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Compiladoras

Cuerpo, educación y liderazgo político: una mirada desde el género y los estudios feministas

Bodies, education and political leadership: a gender and feminist perspective

FLACSO ECUADOR
UMBC AN HONORS UNIVERSITY IN MARYLAND
LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION

Cuerpo, educación y liderazgo político = Bodies, education and political leadership : una mirada desde el género y los estudios feministas = a gender and feminist perspective / compilado por Sara Poggio y María Amelia Viteri. Quito : FLACSO, Sede Ecuador : University of Maryland : Latin American Studies Association, 2014

210 p. : fotografías

ISBN: 978-9978-67-419-2

GÉNERO ; SEXUALIDAD ; MUJERES ; PARTICIPACIÓN POLÍTICA ; LIDERAZGO POLÍTICO ; EDUCACIÓN SEXUAL ; ABORTO ; TEORÍA QUEER ; LITERATURA ; TEATRO ; AMÉRICA LATINA

305.3 - CDD

© De la presente edición:

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ISBN: 978-9978-67-419-2
Diseño de portada e interiores: FLACSO
Impresión: Impresores Fraga
Quito, Ecuador, 2014
1ª. edición: mayo de 2014

El presente libro es una obra de divulgación y no forma parte de las series académicas de FLACSO-Sede Ecuador.

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Prólogo

Sara Poggio y María Amelia Viteri

En este, el cuarto volumen publicado por la Sección de Género y Estudios Feministas de la Latin American Studies Association (LASA) se reúnen premios del Concurso Elsa Chaney del año 2010, y trabajos no premiados, elegidos entre los presentados en el periodo 2001-2011.

El Premio Elsa Chaney a los mejores trabajos sobre género en América Latina es ya una tradición que comenzó en 1998 y que, con casi perfecta regularidad, la Sección de Género y Estudios Feministas ha continuado haciendo hasta el momento. El mayor objetivo del Premio Elsa Chaney es el de promover los trabajos de investigación más recientes en Género y Estudios Feministas, promoviendo la investigación entre los miembros y al mismo tiempo, difundiendo y divulgando la misma entre los miembros de la sección y la comunidad académica.

La Sección de Género y Estudios Feministas de LASA está dedicada a promover redes de diálogo y debate sobre temas relacionados con las mujeres, el género en América Latina y el Caribe y las mujeres latinas en Estados Unidos, incorporando diferentes aspectos de los Estudios Feministas en las ciencias sociales y en las humanidades. Esta sección tiene como antecedentes el grupo WOCLA (Women's Caucus of Latin Americanists) que se creó en LASA en 1972, por un grupo de feministas de los Estados Unidos lideradas por nuestra querida Helen Safa, a quien está dedicado este libro. Este grupo se disolvió con la creación de la Task Force on Women in Latin American Studies (Grupo de Trabajo sobre Mujeres en América Latina), el único grupo de LASA que incluía a sus propias coordinadoras y que

siempre ha incluido mujeres de América Latina y el Caribe en sus puestos directivos.

En 1997 se propuso un cambio para reestructurar los Grupos de Trabajo, que se transformaron en secciones que se ocupaban activamente de proponer temas, paneles y talleres para los congresos. En consecuencia, la Task Force on Women and Latin American Studies, se trasformó en la Sección de Género y Estudios Feministas con una mayor influencia formal en la programación de LASA.

En 1997 se institucionaliza el Premio Elsa Chaney que tuvo muy buena recepción por parte de nuestros y nuestras miembros, que se han manifestado con un continuo interés en la participación activa, presentando trabajos de mucha calidad. A esta comunidad les queremos agradecer la paciencia que han tenido con la publicación de este volumen y agradecerles su valiosa participación en este proyecto. También queremos expresar nuestro agradecimiento al jurado del Premio Elsa Chaney compuesto por María Amelia Viteri (co-presidenta en el año 2010), Sara Poggio (organizadora del Premio Elsa Chaney), Graciela Dimarco, Amy Lind y Liz Maier. De la misma manera vaya nuestro reconocimiento a todas las co-presidentas de la Sección de Género y Estudios Feministas por su apoyo continuo a la realización del Premio, como así también a todas las que han participado en los jurados.

Nuestra gratitud se extiende a todos los concursantes del Premio Elsa Chaney, a las autoridades de LASA y a UNIFEM, por su apoyo financiero.

Introducción

Sara Poggio y María Amelia Viteri

La colección de artículos de este volumen pone de relieve temas de vital importancia para el campo de los Estudios de Género y Feministas: en la educación y en el ámbito político. Bajo estos dos campos las autoras exploran el cuerpo, el liderazgo, la organización social y su importancia en relación con los Estudios de Género y Feministas. Los trabajos abordan ejes importantes de discusión que son comunes en la literatura de la Antropología, la Sociología, los Estudios Culturales, la Teoría Queer y el teatro, por citar solo algunas. El eje hegemonía-subalternidad, participación política de las mujeres en la democracia y en tiempos de guerra, las estrategias electorales que utiliza el género como arma de lucha para la victoria en la democracia, los reclamos de las mujeres al Estado en tiempos de democracia y de guerra, el proceso de distinción de la diversidad de las minorías sexuales y las reacciones que provoca este experimento, como también los discursos dominantes de educación sexual, son los temas que abordan los artículos seleccionados. Por otra parte, los trabajos representan diversas dimensiones del conflicto entre hegemonía y subalternidad en distintos espacios y tiempos políticos.

Abrimos esta reflexión en un momento crucial para la política estadounidense y latinoamericana y con ello, para la reivindicación de los derechos de las mujeres y otros grupos llamados minoritarios. Miramos, por ejemplo, cómo discursos ideologizados dificultan el derecho a la libre elección de las mujeres sobre su cuerpo en casos concretos como

en la despenalización del aborto, a la par que les otorgan espacios de poder con limitadas posibilidades de decisión en dichos temas. Al hablar del cuerpo, educación y liderazgo político es importante mirar cómo se constituye la modernidad biopolítica. De acuerdo a Berger y Luckmann (1991), la modernidad conlleva una nueva configuración social del sentido de la vida humana. Lo que existe es una subjetividad que concierne a la existencia entera del ser humano (Le Breton, 1999). Son precisamente dichas subjetividades las que se tornan centrales en las reflexiones que nos traen las autoras. En el tema de la construcción de lo simbólico, la presencia de mujeres en puestos de mando puede contribuir a ir cambiando el imaginario (Bonder, 2009), sin embargo, dicha presencia no garantiza una lucha por las inequidades de género y/o por el colectivo de mujeres. Son los cambios culturales en la estructura patriarcal y heteronormada que podrían devenir en prácticas menos desiguales. Lo dicho no desdice la importancia de la militancia y luchas políticas históricas de las mujeres y su rol al impulsar cambios significativos y cruciales en la vida de las mujeres. En ese aspecto, son las dimensiones del cambio social en América Latina las que toman nuevos desafíos que requieren de reflexiones puntuales, como los trabajos aquí desarrollados. La colección de ensayos que presentamos en este volumen dan muestra de las limitaciones y obstáculos aún presentes en los procesos de cambio que está viviendo América Latina, dentro del marco de la globalización cultural. Por otra parte, la colección es una muestra diversa de las luchas que los nuevos y viejos actores enfrentan para insertarse en la narrativa nacional. Esta presencia de viejos y nuevos actores sociales en la narrativa nacional (con y sin roles hegemónicos) se hace presente en los casos tratados por las autoras como nuevas políticas sociales que retoman los reclamos de mujeres, minorías raciales, sexuales y de clase, y representa un cambio completo en la dinámica social de muchos países latinoamericanos. La concepción de país o sociedad pluricultural (Bolivia y Ecuador), el matrimonio igualitario que rige en Argentina, Brasil, la capital de México y Uruguay, las políticas públicas de educación de género y sexual, son parte de los pasos concretos en busca de responder a nuevas demandas de derechos de actores sociales viejos y nuevos.

Flávia Santos de Araújo analiza cómo se concibe el cuerpo femenino negro en la obra literaria de cuatro poetisas brasileñas: Cristiane Sobral, Conceição Evaristo, Esmeralda Ribeiro y Elisa Lucinda. La autora plantea que estas escritoras rompen con los imaginarios que históricamente se han construido en la sociedad brasileña sobre la imagen de la mujer negra. Mediante la visibilización de los estereotipos y las aproximaciones al cuerpo femenino negro que se elaboran en la literatura de las escritoras mencionadas, Santos de Araújo logra evidenciar las contradicciones sociales, raciales, de género y culturales en el Brasil contemporáneo. La autora concluye que los textos literarios analizados, al evidenciar el racismo, el sexismo y las condiciones de opresión vividas por las afrodescendientes, permiten re-pensar y re-construir el cuerpo femenino negro, fungiendo como herramienta de afirmación y liberación.

María Amelia Viteri analiza la producción de significados contrapuestos alrededor del género y la sexualidad, politizando los espacios habilitados a través del *performance* como nuevas formas de democratización del conocimiento y de la ciudadanía. Dicha discusión se basa en su trabajo etnográfico y de arte-acción que explora algunas de las formas en las cuales una combinación estratégica entre los espacios materiales del aula de clase y la universidad (academia), el Teatro Bar Dionisios (teatro drag), activistas LGBTI (lesbianas, gays, bisexuales, trans e intersexuales), la calle y locaciones como salsotecas, tradicionalmente heteronormadas, de la ciudad de Quito, emergen como mapas alternativos que desestabilizan los imaginarios tradicionales culturales.

Carolina Páez Vacas nos ofrece una revisión del libro *Travestismo urbano: género, sexualidad y política* (FLACSO, 2009) en el que se plantean nuevos conceptos que enriquecen el contenido de dicho libro. Se explora la relación entre cuerpo y ciudad en ciudades andinas postcoloniales, teniendo como premisa que el género no solo se rige por la relación binaria hetero-homo, sino también por las formas de reivindicación en las que se inserta lo "femenino" como subordinado a lo patriarcal. La autora se centra en la presencia de cuerpos masculinos feminizados en el espacio público urbano, haciendo un recuento histórico de la presencia de población BGLT en la ciudad de Quito durante el siglo XX, y afirmando que

existe un vacío jurídico en las leyes sobre derechos sexuales que incide en la posición de la población trans en el espacio público de Quito hasta 2008, año en que Páez culmina su investigación.

Barbara Sutton aborda las experiencias de mujeres y las políticas acerca del aborto en Argentina a través de un estudio cualitativo realizado por la autora en 2002-2003, en el cual se entrevistó a mujeres de Buenos Aires con el fin de evidenciar su conciencia del cuerpo, sentimientos y prácticas, y analizar la relación de lo político, lo económico y lo social con la experiencia del cuerpo. La autora se centra en las opiniones acerca del aborto, la experiencia del mismo y la posterior criminalización, enfatizando el papel que tiene la clase, el Estado y la Iglesia católica en las posturas de las mujeres ante el aborto. Se concluye que en la sociedad argentina la maternidad es un valor y, por lo tanto, el aborto está penalizado no solo jurídica y estatalmente sino también social y religiosamente. Existe un control sobre los cuerpos femeninos desde los ámbitos religiosos, políticos, económicos, sociales y de género que hasta ahora han imposibilitado la despenalización del aborto.

Desde otro enfoque, Graciela Morgade analiza el discurso dominante en la educación sexual en Argentina, al que califica como "heteronormativo y biologicista". En su trabajo, partiendo de datos recogidos en su investigación, intenta formular una propuesta de educación sexual integral que incluya lo afectivo, el placer, las sexualidades diversas y el género en los contenidos educativos. El trabajo de Morgade como el de Sutton, también identifican el papel de la Iglesia católica y las políticas de salud del Estado como los mayores obstáculos para una educación sexual integral. Morgade propone saldar las falencias encontradas en la política de educación sexual, propone un enfoque pedagógico que rompa con el positivismo cartesiano y el énfasis en la razón, que producen sujetos del capitalismo. Postula que toda educación es sexual, que los estudiantes son seres deseantes, pensantes y actuantes, y que se debe incorporar la faceta afectiva y vivencial de la sexualidad tanto en los jóvenes como en los docentes. No menos importante es la conclusión de que la educación sexual debe visibilizar los cuerpos y los afectos, para así lograr una pedagogía que sea sinónimo de libertad y justicia social.

