bolivia as well.
[179] The entire documentary can be watched online (Memoria Ciudadana, [2012] 2014).

> [organizational] processes that started many years ago. When we opt to bring up these three topics—decriminalization of abortion, decriminalization of poverty, and alternative families—in reality, we are making various grassroots processes of many years to come together, right? Our presence [in Montecristi] was uncomfortable not because we are super irreverent nor because we were wearing jeans and t-shirts [...] It was uncomfortable because we went to speak the truth and those who received us there knew we were speaking the truth. When Ale or Nancy said, "look, who of those present here does not know a woman that has had an abortion," and in that moment they would add "if you don't, I am here, I have and I am speaking from [the knowledge of] my body," they knew we were speaking truth [to power]." (Feminist organizer in Yépez, 2012, min. 1:00:37-1:00:56, author's translation)

The failure to decriminalize abortion, patent contradictions in the decriminalization of the poor—understood in relation to the necessity for penal/prison reform and even prison abolition following revolutionary feminists like Angela Davis—, as well as the ambivalent recognition of multiple types of family in Ecuador signal a historical discomfort of the modern state with women's sexual agency[180] and subaltern self-determination. Yet even when those demands were not met by the state, this sort of mobilization seems to have re-energized grassroots organization, which even when focused on engaging state institutions feed the diverse approaches that constitute the radically diverse tradition of feminism(s).

These tensions became clear in the conflicts appeared during the Constituent Assembly and have grown in intensity with the years as the government of Rafael Correa has increasingly disavowed the most radical imprints of grassroots social movements and (geo)political actors; namely, the government of the Citizens' Revolution has progressively overlooked the Afro-

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[180] "Women's sexual agency, our sexual and our erotic autonomy have always been troublesome for the state. They pose a challenge to the ideological anchor of an originary nuclear family, a source of legitimation for the state, which perpetuates the fiction that the family is the cornerstone of society. Erotic autonomy signals danger to the heterosexual family and to the nation. And because loyalty to the nation as citizen is perenially colonized within reproduction and heterosexuality, erotic autonomy brings with it the potential of undoing the nation entirely, a possible charge of irresponsible citizenship or no citizenship at all" (Jacqui Alexander, 1997, p. 64).

Amerindian dual concept of plurinationality/interculturality (De Sousa Santos, 2007; Acosta & Martínez, 2009; Chuji, 2009; Arkonada et. al., 2014; Walsh, 2012, Altmann, 2015), privileging the notion of *Sumak Kawsay* or *Buen Vivir* (or Good Living, in English)[181] as a guiding principle for the historical development that the newly conceived Ecuadorian state was going to promote, away from neoliberal modernization. The promise of the Citizens' Revolution to push a "change in the production matrix" or *cambio de la matriz productiva* of the Ecuadorian economy has been increasingly questioned as merely another version of developmentalist modernization; incapable of fulfilling its promise to overcome economic extractivism through strategic reinvestment of the revenues produced by extractive industries because of the self-reinforcing structural tendencies and institutional incentives that extractive industries (re)produce (see Carrión & Sánchez, 2014).

Rather than underscoring the emancipatory promise of an Andean conception of modernity, which would seem to be evoked by the appropriation of the notion of *Sumak Kawsay* by the Citizens' Revolution, the government of Rafael Correa seems to have been unable to truly spark the revolutionary transformations hinted in the 2008 Constitution. Rather, it has adopted a rather limited conception of what *citizenship* has to entail in order to overcome both neoliberal market fundamentalism as well as the (post)colonial dispossession that neoliberal globalization continues to reproduce. Ecuadorian historian and sociologist Silvia Vega (2013) has

[181] "The Ecuadorian Constitution of 2008 was celebrated by a good part of the national and international Left, not so much because it declares the country to be 'intercultural, plurinational' (Art. 1), a historical revindication of the indigenous movement, but rather, because it introduced the concept of *Buen Vivir* or *Sumak Kawsay*. This concept constitutes a critique of modernizing development inasmuch as it proposes a life in harmony with nature and other human beings. *Sumak Kawsay* has been widely discussed by Leftist intellectuals, among whom in Ecuador the economist Alberto Acosta (for example 2010) stands out, and is considered the true innovation of the new Constitution" (Altmann, 2013, p. 283, author's translation).

comparatively assessed the impact on the ongoing public policy attempts to operationalize the concept of *Sumak Kawsay* (in Ecuadorian Kichwa)/*Suma Qamaña* (in Bolivian Aymara) included in the 2008 Ecuadorian and 2009 Bolivian Constitutions in these two Latin American nations.

Two important findings from Vega's research highlight both the explanatory capacity of a gender and power analytics and the (geo)political differences one can note when contrasting the most recent Ecuadorian and Bolivian experiences of constitution making: 1) A gender analytic focus reveals that for all the novelty in the discourse of *Sumak Kawsay* embraced by the government of Correa, the actual policy schemes to operationalize these rights are not much different from earlier feminist demands for equal opportunity—even when there are theoretical innovations, they are apparent in the operative parts of national government programs; and 2) "While in Bolivia there is an important proliferation of publications and events, as well as diverse [political] actors talking about this topic [*suma qamaña*], in Ecuador there was few, and increasingly less, debate [regarding *sumak kawsay*]" (Ibid., p. 84), as it is often deployed merely as a synonym of what Correa's government calls "XXI century socialism" or "republican biosocialism" (Ramírez Gallegos, 2010). Nonetheless, Vega underscores that beyond state cooptation of this Andean conception of modernity—where "living well" entails (geo)political opportunities to challenge interlocking forms of inequality inasmuch as "nobody can live well if others live badly" (see PND, 2007, cited in Vega, 2013, p. 77 & 86)—, there is the possibility for vindicating the conceptual promise of *sumak kawsay*/*suma qamaña* as more than simply an ethical imperative arising from grassroots decolonial struggles but also as a "*conquista social*" or

social accomplishment and a political formula or strategy, “which opens up the concept for collective construction and constant revision” (Ibid., p. 85).

Vega explains the differences she notes when comparing Ecuador with Bolivia to the political composition of its current governments: both have experienced schisms with grassroots Indigenous organizations who have theorized these novel (geo)political concepts, yet the conflict between historic indigenous organizations like CONAIE and Correa’s government has produced a more total separation between the embrace of *Sumak Kawsay* as a model for alternative economic development and plurinationality as a challenge to decolonize the nation-state. When, as the most recent contribution of Afro-Amerindian theorization in the Andes, the concept of *Sumak Kawsay/Suma Qamaña* is decoupled from the more longstanding, and thus better developed, notion of *plurinationality* that cemented the (trans)national organization of indigenous nationalities across South America, we lose sight of the radical claim to self-determination and decolonization of the modern nation-state entailed in Afro-Amerindian collective rights claims.

While it may be tempting to dismiss the cooptation of the Ecuadorian (and to a lesser extent the Bolivian) state of Afro-Amerindian conceptual contributions emerging from their oppositional praxis, it may be more useful to critically make visible the opportunities to further radicalize long-standing social and (geo)political conflicts. This possibility becomes apparent when we leave the Andes and consider the experience of Afro-Amerindian grassroots social movement organization in the Central American nation-state of Honduras. On June 28, 2009, a coup against democratically elected Honduran President Manuel Zelaya took place, accusing him of violating the Constitution because of his initiative to include a non-binding consultation in the

general elections of that year on the question of convening a constituent assembly to redraft the national Constitution. Historian Greg Grandin argued that the coup was not merely a contentious chapter of the battle for Honduras but also for the entire region, as “the coup has encouraged those who want to halt the Latin American left” (2009) embodied in the leadership of Venezuelan President Chávez and Ecuadorian President Correa, among others like Bolivian President Morales.

For Afro-Amerindian communities living in Honduras, the coup entailed the “deepening of the invasion of Black and Indigenous territories” through government concessions that seek the private appropriation of rivers through private damns, hydroelectric projects, and extractive industries as well as the development of corporate tourist initiatives (“Declaración de los Pueblos de la Tierra y el Mar,” 2011). This “Declaration of the Peoples of the Land and the Sea,” product of the first convention of eight different Afro-Amerindian peoples and nationalities after the coup that deposed and exiled President Zelaya, stated the decision to self-organize a continuous “plurinational and multicultural constituent assembly” that “will take place until we manage to promulgate a new constitution that allows for the refounding of Honduras” both as a modern nation and as a state, responsive to those nationalities historically repressed, exploited and marginalized. The grassroots constituent assembly process in Honduras overtly defied political elites and chose that its inaugural event would be a great assembly of Black and Indigenous women of Honduras (Ibid., author’s translation).

While the Constituent Assembly of Black and Indigenous Women of Honduras that took place on July 11-13, 2011, did not result in a Constitution (as the grassroots constituent process is understood to be ongoing), the “Declaration of Copán Galel” it produced underscores

important aspects hinted in postcolonial constitutionalism. It starts by recognizing its diverse composition ("women and children of 6 Indigenous and Black nationalities") and the domestic labor[182] carried out by male *compañeros* in solidarity during the Assembly. Their efforts are defined as the "collective building, through our voices and experiences, of power from below and from women who have for centuries now experienced the violence of racism, patriarchy, and capitalism. [...] During these days we have shared the realities of our territories, of our bodies, and of our organizations" (Minga/Mutirão informativa de Movimientos Sociales, 2011, author's translation). In the citing of these three places of both (geo)political resistance and cultural creativity, women's bodies are highlighted as crucial in order to understand the political economy of the territorialization of neoliberal globalization as well as of social movement grassroots organization resisting its hegemonic impetus towards privatization and extraction.

The Black and Indigenous Women's Grassroots Constituent Assembly (Asamblea Constituyente Autoconvocada de Mujeres Indígenas y Negras) also denounced the impoverishment and dispossession that result from the privatization of natural resources and the country's dependency on extractive industries, which include not only timber, oil extraction and mining but also corporate tourist development projects as well as the systematic "looting [...] of our knowledge, language, and art" (Ibid.). Their final declaration concludes by sketching an answer to the question "What is the Honduras we dream?" The answer is not given as a political

[182] The reversal of traditional gender norms in the grassroots constituent assembly of Afro-Amerindian women of Honduras highlights an implicit argument I have made exploring the last official Venezuelan and Ecuadorian constituent assemblies; this is, that enacting the right to assembly in itself allows for transformative praxis. Much like Rosa Luxemburg argued regarding the pedagogical value of general strikes for the working class, despite if it failed in accomplishing its specific demands or the long-term horizon of socialist revolutionary transformation, assemblies self-declared "Constituent" can constitute not only legal frameworks or government policies but also and, perhaps most importantly, changes in the social relations that reproduce interlocking power structures in daily life.

platform to be implemented by the other (geo)political actors interpellated in the critiques formulated but rather their indictment of Honduran and transnational elites is combined with a reflexive (geo)politics of learning from the very process in which “profound lessons [were] learned about how men can transform the patriarchy that enslaves men and murders women, as seen in their domestic labor that allowed us to work peacefully. With music, poetry, dances and words of encouragement, we end these days of work, tired but full of hope in the construction of this [organizational] process that began many years ago” (Ibid.). The building of a plurinational state in Honduras requires, their final Declaration argues, not only the recognition by the state of Afro-Amerindian nationalities but also the autonomous agency, particularly of Black and Indigenous women, their experiences, embodied knowledge and theoretical perspectives that emerge from their struggles: “Never again a Honduras without the spoken word, the intelligence and action of Indigenous and Black women” (Ibid.).

One of the participants of the Honduran Black and Indigenous Women grassroots Constituent Assembly, Berta Cáceres, a Lenca leader, was assassinated in March 2016 in her own house, after many years of death threats for her environmental activism. Her assassination highlights the fact that the legality of the modern nation-state and its institutions have not only rendered stateless—that is without “public power, political membership, and social practices of equal moral recognition” (Sommers, 2008, p. 5)—increasing numbers of migrants, particularly refugees of various sorts, but also entire peoples and racialized nations and nationalities. As Kichwa intellectual and organizer from the southern Andean region of Ecuador of Saraguro, Luis Macas Ambuludí, underlines, the concept of plurinationality is the result not only of the oppositional praxis of Indigenous peoples in relation to the Ecuadorian state, but rather it is also

a framework to overcome the “colonial lack of awareness” and recognize “our own identities” in relation to those other subjects that have historically suffered through the same subaltern relationship with the modern nation-state. The recognition of Ecuador and Bolivia as plurinational states in their new constitutions, as well as the ongoing struggles of Afro-Amerindian social movements in Honduras and Chile, has to be understood as a contentious (geo)political project challenging racism, patriarchy, and capitalist dependency as structuring principles of the monocultural, uninational state, if it is not also seen as a problem of how to organize diverse peoples and nationalities so as to carry on anticolonial collective action and truly public—not exclusionary and oppressive—institutionalization.

In Ecuador, discrepancies between ensuring the broadest grassroots participation possible and the need to present a finished draft of the new Constitution on the formal deadline[183] signaled the first tensions between President Rafael Correa and other leaders with a more longstanding association with indigenous social movements, like CONAIE, who had become a key political actor resisting neoliberal structural adjustment in Ecuador during the 1990s and early 2000s.[184] Not only indigenous movement organizations, but also labor unions, and feminist and women’s organizations (Lind, 2003, p. 187), as well as gay rights and human rights activists—who were all involved as well in the social pressure to redraft the Constitution in 1998—were key actors in this constituent process in Montecristi in 2008, where they continued to find in neoliberalism “the political rubric under which seemingly diverse political movements

[183] The initial proposal for the Constituent Assembly, made by presidential decree signed by Correa and approved via referendum on September 28, 2008, included the specific rules for its functioning.
[184] These tensions resulted in the resignation of Economist Alberto Acosta—who had received the most votes of any Constituent Assembly representative in the general election—as President of the Constituent Assembly during the last month of its functioning.

and actors converged to address the political and economic crisis" that continued to mark the turn of the 21st century in Ecuador. Although the ambivalence of President Correa and other Citizens' Revolution actors in relation to fundamental demands of these social movements has produced an increasing disaffection among grassroots organizations, the anti-neoliberal discourse of the 2008 Constituent Assembly generated (geo)political opportunities to articulate longstanding social struggles to democratize unequal social relations.

The lengthier Bolivian Constituent Assembly process was marked by violent incidents of a more vicious and openly racist opposition (Fabricant, 2009; Fornillo, 2010) to the efforts led by the majority of elected representatives who were members of Movimiento al Socialismo (Movement towards Socialism), the political party that grew out of coca growers' social movements' praxis and that democratically elected the first Aymara president of Bolivia, coca grower and peasant union leader Evo Morales Ayma, on December 18, 2005. When memorializing her historical role as the President of the Bolivian Constituent Assembly, Silvia Lazarte denounced the sacrifice, discrimination and humiliation that she faced during this (geo)political process: "we even received threats that we would be burnt alive; not even my lease was respected, the landlord showed up one day telling me 'Sister President I ask you to be free, please leave my house since I don't want to see blood on it, they are saying they will come to kill you tonight,' and I had to leave that night. That was my experience as the President of the Constituent Assembly" (in Vicepresidencia del Estado Plurinacional de Bolivia, 2012).

The gendered violence and racialized threats embodied in this incident and that multiplied particularly in some regions of Bolivia, such as the lowlands of the Eastern region (see Gustafson, 2006; Fabricant, 2007), led to a "compromised constitution" (Fabricant, 2012),

slightly different[185] from the one approved under the leadership of Silvia Lazarte amidst the multiplication of (geo)political spectacles and performative politics of racist violence. However, the extended timeframe caused by the multiplication of overt social conflicts around the task of the last Bolivian Constituent Assembly process also had the unexpected consequence of fostering further grassroots organization, the proliferation of cultural production and social mobilization around contentious (geo)political debates and ongoing grassroots participation stemming from the praxis of multiple social movements both within and beyond the coalition that has sustained the government of Bolivian President Morales since 2005. In the case of indigenous/feminist[186] praxis, "rendering visible and empowering Bolivian indigenous women in this context [of increasing tension between indigenous social movement organizations over extractive activities carried out by government and transnational private economic actors] has meant a significant *sacudón* or shake up of the [guiding] conceptions and behaviors of traditional women's and feminist organizations, and the inclusion of the proposal of *despatriarcalización* or de-patriarchalization as public policy guideline has encouraged a direct participation of these organizations in the social debate. This never existed in Ecuador" (Vega, 2014, p. 85). Despite the differences between the experiences of indigenous/feminist social movement organizations in Ecuador, Bolivia, and Honduras, we see the catalyst of a renewed theorization of constituent power as a democratizing tool not only to "refound the nation" and "re-institutionalize the state"

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[185] Eleven changes were required by opposition members of the Bolivian Congress in order to approve the 2009 referendum where the majority of Bolivians adopted a new Constitution. Among those changes, mostly having to do with mechanisms on the institutional framework of the state, one of the most controversial was the amount of land that would be considered a *latifundio* or an excessively large state to be redistributed by initiative of the state.

[186] It is important to note the unfortunate nature of distinguishing between "feminist" and "indigenous" as if there were no overlap between these forms. While one is related to ethnic identification and the other is not, they historically overlap inasmuch as these constituent moments generate dialogues that enrich and cross-pollinate the (geo)political tradition of both feminist and indigenous peoples' social movement organizations.

but also to reimagine grassroots organization around the principles of self-determination and erotic autonomy.

Public education and queer perspectives in contemporary Ecuadorian and Latin American politics, 2016-2012

Eloy Alfaro was born on the coast of Ecuador, in the province of Manabí. In that hot land, region of insolence and violence, no one paid the least attention to his recent divorce law, pushed through against wind and tide.
-Eduardo Galeano, *Memory of Fire: Century of Wind* (1986), p. 28-29

This chapter focused on feminist theorizing of gender and sexuality so as to explore the role of feminist/indigenous social movement organizations and LGBTQ/human rights activism in the demand to redraft national constitutions in Ecuador and Bolivia, successfully, as well as in Honduras, where Black and Indigenous women have led the resistance to the coup that blocked the grassroots (geo)political demand for a plurinational and participatory constituent assembly. From these three national experiences in Latin America, Bolivia stands out as the only one where the last constituent process produced both a new Constitution of the Bolivian state and also an alternative Constitución Feminista del Estado (Political Feminist Constitution of the [Bolivian] State) resulting from the praxis of radical autonomous feminist collective Mujeres Creando (or Women Creating) (Galindo, 2009).

This subaltern feminist Bolivian constitution first came into my hands after a workshop organized by Ecuadorian feminists in Quito (at the Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales campus) with María Galindo, an organizer of Mujeres Creando, during October 2013. The Feminist Constitution comes as an add-on to Galindo's book *No se puede descolonizar sin despatriarcalizar* (Decolonization is not possible without depatriarchalization, 2013), which points to the historical intersection between feminism and postcolonialism and has been echoed

by the Bolivian state's public policy efforts in terms of depatriarchalization of public administration (Chávez et al., 2011; Diaz Carrasco, 2013). Although Galindo, among other feminist analysts, has dismissed the state appropriation of this proposal, born out of the grassroots organizational process that accompanied the Bolivian constituent process, the tense dialogue that emerges between these two very different "constitutional" documents and the experiences they embody are revealing of the ambivalence of the state's capacity to institutionalize and/or channel the constituent power of subaltern subjects.

The Feminist Constitution is introduced with a prologue entitled "the impossible country that thousands of women build every day" that states:

> "[This Constitution] was drafted in a big kitchen while [we] peeled potatoes and the girls and boys helped with the peas. […] The existence of this feminist political constitution of the state is not a campaign favoring the no or yes [option in the referendum] to the project for the new official constitution. We only want to state that there are other ways of conceiving the word of women and the transformations urgently required by our society. […] We make it clear that we wrote this constitution not from a general voice of women, but rather from three concrete voices: those of indian women, whores, and lesbians. This way we recover three places of oppression where we have built important forms of knowledge, *las indias* who know about colonialism and its relationship with culture, *las putas* who know to the extreme what is the condition of being rendered objects by society as well as the double standard used to judge men and women. And *las lesbianas* who, expelled from the condition of [being] women, explore the pleasure of the infinite reading of our bodies and break with the most ancient of laws, which is compulsory heterosexuality." (in Galindo, 2009, p. 181-182, author's translation)

The historical intersections between these three positionalities—which result in embodied knowledge production—and the law are invoked in order to denounce a patriarchal system of racialized classification as well as the resistances that emerge from its subaltern forms of identification.

The grassroots Feminist Constitution concludes its “constitutional provisions” and arguments regarding how the Bolivian state and society should be organized with relevant graffiti that Mujeres Creando painted on the walls of La Paz and that synthesize the spirit of their subversion of the law as the official genre of the state as the dominant narrative. This intertextuality subverts the official logic of modern constitutionalism and invites reflection on the pedagogical role of constitutional (and other) texts and official archives. In this vein, I began reflecting on the constitutional right to education up to the university level, publicly funded and free of any form of discrimination, which characterizes the Andean transformative neoconstitutionalism (Ávila Santamaría, 2011) of Ecuador and Bolivia. The focus on higher education signals my related interest in modern forms of knowledge production and their role in sustaining certain power configurations behind the inequalities associated in Latin America with neoliberal reforms.

Contrasting the ideas regarding education articulated in the Feminist Constitution drafted by Mujeres Creando in Bolivia with my ethnographic account of the Ecuadorian university reform that followed the provisions of the new 2008 Constitution allows me to conclude this chapter by discussing the queer liberation horizons hinted in the push to democratize higher education in Ecuador and Latin America, more generally. The ongoing social conflicts around this issue of the right to public university education in Ecuador are yet another expression of the ambivalence of the modernization project behind the privileging of abstract and fragmentary notions of “quality,” “merit,” and “excellence” over the actual social subjects in higher education institutions, both old and new public universities, private institutions and grassroots initiatives towards the vindication of plurinational/intercultural forms of subaltern knowledges.

When I moved to Quito, Ecuador during August 2012 in order to carry out one last round of field work on the presidential (re)elections taking place that year in both Ecuador and Venezuela as well as other (geo)political rituals related to the this round of Constituent Assembly processes in the region, the unexpected opportunity to teach at the oldest Ecuadorian public university (Universidad Central del Ecuador or UCE) effectively threw me into the middle of an important institutional space being reformed as a result of the 2008 Constitution of Montecristi. René Ramírez Gallegos, an economist that has occupied important roles in Correa's administration, most recently in one of the regulatory bodies of higher education (Senescyt) that have resulted from the 2008 Constitution, has argued that in order to "constitutionalize a *sociedad del buen vivir*"—or a society based on the alternative development paradigm of *Sumak Kawsay*—, Ecuador has embarked on a "third wave of transformation of its higher education" (2013) regime. Not only was education, up to the university level, vindicated as a social right, but a complete overhaul of the higher education was mandated,[187] resulting in the closing of numerous private universities, which had mushroomed during the 1990s and early 2000s, and the evaluation and certification of both public and private universities. Moreover, the Citizens' Revolution embarked on the construction of four new public universities, making higher education a central component of the government's high rate of public and social investment in communications and transportation infrastructure as well as urban(izing) interventions (see Wilson & Bayón, 2015; Sánchez Cárdenas, 2015).

[187] One of the most significant actions of the 2008 Montecristi Constituent Assembly called for a complete evaluation of existing universities, both public and private, in order to reform and refine the university system in Ecuador to ensure world standards of "quality" (see Mandato 14, July 22, 2008).

The first wave of reform sweeping Latin American universities dates back to the student movements that pushed forward the Córdoba reform (Bernhein, 2008; Tunnermann, 2010) in the early 20th century. Making Latin American public universities important political actors in the democratization and modernization of societies and states across the region, the 1918 Córdoba reforms inaugurated principles like university autonomy, democratic co-governance, public service (or social relevance), and free access. The second wave of reform of Latin American universities is associated as a key component of neoliberal reforms, which entailed a defunding of public education and an increasing privatization and the associated commodification of university degrees. The deregulation and abandonment of public universities during neoliberal regimes at the turn of the 21st century had created a situation where the economic, social, and cultural capital required to acquire a higher education minimized the opportunities of a wide range of the population and knowledge production through scientific research was relegated as an objective of higher education institutions.

During the changes brought about with the 2008 Constitution, the government argued for a third wave of reforms to reorient the higher education system on a basis of equal opportunities distributed in terms of true meritocracy; "merit" entailed standard evaluation for individual students and subjection of approved courses of study to the country's development goals as defined by the PNBV (*Plan Nacional del Buen Vivir* or National Good Living Plan) in order to transform the "production matrix" of the country. The PNBV is the policy document produced by SENPLADES (*Secretaría Nacional de Planificación y Desarrollo* or Development and Planning National Secretary) as an instrument to set policy goals and both qualitative and quantitative indicators to evaluate the accomplishment of these objectives of the government of

the Citizen's Revolution. A close reading of the PNBV suggests that the guiding force in the document is objective 10 that state: "To give impulse to the transformation of the production matrix [of the Ecuadorian economy]." While education is a transversal concern throughout most of the twelve objectives, objective 4 is the most explicit with regards to the centrality of education in overcoming economic dependency on primary goods: in order to "strengthen the capacities and potential of the citizenry" PNBV argues that the government needs to ensure an integral education (*formación integral*) "so as to reach the socialist society of knowledge. This will allow us to move from an economy of finite (material) resources to an economy based on the [only] infinite resource: knowledge" (PNBV 2013-2017, p. 159)

While this "third wave" of post-neoliberal reforms in the Ecuadorian university system was presented as a key mechanism to further democratize and decolonize Ecuadorian society, there has been a growing sense of disappointment and denunciation of the Citizens' Revolution education policies as enforcing a neoliberal logic; its goal to ensure "quality" by adopting global(izing) standards of academic "excellence" have been seen by some actors and analysts as promoting an academic re-colonization, the bureaucratization of research, and a fragmented university system, which allegedly produces controlled, submissive, and disciplinary higher education institutions (Villavicencio, 2013). To assess this sort of indictment it is important to discuss the specific objectives set forth by the Citizens' Revolution under Correa's administration for the new wave of reforms, which exceed the dual objectives of mere internationalization and expanded social reach with which they are often associated (Ramírez Gallegos, 2013, p. 197).