Mneesha Gellman y Gwynn Thomas nos llevan al ámbito de la política formal e informal en sus trabajos en tiempos de guerra y en la participación democrática. Gellman analiza los procesos mediante los cuales las mujeres guerrilleras hacen sus reclamos ante el Estado salvadoreño, antes y después de las negociaciones de paz, donde se evidencia la existencia de violencia estructural contra las mismas y mayor marginalización, comparadas con los hombres guerrilleros. Es importante señalar que la autora se basó en su trabajo de campo y literatura testimonial, lo que le permite comparar situaciones de mujeres haciendo reclamos bajo diferentes tipos de regímenes políticos y sobre la relación entre violencia y construcción de las identidades de las mujeres. Gellman expone los testimonios de cuatro mujeres excombatientes, centrándose en las maneras en que la violencia durante la guerra civil –a nivel individual y comunal– ha permeado sus reclamos. La autora concluye que las mujeres salvadoreñas que realizaron procesos de reclamo durante la guerra civil –procesos extra-institucionales– continúan involucradas de diferentes maneras en el activismo político, ahora mediante procesos de reclamos institucionales.

En el plano de la política institucional, Thomas analiza la influencia del género en las nociones sobre liderazgo político y el acceso de hombres y mujeres al campo político, teniendo como marco la campaña presidencial chilena en 2005-2006. Los resultados de la investigación se basan en análisis de medios de comunicación masiva, la observación participante y las entrevistas realizadas de diciembre de 2005 a enero de 2006, durante eventos de las campañas políticas, a intelectuales, políticos, colaboradores y simpatizantes. La autora afirma que la ideología de género repercute en las estrategias políticas de los candidatos a la presidencia, percibiéndose el liderazgo político como una característica netamente masculina donde se atacaba a la candidata Bachelet. En este caso, argumenta la autora, es interesante porque los estereotipos de género acerca del liderazgo político son al mismo tiempo reproducidos y atacados. Se concluye que a pesar de que la relación género-política es actualmente más flexible en Chile, la paridad de género aún no se alcanza y el espacio de lo político continúa siendo predominantemente masculino.

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Righting/writing the black female body in contemporary Afro-Brazilian literature

Flávia Santos de Araújo*

Resumen

Este artículo utiliza una aproximación histórica con el propósito de discutir y analizar cómo las escritoras afro-brasileñas Cristiane Sobral, Conceição Evaristo, Esmeralda Ribeiro y Elisa Lucinda (re)diseñan las imágenes de los cuerpos femeninos afro-descendientes/negros en sus respectivas obras poéticas. A través de sus textos, argumento que estas escritoras ofrecen una perspectiva crítica de las imágenes históricamente engranadas en el imaginario colectivo brasileño. Considerando a la literatura como un espacio donde las representaciones culturales son forjadas, perpetuadas o incluso cuestionadas, este estudio finalmente examina la manera cómo los textos afro-brasileños seleccionados han (re)(des)articulado imágenes estigmatizadas de los cuerpos femeninos afro-descendientes/negros dentro del discurso dominante del *mestiçagem* y cómo han abierto posibilidades para el reconocimiento y reafirmación de las subjetividades de las mujeres negras desde múltiples perspectivas e identidades culturales.

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[Awake and sober, I wrote that black story
for you to perceive once and for all
that between my skin and the paper that
wraps up
your notebooks,
there is no plausible brown comparison,
there is an ocean,
the same ocean-cemetery that shelters my
murdered ancestors,
by the same slavery that still
oppresses us.

I wrote
I write
I will write
With upper-case bright-red letters,
For you to remember there was a flood of
blood.]

Escrevi aquele conto negro bem sóbria,
pra você perceber de uma vez por todas
que entre a minha pele e o papel que
embrulha os seus cadernos,
não há comparação parda cabível,
há um oceano,
o mesmo mar cemitério que abriga os
meus antepassados assassinados,
por essa mesma escravidão que ainda
nos oprime.

Escrevi
Escrevo
Escreverei
Com letras garrafais vermelho-vivo,
Pra você lembrar que jorrou muito sangue.

(Cristiane Sobral, from the poem "Petardo")[1]

Afro-Brazilian poet and novelist Conceição Evaristo, during an interview where she discusses the roles and images usually attributed to black women in Brazil, says: "[…] it is expected for a black woman to be able to play some specific roles, such as cooking very well, dancing, singing –but not writing. Sometimes, people look at me and ask: 'But do you sing?' I say: 'I neither sing nor dance'"[2]. Evaristo's statement reveals not only some preconceived notions about black women prevailing in Brazil, but it also points to a more complex, intricate image of the black woman, historically constructed and

1 This poem by Cristiane Sobral was published in the 1998 volume of *Cadernos Negros* (17). The free English version is mine. As I am discussing works by Afro-Brazilian writers not yet published in English, I am going to refer to these works in their original version (Portuguese), providing my own translation along with the citation of the original. Although presenting significant limitations in terms of the preservation of the literary quality of the original versions, my aim in providing the translation here is simply to mediate the reading and the understanding of the general ideas conveyed in the texts.

2 This translation of Evaristo's quote is mine. The original version was published in the magazine *Raça Brasil*, March 2006, where she says: "[...] espera-se que a mulher negra seja capaz de desempenhar determinadas funções, como cozinhar muito bem, dançar, cantar - mas não escrever. Às vezes, as pessoas olham para mim e perguntam: 'Mas você canta?'. E eu digo: 'Não canto nem danço'".

culturally imposed by colonialist perspectives over black female bodies all over the world, and very strongly in the so-called "New World". However, this is not a "new story", it is intrinsically connected to the history of the transatlantic slave trade and slavery in the Americas, a consequence of the economic needs of both African and American colonies[3].

Looking back at this history, it is not difficult to conclude that the black female body has continuously been considered an object of speculation, exploitation, and "bestialization" throughout the centuries. Inscribed in slavery, black women were pushed into a process that sought to promote the legitimation of a system of oppression that subsequently generated and contributed to perpetuate, in cultural and social practices, a series of stereotypical and derogative images. In her essay *Black Women Intellectuals* (1991), African American feminist-activist bell hooks explains that, in order to justify the exploitation and rape of enslaved black women, the dominant culture created "an iconography of Black female bodies" as hypersexual –"the perfect embodiment of primitive, unbridled eroticism" (hooks, 1991: 153). In her book *Black Feminist Thought*, Patricia Hill Collins also discusses the use of stereotypical images of black women in the US as part of the "generalized ideology of domination", with the purpose of maintaining elite groups in power and justifying the oppression of US black women (2009: 76). Hill Collins demonstrates how important it is for elite groups to define and control societal values that are linked to symbolic and cultural spheres, because the "controlling images of black women", as described by Hill Collins, do not only serve to naturalize racism, sexism, poverty, and other forms of social injustice, but they are also "key in maintaining intersecting oppressions" (2009: 77). Depicting black women as the "other" and inserting them in binary oppositions that shape the understanding of human difference, configures one of the elements in

3 In the 1996 book *More than Chattel: Black Women and Slavery in the Americas*, Claire Robertson's article "Africa into the Americas?" discusses the multi-dimensional aspect of the economics of slavery involving both African and the colonies in the New World. By arguing that wealth, in this context, was related to land ownership, and therefore cheap labor recruitment was a key factor in order to increase the wealth in both places, Robertson then debunks the mythical notion of an idealized free "Africa" (and Africans) when affirming that Africa not only benefited from and assisted with the slave trade, but that it was also connected to the Americas slave trade (5-6).

the ideological apparatus that supports ongoing systems of domination and hierarchies of race, gender, class, and sexuality. The "controlling images of black women" discussed by Hill Collins circulate the African diaspora and, as in the US context, they function in Brazil as an instrument for maintaining the structures of domination (2009: 78-79).

The poem "Pertado" ("Petard") by Afro-Brazilian poet Cristiane Sobral, cited here as an epigraph, refers to the act of "rememory" (to use an expression coined by Toni Morrison in her novel *Beloved*) as a necessary process in order to critically re-think the past and what it means to write about history from a critical perspective, acknowledging that, "[…] há um oceano,/o mesmo mar cemitério que abriga os meus/antepassados assassinados,/por essa mesma escravidão que ainda nos/oprime" ("[…] there is an ocean,/the same ocean-cemetery that shelters my/murdered ancestors,/by the same slavery that still/oppresses us").

Bringing this discussion to contemporary times and regarding literature as a space where cultural representations are forged, perpetuated or even challenged, this article aims at investigating how contemporary Afro-Brazilian writers have (re)(de)constructed prevailing and stigmatized images of the black female body in their literary work, and how these new constructions open up for the reaffirmation of black female subjectivities from multiple cultural perspectives and identities, and at the same time, how these constructions expose the cultural and social contradictions and ambivalences in which they are inscribed.

The black female body and its historical legacy

Besides transforming the black female body into a tool and resource for economic profit, colonization has also made it a singular and intensified expression of "otherness", from the perspective of the colonizer. Drawing upon a series of narratives by male European travelers from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century, historian Jennifer Morgan demonstrates that the bodies of African descendant women were used as the signifier of racial difference and as an evidence of cultural deficiency. Supported by the

European travelers' narratives, Morgan shows that "the process by which 'Africans' became 'blacks' who became 'slaves'" –a process connected to the Eurocentric perspective of the "other"– started through a series of encounters, documented in travel narrations and descriptions, and finally transported and incorporated into slavery and colonization (2004: 13). In this process, the black female body, placed in dichotomy with the white norm, not only connoted the inversed mirrored image of "beauty", but it gained, throughout the centuries, contours that also indicated a lack of feminity: the male European gaze establishes a process of animalization of their bodies, which served as the base for their utility –the reproduction of crops and laborers (2004: 14). In Morgan's words, the black woman was in this sense, "a monstrous laboring beast" (2004: 15).

Having their bodies objectified and then used to serve the purposes of the dominant social system, black women were at the same time regarded as creatures with no intellectual capabilities. These images, hooks explains, have gradually and progressively been installed in the collective consciousness and reinforced the idea that the black female body belongs to a category placed very far from intellectual life (hooks, 1991: 154), as Evaristo pointed out in her interview.

It is important to point out that this gaze has always been permeated by an ambivalent combination of sexual desire, a sense of superiority, and repulse. The white Anglo-Saxon patriarchal Christian set of moral principles and beliefs is not only fundamentally a repressor of sexual impulses and desires, but it also rejects everything that is different from its norm in order to confirm and legitimize the very core of assumptions that constitute its standard of "normalcy". Thus, overwhelmed by the "otherness" of African peoples' bodies, culture, religions, and social arrangements, the Euro-American eyes are both repelled and feel attracted to their vision of the "other". But since colonization is the ultimate end, this vision is depicted in ways that justify and legitimize its final end: the domination of those who serve as support for the perpetuation of the colonial power.

This is, for instance, how racial ideologies fundamentally originated and how the black bodies of African descendant women have been stigmatized

throughout the centuries. In an essay published in the book *Skin Deep, Spirit Strong* (2002), black feminist scholar Beverly Guy-Sheftall discusses this historical legacy imposed over the black female bodies. According to Guy-Sheftall, this historical legacy, constructed at least over two centuries through "exploration travels" around Africa and the New World before the establishment of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, is mainly attached to Eurocentric perceptions of Africans' dark skin and nudity, characteristics that "would be laden with intense racial/sexual meanings for hundreds of years" (2002: 17).

The end of the nineteenth century is marked by "scientific" explorations and theorizing about the hierarchies of human species. In this context, racial differences gained pseudo-scientific explanations according to which the assumed racial inferiority of Africans –and the sexual connections between African women and apes, in particular– was understood as bestial, lascivious, and savage. One of the most emblematic figures that illustrate how black women were target of pseudo-scientific speculation and exploitation is Saartjie Baartman, or the "Hottentot Venus". A Khoisan woman, captured in the Cape of South Africa, Baartman was taken to Europe by Dutch exhibitor Hendrik Cezar and put on display, as a mythical and exotic-shaped specimen of the "Hottentot". Her body was dissected later by French anatomists and her genitalia exhibited in the Musée de l'Homme in Paris until 1974. Only in 2002, her remains were repatriated and sent back to South Africa, where she was finally buried[4].

The characterization of the black female body as ugly, unfeminine, and lustful was not only a mark of difference, but it later served to rationalize the use of the black female bodies in the fields from sunup to sundown, as Guy-Sheftall points out, in order to "fulfill white men's lust and to give birth to slave children who would keep the plantation system afloat" (2002: 23). Underlying this discourse and practice, there was also the moral devaluation of enslaved black women, their incapability of playing "appropriate" roles as wives and mothers, and their promiscuity, indecency and vulgarity (a result of their hypersexuality and "deviant" sexual behavior). As Guy-Sheftall explains, while constructed in contrast with the

4 More on Baartman, see Stephen Jay Gould's 1985 "The Hottentot Venus" in *The flamingo's Smile: Reflection in Natural History* (New York: Norton Press).

prevailing notions of the "ideal woman" –virtuous, pure and decent white European women– the discourse that emphasized the animal sexuality of black women could also be used "to justify their sexual exploitation in the hands of white men" who could "turn to them for the uninhibited sex that was denied them by virtuous, chaste white women" (2002: 25).

In the narratives by US southern white men of the late nineteenth century analyzed by Guy-Sheftall, the animality of black women was also portrayed in the manifestation of anger they expressed during fights and quarrels with others in the black community (2002: 26). In these descriptions, the angry faces, gesticulation, and coarse manners are usually highlighted as an expression of black women's bestial and uncontrolled nature. In relation to this particular aspect, Barbara Bush's 1990 book *Slave Women in the Caribbean Society, 1650-1838* and Lucille M. Mair's 2000 article "The Rebel Woman in the British West Indies During Slavery", contribute to understand the flipside of this Euro-American perspective of black women's "angry" attitude.

Both Bush and Mair acknowledge enslaved women's active participation in different forms of collective and individual resistance to slavery (a portion of history usually removed from the records and silenced in great part from recent scholarship). While both authors address the question of resistance among enslaved women in the Caribbean by making references to more blunt forms of resistance such as *marronage*, plotting and conspiracy, armed resistance, slave revolts, and runaways; they also refer to more subtle (but not less fierce) ways by which captive women expressed their opposition against the oppression they were subjugated to, such as verbal confrontation, poisoning, work avoidance, and work absenteeism.

It is clear that the research developed by Bush and Mair also contribute to debunk stereotypes imposed on enslaved blacks in general, some of which refer to the way they are sometimes portrayed as "contented slaves" in images such as Sambo/Quashee, Uncle Tom, or mammy, and in particular those images historically attached to black women like Jezebel or the superwoman. Ultimately, these texts also contribute to illuminate the history and experiences of enslaved African women who fought as hard and as consciously as their male counterparts in pursue of freedom and dignity.

Although these discourses, images, and practices navigated through the centuries and were incorporated in many instances of contemporary social and cultural life, the organizing, the artistic and political actions, as well as scholarship developed by black women, in Brazil and in other parts of the diaspora, have systematically tried to deconstruct these notions. By highlighting the interlocking systems of oppression affecting black women as a historical phenomenon, black women's production, especially the scholarship of the past forty years, has exposed male and white supremacy, as well as imperialism, as the destructive systems of oppression that have trapped and denigrated black women's bodies and subjectivities for centuries. Following the tradition of Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman, Harriet Jacobs, and Anna Julia Cooper, to name a few, researchers such as Barbara Smith, Patricia Hill Collins, Michele Wallace, and bell hooks, in the US, as well as Lélia Gonzalez, Sueli Carneiro, Luiza Bairros, and Thereza Santos; are all pioneers in the analysis of the specificities of women of African descent and the particular ways in which they experience oppression. This study also benefits from the body of this scholarship in order to perceive how prevailing images of black women's bodies are deconstructed.

In order to understand how some of these images became culturally ingrained in Brazil throughout the centuries, it is important to understand also some aspects of this country's historical background and how slavery and the discourses about African descendant peoples were developed in the national scenario.

Racial democracy, miscegenation, and the stereotyping of black female bodies

In Brazil, the black female body incorporates a series of different inscribed stereotypes, which I would call "the iconography of *mestiçagem*" (miscegenation). The politics of miscegenation and the ideology of racial democracy, two fundamental forces that have informed Brazilian racial order for three centuries, gave rise to the Brazilian color spectrum, predicated, however, on the objectification and sexual exploitation of Afro-Brazilian women. It is important to highlight that the cordiality and intimacy posited by Gilberto Freyre in his classic 1933 *Casa Grande & Senzala* (The Masters and the Slaves) rested on the nursery and kitchen duties of Afro-Brazilian domestic workers, in great part constituted by black women.

In her 2007 book *Negras in Brazil,* Kia Lilly Caldwell proposes an examination of "the centrality of racial hybridity in Brazilian nationalist discourse" (2007: 28). By doing so, the author attempts to "deconstruct dominant representations of Brazil as a racially hybrid society and examine the political and psycho-subjective implications of these representations" (Caldwell, 2007: 28). She demonstrates how the historical construction of a "whitening ideology" in Brazil (prevailing in the nineteenth century) accepted intermediate racial types and rejected blackness as a "pure" category –an expression of the notion of "Aryanization". As Caldwell argues, this ideology did not contribute to establish a more egalitarian social structure for *mestiços*, nor helped deconstruct degrading images connected with mixed-race populations. In fact, it helped promote and perpetuate notions of inferiority of the *mestiços*, having the whitening process as their only way to achieve the heights of civilization; and it also contributed to maintain the political, social, and economic hegemony of white elites. The twentieth century is marked by the discourse of racial democracy and the so-called Luso-tropicalism by Gilberto Freyre, whose cultural and anthropological analysis of colonialism and slavery played a central role in the way popular and official views of race were shaped in the country. Freyre's Luso-tropicalism highlights the system of cultural values through which European colonizers were able "to overcome racial and ethnic divisions and construct racially harmonious societies in the tropical climates" (Caldwell, 2007: 32-33). Freyre's conceptualizations of *mestiçagem* prepared the grounds on which to set the notions of *mestiço* essentialism, strategically and selectively used to either valorize or evade blackness (Caldwell, 2007: 39). Thus, Caldwell argues that "*mestizaje* ideologies have largely served to deny ethnic and racial divisions and differences" and have also been "central to the cultural logic of racism in Latin America and the Caribbean" (2007: 40-41).

This is not to say that the phenomenon of *mestiçagem* did not occur in Brazil. On the contrary, it is actually, as mentioned by Caldwell, a con-

stituent of Brazilian historical formation and a nation. The point here is that in any way this historical process cannot be read as the creation of a hybrid paradise located in the southern hemisphere. It is not a secret that racial discrimination based on the skin color or African phenotypical features is a reality in Brazil, as in other Latin American countries, taking place sometimes in subtle ways, depending on the context. The *doxa* of racial democracy constructs for Brazil the image of a *mestiço* nation –nor black, nor white–; it is the product of a harmonious mixture among the races that were gathered together for the formation of this peculiar people. Following this logic, *mestiçagem* is transformed into a mark of national identity, which as a social construct, promotes a sense of accommodation that usually guides the understanding of the inter-ethnic relations in Brazil. As a consequence, this ideology dilutes the possibility of confronting the reality of racial relations in a country with conflicts that delineate the invisible mask of a myth used to explain that reality.

When applying her analysis of *mestiçagem* to the study of the social representations of women of African descent, Caldwell (2007) demonstrates that Brazilian women of different color categories (*mulatas*, *morenas*, *negras*, and many others)[5] are placed in unaltered or unexchangeable social roles, which clearly point to the engendered contours of the ideology of racial democracy. Dominant notions of womanhood and feminity are attached to whiteness, while subaltern notions of the same categories are connected to the absence of whiteness. According to the color spectrum that categorizes women of color in Brazil, they are portrayed in ways that are always considered distortions (hypersexuality and promiscuousness of the

5 It is important to note here that this Brazilian categorization is based on the color hierarchy that characterizes the country's racial formation. In short, the term *negra* refers to black, while *mulata* and *morena* are "brown" categories, the first darker than the second. These terms and many others are used in Brazil with different meanings, depending on various regional and social contexts. They are not always used as derogative terms for blacks and browns, but the point I want to make here is that they were constructed according to the discourses of *mestiçagem*, historically manipulated by white elites in order to guarantee the maintenance of the power structures and on the expense of the physical and psychological exploitation of women of African descent. For a sociological study of the racial terminology and hierarchy in Brazil, see for instance Edward Telles' *Race in Another America: The Significance of Skin Color in Brazil* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2004).

mulatas) and/or inferior roles (domestic labor, for instance) in relation to the white norms. Caldwell also shows that historically, from colonial times to the contemporary scenario, Afro-Brazilian women have systematically been placed in a social structure where they play roles usually attached to their "service" to white elites, both sexually and economically. In this historical process, these roles/images designed for Afro-Brazilian women have contributed to the systematic naturalization and legitimization of sexual exploitation and economic domination (Caldwell, 2007: 55).

Following the color spectrum that categorizes women of color in Brazil and by studying the iconography of *mestiçagem*, it is possible to perceive certain patterns in terms of representation. By considering literature as a space in which cultural representations are forged, perpetuated or even challenged, I can think of some classic examples of Brazilian literary representations of black women attached to stereotypical images: one of them is personified in the characters of Rita Baiana and Bertoleza in the 1890 novel *O Cortiço*, by *mestiço* writer Aluísio Azevedo[6]. While Rita Baiana is the personification of the hypersexual *mulata*, Bertoleza, who is an enslaved black woman, embodies an unquestionable subservience throughout the narrative. In the twentieth century, poet Jorge de Lima has also used the image of the "devil" *mulata* and immortalized the recurrent figure of the "*negra* Fulô", a "pretty" enslaved black young woman who works in the slave owner's household and is accused of theft, being punished then with a whip. What is striking in this famous modernist poem by Lima is that the event, including the whipping of Fulô, is described as a game of seduction in which Fulô's "misbehavior" is compensated by the vision of her nudity while she is under the whip.

Also involved with the Brazilian modernist movement, novelist Jorge Amado is probably one of the Brazilian writers who most frequently portrayed the *mulatas* and *morenas* in his novels. His 1958 novel *Gabriela, Cravo e Canela* (Gabriela, Glove and Cinnamon) is iconic in this sense.

6 The term *cortiço* to which Azevedo's novel refers, means an urban housing area where many people, families, have to share a small room and severe conditions of poverty. *Cortiços* differ from *favelas* (Brazilian shantytowns) in usually being large houses divided into small rooms, rather than automously-built poor neighborhoods. People who live in *cortiços* are normally families in one very small room who have to share a bathroom and have little or no privacy.

Once again, as a character, the *morena* Gabriela does not break with the stereotypical representations of Afro-Brazilian women in Brazilian nationalist discourse. On the contrary, it reinforces the notion of the hypersexual exoticized *morena*, which has played a central role in constructing social and cultural identities of Afro-Brazilian women through the naturalization of colonial practices of racial and gender domination. As a *morena* of lighter skin color, Gabriela is naïve but extremely eroticized and objectified; as an exotic and "primitive" figure, she has no control over her sexual impulses and is always sexually available.

However, this scenario has been changing all over in the past three decades. The articulation of the black movements in the 1970s and the organizing of the black women's movements in the 1980s are, in great part, responsible for this change. Consciousness-raising and cultural militancy have been strong components of many groups in Brazil in the struggle against racism and for a critical understanding of the country's historical process, as explained by James H. Kennedy in his 1986 article about recent Afro-Brazilian literature:

> It seems clear that such literary output, a natural result of growing racial consciousness, can be directly linked to shifts in the political life of the country. During the post-1964 revolution years, censorship imposed by the military regime and heavily enforced as of 1968, together with the constant threat of police repression, successfully stifled virtually any expression of the newly awakening black consciousness among Brazilians. The major liberalization in the political order, which began in the 1970s coincided with a marked rise in black consciousness among Afro-Brazilians as well as a growing disposition to challenge the country's racial status quo. (1986: 209)

In this context, many Afro-Brazilian writers fought for creating spaces and conditions for the publication of their works, and it is explicit that this period is marked by a political intervention in the art produced by these writers. As the number of Afro-Brazilian women writers increases, they play the role of rethinking and challenging prevailing images of black women in the country.

Contemporary Afro-Brazilian women writers: reclaiming the black female body

During the last three decades, Afro-Brazilian women writers, working together with black movements and black women's movements, have committed themselves to construct new paradigms of cultural expression and representation, analyzing critically, deconstructing and denouncing forms of oppression operating on the intersections of race, gender, class, and sexuality. This articulation has allowed for the creation of new grammars of meaning and signifiers of multiple identities of black women in literature.