Economist René Ramírez Gallegos, who currently chairs the Ecuadorian government higher education regulatory body Senescyt (*Secretaría Nacional de Educación Superior, Ciencia y Tecnología* or Technology, Science, and Higher Education National Secretary), argues that there are seven dimensions to be considered toward the goal of rearticulating higher education as a public good, not merely an individual opportunity or privilege. Vindicating the social impact that higher education has (1), one objective would be the democratization of university spaces, which historically have served to (re)produce economic and social elites (2). Positing the problem of re-articulating a common interest of universities as a social field beyond traditional corporatist interests[188] (3), the objective of "de-patriarchalization" (4) emerges as central "to recover the public character [of higher education, which entails] redefining what actors participate in the binding and collective decision making process of the field. […] It is paradoxical that while increasingly more women than men enter, go through, and graduate, on average with better grades, the authorities and academic institutions continue to be composed almost exclusively by males" (Ibid., p. 199-200). The last three dimensions identify obstacles in the goal to *desmercantilizar* or de-commodify knowledge production by institutionalizing alternative ways to produce scientific knowledge under a "shared and collective character over

[188] The diagnosis of the problems of higher education carried out by the Citizens' Revolution emphasized how corporatist interests blocked the formation of a truly autonomous academic field across Ecuadorian Universities. The argument regarding the neoliberal impact on public universities was not merely that public de-funding and abandonment were to blame for their questionable standing but also former constituent assembly allies, like the National Teachers Union (UNE) and the related now-extinct political party MPD (Popular Democratic Movement), inasmuch they had allegedly instrumentalized educational institutions for political gain. While the diagnosis was widely shared by significant actors of Ecuadorian universities, this conflict has unfolded into increasing concern for the violation of the principle of university autonomy and democratic co-governance. Ecuadorian Historian Pablo Ospina has argued that the Citizens' Revolution suspicion of corporatist interests as an aberration of public interest, understood in liberal abstract terms, has made Correa's administration attempt to exorcise state institutions from corporatist interest to "eliminate the presence and power of teachers, workers' unions, indigenous organizations, professional associations and business federations. The State is not theirs since it is the property of 'all'" (2010, p.11).

individual private interests" (Ibid., p. 202). Reclaiming for the Ecuadorian state its legitimate role as regulator of the university system in the name of public interest and "quality" standards, Correa's government has ended up antagonizing the really existing actors of Ecuadorian public universities, particularly professors and students, often dismissing important sectors of these populations as corporatist obstacles and blaming them for the historical failure of universities to fulfill their allegedly democratizing social promise.

While depatriarchalization and decolonization are invoked in the guiding objectives of the ongoing Ecuadorian university reform under President Correa's leadership, the ambivalence behind the official use of these concepts becomes patent when contrasted with the operationalization of these concepts by Mujeres Creando in their Feminist Constitution (in Galindo, 2009) for the Bolivian State, particularly in relation to the social issue of education as a public good/service and collective knowledge production. The "Cultural regime" of the grassroots Feminist Constitution begins by affirming in bold print that "Private education, that has been the source of humiliations and privileges, is dissolved since it is unnecessary" (Ibid., p. 198, author's translation). More than calling for the nationalization or state administration of all educational institutions, it vindicates public education as a collective space where "manual labor, creative labor, domestic labor, and intellectual labor are considered as equal and will be the basis for the pedagogy of our society" (Ibid.). The underlying argument that there cannot be decolonization without depatriarchalization (and vice-versa) here becomes a pedagogical challenge, while in Ecuadorian official discourse they are often reduced to celebrating an increase in the enrollment or representation of individuals who self-recognize as individual members of historically underrepresented and dispossessed groups.

The Bolivian grassroots Feminist Constitution also highlights “mandatory sexual education” so as that “young people learn to know their naked bodies and forget their shame. […] It will be a non-biologically determined, non-religious, and non-reproductive education where the mechanisms for sexual pleasure and self-knowledge of the body are comprehended” (p. 199). Immediately following this queer pedagogical approach to sexual education, “the patriarchal nuclear family” is disavowed as “the principal nucleus of society, it will stop being considered a good in itself or an entity that shall be protected as absolute value” (Ibid.). As discussed earlier, these issues were raised during the Ecuadorian Constituent Assembly yet ultimately were dissolved as the social subjects and (geo)political actors that raised them were silenced, dismissed, or disavowed during the conservative turn the Citizens' revolution has taken since in this and other aspects. Nonetheless, despite the theoretical and political ambivalence that is clear between those quantitative indicators that suggest an important reduction in poverty and inequality rates and the tensions that have led Correa's government to exalt an abstract citizen as a revolutionary subject while dismissing social movement organizations that stress that without decolonization and depatriarchalization little or nothing would have been accomplished, even if the economy of the country is actually transformed as the remaking of (trans)national (geo)political identities capable of sustaining long-term economic transformations do not naturally emerge from a technical plan for socio-economic change.

Apparently unimportant conflicts that emerged in the context of the 2007-2008 Ecuadorian Constituent Assembly hinted at this premature foreclosure of transformative dialogues regarding (trans)national forms of identification. Take for instance the case of filmmaker Tania Hermida, who served as a Constituent Assembly representative elected as part

of Alianza País, President Correa's political party. During the Constituent Assembly she self-recognized as an artist, a cultural producer who argued:

> "those of us who believe in the transformative capacity of words and signs believe, therefore, that it is not enough to write a new Constitution; to reinvent ourselves and renew our way of living as a country it is necessary, also, to reinvent the symbols that represent us. The national flag, coat of arms, and anthem that were created to consolidate the XIX century Republic and nation-state, are not representative anymore, during the beginning of a new century, these symbols do not contain what we have discovered and embraced collectively to be and what we can become as a country: [truly] diverse."[189] (in EFE, May 14, 2008, author's translation)

Her proposal, which was widely ridiculed by opposition (geo)political actors and ultimately silenced by her own party representatives, is an example of how another potentially transformative social dialogue was cut short by an official urge to focus on the "truly important" issues pertaining to electoral support, at worst, and poverty reduction through government-led redistribution of national wealth, at best.

As with the attempt to include the right to sexual pleasure, the proposal to reinvent national symbols[190] did not materialize, yet it sparked important intercultural dialogues about issues that are often silenced as social and (geo)political taboos. Tania Hermida, however, went on to become a dean and professor at the Universidad de las Artes (University of the Arts) in Guayaquil, a historic port and the largest Ecuadorian city. Universidad de las Artes is one of the

[189] "Quienes creemos en la capacidad transformadora de las palabras y los signos creemos, entonces, que no es suficiente escribir una nueva Constitución; para reinventarnos y renovar nuestro sentido de la vida como país es necesario, también, reinventar los símbolos que nos representan. La bandera, el escudo y el himno nacional, creados para consolidar el proyecto de República y de estado-nación del siglo XIX, ya no nos representan porque, en este comienzo de siglo, esos símbolos no contienen aquello que hemos descubierto y asumido que somos y queremos ser como país: diversos."

[190] In Venezuela and Bolivia, the last constituent process did in fact transformed official national symbols. Besides the name change to Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, another star was added to the flag and Bolivar's horse in the Venezuelan coat of arms traditionally headed right was changed to ride towards the left. In Bolivia, the Andean Indigenous wipala has been adopted in official acts of Bolivian President Evo Morales Ayma.

four new universities (see table 6) with which the Citizens' Revolution government has vowed to transform the higher education system in order to build the new society hinted at in the 2008 Montecristi Constitution. The ambivalent success of these initiatives is marked by the seemingly overbearing investment in infrastructure and technological capacity over the pedagogical interventions necessary to consolidate social subjects and (geo)political actors capable of solidifying revolutionary transformations.

Table 6. Public Universities during Ecuador's Citizens Revolution

University	Number of Students	Location
Yachay Tech	850	Urcuquí, Imbabura.
Universidad de las Artes	740	Guayaquil, Guayas.
Universidad Nacional de Educación (UNAE)	800	Azogues, Cañar.
Universidad Regional Amazónica IKIAM	320	Tena, Napo.
Universidad Central del Ecuador*	40 000	Quito, Ecuador.

Source: University websites and reports.
*Founded on 1826, UCE is the oldest public university in the country and the second largest student population in a public university. Correa's administration established the four newest public universities in the country in 2013.

Yachay, Ciudad del Conocimiento or "City of Knowledge" has been declared by President Correa as the emblematic university of the ongoing higher education reform project and thus a high priority (El Ciudadano, February 2, 2015) for the government of the Citizens' Revolution. It articulates the university Yachay Tech—named for the Kichwa concept for wisdom, science, or knowledge—with the first Ecuadorian planned city. As the first planned city

in the country, the justification for its location is explained by administrators in technical terms (Ciudad Yachay, September 10, 2014), yet it also symbolizes the government's faith in education as the key mechanism to fulfill its promise of democratizing Ecuadorian society (see Ciudad Yachay, April 2, 2014) marked by profound interlocking inequalities. Yachay was built on land that formerly made up the Hacienda San José, the largest in Urcuquí, province of Imbabura. Currently a few hundred students take courses to become the first graduates from Yachay Tech. Besides the university, the City of Knowledge includes an industrial development park and a biotechnology sector for agricultural research. The manager of the public enterprise charged with designing the "intelligent city" of Yachay, sociologist Héctor Rodriguez, foresees Yachay to house around 30,000 researchers, workers, students, and professors in the next thirty years (see Franco, October 19, 2016).

Hacienda San José was owned by Jesuit priests in colonial times, whose sugar cane plantations around Imbabura were key institutions in the history of African enslavement in Ecuador; it continued to exist as an institution and space of Afro-Amerindian forced labor throughout Ecuadorian republican history, enriching the family of Juan José Flores, the first Constitutional President of modern Ecuador, and then Jacinto Jijón y Caamaño y Flores, a leader of the Conservative party, historian, and "sugar cane entrepreneur" (Yachay Tech.edu, 2017). Having been progressively abandoned in the second half of the 20th century, Yachay Ciudad del Conocimiento resignified this territory and brought it into the spotlight of the historical narrative of development articulated by the Citizens' Revolution. The Andean hacienda turned into an "ecosystem of innovation," the first planned city of Ecuador and one of the newest and most

emblematic public universities in the country, became a symbol of the praxis of the Citizens' Revolution government under the leadership of President Rafael Correa.

Another unexpected connection between President Correa's leadership in the ongoing Citizens' Revolution and President Eloy Alfaro's legendary role in the struggles that marked the Liberal Revolution at the turn of the century appears when we connect the (geo)political discourse around Yachay and the characterization of Alfaro performed in Tania Hermida's 2006 motion picture *Que tan lejos* (How much further). When questioned by one of the main characters, a female Spanish tourist named Esperanza, regarding who was Eloy Alfaro, Jesús replies: "He was the first one that imagined that this country could be more than an *hacienda*" (Hermida, 2006). If Alfaro embodied the first modern leadership beyond the (post)colonial institution of the hacienda or plantation, President Correa through his government initiatives in Yachay provides one possible answer to the century-old question of what exactly could Ecuador be as a modern nation and state besides a patriarchal hacienda. Nonetheless, the answer proposed by the Citizens' Revolution has unleashed important conflicts and tensions that necessarily surround Yachay both as a project to produce scientific knowledge and stimulate technological innovation and as a historical symbol expressing the ambivalence between a higher education system subjected to yet another capitalist modernization scheme or woven with alternative pedagogies and research practices to consolidate a "21st century socialist" Andean modernity under construction. These conflicts are particularly apparent when considering the role assigned to the social sciences in Yachay Tech.

Despite the fact that the public enterprise of Yachay is led by a sociologist, the social sciences were initially absent from the educational project devised for Yachay. Ultimately, rather

than decisively building on the critical tradition of Latin American and Ecuadorian sociology, the social sciences were institutionalized in the School of Social Sciences and Innovation. Initially called School of Social Sciences and Entrepreneurship, the pairings in these names suggest a certain subordination of social scientific knowledge to market and promote the technological innovation produced elsewhere in the university. The name change from entrepreneurship to innovation does not hide the tensions of an allegedly post-neoliberal initiative that replicates dominant configurations of public-private alliances, which subordinate knowledge production to state-mandated "development" goals and/or the ruthless competition of capitalist markets. Moreover, despite the (geo)political rhetoric regarding the goals to overcome poverty and interlocking forms of inequality, the subjects conceived to carry out these transformations are still posited in terms of expanding individual opportunity to exploit individual genius and increase human capital as opposed to taking on the social structures and collective agencies behind modern systems of classification and resulting forms of identification and (inter)cultural trans-formations.

A focus on the gender formations expressed in the explicit challenge to the patriarchal and heteronormative logic that has often characterized modern public policy and state institutions, which emerged in the context of the 2008 Ecuadorian Constituent Assembly, allows an assessment of tensions and conflicts between Correa's government policy initiatives and the pedagogical interventions of feminist social movement organizations with proposals that have impacted (trans)national debates, even when they failed to be included in the official Ecuadorian Constitution. The shortcomings of depatriarchalization and decolonization as guiding principles of the self-proclaimed 21st century socialist regime of the Citizens' Revolution under President

Correa's leadership require intersectional historicizing, which highlights the (geo)political relevance of critical race and gender theories:

> without this history, we keep on centering our analysis on the patriarchy; that is, on a binary, hierarchical, oppressive gender formation that rests on male supremacy without any clear understanding of the mechanisms by which heterosexuality, capitalism, and racial classification are impossible to understand apart from each other. (Lugones 2007, 187)

The hegemonic masculinity performed by President Correa has clearly contributed to the reproduction of heteronormativity and (neo)colonial/modern forms of racial classification (Granda, 2016), yet ambivalence emerges from his challenge to neoliberal capitalism, both in his academic writing (Correa, 2012) and in his government policies, that the Citizens' Revolution and Correa's charismatic leadership (which I analyze in the next chapter) has claimed to embody. More than a personality shortcoming of Rafael Correa or incoherence in his administration's efforts to institutionalize modern and democratic institutions devised in the 2008 Constitution, it is important to reflect on how himself is merely an expression of (many aspects regarding) Ecuadorian society and the contentious (geo)politics that characterize modern capitalism.

These tensions and ambivalence began to feel much more familiar and embodied as I started to navigate the institutional contradictions of an emblematic public university like UCE, the oldest and second largest university in Ecuador. During my first years as a full-time professor at the Sociology and Politics School at UCE I became involved with the administrative efforts related to the government-sponsored accreditation process, which sought to rank the "quality" of both public and private institutions as well as to re-institutionalize the specific academic programs, looking to "rationalize" the academic offer so as to make it relevant for the

consecution of the development goals of the Plan Nacional del Buen Vivir. While I had been hired as a Ph.D. candidate, with the allure of *almost* having a degree that was scarce across Ecuadorian universities, my newly found administrative responsibilities to ensure the accreditation of sociology and politics as academic offerings jeopardized my capacity to keep up with my teaching and research responsibilities. Initially excited to contribute to the "revolutionary" transformation of the university system in Ecuador, I grew disillusioned as I was overwhelmed by bureaucratic requirements articulating the all-too-common features of the first world version of the paradigmatic neoliberal re-forming of the modern university: "new regimes of measurement and monitoring, 'quality assurance', 'performance management' and 'international benchmarking' that are historically unprecedented and have dramatically reshaped the way universities operate (Shore and Wright 199, 2000; French 2001; Robertson and Dale 2002; Crook, Gross and Dymott 2006)" (Shore, 2010, p. 15-16).

My anxieties regarding my responsibility over the effort to re-institutionalize the undergraduate programs in Sociology and Politics at UCE[191] paralleled those recounted by my first year students when narrating their educational journey to the university. The standardized exams produced by the new government regulatory bodies of the public higher education system were always recounted with ambivalence; their happiness to have "passed" the exam and therefore have a seat in the "prestigious" UCE contrasted with their frustration either of not

[191] The history of the *Escuela de Sociología y Ciencias Políticas* at UCE has contributed to the tradition of Latin American critical social science, inextricably linked to modern revolutionary struggles and democratization efforts. The works of Agustin Cueva, Fernando Velasco, Alejandro Moreano, and others, are part of the intellectual contribution; yet it is also important to note (as the walls of the building where classes take place re-member) that its students have also contributed to the tradition of revolutionary armed struggle as well as other forms that has taken grassroots popular struggles in Latin America.

being in their first choice academic or professional program or of knowing loved ones who saw their dreams of going to university crumble (in both cases, due to not achieving a high enough grade in the exam). Ultimately the exam seems to serve the function not only of assigning the limited number of seats in the different academic programs of the public universities but also instigating a sense of personal responsibility that is inscribed in the dominant discourse of meritocracy, which is embraced by the Citizens' Revolution discourse on education in spite of its theoretical tensions with the interlocking structures of inequality that the idea of individual "merit" often renders unspeakable. In my case, I, a young U.S.-trained Ph.D. candidate, had been afforded the equivalent to tenure in record time, while the load of bureaucratic responsabilities cut back on my capacity to continue to hone my research and teaching capacities both in relation to my dissertation research but also in fostering collaboration[192] with my colleagues.

As Historian Pablo Ospina (2016) has argued, the educational policies of President Correa's Citizens' Revolution government are a sort of mirror where its achievements and limitations become apparent. Bringing the Ecuadorian state back to the regulatory role of universities, public and private, a heavy investment has been made not only for the building of four new universities (see table 6) but also to create a system of scholarships in order to democratize access to higher education both within the country and abroad. The idea of pursuing a "world class" university system in order to overcome dependency on primary exports and

[192] While I witnessed various institutional efforts, some of which were sponsored by Correa's government, to foster research and academic publications throughout UCE, various institutional and financial obstacles began to appear and frustrate the few Ph.D. trained researchers that work at UCE full time. Most importantly, meaningful collaboration has been hampered by the abrupt nature of the generational transition that forced into retirement a significant number of professors, which opted out when confronted with the requirement to have a Ph.D. degree by 2017.

become a key player in the global "knowledge economy" (Objective 4, PNBV 2013-2017) seemed to have been articulated by policy makers trained elsewhere, without any firsthand knowledge of the historical vicissitudes of Ecuadorian public universities. President Correa has expressed deep suspicion of the historical political actors in public universities—but also in other spaces where neoliberal resistance was waged during the 80s and 90s—, classifying them contemptuously as "tirapiedras" (stone-throwers). The main contradiction of the emphasis of President Correa's administration on higher education, as a key mechanism to transform the "productive matrix" of the country's dependent economy, seems to reveal a wider problem with a "government that is convinced of the inexistence of [grassroots] social actors to carry out transformations" (Ospina, 2016). If we understand revolutionary and democratizing social transformations as needing a revolutionary and democratic education, we cannot reduce our understanding of education to merely empowering individual *citizens*, no matter if they identify with historically marginalized groups. Education understood as a critical "pedagogy of the oppressed" (Freire) entails not knowledge production functional[193] to a global knowledge economy but rather creating the (geo)political and economic conditions to render possible those subaltern subjects who have been denied not only the right to education but also recognition as knowledge producing subjects; in a plurinational context, this should entail an education that is capable to aid in the project of intercultural translation and diverse "pluriversities" and other

[193] The last objective of PNBV 2013-2017, Objetive 12 vows to "guarantee sovereignty and peace, [through] deepening the strategic insertion [of Ecuador] in the world and Latin American integration." While the Citizens' Revolution foreign policy has been the most consistently aligned with subalternoor Third World solidarity, the way this objective is articulated reveals how most "progressive" objectives get functionalized to transform the country's economy through "strategic insertion" in global capitalism, without clearly stating how to contribute in a post-capitalist –not merely post-neoliberal- transformation.

spaces spaces where to forge social relations and intersubjectivities that overcome heteronormative racial neoliberalism.

These perspectives of decolonization and depatriarchalization of higher education and the queer horizons were only hinted in the ambivalent, contradictory yet also potentially transformative dialogues that emerged around concepts like plurinationality, *sumak kawsay*/*suma qamaña*, and universal citizenship as well as the feminist provocations regarding the right to sexual pleasure, the diversity of transnational families that destabilizes the hegemony of the heteronormative nuclear family, the decriminalization of poverty (by legalizing abortion and abolishing the existing prison system) and even the call to overhaul our national symbols in order to rethink who we are. In the next chapter I turn to compare more explicitly the charismatic leaderships and the higher education reforms at play in Ecuador and Venezuela in order to suggest that the latest constituent moments experienced recently in these South American nations cannot simply be found in a narrow reading of the resulting Constitutions but also in the grassroots praxis they have resulted from and further catalyzed, sometimes in overt defiance to the law in the books.

Chapter 4

Venezuela and Ecuador in comparative perspective: Charismatic leadership, higher education reform and the paradox of institutionalizing the margins.

The nationalism I seek is one that decolonizes the brown and female body as it decolonizes the brown and female earth. It is a new nationalism in which la Chicana Indígena stands at the center, and heterosexism and homophobia are no longer the cultural order of the day. I cling to the word 'nation' because without the specific naming of the nation, the nation will be lost (as when feminism is reduced to humanism, the woman is subsumed). Let us retain our radical naming but expand it to meet a broader and wiser revolution.

- Cherríe Moraga, "Queer Aztlán" (1993)

Not for nothing Max Weber, scholar of the charismatic power, calls it "the nascent state". Each time it emerges, the charisma seems to call forth the creation of the world within the charismatic person or mana-personality. The function of the charismatics is to be midwife to the latent charisma within others. Their mission is not to dominate them with their splendor, nor seduce them so that the people follow them blindly, but to awaken them from their every day lethargy. And, when they awaken, that they discover that every day life has within it secrets, novelties, and hidden energies that can always be awakened and can give new meaning of brilliance to life, to our short passage through this universe.

-Leonardo Boff, "Charisma and charismatic: what kind of energy is it?" (2012)

If the building of a bridge does not enrich the consciousness of those working on it, then don't build the bridge, and let the citizens continue to swim across the river or use a ferry. The bridge must not be pitchforked or foisted upon the social landscape by a deus ex machine, but, on the contrary, must be the product of citizens' brains and muscles.

-Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (2004 [1963], p. 141)

The last two chapters presented historicizing accounts of the constituent assembly processes that inaugurated the Bolivarian Revolution in Venezuela and the Citizens' Revolution in Ecuador based on grassroots (counter)cultural engagements with (geo)political regimes that self-proclaim to be *revolutionary* and *democratic*. These (geo)political (counter)cultures are key to understand contemporary Latin/x American contentious geo-politics, which cannot be reduced to international relations between states but that also have to do with contemporary histories of migration across various sorts of socio-historical borderlands. The latest Venezuelan and Ecuadorian constituent processes were contrasted with ongoing grassroots struggles in Chile and Honduras to convene national constituent assemblies as a mechanism for democratization as well as decolonization in order to underscore the regional dimension of this (geo)political demand. These processes were also connected to the Haitian and Bolivian contributions to postcolonial constitutionalism, which as the first and the last instances of postcolonial constitutionalism provide historicizing contextualization and give testimony about an important tradition of revolutionary struggles across the Americas. By tracing a postcolonial genealogy of self-defined anti-neoliberal (geo)political struggles that converged in the most recent Venezuelan and Ecuadorian (and Bolivian) constituent processes, I attempted to underscore how the ambivalence and contradictions that emerge from a close reading of the lengthy resulting constitutional texts as well as in the attempts to translate them into actual policies should not be read merely as inherent shortcomings but rather as symptoms or expressions of the ongoing crisis of the nation-state as the constitutive block of capitalist modernity and the international system of nation-states that sustains it.

The paradoxical crisis seemingly faced by modern nation-states across Latin/x America,

which unfolded as a result of neoliberal structural adjustment, is twofold: the challenge to ensure institutional mechanisms to promote the (geo)political participation of those sectors of society that have been historically marginalized and to recognize the self-determination of peoples and nationalities historically eclipsed by (neo)colonialism, imperialism, and coloniality at large (Moraña et. al., 2008). Following the theoretical lead of Afro-Amerindian social movements that, by unhinging nation from state, have deployed *nation* as a symbol for different struggles for self-determination, I have posited the notion of postcolonial (trans)nationalism to highlight the constitutive tensions between the dual social task to imagine diverse or plurinational imagined communities and (trans)national forms of identification, while building state and other public institutions that can effectively move beyond the (neo)liberal traps behind the concepts of citizenship and rights (Rivera Cusicanqui, 2010) as granted from above in exchange for (geo)political duties, responsibilities, and loyalties.