This is particularly evident in the publication of *Cadernos Negros* (Black Notebooks) and the foundation in 1980 of the publishing group *Quilombhoje*, established and run by black Brazilians. Based in the city of São Paulo, *Quilombhoje* was created with the objective of deepening the discussion of the Afro-Brazilian experience in literature[7]. Its first publication series in 1978, *Cadernos Negros* was born out of the necessity of creating space for and making the Afro-Brazilian literary production visible and marketable. The result also extends to a larger scale, since the publication challenges the Brazilian literary canon, which is predominantly white and male. *Cadernos Negros* has systematically published poetry and short fiction by various black writers, among whom, black women writers stand as a significant and constant presence. In this sense, *Cadernos Negros* has represented an important vehicle for a number of Afro-Brazilian women writers. Conceição Evaristo, Miriam Alves, Esmeralda Ribeiro, Geni Guimarães, Cristiane Sobral, Elisa Lucinda, Ruth de Souza Saleme, Lia Vieira, and Sônia Fátima are some of those writers whose texts are always present in the volumes of *Cadernos.*

In this article, I would like to travel across some of these writers' texts and explore the possibilities they offer in order to understand, from multiple perspectives, the reconfigurations of the black female body according to their own voices. Conceição Evaristo's poem "Eu-Mulher" ("I-Woman") (*Poemas da Recordação e Outros Movimentos,* 2008: 18) is not only a reaf-

7 This is a statement published by the group on their website, which I am translating here into English: http://www.quilombhoje.com.br/quilombhoje/historicoquilombhoje.htm.

firmation of an embodied female subjectivity and self-valorization, but it points to the expression of sexual desire as empowerment and valorization of the black female body as liberation. The poem also carries a set of female-centered images of the world, of their creative power and nature:

Uma gota de leite
me escorre entre os seios.
Uma mancha de sangue
me enfeita entre as pernas.
Meia palavra mordida
me foge da boca.
Vagos desejos insinuam esperanças.

Eu-mulher em rios vermelhos
inaugura a vida.
Em baixa voz
violento os tímpanos do mundo.

Antevejo.
Antecipo.
Antes-vivo.
Antes-agora-o que há de vir.
Eu fêmea-matriz.
Eu força-motriz
Eu-mulher
abrigo da semente
moto-continuo
do mundo.

[A drop of milk
runs down between my breasts.
A stain of blood
adorns me between my legs.
Half a word choked off
blazes from my mouth.
Vague desires insinuate hopes.

I-woman in red rivers
inaugurates life.
In a low voice

I ravish the eardrums of the world.
I foresee.
I anticipate.
I live beforehand.
Before-now-what it is to come.
I, the female-matrix
I, the power-motive
I-woman
shelter of the seed
continual motion
of the world.]

Evaristo's use of the image of menstrual blood as a symbol of creative power deconstructs the naturalized notion that this blood is related to impurity. Placing the female body as the matrix of the world, this metaphor also connects the female body to the idea of continuous renovation, a source of self-sustainability, resistance, intervention, and transformation. The history of slavery shows that black women's fertility, as their labor, have been exploited and used to serve the interests of the colonial power. In reclaiming her body, the speaker in the poem acknowledges her fertility as her own power for change and creation. The speaker is able to live the present (she "inaugurates life"), but she is also able to "anticipate" the future, which demonstrates a profound awareness of her own power to intervene in the world.

In a very short poem entitled "Dúvida" ("Doubt") (*Cadernos Negros*, 1998: 61), Esmeralda Ribeiro, poet and one of the editors of *Cadernos*, defies the discourse of racial democracy in Brazil and, by posing her doubts, she questions the racial hierarchy prevailing in the country where race, gender and class are literally embodied in the social position of the majority of black women in Brazil:

Se a margarida flor
é branca de fato
qual a cor da Margarida
que varre o asfalto?

[If the daisy-flower
is actually white
what is the color of the Daisy
who sweeps the road?]

By playing with the word "margarida" ("daisy"), both the flower name and a female name, Ribeiro is able to intersect many layers that reveal the racial, gender and class-interlocking systems of oppression operated on Afro-Brazilian women, but are normally invisible and naturalized in Brazilian social structures. Margarida, as a flower (a conventional symbol of delicacy, fragility, purity, and femininity), is also related to the notions of womanhood more closely connected to whiteness; while Margarida, the person, is the exploited woman worker whose racial identity and oppression becomes invisible and naturalized in the dominant social systems. Ribeiro (1998), therefore, exposes the social mask that covers the ways in which the system of oppression operates and its effects on Afro-Brazilian women. The question posed by the poem ("qual a cor da Margarida/que varre o asfalto?" [what is the color of the Daisy/who sweeps the road?]) uncovers the ways in which racism in Brazil is combined with class and gender dynamics. The job of sweeping the road, considered to be an inferior one, is typically carried out by workers who belong to a lower class status, which in the Brazilian social hierarchy is largely made up of Afro-Brazilian populations. The contrast implied by the images of the delicate white flower (daisy) and the brutal and strenuous work done by Daisy, the woman (who logically is dark-skinned), is solely understood when the woman's color/race is revealed by the silent and implicit answer to the question. Therefore, "Doubt" not only represents certain reasoning about a social situation, but it also functions as a denunciation of the veiled, masked, and silenced racist rhetoric and logic of the Brazilian racial dynamics.

On the same note of denunciation, Cristiane Sobral's "Petardo" ("Petard", see epigraph in this article) highlights the impossibility to mask the reality of racial discrimination and social oppression imposed on the Afro-descendant populations since slavery –a reality the myth of racial harmony and the discourses of *mestiçagem* have historically tried to cover up. The very act of writing a *conto negro* (black story) with sobriety represents not only the act of "rememory", as commented before, but it also implies a level of (self)consciousness about a period of history in Brazil that is often neglected or dismissed. By persistently navigating across the "mar cemitério" ("ocean-cemetery"), a shelter for millions of "antepassados assacinados" ("murdered ancestors"), Sobral's poem connects past and present in order to speak up about the ongoing oppression that still prevails ("essa mesma escarvidão que ainda nos/oprime" [the same slavery that still/oppresses us]) in a social arrangement where "não há comparação parda cabível" ("there is no plausible brown comparison") (*Cadernos Negros,* 1998: 17). As a petard, Sobral's explosive poetics demolishes and defies the discourses of *mestiçagem* used to camouflage racism.

Poet and actress Elisa Lucinda depicts a case of sexual and racial harassment where the victim, a "mulata with green eyes", is insulted by a "white male intellectual". The poem "Mulata Exportação" ("Mulata-Exportation") (*O Negro em Versos*, 2005: 83-84) plays with the stereotypical representation of the hyper-sexualized "mulata", which is so deeply incorporated and naturalized in the larger Brazilian culture. Ironically and humorously, the poem describes the real nature of the "proposal" made by the "white male intellectual" to the "green-eyed mulata" whom he calls "nega", a short name for "negra" (black) –a word that can be very derogative for black women in Brazil but that can also be used as a term of endearment. The entire poem is constructed as a dialogue between the "mulata" and the white man, always playing with the dualities incorporated in the veiled intention of the proposal, the language used to refer to the "mulata", and the black and white dichotomy established between the black woman and the white man:

Mas que nega linda
E de olho verde ainda
Olho de veneno e açúcar!
Vem, nega, vem ser minha desculpa
...
(Monto casa procê, mas ninguém pode saber, entendeu meu dendê?)
...
Vem ser meu folclore, vem ser minha tese sobre nego malê.
Vem, nega, vem me arrasar, depois te levo pra gente sambar.

[What a pretty *nega*
And green-eyed
Eyes of poison and sugar!
Come, *nega*, come be my excuse
...
(I'll put you in a nice condo, but nobody should know, ok my sweetie?)
...
Come be my folklore, my thesis about the black maroons.
Come, nega, come, destroy me, then later I'll take you to samba.]

The poem presents many different layers of meanings and representations. There is the notion that by having a relationship with a white man, black women somehow find a way to uplift their social status and this is the "benefit" underlying this man's proposal in exchange of his sexual use of the black woman's body. However, in contrast with this view, the poem goes on to describe not only the black woman's repudiation of the white man's proposal, but also her decision to take the case to the police who act in total compliance with the male character. She then goes to court, but the judge sentences the man to a short period of imprisonment with special benefits because he is a "white intellectual". When all the legal resources are exhausted –resources linked to white male-dominated institutions–, the black woman then turns to the white man and confronts him with his attempt to gain from her sexual benefits:

Eu disse: "Seu juíz, não adianta! Opressão, Barbaridade, Genocídio,
Nada disso se cura trepando com uma escura!"
[I said: "Your honor, it doesn't matter! Oppression, Barbarity, Genocide,
None of these are resolved by fucking a black!"]

The black woman's way of responding to the sexual proposition can be understood as sexual agency. In her famous book *Black Feminist Thought,* Patricia Hill Collins notes that, "sexuality in the individual, interpersonal domain of power becomes annexed by intersecting oppressions in the structural domain of power in order to ensure the smooth operation of domination" (2009: 185). In this sense, Lucinda is able to inscribe the sexual agency performed by the black woman in the poem as the very expression of the character's struggle for liberation –liberation of her body as a whole. In her protest, the speaker's language is permeated with political self-consciousness with which she is able to understand that both the event in the present and the discrimination she is subjected to, are in fact a consequence of the history of slavery in the country and its masked racial oppression, making explicit reference to Gilberto Freyre's classic work. She then points out that the only way to truly transform the reality of racial oppression is by first acknowledging its intrinsic connection to the discourse and ideology of *mestiçagem*. In the final lines of the poem, another proposal is made, but this time the black woman takes the initiative and suggests that a different story needs to be written –consciousness and the transformation of old paradigms are here, where the bottom line is:

Olha aqui, meu senhor:
Eu me lembro da senzala
e tu te lembras da Casa-Grande
e vamos juntos escrever sinceramente outra história
...
Porque deixar de ser racista, meu amor,
não é comer uma mulata!

[Look, sir:
I remember the slave quarters

and you remember the "Casa-Grande"
and let's write together and sincerely another history
...
Because not being a racist, my dear,
is not fucking a mulata!]

Conclusion

The texts selected for this study offer an opportunity to listen to one's own body and voice and acknowledge its beauty, its complexities, and even its oppression in an act of subversion of a long-imposed set of degrading images of the black female body. This act of reconfiguring one's own body may also represent a tool with which Afro-descendant women are able to build self-consciousness, self-affirmation, and self-liberation. None of the texts discussed here, nor the interpretations drawn from them, offer an easy path toward these processes; none of these texts provide a recipe on how to succeed in the achievement of racial and sexual liberation, consciousness, self-valorization, self-affirmation, or alleviation from oppression. In relation to the body politics that literary aesthetics may be engaged to, each one of these texts contributes to the understanding of the ideologies and conditions that have sometimes led Afro-descendant women, in particular Afro-Brazilian women, to feel and be seen as inferior or worthless when elements of those ideologies are culturally internalized. Ultimately, Sobral, Evaristo, Ribeiro and Lucinda show that Afro-Brazilian female bodies are historical and, by being so, are inserted into a process that opens up the possibilities of cultural reinvention and political agency for Afro-descendant women in the communities to which they belong.

Although I have solely focused my analysis on the poetry of contemporary Afro-Brazilian women writers, this study has the intention to connect to further discussions on the ways Afro-descendant women writers articulate and negotiate the body/cultural politics in their works across the African diaspora in the Americas. Within this context, I finally argue that by re-writing the Afro-descendant female body, identities, and subjectivities into literary representations of multi-layered racial, gender, and sexual discourses; contemporary Afro-Brazilian writers do not only challenge the celebratory postmodern discourses that equal hybridity to the capacity of transcending racial divisions, blurring the lines of racial differentiation; these writers also use representations of multiple identities to re-elaborate universalizing notions of selfhood and the complexities of subjectivity, while retaining a sense of cultural and historical specificity. Considered as a product of the history of the African diaspora in the Americas, these literary representations open up paths to re-address the memory of the oppressions that mark this history –the embodiment of colonization and conquest (Hill Collins, 2009: 158-159).

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Insurgents and advocates: women's claim-making in El Salvador*

Mneesha Gellman**

Resumen

Este artículo aborda las formas de participación de las mujeres en El Salvador en procesos de reivindicación con el Estado y cómo sus experiencias de violencia han informado las mismas. Utilizo una serie de viñetas basadas en mi trabajo de campo y literatura de testimonios para ejemplificar las razones por las cuales las ex-combatientes escogen diferentes posibilidades de reivindicación tanto durante la guerra civil como después. Al enfocarme en las mujeres que fueron activas durante la guerra y por tanto, estuvieron expuestas a la violencia perpetuada por el Estado (y que continuaron sus luchas después de los Acuerdos de Paz), sitúo la forma a partir de la cual la violencia facilitó una renegociación de demandas entre los y las ciudadanas y el Estado.

* A previous version of this article was presented at the Latin American Studies Association Congress in October 2010, in Toronto, Canada. I thank the Dispute Resolution Research Center of Northwestern University, which partially funded the 2010 fieldwork in El Salvador, and research participants for sharing their stories. I alone am responsible for any errors.

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Introduction

Leonor Hernández squints through the fog bank to keep us on the winding trail over the mountains in the department of Morazán, located in the far northeast corner of El Salvador. A co-founder of Prodetur, a community-based tourism association, Leonor leads me on a hike past a former Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) encampment to the village of El Mozote, a remote community where more than 800 people were massacred by the U.S.-supported Salvadoran National Army in 1981, for being suspected FMLN sympathizers.

Leonor was born in 1972, outside of Perquín but spent her adolescence in a refugee camp in Honduras, and as we leave El Mozote, she explains why she joined the insurgency. "I left school in the camp after 6th grade, at age 15, to join the FMLN. I didn't know what else to do, people were hungry, I was hungry" (personal communication, May 15, 2008, Perquín). Leonor crossed the border back into El Salvador and trained in communications with the FMLN, learned to make radio broadcasts and eventually worked with Radio Venceremos, the clandestine radio program in Morazán that kept civilians in touch with the guerrilla agenda. She believed that the revolution could make things better but is now more skeptical. Leonor just got electricity at her home in 2007, fifteen years after the Peace Accords were signed in 1992, and decades since the guerrillas rose up in protest of the impoverished living conditions many Salvadorans were, and continue to be, subject to. Her one-room cinderblock house and nearby latrine was built with the assistance of an NGO, and she lives there with her mother and two teenage daughters. Despite serving an important role in the community, the benefits of the revolution have not reached people like Leonor the way the FMLN promised.

Yet Leonor continues to make claims on the Salvadoran state as an active citizen and community member, and she persists in believing that her actions can influence people, whether as an FMLN ex-guerilla, voter, or liaison with the international community. Leonor's main work consists of repeatedly telling her story about the civil war to people who come to Morazán to visit the war museums and memorials[1], and in doing so, she keeps current the ideal

1 Since the time of this writing, Leonor left her work as a guide and was appointed to a municipal government position doing natural disaster preparation.

of citizens' rights to both institutional and extra-institutional claim-making on the state. Like other former combatants, Leonor has risked much to pose her demands to the Salvadoran government. As is the case in many countries, Salvadoran female ex-combatants constitute a more marginalized group than their male counterparts, and thus, I focus on the female experience as a way to assess some of the least resolved challenges facing post-conflict claim-making.

In hopes of better understanding the implications of Leonor's story for the wider population of female ex-combatants in democratizing countries, I ask the question: how have women in El Salvador participated in claim-making processes with the state at various stages in the state's political regime, and how has violence informed the claims they make? To understand why former female combatants chose the paths of claim-making that they did, and how these women have transferred their activism to the post-war environment, I share a series of vignettes from the time of the civil war and afterwards.

By specifically focusing on women who were active in claim-making during the civil war, who were exposed to state-perpetrated violence, and who continue to be claim-makers in post-Peace Accords times, I try to situate the environment in which violence was drawn on to reassert the social contract between citizens and their government. The kind of claim-making that took place under the authoritarian regime is distinct from the way claims are made as El Salvador democratizes. With the assumption that negotiations of a social contract are most likely to succeed under democratizing and democratic regimes, rather than authoritarian regimes, I offer a brief theoretical discussion of the claim-making possibilities under different regime types, as well as a basic conceptualization of how violence informs identity and claim-making strategies. I next provide a historical overview of El Salvador and the civil war in order to establish some of the main actors and political arenas in which they were operating, and then move on to examine how women, specifically insurgent women, navigated these arenas to make their claims. By sharing vignettes of individual women's experiences of mobilization and claim-making, I create a forum where Salvadoran women use their own words to describe how they came to such active citizenship. Finally, I draw on Jocelyn Viterna's theory of why women

mobilized in El Salvador to provide a theoretical basket in which to situate the narratives and testimonies of former female insurgents.

Claim-making in the interest arena

After extensive scholarship on electoral arenas, the importance of interest arenas in Latin America as sites of claim-making is now becoming visible. The interest arena is defined as an "informal locus of specific interest articulation and problem-solving" which allows both citizens and the myriad organizations that represent them, to make claims on the state (Collier and Handlin, 2009: 8). Representation of interests inside this arena in no way guarantees that the interests will be addressed, but rather participation, in the promotion of interest representation, "constitutes a step prior to influence and effectiveness" (Collier and Handlin, 2009: 16). I do not try to measure the effectiveness of women's participation in making claims within the interest arena here, but instead attempt to historically situate factors that facilitate or curb women's participation.

Claim-making can be divided into institutional and extra-institutional categories (Garay, 2009: 269), with the former connoting channels of state-legitimized interest representation and the later as contentious acts that place people's interests outside the acceptable scope of state accommodation. State-targeted, institutional claim-making strategies are one type of problem-solving strategy that take place in the interest arena, and Kapiszewski's examples of what form this strategy might take, include contacting politicians and government agencies, calling on judicial infrastructure, or participating in venues for interest presentation that are state-created (Kapiszewski, 2009: 194). Institutional claim-making has taken place in El Salvador by many interest groups since the signing of the Peace Accords in 1992, and continues to the present day. In contrast, extra-institutional claim-making is when claims are channeled to the state outside of institutional means of delivery, for example, during El Salvador's civil war when insurgents took up arms against the government as a means to communicate demands for opportunities for the poor and working class.

In a democratizing or democratic constitutionally-bound state, claim-making is a mechanism for expression of a need or want in the context of a reasonable expectation that such a claim will be addressed, even if not approved, by the governing regime. When there is the expectation of a social contract, claim-making tends to take place institutionally. If the social contract is minimal or non-existent, as it is the case under authoritarian regimes, claim-making may occur with little likelihood of being addressed; and if the collective action problem can be solved, extra-institutional means of claim-making often takes place. Extra-institutional claim-making is a form of contentious politics and does not require the expectation that claims will be addressed in order to generate collective action, though often actors hope that claims will bear fruit. Since contentious politics includes too many kinds of claim-making for detailed analysis of each micro-process here, in attempt to gain an understanding of the larger process of women's participation in the interest arena, I bring together an array of insurgent behavior and protest mechanisms under the title of extra-institutional claim-making. Rather than produce a typology of claims, this claim aggregation allows me instead to offer a historically situated analysis of how a specific subgroup, former insurgent women, participated in the interest arena in different regime contexts, and how violence informed their choices about interest representation.

Though Collier and Handlin's volume does not draw from Central American experiences in their evaluation of what they term "associational networks" (Collier and Handlin, 2009: 18; see also, Dunning, 2009: 128-129), they propose that women, indigenous peoples, and other marginalized groups make use of the interest arena at high rates in their case studies. Latin American scholars have documented the narratives of women's emancipation within the guerilla movements in El Salvador and Nicaragua. In both countries, post-war years saw a significant use of feminist organizations as a tool for interest expression, particularly in regions where previously the insurgencies were most active. Yet the promise of women's claim-making has not always been successful in the aftermath of war. I look at the narratives of several former women insurgents to give depth and context to how women articulated their interests when subject to a

range of regime types and within different factions of the insurgency. Thus, I attempt to join insights from several literatures to inform an understanding of how women in El Salvador who have been affected by state-perpetrated violence, consider their citizens' rights as tools to make claims on the state within the interest arena.

Democracy and democratization

To reiterate the theoretical outline above, claim-making is only able to take on an institutionalized form when there are, at the very minimum, democratic processes taking root in a country. Absent any democratic tendencies in a ruling regime, citizens may find extra-institutional claim-making is the only path available, with armed conflict being the most dramatic example. Thus, in this sub-section I discuss democratic definitions integral to the process of claim-making.

For some scholars, elections make a democracy. Lipset, for example, limits his definition to "a political system which supplies regular constitutional opportunities for changing governing officials, and a social mechanism which permits the largest possible part of the population to influence major decisions by choosing among contenders for political office" (1960: 45). If we accept Lipset's definition, democracy constitutes an inclusive electoral process that encompasses a political culture with distinct notions of legitimacy pertaining to institutions (Lipset, 1960: 45) but devoid of explicit civil liberties. This definition veers rather dangerously near the "electoral fallacy", which Linz and Stepan describe as the necessary condition of elections in a democracy being taken as sufficient criteria to label something as a democracy (1996: 4).

Huntington, a self-proclaimed Schumpeterian in that he defines democracy as elite competition, also takes electoral competition as the key element of democracy, though he also includes Dahl's dimensions of contestation and participation (Huntington, 1991: 7). By contrast, Linz and Stepan define a consolidated democracy as the political situation where "democracy has become 'the only game in town'" (1996: 5). Rueschemeyer sees democracy as entailing free and fair elections through universal suffrage, as well as "responsibility of the state apparatus to the elected parliament [...] and […] the freedoms of expression and association as well as the protection of individual rights against arbitrary state action" (Rueschemeyer, Stephens, and Stephens, 1992: 43). This definition of democracy encompasses competition, inclusion, and some degree of claim-making ability in the interest arena, making it broad in comparison with other definitions.

Schmitter and Karl see democracy as offering "a variety of competitive processes and channels for the expression of interests and values –associational as well as partisan, functional as well as territorial, collective as well as individual" (1991: 78). They include, in this definition, an assumption of institutionalized claim-making ability within democracies, and they are right in that citizens can petition for accountability or greater transparency through state-sanctioned channels in the interest arena under democratic regimes. But many excellent theorists of claim-making in democratizing or democratic regimes tend to neglect theorizing extra-institutional claim-making because it is not seen as consisting of democratic behavior. New contentious politics literatures (Tarrow, 2005; Tilly and Tarrow, 2007) actively shift this discourse to some degree, but still do not grapple with extra-institutional claim-making in non-democratic regimes, such as civil war insurgents as claim-makers in authoritarian regimes. While protest may now be more accepted as legitimate, democratic extra-institutional claim-making, armed conflict is certainly not. It remains, however, an important vehicle for claim-making in the absence of democracy.

Democratization in El Salvador

Only in 2009 did El Salvador experience the change in government that brought it, via limited procedural definitions, into the ranks of a consolidated democracy. Prior to this, El Salvador spent nearly two decades in the ambiguous holding pattern of being a "democratizing" country, and by broader definitions of democracy, it should still be considered democratizing today. Linz and Stepan describe democratization as a specifically

political liberalization that mandates an allowance of contestation and competitive elections (1996: 3). However, such a definition emphasizes changes in the electoral arena, as many theories of democratization and democracy do, with the interest arena left under-theorized. While contestation could conceivably play out in the interest arena, it is commonly attributed to electoral challenges or contestation of party interests within electoral arenas.

After decades of authoritarian and competitive authoritarian regimes, it has taken considerable effort merely for El Salvador to develop the electoral arena to meet minimum definitions of democratization. More than two decades ago, after the signing of the Peace Accords, El Salvador began holding elections that could be labeled (using minimal definitions) as free and fair. There is universal suffrage for Salvadorans over the age of 18, and half a dozen political parties compete for seats, including the FMLN, which underwent a major transformation from insurgent group to left-of-center party. The interest arena and the claim-making processes that happen inside it have been expected to reform themselves in proportion to concessions made in the electoral arena. But even as electoral institutions strengthen, such institutions cannot absorb and address all claims, therefore, extra-institutional channels remain active, albeit in less violent form since the Peace Accords.

As of this writing, El Salvador is by minimal definition, a democracy. With the necessary conditions of competition and inclusion present (though not without problems), civil liberties and the right to claim these liberties from the state, persist as problematic daily terrain. Freedom House reports that though freedom of religion and assembly exist, journalists self-censor, elites manipulate the media, and discrimination against some NGOs and labor organizations continues (2007: 4)[2]. Though many people I spoke with during fieldwork in March 2010 were optimistic about

2 While El Salvador was rated "free" by Freedom House in their 2007 report, the country has many characteristics of what has been dubbed "subnational authoritarianism" (Gibson, 2005: 103): with local leaders strong-arming their agendas onto citizens who are also subject to a more democratic (and more monitored) national government. One example of this is with natural resources exploitation, especially in the mining sector, where local activists have challenged both mining companies and co-opted leaders, to defend their communities from mining exploitation, facing harassment and assassination.

FMLN President Mauricio Funes putting the country on a more progressive path, much of the right wing National Republican Alliance (ARENA)-controlled infrastructure and personnel in media and ministries alike, remained unchanged. Interviews with people in a subsequent trip in 2012 revealed increasing frustration with the same claims, ignored under ARENA, being unaddressed under Funes. The degree to which El Salvador's transition has been institutionalized and the expansion of opportunities for claim-making this consolidation implies, are still open for debate.

Civil society-state relations must account for the development of the electoral arena, as seen in democratization[3], and as I have tried to show here; but the interest arena is also vital in the initial democratic transition as well as the flourishing of a genuine democracy. To understand women's claim-making both as insurgents and in the post-war environment, it is important to recognize the theoretical limitations of claim-making in the interest arena constrained by characteristics of democratization and electoral democracy. Now turning to the case study, the section below offers historical context and then examines the process in which women struggled to bring their claims into the interest arena both during the war and within democratization processes.