Together, chapters two and three argue that it is more useful to center our analysis of the achievements and shortcomings of these processes around the historical aspirations and struggles articulated in constituent assemblies as mechanisms to reimagine the *nation* and rethink the modern state as opposed to the common fixation on the charismatic leaders that often come to embody an important part of these constituent moments. In that vein, the three sections of chapter two and chapter three were organized as accounts of the pre-constituent, constituent, and post-constituent moments in 21st century Venezuela and Ecuador while glimpsing at ongoing struggles to redraft postcolonial constitutions across the Americas more generally. In this chapter I do not compare these three moments but rather focus on the interplay between three different dimensions or social spaces, on which the ongoing significance of the *national* seems to be

contentiously signified or granted social and (geo)political meaning: street rallies and demonstrations, assemblies and institutions where pedagogical dialogues and intercultural translation take (or should take) place, and the (trans)national arena of contentious geopolitics and international relations where concepts like *democracy* and *revolution* are contentiously forged. If in the preceding chapters I deployed specific expressions of cultural creativity in order to provide a historicizing account of the last Venezuelan and Ecuadorian constituent process, in this chapter I go back to the theoretical and (geo)political implications of the different levels of cultural creativity that have been catalyzed and mobilized by the Ecuadorian Citizens' Revolution and the Venezuelan Bolivarian Revolution while trying to explain why in the latter case this creativity seems more apparent and consolidated.

Despite the fact that they are often lumped together as examples of the "bad" and "populist" leftist regimes in the Americas, there are significant differences in how the Venezuelan and Ecuadorian governments under the leadership of President Chávez and President Correa respectively have conceived of the historical subject(s) for their proposed revolutionary transformations, capable of sustaining the medium and long-term strategic democratization goals delineated in government programs that posit the need to confront interlocking forms of modern inequality. This has led me to consider three specific explanatory comparisons in this chapter: first I compare the sociological dimension of the charismatic leadership embodied in Hugo Chávez Frías and Rafael Correa Delgado in terms of their perceived pedagogical qualities; then I consider the contrast between the Venezuelan emphasis on revolutionary democratization as a (geo)political project and the Ecuadorian focus on poverty and inequality alleviation as *revolutionary* achievements, through the institutional transformations carried out in higher

education reform; finally I compare the intersections between the theoretical and cultural contributions to the normative debates on the nature of *democracy* and the need to conceive of modern social change in terms of *revolution*, which for Third World peoples necessarily entail anti-colonial struggles and postcolonial desires.

Modern institutions mediate citizenship rights and (geo)politically perform as the crystallization of the national body politic; their legitimacy is based on a sense of internal cohesion, socially real inasmuch as it is *collectively* imagined, that is required to present a given nation-state as a legitimate member of the so-called international community. The historical development of Afro-Amerindian local organizations into (trans)national social movements discussed in the previous chapter shows how constituent processes impact not only the state as the hegemonic embodiment of the commons or the public but also subaltern subjects' praxis I have analyzed in relation to both grassroots cultural creativity and organizational capacities. If nation-states continue to be the regional blocs capable of influencing the contentious (geo)politics of modern capitalism, the postcolonial (trans)nationalism articulated in the Venezuelan and Ecuadorian constitutions calls attention to the constituent power of subaltern subjects even as they are rendered impossible by the hyphenated modern nation-state.

The capacity of social groups to become relevant at the national and transnational lever requires effective forms of interpellation of the modern/postcolonial nation-state, which often entail the strategic deployment of international law (and transnational solidarity more generally) and the forging of alliances that defy different types of social borders; including but not limited to the boundaries patrolled by national armed forces. Postcolonial (trans)nationalism and cross-border solidarity challenge the neatness of Eurocentric maps and catalyze cultural (re)production

of alternative ways of organizing modern life. Hence, the problem of methodological nationalism, particularly in historical-comparative sociological analysis, is not merely a methodological issue but rather entails the danger of overlooking the historical contributions of subaltern subjects for theorizing “processes of institution building, social transformation, and cultural creativity” (Eisentadt, 1968, p. xvi)[194] in a postcolonial context.

The first section of this chapter compares the charisma of late Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez Frías with that of Ecuadorian President Rafael Correa Delgado not in terms of personality traits but rather as a sort of socio-historical energy that is revealing of the nature of the (geo)political relations constructed between leaders, collaborators and supporters. The second section moves to compare institutional outcomes of the political processes undertaken by Chávez and Correa’s administrations in relation to higher education policy reforms. The different paths that seem to be unfolding in Venezuela and Ecuador with the explicit objective of reversing what is perceived to be the impact of neoliberalism on (higher) education institutions express the different forms taken by the appeal to grassroots participation articulated by these two self-proclaimed *democratic revolutions* or, alternatively, *revolutionary democracies*. Nonetheless I

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[194] “[Max Weber’s] most general concern, permeating all his work, was with what may be called, in the terminology of modern sociology, the processes of institution building, social transformation, and cultural creativity” (Eisentadt, 1968, p. xvi). Not only in the Weberian tradition but also throughout sociological classical theory we see a constant return to these concerns. C. Wright Mills has argued that what makes classical sociological analysis classical, and hints at the promise of the sociological imaginations, is that they “have been imaginatively aware of the promise of their work [and] have consistently asked three sorts of questions” (2000 [1959], p. 6). The first sort of question has to do with institutional building in structural terms, including inquiries regarding what is the structure of a particular society and what are its essential (institutional) components, including their relation to one another. The second type of question is about social transformation, as it deals with where a society stands in human history and what is its place within and its meaning for the development of humanity as a whole, including what are its characteristic ways of history-making. Finally the third group involves questions regarding the varieties of men and women that prevail in a given society, the ways they are selected and formed, liberated and repressed, made senstitive and blunted: questions that boil down to sociological inquiry regarding what kinds of “human nature” are revealed in the conduct and character we observe in a given society as well as how the features of particular societies are significant to sociologically research and theorize “human nature” (Ibid., p. 6-7).

stress that we cannot lose sight of the transnational interconnections between these national experiences since they are but the latest chapters of the articulation of "Latin/x America" as a (geo)political project that vindicates the emancipatory promise of modernity by pointing to its eurocenctric blindspots.

I conclude this comparative analysis in the third section by exploring the theoretical implications of the distinction suggested by these two characterizations, democratic revolution v. revolutionary democracy, which signal a renewed interest in the historical and conceptual relation between *revolution* and *democracy*. An important relationship that is too often severed and disavowed by (neo)liberal doxa which falsely equates individual freedoms and "free" markets with social freedom and emancipation from authoritarianism. Highlighting the contributions of both Venezuelans and Ecuadorians (as well as other Latin/x Americans) to the necessary rethinking of nations and states in order to remake modernity, I end by pointing to the evidence that seems to suggest that, for better or for worse, the Venezuelan constituent processes' focus on protagonist subaltern participation seems much more diluted in the Ecuadorian experience; in part because of the stress on the notion of atomized "citizens" to define the subject of the transformation being proposed, the Citizens' Revolution seems to have been unable to consolidate the initial social energies and (geo)political fervor that surged in the context of the Montecristi Constituent Assembly. I will argue that both theoretically and historically the notion of "citizenship rights" has been unable to stretch enough, either theoretically or practically, in order to encompass meaningfully the demand to decolonize—and not simply democratize—modern states and societies, which continue to organize as nations and *nationalities* despite the profound transformations experienced by the transnational historical

development of the modern world-system.

Charismatic leadership and (post-)neoliberalism: Hugo Chávez as popular educator and Rafael Correa as progressive professor

As we have seen in previous chapters the renewed call for (geo)political participation that characterizes 21st century postcolonial constitutionalism in Latin America has historically been linked to the social problem of education, understood in multiple ways and dimensions. The participation of those historically marginalized from public policy and official decision-making particularly has been both blocked (by literacy requirements for voting rights, for example) and enabled by educational institutional practices that can generate oppressive as well as emancipatory pedagogies. “In the banking concept of education, knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing. Projecting an absolute ignorance onto others, a characteristic of the ideology of oppression, negates education and knowledge as processes of inquiry. […] The *raison d’être* of libertarian [or emancipatory] education, on the other hand, lies in its drive towards reconciliation” (Freire, 2005 [1968], p. 72). The role of charismatic leadership in contemporary revolutionary transformations seeking to reconcile profoundly unequal and fragmented societies can be better understood in terms of what Brazilian educator Paulo Freire called the “teacher-student contradiction,” which is characteristic of oppressive “banking” education and the relation between subaltern or impossible subjects and the modern-nation state they have helped to structure.

Both late Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez and Ecuadorian President Rafael Correa made education a central element of their self-proclaimed revolutionary government platforms.

In part, this can be considered the result of their personal connection to education as institutionalized praxis: Chávez was the son of school teachers in rural Venezuela and he eventually taught at the Military Academy where he became a soldier; while Correa, raised in an urban lower middle class Ecuadorian environment, entered the world of political organizing as a university student leader and excelled academically, obtaining a Ph.D. degree in Economics from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 1999. During my research, the pedagogical qualities of Chávez and Correa were regularly extolled by his sympathizers and supporters as an explanatory vein to understand their unprecedented (geo)political success in multiple elections and referenda sponsored by their administration.

However, when speaking about Chávez, the emphasis was often on his qualities as a popular educator, his charismatic capacity of adapting his discourse to connect with his different audiences, always making himself understood through personal anecdotes and historical references; whereas Correa's followers often celebrate the image of a knowledgeable progressive economics professor who takes time to explain the technical details of his government policies in plain words, emphasizing Correa's international credentials and the pedagogical techniques utilized in his public addresses, which often included many elements commonly found in a university class session. However, the admiration produced by Correa's leadership ultimately seemed to fall on his international credential and never felt as intimately powerful nor pedagogical as Chávez's impact in Bolivarian Venezuela.

Ignacio Ramonet's (2014) biographic dialogues with Hugo Chávez are introduced by narrating his early experience at the rural classroom where his mom taught, the admiration and love he inspired in teachers and peers during his student years, as well as the manual labor he

engaged with from a young age to help sustain his family. These experiences inscribed in young Hugo Chávez's brain the ability to articulate three types of learnings: "scholarly or theoretical, autonomous or self-taught, and manual or practical. The articulation of these three fountains of knowledge—without the slightest consideration of one as superior to the other two—is one of the keys to understand his original personality" (Ibid., p. 18, author's translation). More sociologically relevant than his original personality, however, are the ways in which this epistemological articulation informed his charismatic leadership (or mana-personality) and became rearticulated in the process of (geo)political identification as Chavistas by a large sector of the Venezuelan population that had felt marginalized from formal (geo)politics before the emergence of Chávez's leadership.

Famous for being an avid reader, President Chávez also became known for producing national and international bestsellers (Clark, 2009). During my first visit to the National Library in Caracas in 2012, the main lobby had an exhibition of over one hundred books that had been recommended by Chávez's during his public addresses; more recently it has been reported that 518 books were referenced during the 378 weekly appearances of his TV show called *Aló Presidente*[195] (Correo del Orinoco, 2014). Mostly nonfiction works, a common thread in these books is the imperative to historicize and theorize a postcolonial history of Latin American peoples particularly and Third World peoples' more generally. When making these references, it is clear that Chávez's scholarly expertise was particularly effective because it emphasized self-

[195] On November 25, 2008, PBS aired a Frontline documentary entitled "The Hugo Chávez Show" (Bikel, 2008) focusing on Chávez's (geo)political performances during his weekly TV program *Aló Presidente*. The representation of Chávez as a showman reproduces the tropicalizing tropes discussed in chapter 2, missing the chance to explore the effectiveness of this communication space in consolidating Chávez's relationship with his supporters.

education as means for collective empowerment, grassroots organization, and protagonist subaltern (geo)political participation. Moreover, his government promoted a chain of subsidized bookstores, editorials and distributors, which provided an impressive access to a wide range of educational and literary materials. There was not a single interview in Caracas where I was not gifted a range of books on the Bolivarian Revolution as well as Latin/x American history and social theory more generally.

Sharing his readings and references in relation to both personal anecdotes and historical vignettes helped late President Chávez to connect with his supporters, who often discussed his teachings in relation to Chávez's lived experience of manual and practical labor to survive the hardships faced by the majority of Venezuelans, particularly in rural areas and urban *barrios*. Re-membering the life lessons he learned while helping his *abuela* (grandmother) sell sweets in his birthplace Sabaneta, in the state of Barinas, as often as he referenced the military victories and the writings of Simón Bolivar, Hugo Chávez's discourse opened up possibilities for identification of the majority of impoverished Venezuelans with the (geo)political project he came to embody.

While a diversity of grassroots (geo)political projects converged under the rubric of the Bolivarian Revolution, Chávez's charismatic leadership emphasized the necessity of the ongoing challenge to build a revolutionary subject around the concept of *pueblo* (see Ch. 2). The building of "popular power" was always linked in Chávez's discourse with the capacity to "think by and for ourselves" beyond the common sense that had produced the interlocking inequalities he systematically denounced during his public interventions. His figure as a popular educator was built on this dual objective of not merely carrying out a program of revolutionary socio-political

transformations but building and organizing a sociopolitical subject capable of sustaining the (geo)political impulse necessary for revolutionary change. His constant call to impoverished and historically marginalized sectors of Venezuelan and Latin American societies was to "think ourselves" not through colonial frameworks but from our embodied knowledges, which, far from an essence with which someone is born, is rather the consequence of lived experience.

On the fourth episode of the radio show *La Vida Misma – Ecosocialismo en construcción* (Life Itself—Building ecosocialism) entitled "¿Patria, Mina o Colonia?" (Cazal, 2015), which aired on the community radio *Al Son del 23* (94.7 FM) on October, 2015, the grassroots organizers Eder Peña and Ernesto Cazal discussed the historical perspectives of the Bolivarian revolution in relation to the problem of coloniality. Drawing on the critique of instrumental reason (Adorno & Horkheimer, 2016 [1969]), they posit the the anthropocentrism behind dominant ideologies like developmentalism as the attempt to subjugate nature in order to vindicate humanity as the sole subject of historical development. They illustrate the cultural struggle to overcome the racialized and gendered representations of nature as instrumental for human development with an audio recording of late Venezuelan President Chávez narrating the rescue of a stray dog with a broken leg in an inhabited Venezuelan savannah. Chávez's anecdote concludes with his argument regarding the need to develop "the sensibility to love, values that are essential for the building of socialism" (Cazal, 2015, min. 26:07-27:39, author's translation). Analyzing the audio clip from President Chávez, one of the first issues the radio dialogue raises is "always Chávez's pedagogical capacity, to make of any anecdote, to fully juice it, his capacity to extrapolate anything to another realm, to the political realm"[196] (Ibid., min. 29:30-29:45). Such

[196] "siempre la capacidad pedagógica de Chávez, de hacer de cualquier anédota, sacarle el jugo, y su capacidad de

politicizing capacity is linked to Chávez's ability to reveal the power of deep thinking in seemingly mundane everyday experiences.

The concluding tracks of "Hijos del 89 (1989 Lumbre de las Mayorías)" (El Cayapo, 2015), the Soundcloud.com playlist I discussed in chapter two, begin with Hugo Chávez identifying a key problem for contemporary revolutionary (geo)politics: "This is why capitalists and imperialists would like us to not think. They want to deny us [the freedom of] thought. They want to deny us the possibilities of deep thinking, of education. Hence their insistence on telling us what to do. 'Do this! Do that! Do it!' Do what? Towards what end?" (El Cayapo-HHR, 2015, "19. Combo e' Gente," min. 0:00-0:21, author's translation). Immediately the rappers build on Chávez's argument: "We are a group of people [or *combo e' gente*] that turn on an idea / collectively we are everywhere / we talk revolution while rapping / Here [we do] not believe but rather we create" (Ibid., min. 0:23-0:33). Invoking Simón Rodriguez,[197] Bolívar's mentor and one of the founders of Latin American public education, this song vindicates the emancipatory pedagogy that President Chávez came to embody within this lineage of historic leaders. More than a mindless celebration of these leaders, the three concluding songs from this grassroots cultural production emphasize that the importance of charismatic leadership lies in its capacity to awaken our ability to render meaningful our current lived experiences with long-standing historical struggles.

extrapolarlo a otro plano, a un plano político."

[197] Bolivar's tutor and pioneer in public education reform in the newly emancipated South American republics, Simón Rodriguez is often cited arguing that "Hispanic America is original, [thus] original have to be its institutions and government; original have to be the means to create them. Either we invent or we fail." This last punchline, "Inventamos o erramos," is the title of the Bolivarian government's reedition of Rodriguez's 19th century writings (see Rodríguez & Dardo, 2007).

Track 20, entitled "Chavez, the son of '89" makes this even more explicit when the hip hop artists argue that "[Chávez] taught us he was not indispensable / although he was invincible; he made us responsible, so that this would be irreversible / that it is not about an individual but a people [as a whole] / and that it was not merely Hugo but WE the people building / the protagonists and the leaders / this is why today those in power have our features"[198] (El Cayapo-HHR, 2015, "Chávez hijo del '89," min. 2:13-2:28). This sort of identification with a charismatic leader like Chávez highlights, rather than downplays, a newly found (geo)political agency among those identifying with him as the embodiment of a revolutionary (geo)political project. Vindicating the right and capacity of those historically pushed to the margins of (geo)political decision-making, since Eurocentric modern knowledge has represented them as "peoples without history" (Wolf, 1982) or knowledge, late President Chávez's pedagogical capacity and charismatic leadership was constantly legitimated by conjuring a decisive postcolonial historicity. Inviting a reflection on the complexities of defining the historical subject of ongoing revolutionary transformations, but without renouncing the task, Chávez's charismatic leadership and pedagogical praxis has expressed the importance of popular power not only to transform the modern state but to consolidate (trans)national processes of (geo)political identification with (an-)other institutional logics, hinted in the organizational history and repeated mobilization of grassroots (geo)political actors, (counter)cultural producers in Venezuela and anti-systemic movements in Latin/x America more generally.

[198] "nos enseñó que no era indispensable más invencible, nos hizo responsables para que esto sea irreversible, que no era un individuo que era un pueblo, y que no solo era Hugo sino era el Nosotros construyendo, el que protagoniza y ejerce liderazgo, por eso hoy en el que asume vemos nuestros razgos."

A clear example of how Hugo Chávez's charisma was never a one-way street of authoritarian manipulation, translating diasporic (counter)cultural expressions into (trans)national social movement organizations, can be found in contemporary Afro-Venezuelan history. On May 10, 2005 the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, in an act of symbolic reparations, instituted remembrance of the day of *Afrovenezolanidad* in honor of José Leonardo Chirinos. Chirinos was inspired by the Haitian Revolution[199] and the ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity (too often theorized exclusively in relation to the French revolution conceived in methodological nationalistic terms) to organize a successful insurrection against slave owners in the Venezuelan eastern lowlands or *llanos* in 1795. A predecessor of Simón Bolivar's struggles for national independence in South America, Chirinos was assassinated by the colonial state in Caracas in December 1795.

The first day of *Afrovenezolanidad* was announced by President Hugo Chávez two days earlier on May 8, 2005, during one of his weekly TV broadcasts of *Aló Presidente* (#221) where he hosted African-American leaders from Colombia, Brazil, Cuba and the U.S. who had participated that week in the International Encounter "Afrodescendants and public policy" (Caracas, May 6 and 7, 2005). Conversing with them, President Chávez stressed the importance of translating symbolic reparations into actions that acknowledge a historical debt with Afro-descendant peoples and nations,[200] not only in Venezuela but across the Americas. This

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[199] Chirino was the son of a free indigenous woman and an enslaved Afro-descendant, making him a *zambo libre*, who had traveled to Haiti and witnessed firsthand the social agitation that would result in the Haitian Revolution (1791-1804).

[200] During this intervention President Chávez referenced two books that expand on the historical debt of American nation-states to both Afro-descendant communities and also to Haiti, the "first Black republic." He raised a copy of C.L.R. James's seminal study *The Black Jacobins* (1932) as well as the 2005 book by Jesús Chucho García *Afrovenezolanidad e inclusión en el proceso Bolivariano* published by the National Network of Afro-Venezuelan organizations, which in turn had organized the May 5 and 6 International Encounter.

recognition by a Latin American head of state of the need to combat racism was a historical accomplishment of the Afro-Venezuelan social movement organizations that were active in the Constituent Assembly of 1999 and the constitutional referendum of 2007, despite their ongoing lack of explicit constitutional recognition.

Diasporic organic intellectual Jesús "Chucho" García (2011). has documented the proposals that Afro-Venezuelan social movement organizations played both in the context of the Constituent Assembly of 1999 and in the participatory process to craft a proposed (but ultimately defeated) constitutional reform in 2007. García argues that this apparent failure of the efforts of Afro-Venezuelan social movement organizations seeking state recognition gains a new meaning when we consider it against the backdrop of the remarkable articulation of the Afro-Venezuelan social movement at the national level (Garcia, 2014) as a result of the constituent process. In 2000, Fundación Afroamérica and Unión de Mujeres Negras—social movement organizations that had presented proposals to the Constituent Assembly of 1999—invited other Afro-Venezuelan organizations to create a national network. These efforts resulted in the first Afro-Venezuelan National Encounter where guiding lines and objectives[201] were defined in their own:

> complementary agenda to the Bolivarian process. [...] Since 2001 until the year 2008, all these strategic objectives were accomplished with the exception of the Constitutional Reform (2007). During 2008 the second Afro-Venezuelan National Encounter is organized as a space to elaborate strategies to deepen the struggle for Afro incorporation in public policy, as well as in the juridical field and the international arena. (Ibid.)

[201] "Constitutional reform to recognize Africans and their descendants as part of our nationality; to incorporate the dimension Afro-Venezuelan into the National Census to know how many of us there are, where we are and how we are doing; to open spaces in public institutions; to back the Convention on Cultural Diversity (UNESCO); to deepen the struggle against racism and the need to adjust the curriculum of the educational system to include the political, moral, cultural and spiritual contributions of Africans and their descendants." (García, "Afrosostenibilidad Estratégica," 2014, para. 2, author's translation).

By the third Afro-Venezuelan National Encounter convened in 2014, the national network also included Haitian and Afro-Colombian migrants' social movement organizations. In between these National Encounters, Afro-Venezuelan social movement organizations had also hosted continental meetings, such as the "IV Encounter of Afro-descendants for revolutionary transformations in the Americas and the Caribbean and in solidarity with Haiti" at Alba Caracas Hotel in June 2011 (see illustration 4) following the last devastating earthquake that hit the first postcolonial modern nation in the Americas and the world on January 12, 2010. The feedback loop between local struggles and (trans)national organization articulated in this encounters sheds light on the pedagogical dimension in the relation between social movement organizations and the modern state.

In this vein, García argues that one of the most remarkable accomplishments of the Afro-Venezuelan social movement's praxis following the Constituent Assembly process was making the modern Venezuelan State, embodied in President Chávez and his evolving (geo)political performances, aware of the historical debt, both material and symbolic, that modern nation-states have with Afro-Venezuelan and Afro-Latin/x American communities. The enfleshment of this subaltern knowledge in the charismatic leadership of President Chávez takes a series of pedagogical interventions and dialogues between Afro-Amerindian social movements and popular, albeit at times also *populist*, charismatic leaders like Chávez: "This grassroots strategy towards the re-literacy [*realfabetización*] of the government [regarding the Afro-Venezuelan legacy] has been the most creative and extraordinary [result] in the struggles of Afro-descendants in Venezuela" (García, 2014, "Afrosostenibilidad Estratégica," para. 2, author's translation). Challenging the power of ideological state apparatuses (Althusser, 1970) to enforce oppressive

forms of “banking” education over manipulated masses, the experience of Afro-Venezuelans suggests that a pedagogy of the oppressed (Freire, 1968) should be central to any meaningful project to remake the emancipatory side and revolutionary (geo)political horizon of modernity.

Illustration 5. Poster for the Fourth Afrodescendents’ Encounter for the revolutionary transformation of America and the Caribbean and in solidarity with Haiti.

Source: Sitio Oficial Aristóbulo Iztúris / PSUV.

In this sense, the Venezuelan efforts in the remaking of modern state institutions are not merely the consequence of Chavez’s charismatic leadership nor the contradictions and

ambivalence that marks the specific rewiring of institutional mechanisms and procedures narrowly understood either as formally "democratic" or "authoritarian." The pedagogical intervention by Afro-Venezuelan social movement organizations to make government representatives learn from the enfleshment of subaltern knowledge generates the social need to pay closer attention to the lived experiences of subaltern subjects. Too often rendered impossible by institutionalized racism and the heteronormative coloniality of power, it is in the longer postcolonial genealogy of anti-colonial struggles where we find the root of the transnational impact that late President Chávez's charismatic leadership had on the continent and the Third World more generally.

Sociologist Charles Camic has argued that the "fundamental connection Weber discerns [in his *Sociology of Religion*] between extraordinary human needs and charisma has often been neglected but is of immense empirical and theoretical significance" (1980, p. 7). In a postcolonial context, the imperative to historicize what has been "distorted, disfigured, and destroyed" (Fanon [1963] 2004, p. 149) becomes an extraordinary human need. Venezuelan political scientist, novelist, and jurist Arturo Uslar Pietri argued, before the emergence of Hugo Chávez in the public sphere in February 1992, that Venezuelans were "thirsty for history" (cited in Ramonet, 2013, p. 65, author's translation). When Ignacio Ramonet asked Hugo Chávez if he agreed with Pietri's characterization, his answer was: "He was not talking about an individual [need] but the Venezuelan people [as a whole]. And, precisely, this thirst for history, in these last years, the Venezuelan people that were feeling very dried up, have found a fountain, a spring. The Bolivarian Revolution has given back to Venezuelans their history" (Ibid., p. 67, author's translation). Here Chávez resignifies history not as an object but as history-making; historical

agency that comes from thinking about who we are, thus gaining power over the process of historical identification, in relation to the perspectives and horizon of ongoing (geo)political struggles and away from Eurocentric evaporations of subaltern voices and denial of their historicities.