Political tensions in El Salvador

To understand the historical context in which women's extra-institutional claim-making developed, this section recounts major historical and political dynamics in El Salvador. Owing to path-dependent development stemming from colonial times, El Salvador's "radical liberalism" of the 19th century hardly created a framework for a strong democracy (Mahoney, 2001: 3). Land distribution policies embedded intense socioeconomic discrepancies between colonial *criollos, ladinos,* and indigenous people. These tensions exploded after fraudulent elections in January 1932, at which point peasants in western El Salvador followed leader Agustín Farabundo

3 Depending on how definitions are crafted and operationalized, "democratizing" may still be the most appropriate label for El Salvador.

Martí, of the Partido Comunista Salvadoreño or Salvadoran Communist Party (PCS), and indigenous Nahua leader Feliciano Ama into a rebellion that then-President Martínez suppressed. *La matanza* left between 10,000 and 30,000 mostly indigenous and campesino people dead. The FMLN invoked the 1930s violent quashing of civil society by state-directed militias to justify their own taking up of arms in the 1980s.

After several decades of competitive authoritarian rule and ensuing right-wing elections fraud, which stole the presidency from Christian Democratic Party (PDC) candidate José Napoleón Duarte in 1972, guerilla organizations sought out alliances with peasant and labor organizations to foment an armed rebellion (De Zeeuw, 2008: 35). The March 24th, 1980 assassination of human rights advocate Oscar Romero, Archbishop of San Salvador, officially ignited the movement with fifty thousand people attending his funeral. The civil war took place over the next 12 years, and a conservative estimate of the death toll is 75,000 people (Boutros-Ghali, 1995: 3). Few people have ever been held accountable for any of these killings, and the memories of violence the war generated have influenced a generation of women in their claim-making choices.

FMLN factionalism and claim-making approaches

The FMLN is commonly thought of as one homogenous group, but by analyzing the make-up of its five component factions, differences in approaches to claim-making in the interest arena become apparent. Particularly visible is the crux of the interest-arena divide between those who preferred institutional means and those who saw extra-institutional means as the only viable strategy when faced with an authoritarian regime. This section discusses the factions and contextualizes why they chose the claim-making strategies that they did.

Five main guerilla groups joined together in October 1980 to form the FMLN[4]. First, the Fuerzas Populares de Liberación Farabundo Martí, or

4 For an example of factional descriptions by the US government see "Communist Interference in El Salvador" (United States Department of State, 1981).

Popular Forces of Liberation "Farabundo Martí" (FPL-FM), generally referred to as the FPL, declared in 1970 that prolonged rural warfare was the path to revolution (Moroni Bracamonte and Spencer, 1995: 2)[5]. The FPL started out as a radical splinter wing in 1970, led by Salvador Cayetano Carpio of the Salvadoran Communist Party (PCS), which had established itself in 1930 with the mission of fighting US intervention and addressing the living standards of urban and rural workers (Alegría, 1987: 11). The PCS was banned by the Salvadoran government in 1932 but was intermittently legalized and began to support armed resistance in 1980 (Tula and Stephen, 1994: 203). Speaking in 1974, FPL-FM member Javier describes how institutional claim-making no longer seemed like a viable strategy for his group:

> Our experience was that the most elementary demands of the peasants would always be met by the military dictatorship's usual response of repression and bloodshed […] Each legally acceptable channel was only another weapon in the oppressor's hands, reinforcing our theory that the people had no other option but the armed struggle. (Cited in Alegría, 1987: 61)

Thus, contentious, non-institutional processes of claim-making asserted themselves in this faction's strategy.

Second, the Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo or Revolutionary Army of the People (ERP), predominantly created by dissident Christian democrats (Tula and Stephen, 1994: 203), broke off from the FPL in 1972 because they wanted to focus on gaining urban, rather than rural power. Soon after the ERP's breakaway, internal debates about the merits of military versus political action turned violent in an attempt to repress the debate and maintain organizational cohesiveness. This led to the murder of poet Roque Dalton and the subsequent break from the ERP of the third group, Resistencia Nacional or National Resistance (RN), as a group that favored political action (Moroni Bracamonte and Spencer, 1995: 2). The RN, which tried to win over the urban working class, especially through

5 Though I find Moroni Bracamonte and Spencer's analysis of the civil war highly problematic overall, there is so little written about the five factions of the FMLN that I felt compelled to use some pieces of their descriptions which do document the military relationships between factions more closely than other authors.

electrical and port workers' unions, also created a fourth armed unit, the Fuerzas Armadas de Resistencia Nacional or Armed Forces of National Resistance (FARN), in 1975, which had peasant support in the Suchitoto region (Pearce, 1986: 133). The remaining ERP, led by Joaquin Villalobos and Guadalupe Martinez, turned the organization into an effective military presence, though one critic says that "the ERP's strategy allowed no time for the politicization that transforms rebellion into revolution" (Pearce, 1986: 133).

Another breakaway group from the PCS, and the final in this exposition, the Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación or Armed Forces of Liberation (FAL), was lead by Shafik and Farid Handal, two brothers that decided to adopt violent tactics; and though they broke away from Soviet guidelines to do this, their Communist militia brought in much of the international support that kept the FMLN lucrative (Moroni Bracamonte and Spencer, 1995: 3; US Department of State, 1981: 4). In 1979, the Partido Revolucionario de Trabajadores Centroamericanos, or Revolutionary Party of Central American workers (PRTC), was created. The PRTC took a more regional as opposed to nationalist approach, which had a distinctly laborer and student base, as well as some initial members of the ERP (De Zeeuw, 2008: 35). By expanding the interest arena beyond one particular regime, this faction sought to make claims that would generate regional change rather than isolated domestic actions. Overall, each faction grew in members and strength after the 1972 elections, even as the national government began to send paramilitary units to exterminate them under the pretense of routing out communists (De Zeeuw, 2008: 35).

Tula describes three guerilla groups (FPL-FM, ERP, and FARN) as having been formed for the purpose of achieving deep socio-economic and political change (Tula and Stephen, 1994: 203), though arguably all five factions saw their actions as being directed toward this purpose. It seems that women participated in each of the factions though some factions offered more opportunities than others. Split on the question of tactics to achieve their goals, with some factions drawn more to institutionalized petitioning and voting, and other factions urging the taking up of arms, the missions of these groups were nonetheless similar enough that they joined

together to form the FMLN, a specifically armed and militant organization in 1980. Clearly the extra-institutional claim-makers dominated this decision-making process, pushing their more institutional counterparts to see that claims made under the existing regime would not be adequately addressed. Though now commonly lumped together in the historical record as the FMLN, the five composite factions did serve different roles in the insurrection and though minimal documentation exists about this, they appear to have provided different opportunities for women's participation and claim-making.

Women in the FMLN

The fluidity of the factions and how their members chose to make their claims, come to light in the individual stories of young women who served in the FMLN. Through four vignettes I illustrate the context in which insurgent identity was navigated to produce claim-making capacity and also highlight how memories of earlier violence compelled the claim-making.

Daniela's story

During an anonymous interview with me in San Salvador in March 2010, a leader of one of El Salvador's feminist organizations, whom I call Daniela (not her real name), recounted her experience as a militant with the FPL. Seated together at a round table as workshops happened alongside of us, she told me, "It was a class war, and we believed in the ideal of changing the social structure" (personal communication, March 26, 2010, San Salvador). Through political education classes, she learned about Marxism, "but we didn't know anything about gender or sexism", and in describing her own relationships with men in her guerilla cell, she makes evident the repression of women's leadership. Daniela and her micro-cell resisted the demobilization process, initially, because there weren't safety provisions for former combatants to do so without persecution, and also because the values of

justice and equality for which she had picked up arms remained elusive. The extra-institutional claim-making had not worked for her. Moreover, throughout our conversation, Daniela invoked violence done to her both directly and indirectly as justification for why she chose to take up arms and continue fighting. From oppression in her community witnessed at a young age, to watching fellow FMLN soldiers be killed, the intensity of her participation in the struggle came back to her experiences of violence and the sense of injustice they produced in her. She claimed the right to a governing regime free of systematic discrimination and oppression, but used violence in the form of taking up arms to insist upon that right.

Daniela did eventually demobilize and even ran for municipal office in 2009. From armed militant to political candidate, she demonstrates the spectrum of options available for active citizens to demand representation within the interest arena that opens up with regime change. As a woman and as an activist, she has consistently used the means available to her to make her claims known, from extra-institutional guerilla insurgency under an authoritarian regime and institutional claims, to electoral power under a democratizing regime. Reflecting on her transition, Daniela observed, "then [during the war] we didn't know anything about patriarchy, we were just living it. Learning our rights as women has transformed everything else. Now I am not a militant but I am a feminist, and I am of the left" (personal communication, March 26, 2010, San Salvador). In this way, Daniela describes her own transformation from extra-institutional claim-maker to institutional claim-maker, even as she maintains her political identity and values. Empowered outside of institutions, she has brought that power with her into her new post-conflict role as an NGO leader and political candidate.

Julia's story

Ana Julia Claros is president of the Asociación Comunal de Mujeres de Morazán, or Communal Association of the Women of Morazán, and she began doing clandestine work in 1980, bringing food to guerillas based

near her home. Throughout the war she worked as a schoolteacher for the Frente but without officially incorporating herself to the group. She cites her involvement with the Frente as life-changing: "I was married by the time the war started. My husband would hit me and the war gave me a chance to leave him. I became empowered during the war and have never stopped being an activist since. Though many think of war as bullets and bombs, for me, it was empowerment" (personal communication, March 16, 2010, Perquín). Julia's story shows the interaction between personal and communal experiences of violence, as identity-affecting mechanisms that changed her ability to make claims. At the personal level, the domestic violence she was experiencing was out of alignment with the rights discourse she was exposed to, at the community level, within the militant left. Previously silenced in her marriage, Julia adapted war as a route to claim-making in her personal life even as her assistance to the guerillas brought her into the role of collective leftist claim-maker against the state.

Julia has continued to expand the scope of her claim-making in the post-war period through deep commitment to women's empowerment in Morazán. She sees women trapped in the same cycles of violence she herself had been in and says that the most effective route to facilitating these women's participation is through tiny steps that often begin with economic development. By gaining livelihood skills, women gain a bigger voice in the family as they bring in money, and their spouses will either adjust to this new roll or leave them (personal communication, March 16, 2010, Perquín). Julia's own domestic abuse and the abuses against poor, indigenous, and leftist communities during the war, shaped her activism for human rights, which is the language she uses to describe her claim-making activities. She founded her organization in 1990 and initially focused on addressing women's trauma from the war, which expanded to address the problem of conflict in broken or non-conventional families resulting from the war.

The scope of the problem of family and gender roles during and after the war was also emphasized during an interview with Miriam Rodríguez, the FMLN Mayor of Perquín:

> During the war, women had major leadership roles in communication, health, education, leadership –they had very well-developed roles–, but after the signing of the peace accords, women went back to traditional roles because they had to remake their lives with broken families. This was a critical situation that required women to go back to traditional roles to recreate stability in family life. There are some women who have kept their power and the ability to make decisions, but others have not. Women from both these groups might participate in the community but at different levels. (Personal communication, March 17, 2010)

Rodríguez's insight here is something that was mirrored in many of my interviews with women who had been involved with the FMLN during the war but were frustrated to find their claim-making power curtailed in the post-conflict environment. While war is often thought of as a pattern-disrupter that can make space for new domestic actors, the yearning for post-war stability appears to have curtailed the effectiveness of women's liberation within the insurgency. However, the growing feminist network in El Salvador is working to counter this backlash by the proponents of traditional gender roles.

Julia's organization encompasses more than 500 women working on an array of economic development and self-improvement projects. Just as Julia sees men as being afraid of giving up their power to make space for women, she assesses the political right as being afraid of giving up power by acceding to demands of the left. "They are all worried we are going to take away their power, and in reality, yes, the structure is going to change. But this is important to have stronger democracy in our country" (personal communication, March 16, 2010, Perquín). In addition to local initiatives, Julia continues to expand the scope of her claims by participating in regional and national women's empowerment networks designed to force gender mainstreaming into the rights discourse. She represents a success story of a violence-survivor-turned-advocate, a woman once making extra-institutional claims who now focuses on institutional strengthening.

Vilma's story

Most of Vilma Vasquez's family was killed by paramilitaries in the 1970s and 1980s, and those who survived, joined the FMLN. Vilma has been making rights claims on a non-responsive state for most of her life. She is a co-founder of Las Dignas (or Asociación de Mujeres por la Dignidad y la Vida), a feminist empowerment organization focused on expanding economic opportunities for poor women; she is also an independent syndicate organizer in San Salvador. After decades of exile in both Mexico and the US, she returned to her country the day after Mauricio Funes of the FMLN was elected, showing her optimism at a time that real space for human rights work could take place in the wake of electoral democracy. In 2000, Vilma was imprisoned in El Salvador for her human rights activism, and when she was released she again fled to the US, where she was granted political asylum. Vilma has seen her claim-making abilities shut down at every turn: "I have fought for the dignity of human beings, but under authoritarian regimes and supposed democracies, I have been jailed for this. To fight for dignity, for rights, for equality in El Salvador is a crime. I've been treated as a criminal for my work" (personal communication, March 24, 2010, San Salvador). Yet these obstacles, and the violence continually perpetrated against her and her family, has only encouraged Vilma to become more vocal and seek new channels to challenge both non-democratic behavior of the state and also non-democratic practices within syndicates and leftist organizations. She recognizes how difficult it is for women, in particular, to become active citizens who are willing to make claims against what has historically been a violent and unforgiving state:

> Some people don't want to break with family or their mothering roll. The command we are given is to take care of the family –not every woman is able to leave this role because it is so painful to do. Each person knows what gives them their life force. It takes a big rupture to make these changes, but my life is full. I have sadness, but my wounds make me more sensitive. (Personal communication, March 24, 2010, San Salvador)

In this statement, Vilma also taps into her own experiences of violence to fuel her commitment to active participation. She has made the choice to break from the traditional submissive role, typical not just of Salvadoran women but also of the poor working class and that of indigenous ancestors. Her father's execution by paramilitaries may have been her initial catalyst into activism, but Vilma now overflows with stories about violence done to her and her communities. In discussing her commitment to human rights activism she refers to these incidences continually to show why it would not make sense for her to stop being active when so many injustices continue to be unaddressed.

Vilma, Daniela, Julia, and Leonor are women who draw on experiences of violence in different ways to reinforce their commitments to working for justice through both institutional and extra-institutional claim-making on the state. Through the dispersal of history in Leonor's case or despite more direct lobbying and empowerment projects that challenge the status quo of gender for other women, violence persists as a foundation theme in each of these interviews. Violence done to these women, either directly or indirectly, encouraged each of them to find ways to make claims outside of institutions under the authoritarian regime of the 1980s, and they have transferred their energy to institutional claim-making since the signing of the Peace Accords.

Ileana's story

To complement contemporary interviews with the historic voices of ex-combatants, I now highlight a few cases from Salvadoran testimonial literature[6]. Ileana's story illustrates the struggle for participation within various FMLN factions. Ileana was a campesina incorporated into the insurgency at 15 years old, first with the Unión Democrática Nacionalista,

6 Though there are several published testimonials by female ex-combatants and political activists (for titles see Tula and Stephen, 1994: 225), most focus on describing their personal experiences of the war rather than placing their struggles within the larger international context, leaving readers to guess as to how women saw their politicized female roles outside of individual dramas. Thus, my textual interpretations are informed by interviews of former female combatants in 2008 and 2010.

or Democratic Nationalist Union (UDN), which mobilized the masses at the national level and was particularly good at harnessing women's political energy. She later joined the FAL, where she led a women's battalion (De Herrera, 1983: 59). Ileana's fluidity in moving between insurgent groups is indicative of the way how that participation was experienced (De Herrera, 1983: 21), and of the fact that multiple factions operated in the same areas but with ever-changing zones of control. Though there were divergent political platforms at the micro level between rebel groups that made up the FMLN, the broader platform that all were fighting for was similar enough that circumstance –a change in location, a new spouse or family allegiance, or simply meeting someone from another group and deciding to change factions– seemed like a plausible explanation for why the groups had support from the same families or fighters.

Ileana explained that her motivation to join initially was that she wanted to do something about the suffering and exploitation of Salvadoran people, and also to support the principle that the land should be owned by those who work on it, and to achieve women's rights (De Herrera, 1983: 21). Her story is characterized by the mobilization of collective suffering. Ileana called on her awareness of exploitation and violence as a reason that compelled her to make her claims more vocal. Ileana reflected on studying the works of Lenin as part of the voluntary political education that insurgent forces participated in, to increase their understanding of national and international political dynamics (De Herrera, 1983). She also said that while all-female battalions did not exist in her zone, after a successful offensive by Ileana's soldiers in February 1982, the PRTC and ERP followed her example and made a few all-female battalions that proved to be very effective (De Herrera, 1983: 30). While all revolutionary organizations in El Salvador were open to women's participation in different ways (Montgomery, 1995: 123), it is likely that specific personalities and circumstances shaped the possibilities or limitations for individual female insurgents.

Women played a large but often overlooked role in the FMLN insurgency. Though precise numbers of fighters are not known, we do know that thirty percent of the FMLN's 13,000 members that were officially

demobilized under the 1992 peace accords were women (Viterna, 2006: 6-7). FLP Commander Ana María declared that women's participation in all FMLN factions was high but especially so in the FPL where "their contribution was substantial at all levels, as political militants, within leadership cells at intermediate and superior levels" (cited in Alegría, 1987: 93). FMLN Commander Mercedes stated her feminist platform as one where "women undoubtedly have to play a major part in every aspect of the life of this country –its political, social and economic life" (cited in Alegría, 1987: 95). Alegría describes how women in the FMLN asserted feminist agendas with the story of Eugenia, an FLP commander who was murdered in an ambush while delivering weapons:

> Eugenia always fought all traces of the *machismo* she had come across in her comrades, including the women. Eugenia maintained that is was through involving our people in the revolutionary struggle that women would liberate themselves, obtaining their true and fair place […] She was always very critical of any traces of surviving *machismo*, for example, over the division of labour and what were assumed to be women's chores and what men's. (Alegría, 1987: 88)

Some male comrades were on board with her feminist agenda and Eugenia's husband Javier, interviewed after her death, said, "[w]hen women were included in the agrarian organization, they were accepted on equal terms. This was thanks to the work of the organization as the giver of principles, and also thanks to the women comrades we recruited in the countryside" (cited in Alegría, 1987: 89). Yet other men accused her of "inciting the women" when she would give talks about *machismo* to campesinas (Alegría, 1987: 89), so there were clearly some entrenched beliefs in gender roles that not all insurgents were interested in changing.

The embedded, gendered notions about women's roles played out in relation to international aid in the post-conflict period as well. Though many FMLN factions lobbied for women's rights during the war, in the post-war reconstruction phase, women's organizations within the FMLN gained strength and a host of problems. Luciak documents how these women's organizations were used to solicit funding from donors in the

international community eager to support women's leadership training, but then the male party leaders would manage and spend the funds (Luciak, 1998: 44). Resentment brewed, with women discontent in the role of fundraising tools, and eventually, in 1996, the Movimiento de Mujeres "Mélida Anaya Montes," or the Mélida Anaya Montes Women's Movement, broke away from their founding faction, the FPL (Luciak, 1998: 44). This section has drawn on testimonial literature to show documented claims of female insurgents. The following section examines why women, historically oppressed in El Salvador, decided to become so active in both institutional and extra-institutional claim-making in the first place[7].

Why women made claims

Myriad cultural, economic, political, and psychological explanations exist as to why people perform certain behaviors. This section explores just a few explanations as to why Salvadoran women became active claim-makers during the civil war. While it may be more understandable that women are now taking advantages of institutional openings in the democratization process to make claims, it is more difficult to appreciate the reasons that compelled them to take risks in the 1970s and 1980s. Though the FMLN provided leadership experience for women, many of them initially developed their skills as leaders through the Catholic Church. Tula describes that a central foundation of organizing and political experience for Salvadoran women was the church philosophy of liberation theology, saying, "[i]t is here that women found their participation was not only welcomed, but encouraged" (Tula and Stephen, 1994: 204). Grassroots church organizations provided

7 Sometimes even well-meaning scholarship minimizes the importance of women, as where gender is simply written out of democratization studies. Though Rueschemeyer, Stephens and Stephens (1992) are willing to concede that gender may factor into democracy eventually, they defend their exclusion of women by saying they "were far less important in the known histories of democratization. Vastly less blood was shed in the struggles for women's political inclusion, and their inclusion did not give rise to regime changes designed to re-exclude them" (Rueschemeyer *et al.*, 1992: 48). Rather than dwell on historic power relations and who was and wasn't written into history as a powerful actor, the authors have chosen to render gender silent in their theories of democracy.

women with experience in institutionalized leadership, which came from their participation in rural and urban Christian base communities (Tula and Stephen, 1994: 204). However, some women's groups that were politically active during the war initially through Christian mothers' groups, such as the Asociación de Mujeres Salvadoreñas, or Salvadoran Women's Association of Morazán, San Miguel, San Vicente, and Usulatán; eventually broke away from the church "because they felt their demands were limited by biblical interpretations" (Tula and Stephen, 1994: 205).

Female actions associated with the FMLN were often justified through the rubric of maternal responsibility, thus curbing the masculinizing feature that such militancy could otherwise impart (Viterna, 2006: 8). For example, human rights activist María Teresa Tula describes the context of her own political awakening:

> In 1978, 1979, and 1980 there were bodies turning up all over […] Whenever workers asked for a wage increase, they were killed, disappeared, machine-gunned, and assaulted in their factories, schools, and institutes […] All of this repression encouraged the unification of the FMLN and also pushed a lot of people to join the military forces of the five political organizations. We, as the mothers of the disappeared, also got more involved in a lot of political activity. Every day, more and more people would come to us, telling us about people who were disappeared, assassinated, or imprisoned. They needed our help. (Tula and Stephen, 1994: 84-85)

Tula's justification for claim-making is steeped in her experiences of violence within her community. A personal violence had been committed against the mothers through the murder or disappearance of their children, and claims were made against the state to address this violence. Conventional wisdom on guerilla mobilization of women says that they participate when biographically available, that is, when they are already politicized or have family members already active in the insurgency, or if their families have been fragmented by the war. However, Viterna's study comparing female combatants and non-combatants in the same villages in El Salvador shows that this simplified explanation does not hold (2006: 18-19). Viterna finds that "organizational involvement cited as critical in

all previous studies is central to some women's mobilization but not to most. The importance of family ties to activists is also questioned; nearly all women in war zones, both guerillas and non-guerillas, had close family members serving the FMLN." She also cites the seminal role played by refugee camps as organizational places of mobilization for female guerillas, a space previously overlooked in mobilization discussions (Viterna, 2006: 37). However, refugee camps could serve as an exit strategy from the insurgency as well. Viterna notes that "some of my respondents even suggested that some women purposefully got pregnant when they tired of life in the guerilla camp, as this guaranteed them safe escort to a refugee camp or repopulated community and a legitimate reason for exiting the fight for social justice" (Viterna, 2006: 27, footnote). Thus, refugee camps were arenas to both facilitate and curb insurgent participation.

While it is not clear from individual testimonies why women chose particular factions of the FMLN when they decided to join the insurgency, all women expressed grievance motives of some sort that resulted in making claims on the state. Many voiced anger at the government and social structures that kept people in poverty, and others became mobilized in direct reaction to a husband, brother, son, or friend being abducted, killed, or disappeared by military or paramilitary forces. The motivation for women to become involved appeared to be more out of a desire to have their complaints heard, and less the need for revenge. Ideology was sometimes infused into reasons for joining an insurgency and other times ideology was conjured up as a retrospective narrative to cover up coercion to participate by members of FMLN factions.

Much work has been done on why people in general participate in insurgencies. For example, Timothy Wickham-Crowley (1992) shows how important family, religious, and political networks were for mobilizing individuals into insurgencies in Latin America, and Roger Gould (1995) argues that the degree of closeness within social networks also plays a role in mobilization (both cited in Viterna, 2006: 4). In a study of Salvadoran villages before the civil war, Kalyvas describes class relations as "a poor predictor of allegiances compared with factors such as kin, conjuncture (who gets to organize peasants first), and micropolitics (the ability of organiza-

tions to manage intracommunity conflicts)" (Kalyvas, 2006: 81). Viterna is one of the very few that takes up this topic explicitly in relation to Salvadoran women, and she explores the factors that explain why some, but not all, members of a group participate in insurgent activities. She argues that there are many causes of mobilization, "even among individuals embedded within similar identity-producing networks and within similar structural contexts. These multiple paths to participation arise from the patterned interaction of individual-level biography, networks, and situational context" (Viterna, 2006: 2). By focusing her attention on the micro-level variation, Viterna is better able to generate explanations for macro-level causes and results of insurgent mobilization, while avoiding the pitfalls of generalizing what "typical" paths to insurgency might be (Viterna, 2006: 10). Psychological theories of identity-based action describe how:

> [...] a person's identity as "mother" may compete with a potential movement participation identity, especially if participation in the movement could jeopardize the woman's ability to be a good mother, and therefore her identity as a mother. Both identities may be important to the woman's sense of self, and both identities arise from social networks, but it is the interaction of these network-based identities with each other and with still other competing identities that determines whether the participation identity becomes salient enough to result in action. (Stryker, 2000, cited in Viterna, 2006: 5)

Viterna seeks to explain women's wartime participation in El Salvador, and her independent variables measure networks prior to mobilization by looking at previous organizational involvement, family connections to guerillas, and living in a refugee camp or repopulated community –biographical data is measured through motherhood, completeness of family, and age at mobilization, and the potential relationships of women with the FMLN are divided into guerillas, collaborators, and non-participants (Viterna, 2006: 15). The factors that explain mobilization can also be seen as factors that increase the likelihood of claim-making. Though both mobilization and claim-making can be solitary processes undertaken by individuals, they often involve overcoming the collective action problem in order to make demands or

claims on the state. Experiences of violence help show why women, traditionally a voiceless group in El Salvador, are driven to adopt and perpetuate claim-making behaviors both institutionally and extra-institutionally, depending on the constraints of the political regime in power.