Often dismissed as the paradigmatic "false prophet" (Vicens, Apr. 22, 2016) who seduces his followers with demagoguery and a polarizing rhetoric, Hugo Chávez has been caricatured as a short-sighted messianic leader who played a destabilizing and undemocratic role in the continent. This characterization not only, as illustrated in chapter two, reproduces simplistic tropes of Latin American *machismo* (see Gutmann & González-López, 2004) and masculinities (Gutmann, 2003) that inform tropicalizing representations of Latin American leaders as "populists" unfit for democracy, but also feeds racialized and gendered tropes of Latin/x Americans more generally as easily duped by this "populist" allure. These arguments and representations fail to consider Weber's conceptualization of charisma "as fundamentally rooted in extraordinary human interests (cf. Parsons, 1937: 667). […] The prophet, because of his perceived ability to provide a system of meaning through which the discrepancies of the world can be explained, is deemed charismatic: He seems to resolve another extraordinary human need, the problem of meaning" (Camic, 1980, p. 7).

In this vein, the oft-cited characterization of the historian as a prophet looking backward[202] comes closer to the revolutionary significance of President Chávez's appeal to a

[202] Karl Friedrich von Schlegel, a German romantic poet and philosopher, is often credited with saying that "history is a prophet looking backwards." In social theory, such characterization of history has been analyzed in relation to Walter Benjamin's *Theses on the Concept of History* (1940). Benjamin's Thesis IX, in which he uses Paul Klee's painting *Angelus Novus* (1920) as inspiration to theorize the "Angel of History," has been analyzed by Ecuadorian philosopher Bolívar Echeverría in relation to an 18th century engraving entitled *L'Histoire* (Gravelot & Cochin,

historicizing, dialogic "pedagogy of the oppressed" (Freire, 1968). To make sense of the discrepancies that emerge from the colonial destruction, distortions, and deformation of subaltern herstories, it is required for charismatic leaders like Chávez to act not merely as providers of historical facts but rather as gatherers of the pedagogical interventions hinted in grassroots struggles for self-determination and autonomy of subaltern subjects.

Rafael Correa Delgado was compared to Hugo Chávez even before he was first elected as Ecuadorian president. Both friends and foes saw in him a sort of successor to or inheritor of Chávez's regional charismatic leadership, a characterization that gained a new significance after Chávez's death in March 2013 (Wallace, 2013). His personal friendship with Chávez, to whom he dedicated his last electoral victory in February 2013, and the proximity of their foreign policy projects and international alliances, with the explicit objective of reversing "the long and dark neoliberal night" as Correa has referred to neoliberal hegemony, suggest more than a few affinities between the two leaders. Moreover, President Correa also proclaimed to be leading a "democratic revolution" that allegedly is the historical heir to a long-standing tradition of grassroots struggles. Yet, as discussed in chapter three, Correa's discourse emphasizes less this historicizing component and more the perspectives of carrying out revolutionary transformations with a team of committed and professional public servants characterized by having "clean hands, lucid minds, and ardent hearts."[203] In this vein, if Chávez's charismatic leadership emphasized that revolution required protagonist subaltern participation and grassroots deep thinking in order

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1791, in Echeverría, 2005, p. 25).

[203] This common slogan is often used to describe Correa's administration, his collaborators, and supporters. On the sixth anniversary of the Citizens' Revolution, President Correa concluded his speech declaring: "we are building the Ecuadorian dream, a dream [we have] forged with joy, clean hands, lucid minds, and ardent hearts; yet also great effort and sacrifice" (in Secretaría Nacional de Gestión Política, 2013, para. 14, author's translation).

to "invent" a new socio-political order, Correa's charismatic appeal was for his followers to trust in his government team, displacing the notion of grassroots participation and privileging a progressive, although technocratic, approach.

Although Ecuadorian President Rafael Correa Delgado (and Bolivian President Evo Morales Ayma) are often lumped together under the tropicalizing representation first deployed for Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez as representatives of the bad or "populist" version of the turns to the Left in Latin America at the turn of the century, there exist important differences in the form and substance of the charismatic leaderships of Chávez and Correa. Such differences are more apparent if we remember that a sociological exploration of charismatic leadership is more interested in the relationships between supporters and leaders and their institutionalization; in other words, what is sociologically relevant are not personal differences in the style of leadership between Chávez and Correa but rather the social formations expressed in the impressive electoral support and ruthless (geo)political opposition they have garnered during the 21st century for their (geo)political project to institutionalize democratic revolutions and, in some instances, consolidate mechanisms to sustain revolutionary political democratization and social decolonization.

The academic credentials of President Rafael Correa, which have multiplied with honorary doctorates given to him around the world during his terms as Ecuadorian President besides his University of Illinois Ph.D. in Economics, are key to understand both how his charisma is embodied and performed as well as read, understood, and (re)produced by both those who support and those who oppose him. Paradoxically, I began to note this defining interest in Caracas, Venezuela, where the informal talk before interviews would often delay my questions

regarding the Venezuelan constituent process, since my interviewees were eager to hear more about President Correa, particularly in relation to his economic views and policies, always already authorized by his academic record. If Hugo Chávez's anti-neoliberalism is often accounted in terms of the historical process that begins with the rupture of the February 27, 1989 popular uprising, which signals the emergence f the Venezuelan *pueblo* as a subject of revolutionary transformation, Rafael Correa's anti-neoliberalism is seen as the result of the intellectual interventions in his academic work as an Economics professor with experience in both European and United States American academia as well as important private universities in Ecuador. Rather than inspiring immediate identification (as very few Ecuadorians can boast similar academic training), these biographical experiences instilled profound admiration for a young economist, committed to transforming contemporary Ecuadorian and Latin American (geo)politics. In the end, the remarkable electoral support articulated around Rafael Correa's leadership seems to be in part the result of his capacity to "code-switch" between the language and logic of his academic persona and that of popular expression, often in the form of jokes deployed to challenge the democratic legitimacy of those (geo)political actors and elite "civil society" groups such as private media companies that have opposed his government from the start.

It is important to note that Rafael Correa's first 2006 presidential bid did not at first seem able to convince an important part of the so-called *sectores populares* (Lucas, 2007), which include working-class and other historically marginalized and impoverished majorities of Ecuadorians. The social base of his electorate that allowed him to reach a run-off election against Álvaro Noboa, the wealthiest man in the country, were professional and other sectors that self-

recognize as "middle class" and identified with his image of a "self-made man" who, through education, was able to reach a place where he could challenge what he dubbed the *partidocracia* or the rule of increasingly illegitimate political parties—which he accused of privatizing national public services "*a precio de gallina enferma*" (at the price of a sick chicken, i.e. cheaply) while producing the great economic crisis of the turn of the 21st century that pushed millions of Ecuadorians into the status of economic refugees north of the U.S.-Mexican border as well as towards European destinations like Spain.

His initial incapacity to gain the support of this important bloc of the electorate, in a country where voting is mandatory, was probably the result of his lack of an organic connection to the anti-neoliberal struggles that marked the (geo)political instability suffered by the country at the turn of the 21st century. Correa's academic credentials were only supplemented by his experience in social services as a boy scout and later as a young Catholic volunteer in an impoverished Andean community; experiences that made him sympathetic to but not an active participant in the social movement organizations and grassroots struggles behind the mobilizations that marked the Ecuadorian turn of the century. While at first his professor-like discursive style could be read as an embodied expression of this initial disconnection, eventually Correa's popular appeal would be in his capacity to embrace long-standing demands, like the need for a democratizing Constituent Assembly, and to address his supporters in a direct and sincere tone—which, while asking for unconditional trust in his team's professionalism, academic training and qualifications, connected his sophisticated critique of neoliberal structural adjustment in a dependent capitalist economy with the increasing popular suspicion and frustration generated by different instances of (anti)neoliberal praxis during the last decades.

Both Hugo Chávez and Rafael Correa held weekly TV and radio broadcasts where they would directly address Venezuelans and Ecuadorians for many hours. While Chávez's *Aló Presidente* was justified on the premise of maintaining direct contact between the Venezuelan President and ordinary people historically marginalized from the formal political process, Correa's *Informe Ciudadano* has always been defended as a constitutional mandate for elected officials to be held accountable through periodic reports of activities. Correa's weekly report includes, as Chávez's program did, varied segments including music, singing, and reports by other government actors, yet it often drifts towards an explanatory discourse given by a university professor regarding (geo)political decisions and public policies. Including periodic assessments of the results of his government programs or of social situations or problems, often using powerpoint presentations presenting tables and statistical graphs, Correa's weekly addresses are not intended to be merely informative but also reassuring: the academic training of President Correa and his collaborators means that they "know what to do" and therefore should be trusted. Besides the intellectual capacity that is allegedly certified by such professional credentials, President Correa often differentiated his administration from previous governments by describing his collaborators and himself as having "clean hands, lucid minds, and ardent hearts": in other words, his charismatic leadership, which managed to restore political stability to Ecuadorian democracy for a decade now, self-defined through a bodily metaphor for rational, informed decision-making, connected to an honest record and a passionate determination to fight interlocking inequalities through the reinstitutionalization of the modern state in order to defend public over private interests. Nonetheless, this metaphor, rather than exalting his leadership as the result of a historical, collective process of struggles that forge revolutionary subjects, reveals

an emphasis on individual merit, personal honesty, and uncommon excellence.

Despite the fact that President Correa's government's substantial increase in social spending has achieved a significant reduction in poverty and inequality indicators (see World Bank, 2016) through the expansion of social security benefits[204] and investment in public infrastructure, health, and education, his charismatic leadership has increasingly clashed against historic grassroots leaders and organizations like CONAIE. In fact, after the conflicts that forced a change of Constituent Assembly President in 2008 (see chapter three) President Correa began (over)stating that the gravest threat to his Citizens' Revolution were not the power elites that have fiercely opposed him through the media and in electoral processes but those representatives of what he dismissed as "infantile leftists, environmentalists and *indigenistas*." Later on, this group of opponents, once allies in the drafting and passing of the 2008 Constitution, would also include what he denounced as "infiltrated radical feminists" spreading "gender ideology" and depleting government resources and the democratic legitimacy of his political party.

It is revealing that Correa's suspicion of these groups was articulated in his discourse either through caricaturizing their protests as irrational acts of *tirapiedras* (stone throwers) or dismissing them as defending ideological, not "scientific," agendas. As discussed in chapter three, the former argument was launched by President Correa against a government program, inspired by the 2008 Constitution, that sought to remove from sexual education the biological

[204] An important accomplishment in terms of expanding social security coverage was the operationalization of the 2008 constitutional vindication of "unpaid labor for self-suficiency and human care that is performed at home. The state will promote a labor regime that works in harmony with the needs of human care, facilitating services, infrastructure, and work times that are adequate; of special concern is, the provision of child care, special care for people with disabilities and others needed to ensure that working people can carry out their work related activities; and will give impulse to co-responsibility and reciprocity of men and women in domestic work and family obligations. Social security protection will be extended progressively for persons that are taking care of unpaid family work at home" (Art. 333, Constitución Ecuador, 2008).

definition of gender and the moralist/religious understandings of sexuality. The result of this turn by Correa against “radical feminists” was not merely the overhaul of this government program and the blocking of other feminist demands but also the consolidation of President Correa’s charismatic leadership in line with the hegemonic masculinity that claims that the rationality and intellectual honesty/coherence articulated in scientific knowledge is limited to the male gaze of state authority.

Ecuadorian sociologist María Paula Granda (2016) has analyzed both random and purposive samples of episodes of Correa’s *Enlace Ciudadano* in order to determine how his discourse reproduces heteronormative and racist logics that have characterized the administration of the modern Ecuadorian state historically. Her analysis reveals the workings of the heteronormative common sense that is (re)produced both in Correa’s discourse used to attack his political opponents and in the tropicalizing representations discussed earlier, inaugurated with relation to President Chávez but then also applied to other *populists* like President Correa himself. This paradox has to do with the development of his charismatic leadership around his academic persona; the performance of a professor who can be extremely progressive and sophisticated in his critique of neoliberalism as an economic policy framework while being intransigent with what he deems unacceptable according to his standards of scientific and democratic rationality.

President Correa has defended his intransigence by stressing the uncompromising nature of a revolution, while simultaneously upholding the notion of meritocracy in order to confront corporatist interests. In fact, while the Citizens’ Revolution’s (geo)political objective to eradicate poverty and reduce interlocking inequalities through ensuring equal opportunities would be

unthinkable without some degree of recognition of existing structural constraints, Correa's discourse slips away from a structural understanding as it falls into the culturalist trap of liberal methodological individualism. In reference to the accomplishments of his government, Correa argues "many times what is not seen is what is most important *compañeros* […] for example, the culture of excellence! WE have to overcome that culture of mediocrity or rather that cultural anti-value that mediocrity is, where nobody assumes responsibilities, where there is no meritocracy, where there is the law of the trickster" (*Enlace Ciudadano* # 311, in Granda, 2016, p. 16, author's translation). Pointing to other examples, Granda shows how meritocracy works in Correa's discourse to reproduce a heteronormative logic that both legitimizes his charismatic rule as the most qualified president Ecuador has ever had and disavows the criticism that he receives from "ideological," "primitive," or "semi-ignorant" opposition actors presented as the embodiment of this alleged cultural anti-value that he has also blamed, at times, for "*tercermundista*" (Third world) underdevelopment in Ecuador.

Both President Chávez and President Correa have been characterized as anti-neoliberal *populist* leaders yet it is revealing to not the different ways in which their administrations have confronted the *racialized* dimension of neoliberalism. The racist insults confronted by Chávez during the first years of his administration, particularly during the coup of April, 2002, brought him closer to anti-racist movements, who taught his government to recognize (although belatedly) Afro-Amerindian historical contributions to revolutionary democratizing struggles. On the other hand, Correa's relation to racism has not evolved or radicalized from the sporadic anti-racist gestures embedded in his questioning of historical patterns in Ecuadorian power inequalities. Rather his administration has clashed with historically anti-racist social movement

organizations like CONAIE as President Correa has denounced its leaders as complicit in a sort of "self-inflicted" racism, which allegedly relies on victimization to instigate preferential treatment as if subaltern peoples were vulnerable children and not citizens with full rights and responsibilities.

However, it is the symbolic violence entailed in reducing collective peoples and *nationalities* to the individualizing logic of liberal eurocentric citizenship that re-victimizes them through the negation to engage them as subjects of knowledge production, capable of identifying the problems they confront and participating in resolving them while reconceptualizng notions like democracy, citizenship/belonging, and revolution. When a economics Ph.D. President dismisses those who have conceptualized plurinationality and interculturality as social justice analytic frameworks to reconsider the main problems confronted by Afro-Amerindian peoples, a potentially emancipatory enfleshment of knowledge becomes deterministic and oppressive: "We believe in plurinationality and interculturality, that is why we included it in the Constitution. But let us not fool ourselves! The main indigenous problem is poverty" (*Enlace Ciudadano* #172, min. 34:12-35:48, in Granda, 2016, p. 23). This economically deterministic diagnosis renders indigenous peoples, and the rest of the Ecuadorian *pueblo*, passive objects for those who "know" how to combat poverty and whom, hence, should be trusted to carry out the needed improvements. This tendency in Correa's charismatic leadership has (re)produced the infantilizing ventriloquism (Guerrero, 1994) that has historically marked the engagement of Afro-Amerindian peoples by Ecuadorian formally "democratic" state institutions despite what seems like sincere attempts of his administration to challenge interlocking structures of inequality in Ecuador and Latin America.

Although expressions of the same Latin/x American history of anti-neoliberal resistance, the charismatic leadership of Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez Frías and that of Ecuadorian President Rafael Correa Delgado articulate distinct understandings of what revolutionary change and democratic citizenship can and should entail. Charles Camic has noted that "contemporary sociologists have offered two, seemingly incompatible, interpretations" of the relationship between charisma and social change building on Weber's conceptualization:

> One interpretation, stated simply, suggests that social change is the precondition for charisma. [...] social change (which is variously conceptualized), the origins of which are attributed to a variety of non-charismatic factors, results in various types of cultural, social, and personal disruptions. Those persons who appear to end such disruptions by institution a "new order," some different pattern of cultural, social, or personal arrangements, are, as a consequence, regarded as special or charismatic. The other interpretation, which explicitly objects to this one, suggests that the sources of charisma are located in the "inchoate sentiments" of individuals (Friedland, 1964), which exist, prior to social change, in "relatively ordered" social settings (Dow, 1969:309; see also Berger, 1963; Dow, 1968). Those persons who can articulate and offer solutions for these sentiments are considered special. (Camic, 1980, p. 10)

Beyond the apparent incompatibility of these arguments regarding the question of whether charisma is revolutionary because it causes, or is the result of, social transformation, we can use them to make sense of the difference between the charismatic leaderships of late President Hugo Chávez and President Rafael Correa.

While the profound political instability that resulted from the economic crisis at the turn of the century in Ecuador found in the charismatic figure of a highly qualified heterodox economist the key to end the disruptions caused by the constant overturning of democratically elected presidents, in Venezuela Chávez was considered charismatic inasmuch as he could appeal to the collectively held inchoate sentiments that resulted from the social explosion of the Caracazo in 1998. While Correa's individual qualifications are the basis for his charismatic

legitimation, Chávez's charismatic appeal is always narrated by his supporters as the result of his participation in the key social and political struggles that marked the undoing of the old political regime with the new 1999 Bolivarian Constitution. Hence, Correa's charismatic leadership is sustained in a sense of stability and order, which was ensured by his academic qualifications and honest and passionate commitment to those who have suffered interlocking inequalities, while Chávez's charisma seems to catalyze more pronounced (geo)political fervor and (counter)cultural creativity, inasmuch as his leadership felt as integral part, the main condiment,[205] of ongoing struggles to transform the lived realities of those who identify with the goal of a *democratizing* revolution.

Camic's discussion on the "varieties, preconditions, and consequences" of charisma (1980) as a sociological concept, which Weber proposed to understand social transformation as well as the institutionalization of modern forms of political organization we associate with modernity, provides a framework to understand the tension we find in the inconsistent original articulation of the concept of charisma in Weberian sociology. In order to clarify this tension between charisma as "'the great revolutionary force,' opposing and repudiating existing social orders (1922:244-5)" and the times when "charisma may become, through dissociation from particular revolutionary persons, 'an objective transferable entity [… as in] the charisma of office' (1922:248)" (Weber in Camic, 1980, p. 9), Camic suggests charismatic figures can be seen (by majoritarian groups of people, capable of electing them to office in democratic systems

[205] The popular educator and singer Gino González, whose work I analyse in relation to the HHR-El Cayapo movement in Venezuela (chapter two), synthesizes his characterization of Hugo Chávez in his song 1989: Lumbre de las Mayorías, as the most important condiment in a *sancocho*, a soup where a diversity of elements come together to make a meal that is emblematic of Latin/x American popular cuisine.

for example) as omnipotent, excellent, sacred, or uncanny, revealing the particularities of the extraordinary social needs behind charismatic leadership. If we think of many of these needs in (geo)political terms we see how the omnipotence and sacredness Chavistas transferred to the figure of the late Venezuelan President is rooted in the constituent act of the "We, the People" that introduces most modern constitutionalism. Rather than prizing individual excellence or uncanny genius, as the ideological construct of capitalist meritocracy entails, Chávez's charisma as a popular educator pointed to the realization of the necessity to question the individualistic, ego-centric, historical horizon of (neo)liberalism. Ecuadorian President Correa, on the other hand, has a charismatic leadership that extolls excellence as a cultural value to aspire to, embodied in the academic and public service record of the uncanny economics Ph.D. himself and his government team.

During his last electoral campaign in 2012, already battling the cancer that would eventually take his life, a teary-eyed Hugo Chávez declared "I am not myself anymore, I am a people," creating yet another one of those phrases his supporters always reference when memorializing Chávez's leadership. While those who oppose Chávez often dismiss these statements as hollow populist rhetoric at best or a megalomaniac cult of personality at worst, the electric connection among Chavistas these ideas seemed to generate shows charisma as a mechanism that can consolidate (geo)political transformation inasmuch as it creates a path to forge a new collective, self-recognized historical subject seeking to transform society. This consolidation is for example expressed in the transformation of the grassroots audiovisual campaign around the graffiti *Nosotros con Chávez* (We are with Chávez) (Unidad de Documentales Vive TV, 2012; HHR-Venezuela, 2012), in support of Chávez's 2012 presidential

bid, into the vindication *Juntos somos Chávez* (Together we are Chávez) that was popularized following his death in 2013 (see Unidad de Documentales Vive TV, 2013; HHR-Venezuela, 2013).

Argentine-Mexican philosopher Enrique Dussel (2012) has argued that the category *pueblo* should not be confused with what is *popular*, which often is used to link the (geo)political deployment of the category *pueblo* to an ill-defined "populism," which more than a critical concept has become more recently a pejorative epithet. As a necessary category for Latin/x American (geo)politics of liberation:

> *pueblo* shall not be confused with the mere political community, as the undifferentiated total population or citizenry of a State (the *potestas* as institutional structure in a given territory), the intersubjective reference of a given historical political order in force. The *concept* of *pueblo*—in the sense we give it—is born out of the critical moment in which the political community splits, since the historical bloc in power […] stops constituting a ruling class. (Ibid., p. 64, author's translation)

Instead, it becomes merely the *dominant*[206] class, inasmuch as the oppressed majorities move away from traditional ideologies used to justify their subordination. In this sense, Chávez self-proclamation of embodying a *pueblo* becomes a powerful pedagogical reminder of the emergence of a (geo)political actor and social subject, which cannot anymore be subsumed under capitalist/imperialist hegemony.

Invoking the Ecuadorian people in a very different sort of interpellation, Rafael Correa's last electoral campaign for reelection in 2013 produced a TV spot which expresses the (geo)political and conceptual tension that emerges between the concepts of citizen or *ciudadano*

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[206] Dussel (2012) draws extensively on Gramsci to make this point, including the following citation: "If the dominant class has lost consensus (*consenso*), it is no longer the ruling (*dirigente*) class, it is merely *dominant*, it holds pure coercive force (*forza coercitiva*), which signals that the great masses have moved away from traditional ideology, no longer believing what they had before" (in Dussel, 2012, p. 165, author's translation).

and *pueblo*. The widely circulated campaign ad features a lone President Correa who leaves the Ecuadorian Presidential Palace on a bicycle and travels around the country's diverse landscapes, featuring the iconic public works built during the Citizens' Revolution. The only Ecuadorian people portrayed are children riding bikes with him, undifferentiated adults cheering him on with their backs to the camera, and, in the final scene, an elderly Andean indigenous couple who receive President Correa into their house. After greeting them in Kichwa, President Correa tells them in Spanish: "I am just passing through, the power is yours, *pueblo digno* that has become deserving of better days" (Tenemos a Rafael, 2013, min 3:04-3:10, author's translation). The shorter televised version skips the greeting and leaves Correa as the protagonist of the revolutionary transformation, even as he humbly recognizes that he is only "passing through." More recently, as his presidential term comes to an end in March 2017, and his party AP nominated his fist vice-president, Lenin Moreno,[207] for the presidential elections on February 19, 2017, President Correa has argued that he will continue to be a (geo)political actor within the framework of the AP party since "a revolutionary is neither born nor dies with a public office" (Correa, October 1, 2016; see Infobae, 2016).

President Chávez came to understand revolutionary leadership as omnipotent history that "absorbs"[208] folk like him, who in a sacrosanct manner come to embody the *pueblo* as enfleshment of self-knowledge as historical subject. President Correa, on the other hand,

[207] On April 2, 2017, Lenín Moreno was elected President of Ecuador on a runoff presidential election with a narrow margin over the banker Guillermo Lasso, who has not by April 5 recognized the resulted, claiming there is enough evidence of voter fraud (see Watts & Collyns, 2017; The Associated Press, 2017).

[208] Referencing the famous speech prepared by Fidel Castro as a young lawyer representing himself on a legal trial after his first subversive attempt against the Cuban State where he concluded: "you can condemn me but History will absolve me," Hugo Chávez told Ignacio Ramonet that if he would have known he would end up president of Venezuela back when he was young, he would have to say "History will absorb me" (2013, p. 63).

expresses an apparent "humility" betrayed by his concurrent proclamation and request for individual acts of faith in the necessity of trusting "honest" public servants like himself and his collaborators The slogan of having "clean hands, lucid minds, and ardent hearts *por la patria*" (Tenemos a Rafael, 2013, min. 0:42-0:47) or for the "fatherland" Ecuador, with which Correa was re-elected as Ecuadorian president in 2013 reduces the cultural dimension of revolutionary transformation as fostering individual values and confronting anti-values. Honesty, intellectual capacity and passionate commitment to the nation are represented as the key values needed to inaugurate a true meritocracy with equal opportunities for all *citizens*, starting with public servants and state administrators, who are required in sharing this allegedly "revolutionary" ethic behind Correa's charismatic leadership. Nonetheless, as it is clear when contrasting the primary sources discussed in chapter 2 and 3, while the charismatic leadership of Hugo Chávez seemed to have catalyzed dialogical pedagogical engagement between his administration and subaltern subjects' (trans)national organizations, the relationship between historic Ecuadorian social movement organizations vindicating subaltern subjectivities seems to have reached an unsurmountable impasse.

Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez and Ecuadorian President Rafael Correa were personal friends, even before Correa was elected to office. In fact, Chávez was significant in the first presidential election of Correa in Ecuador in 2006, not because he illegally meddled in the internal affairs of another country, as his opponents often accused him of doing, but rather because these accusations probably boosted Correa's popularity[209] at the time. In other words,

[209] Uruguayan-Ecuadorian journalist Kintto Lucas (2007) noted that in Ecuador, the common strategy of Latin American rightist parties of accusing leftist electoral contenders of being "puppets" of Hugo Chávez backfired, since polls suggest that Chávez sustained high levels of popularity among Ecuadorians at the time. Moreover, Rafael

while they may have marked differences in their leadership styles, their existence as historical figures have been intimately connected. More than in content (of either their government policies or their personal ideological premises, although certainly different), it is in the form of their charismatic leadership where the differences are clearest and most relevant to understand the achievements and limitations of these constituent processes in the Americas, particularly with regards to their condition as catalysts for (counter)cultural innovation expected from revolutionary transformations of modern states and societies. From the hegemonic masculinity hinted in the geopolitical performances of an army lieutenant and a university professor to the more or less successful challenges they launched against deeply entrenched forms of inequality in Latin America, Chávez's and Correa's charismatic leadership, albeit contradictorily, have opened the sphere of formal (geo)politics to crucial yet often foreclosed debates.[210]

In the next section I explore how to understand the premature foreclosure of transformative conceptions articulated in the 1999 Venezuelan and 2008 Ecuadorian constitutions and the obstacles their (geo)political impact continue to face requires consideration of the distinct institutional patterns that have emerged out of these Ecuadorian and Venezuelan constituent moments. The cases of the higher education reforms that followed the Venezuelan and Ecuadorian constituent processes allows continues to explore the pedagogical impact of the

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Correa publicly recognized his personal friendship with Hugo Chávez, and moreover, Chávez had also publicly met with Luis Macas, historic leader of CONAIE and another presidential candidate. These meetings served to symbolically ease the tensions that emerged between Correa and Macas during the election while highlighting Correa's credentials as an important member of the Latin American left.

[210] One example of these prematurely closed debates is the relationship between feminist praxis and the democratization of the state. This missed opportunity is expressed in Hugo Chávez's self-identification as a feminist, which included his questioning of Rafael Correa as to whether he was a feminist, and his conclusion that truly revolutionary socialism ought to embrace feminism, as well as in Correa's ruthless dismissal of some of his own government policies as misguided by "infiltrated radical feminists" in his government team, discussed in chapter 3.

role of President Chávez's and President Correa's charismatic leadership in relation to social and institutional transformations that purport to be revolutionary as well as both democratic and democratizing in a (geo)politically decolonizing sense. The attempt to implement the right to public higher education free of charge is an opportunity to further explore the tensions between the push to institutionalize as well as the pull to consolidate alleged *revolutionary* transformation of national imagined communities in Latin/x America.

Higher education and postcolonial constitutionalism: Institutionalization and consolidation of the Venezuelan Bolivarian Revolution and the Ecuadorian Citizens' Revolution.

During my dissertation research I had the opportunity to become a professor and researcher in the oldest, and currently the second largest, Ecuadorian public university. Higher education reform and a government oversight process of evaluation and accreditation of existing universities and the academic programs they offered had become a key issue in the 2008 constituent process resulting in a constitutional mandate (see chapter three) that called for the overhaul of the higher education system in the country. In Venezuela, higher education reform had also been a central concern since Hugo Chávez was elected president as it was seen as an emblematic area to democratize in order to reverse interlocking inequalities exacerbated by neoliberalism push towards privatization of public services.

Both countries faced a similar situation of encroachment of the private sector in the provision of education, making access a class privilege and thus reproducing interlocking forms of inequality (taking into account the racial and gendered logics that historically constitute class privilege), and an increasingly market-driven, professionalizing logic applied in the administration of universities, even in the formally "public" portion of the higher education

system. The revealing differences in the results of the last Venezuelan and Ecuadorian experiences with higher education reform should be understood both in terms of the institutionalization of new understandings of public education as a crucial social right, which implies the issues of democratizing access and ensuring quality education standards, as well as how, to what end, for whom and by whom, universities should be organized and administered. The consolidation of (geo)political support for the revolutionary transformations proposed in response to the grassroots anti-neoliberal challenges encoded, albeit contradictorily, in the Bolivarian and Citizens' Revolutions, is particularly at stake when struggling over the historical perspectives of modern public universities particularly and higher education more generally.

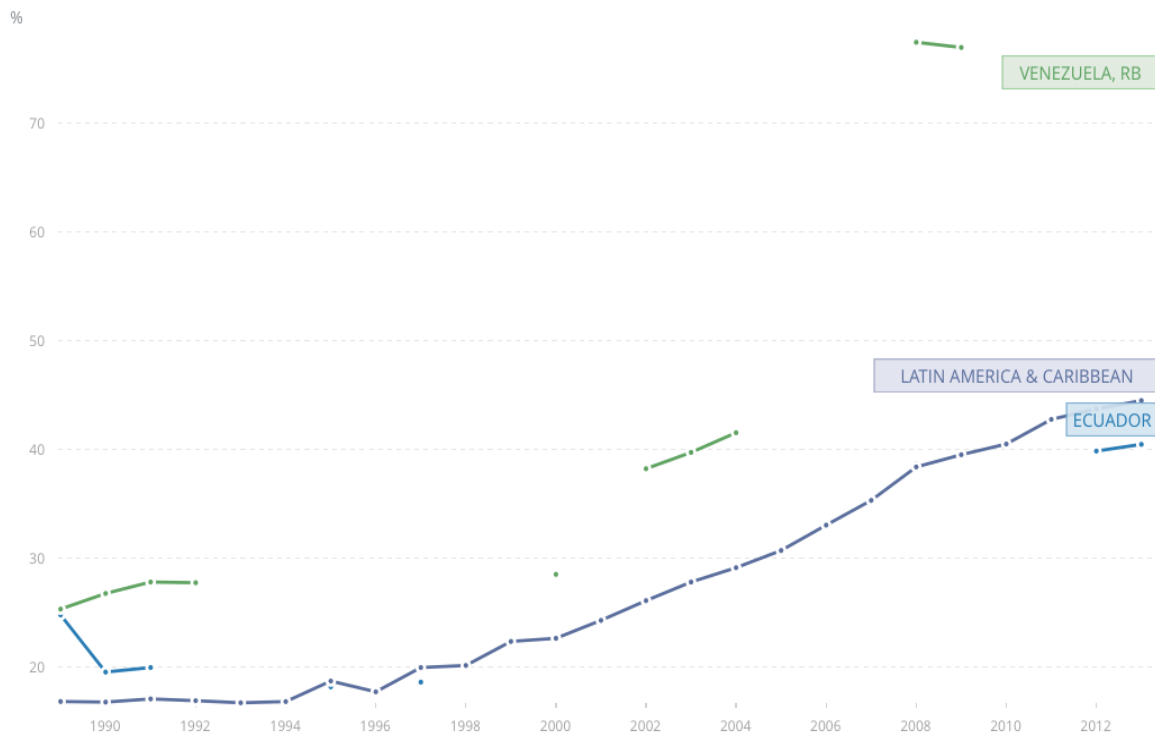
The Bolivarian Revolution in Venezuela has been praised for achieving the fifth highest national enrollment rates (see illustration 6) in higher education globally and the second highest in Latin America, after Cuba, according to UNESCO (2010 in Duffy, 2015, p. 657). The remarkable increase in university enrollment is often presented by Venezuelan officials as a quantitative indicator of the democratization via the *territorialization* (taking university education outside of academia to social spaces where higher education has been historically lacking) of higher education catalyzed by *Misión Sucre*. This government program was the first to be highlighted in the interviews I carried out during my first visit to Caracas during January, 2008 at the newly created Universidad Bolivariana de Venezuela (UBV). The professors and students I interviewed there underscored that higher education reform under Chávez leadership made it clear that the historical challenge was not merely to increase access to higher education, giving the opportunity to a broader swath of Venezuelans to learn, but, fundamentally, to teach higher education institutions how to engage with impossible subjects. *Municipalización* or

territorialization entails the expansion of what was call "extension" during the first higher education reform in Latin America during the first decades of the 20th century: acknowledging the spatialized consequences of (post)colonial inequalities, territorializing higher education suggests that democratizing knowledge production requires the multiplication of the sites for scientific research rather than merely opening the doors of existing universities to historically marginalized groups. Qualitatively, this inscribes the Bolivarian educational missions in a larger pedagogical project hinted in the 1999 constitutional recognition of democracy being participatory and protagonist. This process has entailed the building of grassroots social subjects and (geo)political actors by reflecting on the geopolitics of knowledge production, pushing against the tendency towards the silencing of collective subaltern memorialization in official (trans)national historicities.

As I began to discuss in chapter two, the Bolivarian *Misiones* did not only constitute an innovative policy scheme to tackle specific social needs exacerbated by previous neoliberal reforms, but in addition its emphasis on grassroots protagonist participation catalyzed organizational and memorialization processes well beyond state control. Starting with their names, the official educational *misiones* (Robinson, Ribas, and Sucre) posit a historicizing understanding of the role of public education in the emancipation of the postcolonial societies that emerged from the 19th century struggles invoked by these historical figures. The subversive gesture of creating an unofficial *Misión Boves* (see chapter 2), however, shows how the official narrative is always incomplete, requiring sensibility towards the pedagogical interventions encoded in the praxis of those historically denied space in formal educational institutions;

namely, Afro-Amerindian communities, which nonetheless have contributed in educating revolutionary (geo)political actors and leaders from Simón Bolivar to Hugo Chávez.

Illustration 6. University Enrollment in Venezuela and Ecuador (1989-2012)



Source: Unesco Institute for Statistics / data.worldbank.org

This recognition has not been merely symbolic, as important as symbolic decolonial violence is in trans-forming the existing geopolitics of knowledge, as it translated into institutions like the Indigenous University of Venezuela (UIV or Universidad Indígena de Venezuela). UIV began as the product of a plurinational collaboration in 2003, when "[f]ortified by Article 121 of the Venezuelan Constitution, which gives indigenous peoples the right to develop their own education, four indigenous communities came together to create a space where their youth can be educated […] indigenous youth representing eight distinct ethnic groups now attend the university: the Warao, Pemón, Kariña, Pumé, E'ñepa, Piaroa, Sanema, and Ye'kuana"

(Martinez et. al, 2010, p. 196). The autonomous educational project, that began receiving national funding only in 2008 (after failing to secure funds from local governments), was recognized as a national public university in 2010 by the Ministry for Popular Power of Education and thus the national government under Chávez's leadership (Correo del Orinoco, June 17, 2010), nearly a decade after the legal and conceptual basis for its function was conceived in the new Constitution. Nonetheless, the grassroots foundation of UIV coincides with the launching of the *Misión Guaicaipuro*,[211] created in 2003, suggesting a parallel post-constituent process in the realm of state institutions and subaltern organization and mobilization.

This example of the path of institutionalization of a broadly conceived, unprecedented set of constitutional rights is revealing of the tensions that have surrounded official implementation of many of the rights newly recognized in these latest constitutions and the resulting subaltern critical readings and grassroots (geo)political challenges. The experience of indigenous peoples and nationalities in Venezuela, as in other countries in the region, suggests that institutionalization often comes at the cost of the evaporation of the embodied geographies of knowledge required for the consolidation of autonomous[212] grassroots organization, crucial to

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[211] An icon of early Amerindian resistance to European colonization in the 16th century, Gaicaipuro was a leader of the Caracas and Teques peoples, after which the capital and a neighboring city are named. The vindication of his memory under President Chávez's administration included the rebrading of October 12th as a national holiday commemorating the Day of Indigenous Resistance and the symbolic inclusion of his remains in the National Pantheon with independence leaders like Simón Bolivar in 2001. The *Misión Gaicaipuro* is a government program that was intended to distribute land titles of collective ownership to indigenous peoples and implement the rights newly recognized in the 1999 Constitution; eventually it resulted in the creation of the Ministry for Popular Power for Indigenous Peoples in 2007.

[212] While indigenous peoples recognize that they have been provided with unprecedented opportunities, they also see many obstacles to the fulfillment of their new rights. Although the incorporation of leaders from CONIVE into positions of power in the Venezuelan government has brought indigenous representation within the state to a new level, it has also brought criticism from an indigenous base that has sensed a loss in the organizations' autonomy and ability to make stronger demands. And while significant territory has been granted to some indigenous groups, a comprehensive response to many communities' land claims remains elusive (see Indigenous University of Venezuela, 2010, p. 195-196).

ensure the right to self-determination. Moreover, this example shows how the Boliviarian Revolution in Venezuela appears to have been more successful in consolidating its perceived role as catalyst of long-standing traditions of grassroots organization than in truly transforming state bureaucracies by institutionalizing the revolutionary experiences more often than not still taking place at the margins of the Venezuelan state.

However, struggles for self-determination and recognition of plurinationality can be very different when, rather than an ambivalent ally as head of the national government, the president increasingly dismisses you as a public enemy and the "worst danger" for his Citizens' *revolutionary* government. Despite also positing higher education reform as a key mechanism to overcome the interlocking inequalities exacerbated by neoliberal reforms, in Ecuador this reform signified the closure of an Indigenous university rather than its support (however delayed). The Intercultural University of Indigenous Peoples and Nationalities "Amawtay Wasi," which resulted from the praxis of CONAIE (Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador) at the turn of the century, was recognized by the Ecuadorian government in 2004 under the presidency of Colonel Lucio Gutierrez.[213] The process of evaluation of all universities mandated by the 2008 Constitution (discussed in chapter three) resulted in the closure of "Amawtay Wasi" as a university in 2012. Although it continues to carry out its activities under the name of *Pluriversity* "Amawtay Wasi" (see amaytaywasi.org, 2017), the government closure taking away its ability to grant higher education degrees severely limits the impact of this pioneering indigenous university in the region, and is telling of one of the most patent contradictions in the

[213] President Gutierrez was elected in 2003 with the support of leftist political parties and social movement organizations like CONAIE, who quickly broke their alliance when Gutierrez aligned himself with the neoliberal Washington Consensus almost immediately after being elected president.

attempts of President Correa and his Citizens' Revolution to confront the undemocratic effects of previous neoliberal reforms on Ecuadorian higher education.

More than an isolated incident, "Amawtay Wasi" was one of many universities closed down after the evaluation process which gave a "quality" ranking to each higher education institution with a letter from A to E. Although the objective of the evaluation was to vindicate education as a social right and public service, thus ending what Correa called a neoliberal "social lie" of alleged "universities" that profited from printing degrees without any interest in the (re)production of scientific knowledge, the best ranked university in Quito was in the private sector[214] and historic public universities like UCE lost social prestige when they were ranked in lower categories. Despite the allegedly technical criteria used to evaluate Ecuadorian universities, these foundations of the third wave of higher education reform in Ecuador (see chapter three) were perceived by many as an affront to existing public universities; not only was Correa and his team of reformers foreign to the history of the Ecuadorian public university but their project to launch four new public universities to emblematize the revolutionary effects of the democratizing policies carried out by his government seemed to entail a disavowal of previous struggles to improve and defend public higher education in long-standing institutions. Moreover, the Ecuadorian Ley Orgánica de Educación Superior or Higher Education Bill secures the centrality of the concepts of "quality" and "excellence" in knowledge production, which have

[214] Universidad San Francisco de Quito, along with two public Polytechnic higher education institutions, was ranked in the "A" category of undergraduate higher education institutions. Although Universidad San Francisco was the last university where President Correa worked as a professor, the high tuition costs and its geographical location within the city of Quito makes it one of the social strongholds of opposition to the Citizens' Revolution. Nonetheless it was recognized as the most "active" academic community in the country based on the number of Ph.D.'s working as researchers and professors and the volume of high-prestige international publications by its employees.

characterized the justification of (neo)liberal privatization of higher education through reforms that privilege quantifiable indicators of Eurocentric academic production and the impact of publications in world scientific debates over other sorts of considerations. The renewed focus on sufficient infrastructure as a result of increased public investment led Correa's government to demand satisfactory levels of cultural capital embodied in adequately-trained professors in terms of the overarching notion of Eurocentric meritocracy: a notion that entails conceptions of excellence and quality that, when ill-defined, reproduce the individualizing neoliberal logic that obscures structural barriers to attaining such excellence and quality levels and alternative conceptions of knowledge production and teaching-learning processes encrypted in subaltern historicities.

Although Ecuador has also been internationally recognized for significantly expanding investment in public education as well as university enrollment rates, this quantitative increase has been disputed and fiercely debated[215] as the results of the alleged democratization of higher education in Ecuador have not been as unequivocal as in the case of Venezuela.[216] Both in

[215] Ever since critiques of the regulatory practices the Citizens' Revolution undertook in the Ecuadorian higher education field began to gain traction in national media, government officials have indicated comparisons of quantitative data on enrollment rates during this period are difficult since in 2012 the measurement instruments were changed. While many have argued that, after an initial increase up until 2011, when a new standardized test for admission was implemented there was a clear drop in 2013 (Luna, 2017), Senescyt, the government regulatory body of higher education, argues that this is a methodological issue due to the fact that enrollment rates do not include those students in *nivelación*—pre-university courses devised by the government to prepare students that did not achieve the minimum standardized test grade required to enroll directly in public universities (see El Universo, 2014). Moreover, René Ramírez, head of Senescyt, has emphasized the doubling in university enrollment of students from the poorest quintile of society as well as in the enrollment of Afro-Amerindian students (interview with Camila Vallejo in Ecuadoruniversitario.com, 2015).

[216] Venezuelan sociologist Edgardo Lander argued that the tendency of the Bolivarian University reform goes counter the current of those experiences analyzed during the International Seminar "Educación Superior Latinoamericana y la geopolítica del conocimiento" at Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar (UASB-Sede Ecuador, 2015). He shows various quantitative indicators to point to unequivocal increase in the access to higher education among Venezuelans (see illustration 6).

Ecuador and Venezuela, this latest round of higher education reforms shows evidence of more equitable university systems, yet the tensions and contradictions are still markedly distinct, particularly in terms of the consolidation of (geo)political support for higher education reforms and the socio-cultural creativity required for the institutionalization of the post-neoliberal transformations vindicated by the Ecuadorian Citizens' Revolution and the Venezuelan Bolivarian Revolution.

In Venezuela, the consolidation of subaltern support for the democratization and territorialization of public higher education has meant a greater expansion in the social impact of universities. Both in terms of their relevance as (geo)political actors and the spillover of the social appeal of knowledge production beyond the borders of academia, only in part due to increased enrollment, higher education reform in Venezuela has better suited to forge social spaces that invite exercizing the collective right to "deep thinking," not simply individual freedom of thought. This collective right historically negated to subaltern subjects was vindicated by Chávez's charismatic leadership and was institutionally translated not only in government policy schemes like the educational and other[217] *misiones* but also in alternative pedagogical spaces such as the *Encuentros Filosóficos de los Pobres* (Philosophy Fora of the Poor)[218] (Telesur TV, 2014; El Cayapo, 2014), which challenge the alleged universal authority of

[217] Another emblematic Bolivarian *misión* was Barrio Adentro which brought health services to Venezuelan *barrios* where public health authorities had never set foot. One of the first obstacles this government policy encountered was the refusal by Venezuelan doctors to serve in these communities, impoverished and stigmatized as sites of criminality. The Chávez administration, with the aid of Cuban doctors and their historical experience, developed Misión Barrio Adentro with the awereness that is not sufficient to provide basic social services like health and education but that such provision required developing the social, organizational and cultural, capacities to do so. In this vein, Misión Barrio Adentro started training doctors in Venezuelan *barrios* being provided an education not only on technical medical knowledge but also (geo)political and sociological basis to develop a commitment to the collective welfare of the communities they were called to serve upon graduation.

[218] These international encounters organized by collectives from around Venezuela (like HHR and El Cayapo) was

academic institutions and were born out of the praxis of the collective HHR, including the EPATUs analyzed in chapter two.

The constitution of these (trans)national educational institutions in Venezuela, including more autonomous grassroots spaces like the EPATUs as well as public policy programs like the *misiones bolivarianas*, suggest a cross-pollination between official government initiatives like the building of new universities or foreign policies based on solidarity in the context of South-South cooperation schemes like ALBA (Harris & Azzi, 2009; Muhr, 2010) and the consolidation of enfleshments of subaltern knowledges most recently discussed in terms of the building of socialist communes and *conucos*.[219] Nonetheless, there has also been significant criticism alleging that the Bolivarian Revolution has traded the institutionalization of minimal quality standards for academic institutions, so as to ensure a unified, self-determined and autonomous academic field, for an increasingly sprawling and dual university system (see Lander, 2015) that reproduces the fault lines of the (geo)political polarization felt in other parts of Venezuelan society as well. These critiques point to the loss of a significant number of Ph.D.-trained researchers experienced during the last years to the traditional routes of modern brain drain yet

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initially conceived as the "World Encounter of *Ignorares*," a neologism that criticizes hegemonic notions of "knowledge" by invoking its opposite: If knowledgeable people are said to have knowledge, then "ignorant" people are not defined by a lack of knowledge, but rather by alternative forms of knowledge that have been negated by the dominant understanding of what counts as knowledge; ignorant people have "*ignorares*" (see Vargas, 2014).

[219] *Conuco* is an indigenous concept, originally associated to the Taíno people, that describes a unit of collective, usually agricultural, labor. Similar to the Nahuatl concept of *milpa*, it is part of a Latin/x American (geo)political tradition that vindicates the importance of food sovereignty as the basis to build subaltern self-determination and meaningful national sovereignty. Most recently it has been embraced by President Nicolás Maduro, democratically elected after Hugo Chávez's death, in April, 2013. The (counter)cultural collective HHR-El Cayapo as part of the 2012 *Nosotros con Chávez* campaign (analyzed in chapter 2) already argued that "*Escuela no le gana a conuco*" (DavidBorges Revilla, 2012) challenging the capacity of formal education to replace educational spaces like the *conuco*. More recently, in track 16 "(interludio) conuco" of the "Hijos del 89 (1989 Lumbre de las Mayorías)" (2015) Soundcloud.com playlist also analyzed in chapter 2, we see the creative dialogue proposed by these grassroots (counter)cultural producers with Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro. For another example of the way grassroots Chavistas understand the *conuco* see Gente Chavista, 2016.

increasingly also to regional destinations like Ecuador[220] as an important unintended consequence.

In Ecuador, the institutionalization of a government-regulated accreditation process based on "internationally-recognized" quality standards seem to have come at the cost of antagonizing with many of those social groups most directly concerned with higher education institutions. From the initial hopes produced by the increased investment for scholarships for both young students and experienced educators to pursue higher degrees abroad and inside the country to the implementation of a meritocratic system of evaluation, which paradoxically seemed to increase the inclusion of individual members of historically marginalized groups while dismissing subaltern subjects critiques of the education system as a whole, higher education reform has increasingly alienated important sectors of Youth and educators' social movement organizations. In other words, despite the Citizens' Revolution achieving the highest share of public investment in education of any previous government, as well as high levels of investment in other public services, it has failed to consolidate the active support of relevant social subjects, capable of vindicating an alternative model for conceiving knowledge production while sustaining the institutional transformations required to overcome economic dependency on primary exports.

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[220] Venezuelan biologists Jaime Requena and Carlo Caputo have provided a quantitative analysis to give a sense of "Talent Loss in Venezuela: the migration of its researchers" (2016). Crossing a series of databases, they see that in recent decades there has been an important emigration of researchers, particularly in the area of oil engineering, following traditional paths towards developed regions of the world like North America and Europe. However, one of their most interesting findings is the fact that many Venezuelan academics are moving to Ecuador. As part of Ecuador's highere education reform, Correa's administration created the program "Prometeo," that sought to attract Ph.D.'s from around the world to build post-graduate programs within Ecuador, which to this day are insufficient or nonexistent in many areas of knowledge making it unfeasible to comply with the National Higher Education Law that requires Ph.D. degrees of full-time university professors by 2017. I hope to carry out more systematic research regarding this issue of intra-regional "brain-drain," which could be seen in a different light if it effectively is the result of the geopolitical project for regional integration (as the immigration of Cuban doctors and other professionals to Venezuela in order to organize *misiones*).

The proclaimed goal of “transforming the productive matrix” of Ecuadorian economy from primary exports to a “knowledge-based economy” has too often foreclosed the (geo)political debate regarding the transition strategy, particularly with regards to role of grassroots organization and subaltern subjects in the transformation of both state institutions and social structures.

What is most paradoxical regarding the ongoing higher education reform in Ecuador is the emergence of many characteristics associated with the so-called neoliberal university under the leadership of the outspoken anti-neoliberal government of the Ecuadorian Citizens’ Revolution. On one hand, more public funding in higher education has meant more economic incentives to both attract and keep well-trained academics, working full time in teaching-learning processes, while highlighting for these processes to include scientific research and *vinculación con la comunidad* or social relevance and responsibility towards the problems faced by the communities that higher education institutions are part of. On the other hand, the logic of the neoliberal university “requires high productivity in compressed time frames” and produces a “fast-paced, metric-oriented university” (Mountz et. al., 2015, p. 1236) with isolating effects on the embodied working conditions for both students and professors. As coordinator for the accreditation of the School of Sociology and Politics at UCE, professors constantly reported an “ever-increasing work-load” as a result of the contradictory demands on their work time by the push to increase their scientific research output as well as the multipllying bureaucratic and administrative tasks devised by external government officials to re-institutionalize public universities. Moreover, the lack of participatory feedback mechanisms to ensure that, particularly in times where state funding is scarce, entails the risk for Ecuadorian public universities to fall

back into the tendency of "increased contingent labor, and the elimination of programs" (Ibid., p. 1237) that fail to prove their utility in terms of an externally imposed disciplinary logic. A logic that is not only functional to global capitalist accumulation but that also mimics its constitutive coloniality of power, which seeks to reduce the power of racialized and gendered labor.

When Manuel Fernández, the Venezuelan Minister of University Education, Science and Technology visited in Ecuador in January 2015, he declared that after having accomplished "democratization and territorialization" of university education, Venezuela had the ongoing challenge to raise the "quality" of knowledge (re)production in higher education institutions (mmpeuct.gob.ve, January 19, 2015). While recognizing that Ecuador and Venezuela have many concurrences in education policy, the Venezuelan minister seemed suggest a two-step logic, wherein the debate regarding quality in higher education presupposes adequate democratization and territorialization first. This seemingly late Venezuelan interest in emblematic projects like the Ecuadorian Yachay Tech suggests contrasts with the Ecuadorian initial emphasis on ensuring quality and excellence by re-centralizing, rather than de-centralizing, the higher university system. Subordinating the anti-neoliberal critique of the Citizens' Revolution to the pretension of quickly meeting the quality standards of "excellence" in a world still reigned by the neoliberal model of university while attempting to democratize the access to higher education is not merely a shortsighted mistake but speaks about the lack of critical engagement with those subjects that, having lived first-hand problems like inequality and marginalization from university education, need to be agents in the transformation of those institutions. Historian Pablo Ospina Peralta (2016) argues that the administration of higher education reform is a mirror of the accomplishments and limitations of the Ecuadorian Citizen's revolution: while given the total

state abandonment that neoliberalism enatailed for Ecuadorian universities, any state regulation appear as better than nothing, the current administration of higher education reform expresses Correa's government deep suspicion of existing universities and *universitarios*, which has make him clash with former or potential allies among existing or latent social movement organizations.

Finally, it is important to understand that the similarities and differences in the higher education reforms resulting from the constituent processes in Venezuela and Ecuador are related to the conceptual bridges and tensions that appear when we contrast the notion of "endogenous development" included in the 1999 Bolivarian Constitution and the objective of "changing the production matrix" born out of the 2008 Ecuadorian Montecristi Constitution. While both concepts seek to provide an answer to the challenge posited by structural dependence on global capitalism's addiction to oil and consumption of other primary exports, "endogenous development" in the Venezuelan case has catalyzed a pedagogical process of subaltern memorialization and critical deep thinking regarding dominant (neo)liberal notions of *development* as well as (counter)cultural mobilization and grassroots institutional innovation (discussed in chapter 2), which seem to entail a diffuse process of mental decolonization among subaltern groups due to increased levels of protagonist participation in the administration of public goods, services, and spaces.

On the other hand, the Ecuadorian objective of "changing the production matrix" has acted as a powerful (geo)political slogan to garner electoral support behind a program to modernize and democratize the nation-state, yet seems to have fallen into an institutionalist trap that often results from economic determinism. While many economic sectors (like tourism) have been given a boost through public investment directed at alternatives to extractive economies,

discussion of how to change the axis of accumulation of the “productive matrix” of the Ecuadorian economy often focuses on the proposed end result—a “knowledge economy” capable of strategically inserting itself in the global economy on better exchange terms—rather than specifying the social subjects and (geo)political actors necessary to sustain a transition process of revolutionary economic and cultural transformation at the (trans)national level (see Carrión Sánchez & Sanchéz Cárdenas, 2014).

The role of education, and particularly of higher education, in both democratization and revolutionary transformation has been highlighted in the latest Venezuelan and Ecuadorian constituent processes as well as in earlier (geo)political experiences of democratically built revolutionary socialism. Late Chilean President Dr. Salvador Allende famously stated in the 1970s: “Being young and not being revolutionary is a contradiction, even biological. But advancing in the paths of life and maintaining [oneself] as a revolutionary is even harder” (in Lion NueveUno, 2013, min. 0:00-0:16). Referenced directly and indirectly multiple times during my fieldwork in Caracas, Venezuela and Quito, Ecuador, and in my research on audiovisual grassroots archives, Salvador Allende and the short-lived (geo)political project of the “Chilean way to democratic socialism” point to both the central agency of student social movement organizations in revolutionary transformations in Latin/x America and the structural forces containing such revolutionary impetus in capitalist societies. University student and urban youth social movement organizations in Venezuela have been more visible in the post-constituent (geo)political conflicts, embracing (and at times opposing) the (geo)political project of the Bolivarian Revolution. In Ecuador, student and youth movements more generally have not been a significant actor in the third wave of higher education reform, revealing the shortcoming of the

Citizens' Revolution and President Correa's charismatic leadership in terms of expanding grassroots participation. In the next section I theorize how the differences and similarities between these Venezuelan and Ecuadorian constituent processes can also be understood in relation to the long-standing debate regarding the connection between democratization, (post)neoliberalism, and revolution amidst calls to build a Latin/x American 21st century democratic socialism.

Revolutionary democratization v. democratizing revolution: No peace without social justice (or the case against "democracy promotion") in postcolonial contexts.

No es lo mismo hablar de revolución democrática que de democracia revolucionaria. El primer concepto tiene un freno conservador; el segundo es liberador. [...] Son tiranías disfrazadas de democracia lo que hemos tenido en estas tierras durante mucho tiempo. Hay que echar abajo las bases del Estado colonial y construir un nuevo Estado Social, una República nueva que sea expresión del poder constituyente.[221]

-Hugo Chávez Frías, (Public Address, La Paz, Bolivia, January 23, 2006)

Up to this point I have highlighted the theoretical significance of rethinking the relationship between revolutionary social change and democratization, particularly because many of the leftist or progressive governments that have marked the Latin American (geo)political landscape in the last decade have self-recognized as either the result of a "democratic revolution" and/or with the project of building a "revolutionary democracy." Moreover, I have argued that the pejorative undertones of dismissing these governments as "populists" forecloses the important critique of neoliberalism as an obstacle to meaningful democratization, which in postcolonial contexts entails critical engagements with social relations that reproduce the

[221] It is not the same to talk about a democratic revolution as about a revolutionary democracy. The first concept has a conservative brake; the second is liberating. […] In our lands we have had tyranny dressed up as democracy for a long time. We need to abolish the foundations of the colonial State and build a new Social State, a new Republic that is the true expression of constituent power.

coloniality of power. Following Argentine-Mexican philosopher Enrique Dussell, I have pointed to the centrality of the concept of *pueblo* to understand anti-colonial democratization struggles in Latino/x America and the same can be said regarding modern democracy if we define it, as Abraham Lincoln did in his Gettysburg Address, as "the government of the people, for the people, and by the people." More than the national addition of citizens, peoples (and nationalities) are (geo)political projects that are only feasible inasmuch as they manage to articulate historical subjects capable of carrying out world-historical transformations.

Theda Skocpol (1979) seminal work on *explaining social revolutions* provides a working definition for revolution as a mode of modern historical transformation:

> Social revolutions are rapid, basic transformations of a society's state and class structures; and they are accompanied and in part carried through by class-based revolts from below. Social revolutions are set apart from other sorts of conflicts and transformative processes above all by the combination of two coincidences: the coincidence of societal structural change with class upheaval; and the coincidence of political with social transformation. In contrast, rebellions, even when successful, may involve revolt of subordinate classes –but they do not eventuate in structural change. Political revolutions transform state structures but not social structures, and they are not necessarily accomplished through class conflict. […] What is unique to social revolution is that basic changes in social structure and in political structure occur together in a mutually reinforcing fashion. (2008 [1979], p. 4-5)

While it may be too early to assess if the social and political transformations expressed in the 21st century constitutionalism articulated in Venezuela and Ecuador can be analyzed as true social revolutions, this definition help us understand why Hugo Chávez pointed to the contradiction between defending a "democratic revolution" and forging a "revolutionary democracy." In the former, democracy acts as a conservative break to the potential of a political revolution to unfold in social upheavals or movements that can sustain historical transformation of social and political structures "in a mutually reinforcing fashion" since democracy is reduced

to respecting constituted institutional mechanisms as source of (geo)political legitimacy. A revolutionary democracy in the other hand suggests that democratization is an ongoing project and invokes the constituent power of the *people* as the revolutionary impulse necessary to redefine the very meaning of democracy, modern state, and (trans)nationalism as mechanisms to carry out rapid and basic transformation in the social and political structures that characterize capitalist modernity as a world-system.

Ecuadorian sociologist Hernán Ibarra (2008) has provided a "historical-political vision of the 2008 Constitution" of Ecuador, relating it to the most recent constitution-making experiences in the region (Venezuela, 1999 and Bolivia, 2006-2009) and to the previous Ecuadorian Constitution (which only lasted a decade, 1998-2008). Ibarra introduces his analysis identifying four modern functions and two conceptions or genres of modern national constitutions based on the classical definition of Ferdinand Lasalle: "Constitutional questions are first and foremost not questions of right [or law] but of force [or power]; the *actual* constitution of a nation lies in the real, actual relation of forces existing there, written constitutions are valid and stable only when they correctly express the actual relation between forces in a society" (Lasalle, 1982, "The Art and Wisdom of Drafting Constitutions," para. 2). Before this distinction between "actual" and "written" constitutions came to my attention, my interviews had already repeatedly brought up the term *constituciones de papel* or "paper constitutions," used either to characterize the failure of previous constitutions or to challenge the legitimacy of existing constitutions. It was also a short-hand to ironize the sheer number of national constitutions that are part of Venezuelan and Ecuadorian republican history: Venezuela is the Latin American country with most constitutions,

having had 25 before the current 1999 Bolivarian Constitution, and Ecuador follows closely with 19 constitutional texts preceding the 2008 Montecristi Constitution.

Ibarra notes that the first general function of a constitution is to construct an international regime of states by defining a basic requirement for entry; a second function is to stabilize and rationalize a political order seeking its permanence and continuity over time; third, constitutions legitimize political transformations that come either from revolutionary ruptures or coups d'etat; and finally they promote given ideologies and therefore work as instruments for (geo)political education. Which of these functions are emphasized is in part a result of the genre of the constitution; a common distinction is often made between "balance" or statutory constitutions and programmatic constitutions: "The first sort of constitutions are normally drafted to settle accounts with the past and establish certain adaptations to previous constitutional trajectories. The second type is usually more focused on articulating guiding principles for the medium and long term relative to economic and social dispositions" (Ibarra, 2008, p. 16-17, author's translation) for further transformation. This conceptualization of ideal types is useful inasmuch as it allows us to recognize that most modern constitutions contain both statutory and programmatic elements, yet postcolonial constitutions tend to turn the balance toward the latter, although never losing sight of the ongoing account-settling with the (post)colonial past. If we connect this general conceptualization of modern constitutions with the empirical insight regarding postcolonial constitutions conceived as instruments for further social transformation (Go, 2003), we can expect constitution-making in postcolonial contexts to be more programmatic and emphasize its role as a pedagogical tool for revolutionary transformation. This is confirmed by both the 1999 Venezuelan and 2008 Ecuadorian constitutions yet in the Bolivarian Revolution

the little blue copies of the Constitution has had a more prominent presence both in street demonstrations and (counter)cultural memorialization of the charismatic leadership of President Chávez.

Eric Selbin's analysis of 20th century *Modern Latin American Revolutions* (1993) suggests that it is important to distinguish between *institutionalization* and *consolidation* of revolutionary transformations and regimes more generally. When these dimensions are confused or treated as one the historical-comparative analysis of *revolutions* tends to downplay the agency of individual political actors as well as operationalize narrow conceptions of "success" in revolutionary social struggles:

> The difference between institutionalization and consolidation is more than a matter of semantics. [...] Consolidation occurs when a significant majority of the population embraces the core of the social revolutionary project—centered on the creation of a more just and equitable society—and is therefore willing to resist efforts to roll back the gains made through the social revolutionary process. The focus is on people, not structures; choices, not determinism; and transformation, not simply transition (1999 [1993], p. 4).

Transition[222] has been the dominant framework through which democratization is theorized and historicized. Hence, *revolutionary* transformation, a central component of modernity as historical formation, is too often decoupled from any discussion of democratization or even presented as dangerous to the consolidation of transitions to democratic rule. Therefore, it is significant that

[222] The passing reference to the seminal work on democratization studies *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies* (O'Donnell & Schmitter, 2013 [1986]) is not meant to dismiss this concept as unimportant. In fact, elsewhere we have argued that part of the problem of logic behind "changing the productive matrix" in Ecuador is that it is not enough with assuming how a (geo)political transition happens from the alternatives previously devised and articulated; in other words, for revolutionary transformation of a capitalist dependent economy it is not enough to assess or think about alternative "use-values" (such as tourism) that could replace dependency on primary exports as the main economic engine, but rather requires the capacity to sociologically imagine what sort of transition (Carrión & Sánchez Cárdenas, 2014) is feasible, in terms of what really-existing social subjects and (geo)political actors can sustain (and will resist) the proposed nation and state-making projects that fuse in constitutional provisions.

self-proclaimed "revolutionary" (geo)political actors in 21st century Latin/x America explicitly tackle both the historical and theoretical relationship between democracy and revolution. A relationship that

underscores that beyond pacts of (geo)political elites, democratization, particularly when its part of a broader decolonization project, ought to confront the often unruly collective agency or, rather, praxis, which is necessary to topple oppressive structures and institutions as well as constituting and sustaining new social and political structures.

During my preparations for my last round of fieldwork in Caracas, I was surprised by a mural that appeared overnight on the building of the School of Sociology and Political Science at UCE in Quito. The mural (see Ilustration 7) honored Venezuelan President Chávez after his passing away with his black silhouette on a red background next to a synthesized version of his argument regarding the distinction between a "revolutionary democracy" and a "democratic revolution." The proposed distinction underscores an important tension of the contentious (geo)politics of modernity; that between constituted powers of formally "democratic" states and emergent constituent challenges that continue to defy their legitimacy and (re)produce grassroots anti-neoliberal conceptions of what revolutionary democracy can contribute to long-standing tradition of anti-neoliberal struggles.

When I asked some members of the student collective Iñina regarding their reasons to honor Chávez with a mural at UCE, they replied that it seemed an important lesson to spotlight in the context of current socio-political debates. When asked where they saw Ecuador in this dichotomy, they replied: "not much is looking revolutionary nor democratic nowadays, there have been many conservative brakes to this so-called Citizens' Revolution" (Informal

conversation, 2013).[223] Their disillusionment was palpable during our conversations, which eventually resulted in research collaboration with some students from the collective with whom we carried out a pilot study on the subjectivities of students trying to enter public universities like UCE during the higher education reform carried out by the Citizens' Revolution.

Illustration 7. "Chávez Vive!" Mural at UCE

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[223] Their disillusionment at that time, in the fall of 2013, responded particularly to disagreements with parts of higher education reform as well as latest decision of Correa's administration to roll back the Yasuní-ITT initiative (Watts, 2013; Pellegrini et. al., 2014).The Yasuní-ITT initiative (Larrea & Warnars, 2009; Rival, 2010; Warnars, 2010; Finer et. al., 2010) was an unprecedented proposal to the international community to keep an estimated 846 million barrels of petroleum in the earth in Yasuní National Park, one of the most biodiverse ecosystems in the world, in exchange for contributions to add up to half the estimated market value if Ecuador were to exploit the oil reserves. First conceived by social movement organizations (see Martínez, 2016), it was formally articulated by President Correa's administration arguing that the initiative sought to both combat climate change and advance a new sort of relationship between humans and nature not based on the imperatives of capital accumulation, as a way of implementing the unprecedented constitutional sanctioning of Rights of Nature (Chapter seven, Title II, Constitución República del Ecuador, 2008; see also Gilman, 2016). Nonetheless, after international contributions did not reach a significant portion of the requested amount, President Correa announced that economic imperatives necesitated the exploitation of some of the petroleum reserves in the park. This announcement in turn produced the emergence of a grassroots movement named Yasunidos, which attempted to block Correa's decision via referendum; although Yasunidos collected the number of signatures specified in the Constitution for such an electoral process, the National Electoral Council invalidated their petition and the referendum never materialized.

The study also included high school students who had not passed the standardized admission exam[224] and thus failed to get a spot in a public university. We carried out focus groups that used corporal maps in order to explore the affects (re)produced by the meritocratic system of public university enrollment under the new higher education law; reflecting on the feelings experienced in different parts of their body before, during, and after the exam, it quickly became clear how the institutional efforts to democratize Ecuadorian public universities, while improving their standing in international quality rankings, were having non-intended, often devastating and perverse social-psychological effects.

Both students that were and weren't successful in overcoming the obstacle entailed in the National Exam expressed resentment with the stress entailed in preparing for the exam and the pressure to invest in (paid, private) preparatory courses. While those successful were more likely to justify it as a necessary mechanism to democratize educational opportunities instituting a meritocratic allotment of public university seats, those who had been denied entry because of their performance on the exam tended to agree that a mechanism of this sort was necessary but ambivalently waned between recognizing structural barriers and blaming themselves for their failure to gain access to a university education. While Correa's government claims to have significantly expanded university enrollment rates among historically marginalized social groups like Afro-Ecuadorian and indigenous communities and nationalities,[225] the emphasis on building

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[224] Run by the Ecuadorian government until 2017, the National Exam for Higher Education (Examen Nacional para la Educación Superior) exam was recently cancelled after harsh criticism and some quantitative evidence that enrollment rates had been negatively affected since the introduction of standardized admission testing. The pressure to cancel the exam may have been due to the electoral conjuncture where opposition candidates made it a campaign issue.

[225] While Correa's administration has presented statistical data (see ANDES, 2012, El Telégrafo, 2013) suggesting that net university enrolment of Afro-Ecuadorian and Indigneous students more than doubled between 2006 and 2011 (going from 6.5 % to 14.5% and from 9.5% to 19.7% respectively), the closing of an indigenous university and

a "true meritocracy," even while recognizing the structural inequalities the concept of meritocracy tends to normalize, seems to have resulted in an individualizing perception that weighs heavily among young Ecuadorians.

Moreover, even when they recognized important accomplishments in Correa's administration of higher education and, in some cases, identified as *correistas*, the students' desire to get a university degree, evolving in relation to these newly installed bureaucratic processes of evaluation, never seemed to hint at the necessity to organize collectively shared (geo)political loyalties required to sustain medium to long-term (geo)political projects for revolutionary transformations. Even those students who have excelled and received scholarships to study in the best-ranked universities around the world[226] are more likely to express individual pride followed by gratitude for the unprecedented educational opportunities afforded to them as well as admiration for the government that has been able to grant them those opportunities. Student-led social movement organizations, historically an important (geo)political actor in Ecuador, have grown increasingly weak as the need for autonomous organization among students in order to carry out the transformations proposed in the context of the last constituent assembly process is at best a secondary concern after meeting academic quality and intellectual

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conflict with the grassroots system of bilingual schools created by social movement organizations like CONAIE reveal a schism: more inclusion of individual members of historically marginalized social groups accompanied by an ongoing incapacity to engage subaltern organizations and epistemologies in the rethinking of state administration.

[226] In informal conversation, many students that have received government scholarships have recounted that despite the fact they are sent of to their academic destinations with a speech regarding the importance of their preparation for the country's development and declaring them "ambassadors" of the Ecuadorian Citizens' Revolution, very few of them change the suspicious and distant way with which they relate to the state. After all, it is their merit which is being celebrated, which is most often understood as a personal characteristic. The few that are outspoken regarding their commitment to their communities of origin, developed such (geo)political commitment previous, and often in tension with, the sort of loyalty and identification that Correa's vindication of meritocracy as something compatible with "21st century socialism" suggests.

productivity levels expected by the mostly foreign-trained Ph.D.'s administrating the third wave of reforms in Ecuadorian higher education.

In Venezuela, student-led social movements are often a key component of the hegemonic media coverage (Nunez, 2007; Orozco, 2008; Krauze, 2014) of anti-Chávez protests, where militant opposition university student movements fighting for "freedom of expression" against the allegedly authoritarian Venezuelan state appear in the front stage. However, there has also been a vibrant Chavista student and urban youth social movement organizations as well as a broader ideological diversity that marks the history of Venezuelan student-led movements (Martinez et. al, 2010, p. 235; Ivancheva, 2015) more generally. As discussed in chapter two, urban youth social movements like HHR (Hip Hop Revolución) have highlighted the horizon of revolutionary transformation, calling attention to the limitations and contradictions found in state institutions but vindicating their right to participate in national (geo)politics. Moreover, the Chavista student organizers from Parroquia 23 de Enero whom I interviewed often commented ironically that those who oppose Chávez should be his most enthusiastic supporters because if it was not for his leadership, the country most likely would have descended into open confrontation as the result of the deeply ingrained, interlocking inequalities that have characterized the experience of modern Venezuela, and Latin/x America more generally, with neoliberal structural adjustment. The ways the Chávez administration and his (trans)national leadership helped memorialize anti-neoliberal struggles across the Americas and the Third World in a broader anti-colonial genealogy has renewed the (re)production of cultural symbols forged in a clear, albeit diffuse, process[227] of decolonization; a (geo)political project based on tenets of subaltern

[227] From the cultural manifestations of grassroots creativity discussed in chapter two and the territorialization of this

protagonist participation and principle of endogenous development, vindicated both at the local and (trans)national scales in the 1999 Bolivarian Constitution.

In the Ecuadorian context, President Correa has also self-proclaimed to be the legitimate heir of anti-neoliberal struggles, yet he has clashed with social movement organizations that were at the forefront of those struggles while he was abroad building his academic career as an economist during the 1990s. These conflicts have pushed Correa and his supporters to emphasize his democratic (i.e. electoral) legitimacy over his critics, having not only received unprecedented electoral support and maintained relative (geo)political stability during the last decade but also holding unprecedented academic qualifications in comparison to the average Ecuadorian politician. For the Citizens' Revolution, rebuilding trust in formal political institutions and expanding citizenship rights seems to have been in and of itself a revolutionary accomplishment, neglecting the need to catalyze grassroots organization and mobilization capable of sustaining revolutionary challenges to the ongoing coloniality of power and the interlocking inequalities that characterize it. On the contrary, President Correa's clashes with former allies in the context of the 2008 Constituent Assembly have increasingly exacerbated the contradictions of his government policies inasmuch as the strategy of Correa's charismatic leadership seems to be based on asking his supporters to "believe" in those qualified to delineate the necessary changes, rather than inviting protagonist subaltern participation to create not merely alternative plans for

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creativity through the recovery of public spaces like Tiuna el Fuerte cultural park in the Caracas borderlands of Valle-Coche (see Hunt, 2013; Public Art Review, 2015; Mikkelson, 2015) to the innovative institutional gestures in the *misiones* as a parallel state and more recent debates on the building of a communal state (Ciccariello-Maher, 2016), the common thread found in the innovative (geo)political projects and (counter)cultural spaces forged under the Bolivarian Revolution is clearly the principle of a participatory and protagonist democracy as the only means to operationalize, build, and create a revolutionary democracy, rather than merely implementing a prefabricated recipes associated with neoliberal "democracy promotion" (see Robinson, 2006, p. 104).

economic transformation and historical development but historical alternatives to the modernizing logic of the Eurocentric teleology of development, which often dilutes the emancipatory side of the revolutionary promise of modernity.

In order to move away from simplistic (mis)representations of constituent assembly processes as merely the mechanism through which yet another generation of Latin American charismatic "populist" *caudillos*[228] have concentrated power in the executive branch of government, we need to historicize both the tensions and connections between the praxes of social subjects such as indigenous nationalities, migrant communities and Afro-Amerindian peoples more generally, and the unprecedented constitutional provisions that evidence the ongoing relevance of the state as the arena where the struggle to define what is public and defend the commons takes place. Postcolonial constitutions as historical documents, their possibilities and shortcomings, cannot be understood apart from the localized efforts of social movements, community organizations, and oppositional cultures (Mansbridge and Morris 2001) of subaltern social subjects. The disparate emphasis on the (geo)political participation of these social subjects before, during, and after the Venezuelan and Ecuadorian constitutional redrafting seems to be related to how neoliberalism in Latin/x America "produced a genuine reconfiguration of social existence, of the basic social relations, of social interests, of its agents, and its institutions, in the material as much as in the inter-subjective dimensions" (Quijano, 2005, p. 172) in these countries. As fundamental as securing better material conditions, for any (geo)political project to be

[228] The image of the mindless mass following a charismatic *caudillo*, who relies on networks of patronage or other means of coercion, is what comes to mind when a leader is dismissed as "populist" in Latin American studies. An important critique of this trope, both theoretical and empirical, is found in Auyero 2000. The popular representation of this leadership is also the racist image of the hyper-sexualized macho military dictator, thus blending together historical experiences that have nothing to do with one another (see Corrales 2006 for one example).

sustainable, particularly in postcolonial contexts, it must consider the significance of the inter-subjective dimension where we can begin to evaluate the possibility of a postneoliberalism: in other words, to what extent are the inequalities exacerbated by neoliberalism being (geo)politically confronted by organized subaltern subjects and (geo)political actors, who look not only to reform or democratize existing social structures and political institutions, exorcising neoliberal doxa so to speak, but also to vindicate their capacity and agency to build alternatives to the common sense instilled by neoliberal hegemony in the last decades.

Venezuelan anthropologist Fernando Coronil has argued that "[t]he privatization of the economy and of public services, or what [Zapatista Subcomandante] Marcos calls the 'striptease' of the state, has led not only to the reduction of bureaucratic inefficiency and in some cases to increased competitiveness and productivity, but also to the demise of projects of national integration and the erosion or at least the redefinition of collective attachments to the nation" (Coronil, 2000, p. 361). The performative gestures in the last Venezuelan and Ecuadorian constituent assemblies of self-consciously re-defining collective attachments to the nation away from neoliberal orthodoxy, vindicating the necessity not only for government regulation but for collective planning to reclaim the public realm from private interests and logics, have been followed by distinct formations (in institutional reforms and cultural expressions) of contentious understandings of the structural challenges necessary to undo the interlocking inequalities that characterize the daily fragmentary experience of modern states and societies. My research suggests that these distinct paths are, at least partially, related to the constitutive role of different grassroots critiques of neoliberalism that infused with *revolutionary* meaning the Bolivarian Revolution in Venezuela and the Citizens' Revolution in Ecuador in relation to the elements privileged in the

charismatic leaderships of President Chávez and President Correa.

Lelie Gill's ethnographic account of El Alto, Bolivia, a paradigmatic site for anti-neoliberal praxis in Latinx America during recent decades, captures the multifaceted challenge to make sense of structurally adjusted neoliberal states and societies:

> Many poor alteños have a basic understanding of the economic transformations buffeting their lives and label these processes neoliberalism. This label, of course, can obscure as much as it reveals [...]. But neoliberalism—the concept and the slogan—has also enabled alteños to focus debate and resistance. They understand neoliberalism to be a series of policies and practices that express contemporary forms of class and national oppression. (2000, p. 12)

The attempt to make feminist sense (Lind, 2002) of racial neoliberalism (Goldberg, 2005) points to how contemporary forms of class and national oppression related to the (geo)politics of neoliberalism are impossible to understand without close examination of racialized and gendered disparities. In fact, despite the complexities entailed in theorizing in historically grounded terms, (post)neoliberalism has become a way to grasp the complexity of intersectionality (McCall, 2005), understood not merely as a theoretical framework that problematizes the systems of classification and identification we invoke with concepts like gender, race, class and sexuality but also as a way of critically theorizing interlocking or mutually constitutive power structures that historically constitute the heteronormative coloniality of power.

Drawing on the meanings conjured and mobilized by late Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez and Ecuadorian President Rafael Correa as well as by the grassroots praxis of Afro-Amerindian, migrant workers, and urban youth social movements who have created and/or embraced concepts like that of endogenous development, the plurinationality of modern states, the recognition of transnational and sexually diverse families, the right to human mobility and

the "progressive end to the condition of *foreigner*" (Article 416.6, Ecuador Constitution, 2008) and Latin/x American integration through popular/communal power in order to combat geopolitical inequalities and economic dependency, I use the notions of revolutionary democratization and democratizing revolution to synthesize some of the lessons that emerge from the historical-comparative analysis presented here regarding the 21st century Venezuelan and Ecuadorian constituent processes. More than ideal type representations of the constituent processes I have analyzed, these terms refer to different (geo)political strategies encoded in the charismatic leadership that has given impulse to these important processes of contemporary Latin/x American contentious (geo)politics. The former makes revolution a qualifier of the ultimate objective: democratization, which too often has been reduced to institutional calculation and reform. The latter aims for substantive revolution, understood as democratizing transformation of the modern state, historically understood to require further decolonization. To speak of revolution signals rapid structural change as the result of the (geo)political eruption of previously impossible subjects and subaltern subjectivities, who actively participate not only as protagonists in the process of infusing public institutions with emancipatory, and not merely modernizing, meanings but also as historical subjects, capable of knowledge production and hence of carrying out pedagogical interventions and engagements across their communities, the continent, and the world.

Democratization too often runs short of its (geo)political promises of "liberty, solidarity, and equality" inasmuch as it falls into the logic of "democracy promotion," where democracy is conceptualized in Eurocentric fashion as a thing that some modern and "developed" countries or historical subjects have figured out and can be exported to underdeveloped or "developing"

countries, former colonial territories. Even when imperialist forces are not the ones carrying out this kind of democratization logic, the idea of promoting "democracy" fetishizes its meaning by foreclosing the (geo)political struggles behind theorizing guiding ideas such as democracy and revolution. To speak of revolutionary democratization is to speak about a messy eruption, not a linear progression, of (geo)political demands, democratizing inasmuch as they require both institutional responses but also, perhaps most importantly, grassroots organization and mobilization. The consolidation of a revolutionary subject to wage the conflicts that necessarily emerge from any attempt to democratize highly stratified and unequal socio-economic structures seems to entail historically the paradigms of decolonization and depatriarchalization so as to connect with the daily lived experiences and struggles of the majority-world (Connell, 2007), classified and identifying within the historical horizons of the queer (geo)political project of the "Third World" (Prashad, 2007; Kapoor, 2015; Phạm & Shilliam, 2016) since the dawn of the twentieth century. My analysis and research suggests that 21st century "Latin/x America" is yet another reiteration of this modern emancipatory (geo)political project.

The Venezuelan Bolivarian Revolution seems to have catalyzed a diffuse process of decolonization by emphasizing subaltern protagonist participation as fundamental to meaningful democratization. This uncompromising commitment to the revolutionary subjectivities of subaltern (geo)political actors has exposed the internal tensions between a democratization that seeks to minimize conflict, privileging (geo)political stability and existing institutional mechanisms, and a democratization based on bringing the state back in but also transforming it by engaging grassroots (geo)political actors, whose historical lived experiences can often provide alternative conceptions of democratic socio-political organization and cultural and economic

innovation. Nonetheless, the unruliness that can result from politicizing previously normalized social stratification to democratize highly unequal postcolonial societies may endanger the perspectives of revolution as an emancipatory pedagogical project to build "21st century socialism" in the long run.

In the Ecuadorian case, the Citizens' Revolution under President Correa's leadership has self-proclaimed to be a fundamentally democratizing and modernizing, hence *revolutionary*, social and political force. Lay *citizens* are reduced to a supporting role, not even a fragmentary agent of the ongoing trans-formation of the Ecuadorian socio-economic fabric, leaving the job to those with allegedly "clean hands, lucid minds, and ardent hearts" who currently administer state institutions. President Correa and his government point to an unprecedented degree of modernization of national infrastructure and state institutions as evidence of the expanded citizenship rights articulated in the 2008 Montecristi Constitution. The Citizens' Revolution is democratizing because it vows to fight historical inequalities and thus include those historically marginalized in the management of public matters of the modern state. However, after the 2007-2008 Constituent Assembly process President Correa's government seems to have grown increasingly suspicious of those demanding historicizing debates that challenge "democratic" institutions as (in)sufficient to reverse historical patterns and landscapes of modern/postcolonial inequalities.

President Correa claims to be the leader of a "democratic revolution," and the Citizens' Revolution has found its conservative brakes stemming from this suspicion of potential allies, particularly subaltern social movement organizations that refuse to unconditionally support his policies. Historical grassroots (geo)political actors that have criticized his allegedly

postneoliberal platform have confronted both dismissals that they must first "win an election" for their critiques to have democratic validity and accusations of being "*atrasa-pueblos*"[229] or responsible for their peoples' *backwardness*. His "progressive" discourse and policies stop being revolutionary to the extent that they disavow the historical agency of those directly affected by government policies by enacting an implicit, hegemonic understanding of public interest encoded in the abstract conception of a (dis)embodied citizen that can now trust in their public *representatives*. The remarkable (geo)political stability and economic performance in terms of poverty and inequality reduction as measured by quantitative indicators in Ecuador under President Correa's leadership has come at the cost of subaltern protagonist participation. Not only has such participation been increasingly pushed back to the margins of the administration of state institutions, with its usually violent consequences, it has also reignited the neoliberal suspicion that rejects direct action and civil disobedience as unnecessary and invalid when dealing with an allegedly *revolutionary* democratic government. As unruly as protagonist subaltern participation may appear within (neo)liberal frameworks of democracy, its decolonial symbolic violence (Ciccariello-Maher, 2010) has been a crucial component of attempts to democratize highly unjust and unequal societies inasmuch as it is able to infuse public institutions with *democratic* values and principles; not because subaltern subjects are born with these inherent values but because they vindicate their (geo)political agency and progressively stop "[naively expecting] the dominant classes to develop a type of education that would enable

[229] Often used together, the epithets "*tira piedras*" and "*atrasa pueblos*" (literally, "stone throwers" and "those who set people back [in history]") are deployed by Correa to suggest that intransigent protest is neither democratic nor helpful in pushing Ecuador forward rather than backward. The linear Eurocentric conception of history entailed in this characterization is also evocative of the civilized/savage dichotomy that has been historically used to justify the exploitation of those who allegedly need to be brutalized so as to receive the blessings of "civilization."

subordinate classes to perceive social injustices critically" (Freire, 1985, p. 102).

If we understand democratization as the learning, rather than the promotion, of democracy, its revolutionary character will depend on the specific resolution of the teacher-student contradiction as it relates to the epistemological dimension of the (geo)political struggles to define who has the power to decide what principles and which values have democratic legitimacy. For this reason it is useful to compare Chávez and Correa's charismatic leadership in relation to (counter)cultural memorialization of the (geo)political project encoded in the Venezuelan and Ecuadorian constitutions so as to understand the strategic (geo)poltical choices that have been made to carry out the project of postneoliberal democratization. The differences we see when comparing the constituent processes out of which these constitutions emerged can be explained only by considering both the agency behind these choices, that has come to be embodied in the historical figures of these leaders, and the specific structural and institutional impact of previous neoliberal reforms in Venezuela and Ecuador, and hence their resulting critiques often encoded in the grassroots memorialization of subaltern resistance to neoliberal structural adjustment.

In Venezuela, neoliberal structural adjustment resulted in an early grassroots uprising in 1989 followed by a failed coup against a neoliberal administration in 1992 that brought Hugo Chávez to the spotlight. The historic levels of impoverishment that existed alongside the country's remarkable oil incomes entailed the systematic marginalization of the majority of the population from formal (geo)political decision making and led to the unequivocal vindication of protagonist subaltern (geo)political participation, national sovereignty and engagement in anti-imperialist struggles to democratize social relations on a world-scale as necessary components of

national democratization. In Ecuador, early attempts to implement a neoliberal SAP confronted in 1990 the first of many indigenous uprisings constituting Ecuadorian contentious (geo)politics at the turn of the century. Yet important theoretical contributions to rethink modern democratic states and societies—like *plurinationality* and *interculturality*—that resulted from these uprisings are too often eclipsed by official historical narratives that focus on the chronic political instability of the country before Correa's presidential election in 2006. The specter of this seemingly endemic political instability has increasingly pushed Correa's decade-old administration to invest the (geo)political capital gained during this time, as a result of its undeniable accomplishments, in a modernizing development project. Despite innovative elements (mostly adapted from preceding grassroots anti-neoliberal struggles), the Citizens' Revolution has generally foreclosed radically democratic dialogue regarding historical alternatives to Eurocentric development that could remake the emancipatory promise of modernity by engaging with the revolutionary impetus of protagonist subaltern (geo)political participation.

Chapter 5

The weaving of (counter)cultural *autohistoria* in 21st century Latin/x America

Now, as Reality is such as we have affirmed, know that thou art imagination and that all thou perceivest and that thou doth designate as “other than me” is imagination; for all existence is imagination in imagination (that is to say “subjective” or microcosmic imagination in an “objective” collective or macrocosmic imagination).
-Abu Bakr Muhammad Ibn Al-Arabi, 1165-1240 AD (in Hernández Cruz 2001, p. 111)

At all times, however, they have divided human beings into races, which, while they perhaps transcend scientific definition, nevertheless, are clearly defined to the eye of the Historian and Sociologist.
- W.E.B Du Bois, “The Conservation of Races” (1897 in Green and Driver 1986, p. 240).

I only know one France. That of the Revolution. That of Toussaint L’Ouverture. Too bad for the gothic cathedral.
-Aimé Cesáire, “Panorama” (1941).

The natives’ challenge to the colonial world is not a rational confrontation of points of view. It is not a treatise on the universal, but the untidy affirmation of an original idea propounded as an absolute. The colonial world is a Manichean world.
- Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963, p. 41)

I had a sound colonial education / I have Dutch, nigger, and English in me, / and either I’m nobody, or I’m a nation
- Derek Walcott, “The Schooner ‘Flight’” (1979)

"Either I'm nobody, or I'm a nation," is the poetic rendering by Saint Lucian Nobel Laureate, poet, and playwright Derek Walcott, of the historical ambivalence that characterizes the postcolonial condition, an underlying theme of this dissertation's analysis of postcolonial constitutions in contemporary Latin/x America. Aimé Césaire's reflection on revolutionary modernity challenges this ambivalence by historicizing a decidedly postcolonial genealogy dating back to the struggles embodied in Toussaint L'Ouverture and the 1804 Haitian Constitution. However, as we have seen, Eurocentrism has not only rendered postcolonial histories such as the Haitian Revolution to be epistemologically illegible but has bestowed upon postcolonial subjects an ontological impossibility through which material and symbolic violence re-inscribes this postcolonial ambivalence; a historical force behind both oppressive subjection and modern dependency as well as potentially emancipatory subjectification or the historical becoming of revolutionary subjects.

In a Manichean world, Fanon reminds us, we cannot expect actual democratization to come as "a rational confrontation of viewpoints" nor "a treatise on the universal" (1963, p.41). This recognition, however, should fall neither on the trap of the pretentiousness of postmodern particularism nor the push to disavow the study of (trans)national society as a historical totality. The sociological imagination—and its (geo)political equivalent, the revolutionary imagination—can help us avoid falling into the temptation of any sort of determinism inasmuch as it fosters the mental capacities necessary to navigate the ontoepistemological[230] structuration of the relations

[230] Here I am gesturing to the important analysis by Brazilian sociologist and Critical Ethnic Studies scholar Denise Ferreira da Silva who has examined "how the tools of nineteenth-century scientific projects of knowledge produced the notion of the racial, which institutes the global as an ontoepistemological context –a productive and violent gesture necessary to sustain the post-Enlightenment version of the Subject as the sole self-determined thing" (2007, p. xii-xiii).

between biography and history and the social articulation of “objective” or “macrocosmic imagination” and “subjective” or “microcosmic imagination.”[231] Hence, the dual task to rethink and remake modernity, both as an epistemological and (geo)political project, needs to pay close attention to the pedagogical dimension of subaltern protagonist participation in (trans)national public spheres. Both in analyzing rapid historical transformations, such as social revolutions, and in assessing the modern forms of knowledge production these often catalyze, it is crucial not to lose sight of (im)possible revolutionary subjects and the countercultural subjectivities, which often results from subaltern oppositional praxis.

Attempts to quantify “freedom” and “democracy” in indexes, widely referenced in US (and other Eurocentric) social sciences, fail to capture the complexities and the inbuilt ambivalence of anti-colonial efforts behind what I have called revolutionary democratization. By privileging a (neo)liberal framework of individual rights and responsibilities at best, or being functional to imperialist interests at worst, these indicators have been at the core of the “evidence” used to demonize the governments which have convened Constituent Assemblies against the current of increasing impingement on the right to assembly around the world (Butler, 2013; Osterweil, 2015).

[231] This distinction, conceptualized by Abu Bakr Muhammad Ibn Al-Arabi, a judge and Malike law scholar born in al-Andalus in 1076 and who died in Fez in 1148, centuries before Europe existed as a geo-historical identity, is an early precedent of the sociology of knowledge. Ibn Al-Arabi’s definition of “objective” and “subjective” imagination came to my attention as an epigraph in the book *Maraca* (2001) by Puerto Rican poet Victor Hernández Cruz. I began studying Hernández Cruz’s poetic work as a result of the work of Latinx Studies scholar Frances Aparicio, who with Chávez-Silverman and other scholars proposed the framework of *tropicalizations* (1997) with inspiration from Hernández Cruz’s poetry book *Tropicalization* (1976). This is just one example of how the research reported in this dissertation confirms Audre Lorde’s (1984) argument that “[p]oetry is not a luxury. It is a vital necessity of our existence. It forms the quality of the light within which we predicate our hopes and dreams toward survival and change, first made into language, then into idea, then into more tangible action. Poetry is the way we help give name to the nameless so it can be thought. The farthest horizons of our hopes and fears are cobbled by our poems, carved from the rock experiences of our daily lives” (p. 38). Hence the emphasis of this work on subaltern (counter)cultural production in relation to the symbolic re-imagining of “We the people” during the last constituent assembly processes in Latin/x America.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has never fared well in these indexes yet this dissertation has discussed evidence of a vibrant revolutionary imagination that has managed to consolidate various forms of protagonist subaltern participation and to build institutions, which—although without a doubt still riddled with precarious ambivalence and oppressive contradictions—go beyond the logic of the long-standing bureaucratic apparatus of the state. Even amidst increasing violent confrontation between Chavistas and opposition militants in Venezuelan city streets, these subaltern forms of (geo)political organization and mobilization have been sustained during the nearly two decades of the Bolivarian Revolution. International media coverage continues to reproduce tropicalizing (Aparicio & Chavez-Silverman, 1998) images of failed states and populist dictators, obstructing serious consideration of the apparent tensions that exist between contemporary attempts to consolidate subaltern protagonist participation and revolutionary (geo)political identification with re-constituted nations and states with technocratic pressures to privilege the institutionalization of efficient mechanisms to implement public policy and secure a minimum degree of stability required to administer a modern state:

> First, effective ideas about policy emerge from epistemic communities, which are sometimes highly technocratic, yet their successful implementation requires appropriate social coalitions. The age of technocracy is over: good ideas that do not resonate widely and good policies that lack sociopolitical underpinnings are ultimately useless. Second, the nation-state is no longer the sole territorial or political unit of relevance to social, political, and economic change. National governments define countries' macroeconomic policies and their international relations, but they are constrained by globalized markets and traversed by transnational social movements (Beasley-Murray et. al., 2010, p. 8).

In the last Venezuelan and Ecuadorian constituent processes it is patent how Afro-Amerindian transnational social movements traversed the forging of new national constitutions as well as how the (counter)cultural creativity unleashed by these and other subaltern (geo)political

actors has been curtailed by reverberations of (post)neoliberal technocracy. The historical development of the Ecuadorian Citizens' Revolution under the leadership of President Rafael Correa seems to have accomplished a remarkable level of institutional stability, particularly given the chaotic decades that preceded Correa's first democratic presidential election. However, the only explicit reference to the 2008 Ecuadorian Constitution I was able to find in expressive (counter)cultural production was denouncing Correa's decision to reverse the Yasuní initiative as unconstitutional in violation of the rights recognized to indigenous uncontacted peoples and nationalities living in the area. The Yasuní reversal is but one example of how the Citizens' Revolution has seemed to reduce its "revolutionary" horizon to efficiency in state administration and regulation to increase the capacity of the Ecuadorian state to redistribute wealth and combat poverty and inequality. Yet paradoxically this apparent stability has increasingly come at the cost of antagonizing the subaltern social movement organizations who were at the forefront of anti-neoliberal resistance at the turn of the century when they dare to disagree with the government interpretation of constitutional principles like plurinationality and *Sumak Kawsay*.

During the course of my research on 21st century postcolonial constitutionalism in Latin America, it became increasingly clear that in order to understand the broader genealogy of anti/colonial struggles and, particularly, the (geo)political project of decolonization encoded in the geo-historical identity "Latin/x America," it was necessary to look beyond the dominant frameworks of methodological nationalism and (geo)political imperialism clearly expressed in existing "democracy" indexes. Moreover, I have argued that the (geo)political demand to overhaul national constitutions across the Americas entails not merely attempts to further institutionalize democratic procedures to implement narrowly understood "citizenship" rights and progressive

public policy schemes but also the fundamental collective re-imagining of the very meaning of *democracy* and *nation* as mechanisms to transform the logic behind the public administration of modern states and imagining alternative forms of collective belonging. Constituent assemblies as (geo)political rituals that symbolically re-found and re-imagine national imagined communities (Anderson, 1989) are best understood as a response to an ongoing crisis of modern nation-states, which continue to prove unable to fully engage with subaltern subjects, rendering them effectively *impossible*[232] as (geo)political actors despite ongoing subaltern struggles without the consideration of which "democratization" becomes a meaningless conception.

I have also argued that the sociological imagination can bolster the revolutionary imagination located in this subaltern (im)possibility inasmuch as it demands that we stop seeing like a racial state (Scott, 1999; Goldberg, 2002; Kyle & Siracusa, 2005), particularly when making sense of oppositional (counter)cultures and antisystemic social movement organizations and mobilizations. To engage subaltern conceptions for remaking the modern state and rethinking its historical genesis and the revolutionary perspectives for the democratization of contemporary bureaucratic fields (Bourdieu, 1994) it is crucial not to lose sight of the specific relations of power between the many hands of the state and the segregated and fragmented social groups and organizations that characterize unequal societies. We must carefully conceive of better ways to sociologically assess the democratizing accomplishments and shortcomings of self-proclaimed revolutionary (geo)political movements in postcolonial contexts. Existing indicators' refusal to

[232] This impossibility most recently embodied in the experiences of "illegal aliens" (Ngai, 2003), as discussed elsewhere in this dissertation, refers to both the formal liberal privileging of a notion of individual citizen bearer of rights, which in turn disavows collective rights and alternative conceptions of justice and (geo)political organization, and the *othering* (Spivak, 1985), which in times of neoliberalism takes the form of "branded bodies" (Wingard, 2013).

even consider the possibility of engaging alternative conceptions of "democracy" reveal a tendentious complicity with the failed imperialist foreign policy strategy of "promoting poliarchy," a fancy way to refer to "the oxymoron of a 'market democracy'" (Robinson, 2006). While this is not to say that what I have called "revolutionary democratization" or "democratic revolutions" cannot experience rollbacks or infringement of basic democratic rights and freedoms, my efforts in this work have been simply to lay the groundwork on which we can continue to critically assess the obvious pitfalls that observers can easily find in contemporary Venezuelan and Ecuadorian (geo)politics. In this spirit, I want to end this work by discussing the concepts *autohistoria* (Anzaldúa, 2015) and *contracultura* (Silva, 2006 [1980]) as important theoretical foundations to weave better methodological strategies, indicators, and theoretical frameworks to make sense of the ongoing challenges to secure meaningful democratization in contemporary Latin/x America.

Venezuelan intellectual Ludovico Silva proposed the notion of *contracultura* ([1980] 2006) or counterculture to highlight the fundamental role culture plays in capitalist development, building on South African economist Samir Amin's definition of culture: "For us, culture is the mode of organizing the utilization of use values" (quoted in Silva, 2006, p. 6, author's translation). This dissertation has considered (counter)cultural impulses or interventions related to the constituent assemblies in Venezuela and Ecuador and the (geo)political demand to redraft national constitutions in the Americas in general in order to explore two interrelated arguments articulated by Silva: 1) that capitalist modernity is *countercultural*, since capitalism privileges exchange values over use values, not only in narrowly economic terms but in the social realm more generally; yet paradoxically 2) it is precisely through *countercultural* interventions that revolutionary transformation of capitalist societies becomes possible inasmuch as use values are rendered

socially meaningful once again, through collective action that counters the current of the fetishistic veil of capitalist exchange, which in turn reduces social value to individualizing competition in order to ensure the best prices for consumers over any other consideration. This paradoxical usage of the term *counterculture* signals two different levels on which we can better understand how anti-neoliberal resistance in Latin/x America has catalyzed renewed critical theorizing in relation to both transnational and local subaltern (geo)political organization and mobilization, while considering what the contrasts between the Venezuelan Bolivarian Revolution and the Ecuadorian Citizens' Revolution teach us regarding the broader transnational crisis of the modern state signaled in the call to redraft national constitutions.

Under Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez's charismatic leadership, the idea of "Latin/x America" was most clearly articulated as the expression of postcolonial (trans)nationalism, mobilized as a fountain of *countercultural* pedagogical interventions that sought to primarily consolidate social support for (geo)political processes of decolonization. Although without a clear vision regarding how to develop the state capacity required to carry out the economic transformation of Venezuela's crippling dependency on oil-rents, as hinted at least discursively in the case of the Ecuadorian Citizens' Revolution, President Chávez's charismatic leadership unleashed revolutionary democratization inasmuch as it was able to consolidate not merely support for his revolutionary project, but also various forms of subaltern (geo)political protagonist participation, with the explicit goal to forge alternative models for historical development in Venezuela, Latin/x America, and the Third World more generally. In other words, Venezuela's Bolivarian Revolution seems to have been more successful in empowering subaltern subjects to see themselves as both revolutionary (geo)political actors and historical subjects of knowledge

production than in transforming the bureaucratic logic of Venezuelan state institutions. Hence the most interesting institutional innovations (such as *consejos comunales* or *comunas*) that have resulted from the Venezuelan constituent process are to be found in the borderlands or at the margins of, rather than within, the Venezuelan state itself.

The Bolivarian emphasis on the protagonist participation of subaltern subjects as knowledge producers thus led me to the various (counter)cultural productions that engage with the 1999 Constitution. In them I found something similar to what Gloria Anzaldúa theorized in response to Chicana[233] cultural praxis:

> Border arte [which] is an art that […] depicts both the soul del artista and the soul del pueblo. It deals with who tells the stories and what stories and histories are told. I call this […] autohistoria. This form goes beyond the traditional self-portrait or autobiography; in telling the writer/artist's personal story, it also includes the artist's cultural history. (Anzaldúa, 1993, para. 22)

In this vein, *autohistoria* brings us back to the problem of subaltern subjectivity and subjection; two forces in tension behind the historical formation of social subjects. Outburst of violent rebellion should be understood, at least partially, as an expression of this tension confronted in the case of Venezuela by constantly referencing the constitutional principle of protagonist participation as the key objective of revolutionary democratization. On the other hand, the Ecuadorian Citizens' Revolution emphasis on transforming the "production matrix" or *matriz productiva* of the country away from economic dependency on primary exports seems to tame the countercultural unruliness of subaltern *autohistorias*[234] by reproducing the racist trope of "people

[233] In the main body of the text I reference an earlier iteration of Gloria Anzaldúa's reflections on autohistoria where she discusses specific examples of Chicana artists' work amidst the exhibition "Aztec: the World of Moctezuma" that took place at the Denver Museum of Natural History. There is more comprehensive discussion on autohistoria in her never finished dissertation, edited by one of her students, AnaLouise Keating, and published posthumously as *Light in the Dark/Luz en lo Oscuro: Rewriting Identity, Spirituality, Reality* (2015(.

[234] Chicana intellectual Gloria Anzaldúa's work, which is underappreciated in modern sociology in part due to her violent disavowal of disciplinary boundaries and writing genres, provides yet another way of reflecting on the

without history" (Wolf, 1982). By dismissing his critics from the left as childish environmentalists and/or *indigenistas* President Correa has reinscribed the racist disavowal of subaltern protagonist participation, reducing the "democratic" character of his "revolutionary" policy schemes to sustained electoral support and formal political stability. In other words, the Citizens' Revolution has been by far more effective in securing institutional stability by pursuing progressive reforms while failing to consolidate a social base of support capable of checking the technocratic[235] tendencies to be found even among "successful" policy strategies to implement unprecedented rights vindicated in the last round of Latin/x American constitutionalism.

Modern constitutions, according to Colombian politician[236] Gustavo Petro (October 4,

challenges I have associated with both the methodological and epistemological problems associated of (auto)ethnographic research. *Autohistoria* comes closer to the sociological understanding of collective reflexivity as necessary to produce scientific knowledge—as well as for underscoring subaltern protagonist participation in the forging of modernity, although rendered invisible and impossible under the (visual) logic of state prerogative to define who is and who is not entitled to citizenship rights. In highly unequal societies, autohistorias are not merely a methodological strategy to produce knowledge but rather a (geo)political strategy to reinforce contemporary grassroots oppositional praxis by calling attention to broader subaltern revolutionary genealogies; since there is no social revolution without a revolutionary subject, not theoretically defined a priori but rather forged in the struggles of those who Frantz Fanon historicized as "the wretched of the earth" (1969). Twenty-first century postcolonial constitutionalism and the ongoing struggle to redraft national constitutions in Latin/x America provided a window for this dissertation to explore these historical genealogies and contribute to the rethinking of the postcolonial condition as constitutive of global modernity, still trapped in Eurocentrism and ontocoloniality, both counterrevolutionary forces that feed the student-teacher contradiction found in the banking education (Freire, 1970), to which Latin American popular education objected.

[235] "A widely recognized failure of neoliberalism lay not only in the flaws of its policy recipes—not all of which were without merit—but also in the manner of its execution and the lack of commitment to democratic accountability and deliberation. […] Market-driven and almost viscerally anti-political, the neoliberal leaders of the 1980s and 1990s substituted technocratic formulae for democratic debate (Hershberg, 2006). The lefts cannot repeat this mistake" (Beasley-Murray et. al., 2010, p. 4). I believe there is evidence to suggest this mistake is at the root of the growing disenchantment with the Ecuadorian Citizens' Revolution and, to a lesser extent, with the Venezuelan Bolivarian Revolution. While the electoral margin of the victories of the successors of Hugo Chávez and Rafael Correa, Nicolás Maduro in Venezuela and Lenín Moreno in Ecuador respectively, were similarly narrow, the sort of (counter)cultural support analyzed in the case of the Bolivarian Revolution seems to remain more potent than in the case of the Ecuadorian Citizens' Revolution.

[236] Gustavo Petro is a former leader of the M-19 guerrilla army, which was founded after the fraud of the 1970 Colombian presidential elections. It became the Alianza-M19 political party in 1990 and participated in the drafting of the current 1991 Colombian Constitution. Petro has occupied various public offices, including national senator and mayor of Bogotá, having also engaged in a presidential bid.

2016), should be understood as a sort of "peace accords." I argue that this is particularly the case in societies fragmented as a result of the constitutive violence, symbolic and otherwise, entailed in (post)colonial inequalities. When done through participatory constituent assemblies, constitution-making can jumpstart the dual (geo)political process of the "destitution" of the structural sources and institutional(ized) dimensions of socio-political violence configured in interlocking forms of inequality and the "constitution"[237] of institutional paths to build lasting social peace. Both the subaltern memorialization of (in)justice and the contentious forging, both materially and symbolically, of a renewed (trans)national narrative of social cohesion, modern constitutions should be seen not merely as social contracts but as peace accords inasmuch as they are a tool to seek the resolution of long-standing, interconnected (geo)political conflicts. While Petro is speaking from the perspectives of the current peace accords being implemented between the Colombian government and the still-existing guerrilla groups that have waged the longest-standing guerrilla uprising and civil war in the Americas, his reflections are relevant to understand the historical significance of the broader genealogy of postcolonial constitutionalism in Latin/x America. As this dissertation shows, Latin/x American constitutionalism includes wide-ranging experiences, most recently expressed in the participatory constituent assembly processes in Venezuela and Ecuador, but tracing its lineage from the ambivalent product of anti-colonial struggles since the Haitian Revolution. Latin/x American constitutionalism thus cannot be separated from the ever-looming threat of armed violence in Latin/x America, and the (Third) world more generally, which is not a result of personal or collective shortcomings but rather the

[237] A similar analytical logic of this constitution/destitution framework, which was very influential in my thinking, although applied to a different object of analysis can be found in sociologist Ann Shola Orloff's research on "gendered states made and remade" (2017).

obvious sociological consequence of ongoing degrees of interlocking inequalities that make democratic social cohesion unsustainable in the medium and long run.

The 1998 Venezuelan and 2007-2008 Ecuadorian constituent assemblies were the starting points for the intellectual journey of this dissertation, that set out to explore just how transformative 21st century Andean neo-constitutionalism has truly been; not simply in terms of public policy but also in terms of grassroots (counter)cultural creativity and (geo)political expressions of institutional innovation and grassroots organization and mobilization. More than a comprehensive historical assessment[238] of the accomplishments or shortcomings of these processes, my work turned increasingly to historicizing the origins of the imperative to expand the notion of (trans)national citizenship and human rights in order to confront the Eurocentric tendency to render subaltern groups into impossible (illegible, unspoken) subjects within these frameworks, making them stateless, at best, and pariahs or enemies of the state (and, thus, civilization and modernity), at worst. Rather than a constituted, thus institutionalized, clear-cut distinction between citizens and non-citizens, debates regarding expanding human rights should recognize this distinction as constitutive of the modern rationalities at play in the (geo)political articulation of who actually counts as human (i.e. non-disposable), let alone as a historical subject of rights (i.e. citizen) and/or knowledge production. This tension is not resolved in postcolonial constitutions; we have seen how the recognition of Nature as a subject of rights in the Ecuadorian Constitution was no longer up for debate once the (geo)political failure of the Yasuní-ITT initiative led Correa's administration to side with the technocratic formulae that promised to fight against poverty and

[238] For the most up-to-date critical, comprehensive, social scientific and historical evaluation, in the case of Ecuador see Muñoz Jaramillo et. al. (2014), particularly the contribution by Diego Carrión and Francisco Gachet. In the case of Venezuela see the two volumes edited by Alba Carosio entitled *Tiempos para Pensar* (2015a, 2015b).

"change the production matrix" of Ecuador, alienating a part of his grassroots support. Moreover, this case is emblematic of how extractive economies not only contribute to ecological destruction and climate change as a result of the capitalist addiction to fossil fuels but also revictimize stateless peoples and impossible subjects more generally, fueling the modern tendency towards epistemicide (de Sousa Santos, 2014) and epistemic extractivism (Grosfoguel, 2016).

Judith Butler, in dialogue with Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak regarding Hannah Arendt's essay "The Decline of the Nation-State and the End of the Rights of Man" ([1951] 1973, p.267-304), argues that "the category of the stateless is reproduced not simply by the nation-state but by a certain operation of power that seeks to forcibly align nation with state, one that takes the hyphen, as it were, as a chain" (2010, p. 12). The decoupling of nations from states is a conceptual move and (geo)political challenge to the (in)capacity of modern nation-states to mediate the social conflicts that continue to constitute the ongoing inequalities of (post)colonial/capitalist modernity. Such is the contribution of the oppositional theorization of *plurinationality*, born out of Andean Afro-Amerindian peoples' praxis resisting the modern coloniality of power for over five centuries and neoliberalism for over four decades. Both coloniality and neoliberalism are conceptual frameworks to study the constitutive, normative logics of the modern nation-state and the historical formation of global imperialism euphemized when we speak of the "international community;" but can these concepts help us explore the operation of power through which the hyphen between nation-state becomes a chain, which too often remains unspoken in comparative-historical sociology?

The calls to build a sociology (as theory and research practice) of the daily lived experiences of the majority-world (Connell, 2007, 2009, 2014) so as to rethink and remake

modernity (Adams et. al., 2005; Bhambra, 2009) as a historical formation intimately connected with contentious intellectual/pedagogical projects from around the world (not merely understood as diffusing from Europe or North America); or the related call to overcome methodological nationalism in order to understand the contemporary challenge of modern nations and states, cannot be reduced to the simplistic condemnation or disavowal of the modern state, nation and/or nationalism as they continue to be key mediating mechanisms between those daily lived experiences and the global (geo)political scale. The 21st century push to redraft constitutions across the Americas suggests that these historical formations remain *the* chosen mechanism to organize and carry out the daily tasks performed by modern institutions as well as for imagining collective identities capable of producing (geo)political mobilization, which is necessary not only to carry out those daily tasks but also to develop the sociological imagination that can radically transform our basic understanding of how the social world around us can and should work.

As C. Wright Mills made clear in the middle of the 20th century, the sociological imagination, far from being an exclusive professional matter for sociologists, is a mental capacity that is crucial to deal with the *malaise* or frustration that results from not understanding the interconnections between biography and history; a problem that is proper of modernity as a historical formation where "all that is solid melts away in the air" (Marx & Engels, 1848) creating a state of perpetual crisis and potential revolution. This situation can magnify the debilitating effects of interlocking inequalities yet also expand the emancipatory horizon of possibilities and (geo)political alternatives, where the objective of achieving social peace does not mean merely stability due to apathy, indifference, fear, and/or submission to constituted powers, but rather the result of a sincere commitment to subaltern protagonist participation of those who have confronted

the embodiment of knowledge of really existing (in)justice and, thus, are not without ambivalence and embodied contradictions. “This requires a form of social theory that gives some grip on the interweaving of personal life and social structure without collapsing towards voluntarism and pluralism in one side, or categoricalism and biological determinism on the other” (Connell, 1987, p. 61). While Connell is referring specifically to the challenge of theorizing gender and power, her argument is relevant for racialized modernity as a whole. That is, if by modernity we mean the simultaneous epistemological and (geo)political projects that have been articulated through the logic of the coloniality of power and the social struggles and grassroots resistance that have always accompanied modernity’s emancipatory impetus, particularly among its impossible Others, who, paradoxically, have been always those who made possible with their labor the very organization of modern life.

Postcolonial constitutions are not transparent records of subaltern struggles. They are better understood as the expression of the conflicts that characterize highly unequal societies, fragmented as the result of their geopolitical subordination in the international community and economically dependent on the vicissitudes of global markets. Both structuring of, and structured by, global capitalism, postcolonial societies have had a crucial role in the (re)production of modernity. The tensions found in postcolonial foundational narratives are not merely symptomatic of the nature of anticolonial struggles but also reveal how postcolonial constitutionalism has been sparked by (geo)political insurgent agency encoded in constitutional recognition of subaltern conceptions, such as the vindication of “plurinational and intercultural” states, “universal citizenship,” and “the progressive end of the historical condition of *foreigner*” found in the Ecuadorian and Bolivarian Constitutions’ call for protagonist participation to carry out revolutionary democratization and

endogenous development. When those historically excluded from formally "democratic" (geo)politics (re)claim not only existing institutional spaces but also their protagonist role in the collective memorialization and the unfolding historical transformation of the patterns of (geo)political and social organization we can see the emergence of full-fledged constituent processes and the consolidation of constitutive[239] moments.

Perhaps one of the most telling differences I found during my research in Venezuela and Ecuador was that Venezuelans commonly spoke of their constituent process as ongoing (Ruíz Acosta, 2007), while Ecuadorians most often narrated the constituent process as the events in the period between the referenda to approve and convene a Constituent Assembly and to approve the final draft of the 2008 Constitution. Despite the fact that initially President Rafael Correa claimed the Ecuadorian Citizens' Revolution marked an "epochal change" rather than merely an "epoch of changes," the Ecuadorian constituent process does not seem to have been able to consolidate a constituent moment for subaltern protagonist (geo)political participation necessary to be truly able to carry out an epochal change beyond capitalist modernity. In Venezuela, there is evidence that such consolidation does not resolve the social problems discussed in this dissertation yet the vindication of subaltern constituent power fuels more radical understandings of ongoing

[239] Bolivian social theorist René Zavaleta Mercado argues that "the act of self-determination as constitutive moment entails at least two tasks. These are, in effect, the foundation of power, which is [marginalized, subaltern] irresistibility turned into incorporated dread; on the other hand, there is the foundation of emancipation, meaning, the implementation of self-determination as a daily routine. […] It can happen, to speak of something more concrete, that when we refer to the national-popular, the popular has not quite yet become the national; in other words, that nationalization has not been fully accomplished. Here is the significance of social democratization. However, nationalization is always infused with a sign. It is very different to experience of nationalization under a popular-democratic call, such as in France, than one that takes place under the management of previously dominant classes, as in Germany. […] Germany reminds us that there can be *great reactionary acts of the masses*" (2009 [1981], p. 142, author's translation).

constituent moments to articulate (trans)national responses to the current crisis of the modern nation-state.

Sociologist Patricia Hill Collins has argued that "[c]ivilized nation-states required uncivilized and backward colonies for their national identity to have a meaning, and the status of women in both places was central to this entire endeavor" (2005, p. 30). Third World feminism has not only made this clear but has also called attention to how "[i]t is especially on the bodies and lives of women and girls from the Third World/South—the Two-Thirds World—that global capitalism writes its script, and it is by paying attention to and theorizing the experiences of these communities of women and girls that we demystify capitalism as a system of debilitating sexism and racism and envision anticapitalist resistance" (Mohanty, 2003, p. 514). Such a gendered approach was clearly present in the critiques of the consequences of racial neoliberalism (Goldberg, 2009) on which were founded the last Venezuelan and Ecuadorian constituent processes, despite the fact that these so-called "progressive" leftist governments have missed numerous opportunities to fully address the debilitating racism and heteronormative sexism that continues to characterize allegedly post-neoliberal regimes in Latin/x America and transnational capitalism at large.

Despite the patent contradictions of Latin American leftist "progressive" governments' attempts to operationalize the social rights and (geo)political ideas articulated in the 1999 Venezuelan Constitution and the 2008 Ecuadorian Constitution, it is clear that Afro-descendants and "Indians [have] successfully infused new values (diversity, inclusion, collective citizenship) into political institutions, secured a permanent space in the state, and thus transformed relations between state and society and between Indians and non-Indians" (Van Cott, 2003, p. 50) in the

region during the last three decades. This infusion of renewed values and concepts, symbolic recognition, and institutional presence as consequence of the pedagogical intervention of Afro-Amerindian social movement organizations in constituent assemblies hints to an ongoing transnational process. Since the Haitian Revolution inaugurating the 19th century in Latin American politics, the (geo)political impact of (counter)cultural creativity has emerged as a key component to understand the (in)capacity of postcolonial constitutionalism to radically transform interlocking structures of social classification and related forms of identification with modern nations and states; geo-historical identification that continues to emerge in the (geo)political demand to redraft national constitutions in countries like Chile and Honduras.

To face up to the task of historicizing the theoretical challenges that emerge from subaltern (geo)political struggles we need to reflect on the vicissitudes of "institutionalizing the margins"[240] and the obstacles in the consolidation of the post-neoliberalism allegedly encoded in the most recent Venezuelan and Ecuadorian postcolonial constitutions. History alone, however, is never enough without the sociological imagination and (geo)political capacity to transform subaltern protagonist participation into the consolidation of social subjects capable of becoming existing structures and institutions. As the electoral support for progressive postcolonial governments of the newest Latin/x American lefts has started to dwindle and a new wave of street demonstrations, this time protesting allegedly anti- (if not post-) neoliberal governments, begins to take shape in

[240] Jennifer Nash's article "Institutionalizing the Margins" (2014) explores the tendency to disavow the foundational role of Black feminists and the constituent power of the embodied knowledge of Black women in the intellectual history of intersectionality as a theoretical framework to study inequality and oppression. Her exploration of the temporalities deployed in current engagements with intersectionality as a consolidated paradigm shows this evaporation as one peril of modern institutionalization itself. This phenomenon is also discussed beyond academic debates, mostly in women's studies, by Hancock (2016) who explores at length how intersectionality's intellectual history is also revealing of more explicitly (geo)political challenges to the modern state launched by historically marginalized, impossible subjects.

Venezuela and Ecuador, and across the Americas more generally, it is crucial to reflect on how social scientific definitions of decolonization, revolution, and democracy contribute (or not) to elucidating the specific struggles for the democratization of different spheres of social life. While it is a mistake to consider democratization (or modernization) a linear historical progression, a focus on specific anti-colonial struggles teaches us that the single most important political tool for the emancipation of (post)colonial *impossible* subjects lies in the epistemological capacity to recognize such ontological impossibility; this ontoepistemological recognition can strengthen the organizational and strategic capacity of social movement organizations and the institutionalization of revolutionary transformation in state/public administration mechanisms required for democratizing collective action.

Eric Selbin's historical comparative analysis of 20th century Latin American revolutions concludes that "[t]he transmission of revolutionary ideas, ideals, and learning merits far more attention than it has received in the study of revolution" (1993, p.129). This is the corollary of his argument regarding the importance of distinguishing conceptually between consolidation and institutionalization when assessing modern revolutionary moments so as not to fall into institutionalist tendencies that overlook the agency of subaltern (geo)political actors. In this dissertation I have built this argument by exploring the emergence of (geo)political expressive (counter)cultures in two specific instances of 21st century constitutional redrafting. Focusing on the subaltern praxis behind geo-historical identities like "Latin/x America" and "Afro-Amerindian," I understand revolutionary consolidation to entail processes of (geo)political identification that respond to dominant modes of classification and representation. The geopolitical identities of *Chavista* or *Correista* both highlight the importance of continuing to conceptualize

the nature and role of contemporary forms of charismatic authority and the markedly different (geo)political strategies embraced by the Venezuelan Bolivarian Revolution and the Ecuadorian Citizens' Revolution at the turn of this century. In Venezuela, a more decided investment in forging this (counter)cultural consolidation of the "ideas, ideals, and learning" of revolutionary democratization seems to have come at the cost of more coherent institutionalization of these ideas, ideals, and pedagogical interventions. In Ecuador, a seemingly uncompromising commitment to institutionalization of the self-proclaimed "revolutionary" project has led Correa's government to antagonize historic (geo)political actors of anti-neoliberal resistance, compromising the possibility of the consolidation of a revolutionary subject to sustain the proposed structural transformation.

The Ecuadorian Citizens' Revolution under the charismatic authority of Rafael Correa has privileged the revolutionary ideal of transforming the "production matrix" or *cambio de la matriz productiva* in order to overcome Ecuador's dependence on primary exports, particularly oil rents. Official archives, like the various versions of the PNBV over the past 10 years, at first sight suggest a much more cautious articulation of revolutionary ideas regarding how to build the new institutional capacities perceived as necessary to carry out such fundamental economic transformation. The teaching-learning dimension of the Citizens' Revolution, however, as seen in the evolution of President Correa's discourse, often seems to boil down to Eurocentric and capitalist conceptions of cultural change reduced to the individualizing exaltation of meritocracy and "the culture of excellence," despite rhetoric about "21st century socialism," and ultimately disavows subaltern frameworks such as that of plurinationality and interculturality, even when these concepts have been constitutionally enshrined in more than one country of the Americas. In Venezuela, the Bolivarian Revolution's emphasis on *poder popular* or subaltern protagonist

participation, as both a revolutionary ideal and a long-standing historical teaching-learning process, seems to have generated a much stronger consolidation of grassroots support for the *revolutionary* government. Perhaps most importantly, the revolutionary ideas espoused in the Bolivarian Revolution point to a broader (geo)political project to democratize and decolonize different aspects of (trans)national social life. These revolutionary ideas, particularly those mobilized to overcome the series of institutional impasses currently confronted by official Chavismo and its (geo)political opposition, appear to be more diffuse and less effective than in the case of the Ecuadorian Citizens' Revolution. Nonetheless, these revolutionary ideas and institutional innovations are most clearly appreciated in the efforts of grassroots Chavismo, particularly at the level of (counter)cultural pedagogical interventions. Despite increasing frustration with ongoing bureaucratic inefficiencies and institutional blunders by the current government administration and opposition (geo)political actors, Venezuela continues to provide historical glimpses of the importance of a (counter)cultural commitment to grassroots creativity in order to overcome the temptation to apply public policy recipes from above, a move which necessitates the exchange of technocratic formulae for the unruliness of democratic debates and decolonization practices, impossible without explicit subaltern protagonist participation.

If we consider the Ecuadorian and Venezuelan 21st century constituent processes in conjunction, as part and parcel of the same continental and global crisis of modern nation-states and emergence of self-proclaimed revolutionary projects and revolutionary charismatic leaderships, their national differences are better understood as the tensions between the drive to institutionalize post-neoliberal revolutionary programs for economic and (geo)political transformation on one hand and on the other hand the efforts to consolidate collective forms of

organized (geo)political support to sustain such a process of revolutionary transformation of both social structures and institutions regionally and globally. While both institutionalization and consolidation are necessary to carry out truly revolutionary transformations, the (geo)political quest for decolonial democratization seems to require first the consolidation of subaltern subjects, both in terms of developing an understanding of the importance of subaltern authohistoria in the (counter)cultural production of modern knowledge ,and innovative organizational capacities to become effective (geo)political actors. Else the institutionalization of even the most sophisticated "revolutionary" program to overcome the debilitating forces of racism and sexism that characterize neoliberal globalization, and capitalist modernity more generally, will fall short of the expectations of those who know best the enfleshment of (post)colonial knowledge.

The violent, racially marked expendability encoded in capital accumulation and its gendered privileging of the exchange values of commodities over the use values of material and symbolic welfare of human and other life forms, continues to render the majority of beings, peoples, and nationalities into disposable populations and impossible subjects. The consolidation of revolutionary ideas, ideals, and learning-teaching processes will continue to require innovative democratic institutional design, yet the commitment to subaltern (geo)political participation demands the (counter)cultural recognition of existing and emerging forms of revolutionary imagination, necessarily in tension with the drive to institutionalize the margins of the nation-state. In order to hone alternative conceptions of development, democracy, and revolution, which continue to emerge from anti-neoliberal praxis in the Americas, it is important to both check the developmentalist trap that has characterized dominant forms of the revolutionary imagination across the Americas (Saldaña-Portillo, 2003) as well as to think through the rich and under-studied

tradition of ongoing anti-colonial (geo)political struggles; a product of the “local histories” and “global designs” (Mignolo, 2000) of modernity. These postcolonial genealogies will continue to haunt the sociological imagination and the emancipatory promise of modernity until we acknowledge the looming presence of social conflict in the historical development of capitalist systems of classification and the resulting forms of subaltern identification, which despite their characteristic ambivalence, uncompromisingly point to the need of building a world structured in such a way that many different social worlds can fit with uncompromising dignity for all.

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VITA

Name: Ricardo D. Sánchez Cárdenas

Place of Birth: Quito, Ecuador

Relevant Professional Experience:

Research Assistant, Ford Scholars Program / Vassar College (2007).

Academic Intern, Latin American and Latino/a Studies, Vassar College (2008).

Teaching Assistant, Sociology and Latino/a Studies, Northwestern University (2009-2011).

Research Assistant, Sociology and African American Studies, Northwestern University (2011-2012).

Researcher and coordinator, OSPAL-ISIP / Facultad de Ciencias Económicas, Universidad Central del Ecuador (2014-2015).

Full time proffessor (*Titular Auxiliar, Level 1*) of sociological theories, Facultad de Ciencias Sociales y Humanas, Universidad Central del Ecuador (2014-ongoing).

Relevant Publications:

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