Conclusion

To understand the intersection between violence, claim-making, and democratization, this article has brought together insights from several literatures and fieldwork to explain why women in El Salvador have mobilized for different kinds of claim-making. By situating Salvadoran women in relation to the institutions or factions that purport to represent them, I have attempted to show both structural constraints and individual experiences of violence for Salvadoran ex-combatants, navigating claim-making strategies.

Within a theoretical framework about the interest arena and its availability to women under different regime types, I presented the background context in which women in El Salvador have been able to navigate the claim-making process both during and after the civil war. I argued that experiences of violence have impacted women's claim-making choices in the interest arena. Through exploration of claim-making options, as well as normative problems with definitions of democracy and democratization, I elucidated the larger political contexts that actors must navigate in making their claims. Moreover, I demonstrated how women's roles in a diverse arrays of claim-making activities, both during and after the civil war, can inform an understanding of state-society relations in El Salvador. By weaving together individual women's narratives based on interviews and testimonial literature analysis, I sought to make more palpable the connections women make for themselves between experiences of violence and the call to make claims on their state. Since they are a group traditionally shut out of the democratization process, it is meaningful to hear from ex-combatant women themselves as they describe how they view the process of becoming claim-makers both during the civil war and after the

signing of the Peace Accords. As they describe the way both personal and community-level violence has shaped their choices to engage in the interest arena, these former insurgent women demonstrate the complexity of mobilizing for and sustaining claim-making, both during and after the civil war. Though the choices of how to make claims have expanded under democratizing regimes, female ex-combatants still face challenges in sustaining their claim-making, whether institutionally or extra-institutionally, in the face of poverty, discrimination, and trauma.

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Hacia una pedagogía para una educación sexuada con perspectivade género: un enfoque superador de las tradiciones medicalizantes, moralizantes y sexistas en América Latina

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Abstract

This article presents some of the findings from the research project called "The presence and absence of feminine and masculine sexualities among young middle-class students", which was carried out in the city of Buenos Aires, Argentina, by the School of Philosophy and Literature of the University of Buenos Aires. This project sought to identify the imaginaries around sexuality and the possibilities of a sexual education with a gender focus. This study inquires on the hegemonic and emerging discourses regarding sexual education in schools. Initial studies on national and international education highlights the persistence of a biological, sexist and hetero-normative body "norm" that systematically censors adults and young people, inhibiting their understanding of sexuality as a space of affective subjectivism and pleasure.

However, the traditions that are critical of the hegemonic school discourse also tend to have a bias towards a desiring subject, omitting the inclusion of affection and emotions in a comprehensive sexual education plan. In this work, we attempt to recover some of the students' voices that can guide and broaden the scope of a pedagogy for sexual education that includes gender justice.

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La investigación en educación, género y sexualidades en América Latina: debates actuales[1]

La trayectoria que ha desarrollado la investigación enmarcada en los estudios de género y educación en los últimos cuarenta años en los países centrales y en América Latina, es tributaria del despliegue teórico tanto de las teorías feministas críticas de raíz estructuralista como de las teorías feministas de orientación postestructuralista, articuladas a su vez con los debates de las ciencias sociales en general y de la Sociología, la Lingüística y los Estudios Culturales en la educación en particular. Si pensamos a su vez que estas producciones se nutren de las intervenciones políticas de los movimientos sociales de mujeres y sociosexuales en general, es posible perfilar un mapa que, sin pretender erigirse en inventario, permita dar inteligibilidad a los programas de investigación y de acción política más recientes en nuestro territorio. Una mirada retrospectiva permite identificar los hitos en la conformación de nuestro campo de estudio en la convergencia de tradiciones y debates.

Hacia el final del siglo XX, ya disponíamos de un repertorio de conceptos y constructos que nos permitían des-velar las formas invisibles median-

1 En su VII Conferencia Internacional de marzo de 2009, la Gender and Education Association, la asociación académica más relevante del campo a nivel internacional, tomó como tema central la cuestión "Género, regulación y resistencia en la educación". La agenda organizativa de los trabajos libres presentados delineó una panorámica tan amplia como multivariada, como es la construcción de los procesos educativos, y en este sentido, fue desde cuestiones de gobierno y poder en las políticas públicas, pasando por los diferentes niveles educativos, cuestiones de pedagogía y curriculum, hasta aproximaciones psicosociales y la relación entre estructuras y acción humana. Otras entradas del programa refirieron a la intersección de la educación y género con cuestiones de clase y etnicidad, generaciones, discapacidad, religión y organización política y mercado. Solo un eje incluyó el concepto "teoría": el vinculado con "la sexualidad y la teoría queer". Además, como conferencistas centrales fueron invitadas dos destacadas especialistas en cuestiones de género, educación y sexualidades que citaremos en el presente trabajo: Deborah Britzman (1999) y Raewyn (Robert) Connell (1995). En el marco de la tradición postestructuralista, Britzman ha trabajado en significativos análisis críticos de las formas pedagógicas de dominación y las formas de resistencia a la hegemonía en términos de sexualidad y género. Connell es una investigadora muy reconocida en su producción académica sobre las formas hegemónicas y subordinadas de la masculinidad realizada en la fase masculina de su trayectoria, mientras que en la actualidad, se dedica fundamentalmente a indagar la educación desde la perspectiva del transgénero. La centralidad de la cuestión de la construcción social de cuerpos y sexualidades, y la inclusión de la teoría "queer" en un congreso de fuerte arraigo teórico, es un indicio claro de cómo el campo está complejizando sus alcances y de cómo nos están quedando estrechos algunos márgenes establecidos en los desarrollos de la teoría pedagógica desde la perspectiva de género.

te las cuales una organización netamente moderna, como era y es la escuela, no solo no resultaba lo "igualadora" y "democratizadora" que su ideario sostenía sino que tendía a reproducir las desigualdades de la sociedad. El mapa educativo de nuestros países latinoamericanos, tanto en forma estática como en una perspectiva sobre las dinámicas del cambio, marcaba y continúa marcando con nitidez que grandes sectores de la población están excluidos sistemáticamente de las aulas. A la pobreza y la falta de acceso a los servicios educativos se agregan el abandono, vinculado también con frecuencia a la situación socioeconómica y con procesos intraescolares que resultan modos sutiles de exclusión social.

El liberalismo político y el sentido común han tendido a atribuir los resultados escolares a los sujetos en forma individual: una escasa capacidad de esfuerzo o una escasa inteligencia fueron por décadas la explicación más corriente para el fracaso escolar. En contraposición a esta responsabilización individual, en la década de 1970 y en el marco de la efervescencia política y académica del momento, la llamada "teoría de la reproducción" (las obras "clásicas" de Bourdieu y Passeron, 1974; Baudelot y Establet, 1975; Bowles y Gintis, 1976; Althusser, 1974) se mostró mediante investigaciones empíricas la existencia de patrones sistemáticos de exclusión o fracaso, notoriamente: los grupos más pobres, las minorías étnicas, las mujeres... Las escuelas diseñadas según formas de organización y con contenidos afines a las necesidades y prácticas de los grupos dominantes, tenderían de manera casi inevitable a "reproducir" las desigualdades sociales.

Sin embargo, la idea de la "reproducción" fue discutida muy rápidamente por sus propios creadores y por una abundante investigación que también señalaba los quiebres y las contradicciones del sistema: la "reproducción" no es absoluta, por ejemplo, porque los valores políticos de la igualdad también orientan las prácticas y van en sentido contrario a la "exclusión" y, además, porque los mismos actores sociales que logran entrar a la escuela producen resistencias.

Por una parte, para comprender e interpretar esa dinámica comenzó a resultar más fructífero recuperar el concepto de "hegemonía" de Antonio Gramsci (Portelli, 1978) –más antiguo pero revitalizado en el marco de estudios de raíz marxista, con énfasis en los procesos culturales. Para Gramsci

la hegemonía significa la existencia de una influencia social que va más allá de la violencia o la fuerza, o la amenaza de su empleo, y se ejerce tanto en la vida pública como en la vida privada y los procesos culturales que la atraviesan (citado en Portelli, 1978). Se trata en realidad de un proceso que combina instancias de coerción con otras de construcción de consensos que, articuladamente en una configuración histórica particular, tienden a justificar el orden injusto o violento. Lo interesante del concepto es que retoma la dimensión activa de los sujetos, tanto en sostener las relaciones de poder como en modificarlas.

Por otra parte, algunos teóricos de la Sociología de la Educación como Michael Apple (1979) y sobre todo, uno de los trabajos clave en la investigación cultural, la investigación de Paul Willis (1997), comenzaron a trabajar no solamente en la identificación de las resistencias sino también, desde la vida cotidiana en las escuelas, en la complejización de la noción de "reproducción" de clase, desplegando la hipótesis de la simultaneidad e interdependencia entre "clase", "sexo" y la llamada "raza". Sin embargo, son sobre todo los desarrollos de los Estudios de Género los que retomaron y ampliaron la investigación y la conceptualización de las nociones de reproducción y de resistencia, en términos de lo masculino y lo femenino. En los años 1980 fueron pioneros los trabajos de, por ejemplo: Mary O´Brien (1982) que desarrolló la noción de "trabajo doméstico" y retomó los análisis de la relación entre la división social y sexual del trabajo; Michelle Barrett (1980) que mostró que la reproducción no se produce en una jerarquía de importancia (clase, sexo, raza, separadas por una "coma", por lo que habla de la "comatización" de las mujeres) sino en forma simultánea y dual; y de Madeleine Arnot (1983) que señaló los modos en que los códigos de clase se reproducen simultáneamente con los códigos de género.

Así, la Sociología de la Educación en esta tradición crítica comenzó a reconocer las limitaciones de las categorías marxianas que le dieron fundamento: resultaba insuficiente pensar que la "reproducción" solo implicaba un lugar en la división social del trabajo. Y entendió que al ser el Estado una cristalización no solamente de relaciones económicas sino también de relaciones patriarcales, la noción de "aparato ideológico del Estado" resultaba también apropiada para nombrar la función de transmisión de las

relaciones patriarcales de poder a través de las instancias estatales, entre las cuales se encuentra la escuela.

En la indagación sobre la cuestión del acceso –inspirada sobre todo por el feminismo de la igualdad–, el movimiento reparó en que la llave en la promoción y cambio de la condición social de las mujeres era la lucha por más educación y que el problema de la discriminación se mantenía en el empleo de las mujeres educadas. En la investigación sobre la cuestión del curriculum ("qué" y el "cómo" se aprende en las escuelas) fueron centrales los aportes pioneros del feminismo de la diferencia de Ana María Piussi (1989) o Luisa Muraro (1994) en Italia y de la pedagogía feminista en Estados Unidos inspirada en la educación popular de Paulo Freire (Bonder, 1994; Morgade, 2001).

Los primeros estudios, tanto los referidos a la vida cotidiana en la escuela como al trabajo docente, oscilaron entre una visión crítica orientada por las nociones de "reproducción-lucha" o "hegemonía" –en el sentido gramsciano primario, tendientes a interpretar la discriminación de género como una expresión más bien estructural del patriarcado en un mundo capitalista– y otras vertientes inspiradas en los feminismos de raíz liberal que más bien tendieron a sostener que el liberalismo es un proyecto "con fallas" que pueden y deben ser subsanadas en dirección a una plena vigencia de la democracia. En todos los casos, existía una cierta continuidad teórica y fáctica que tendía a pensar en "la niñas" o "las mujeres" desde una definición más bien centrada en su condición social y sus rasgos comunes según la construcción ideológica dominante.

Los Estudios de Género se volcaron entonces a indagar algunos temas que se transformaron en "clásicos" en los diferentes países y centros de investigación: la escolarización de las mujeres adultas, los mensajes acerca de lo femenino y lo masculino en el currículo y los libros de texto, las expectativas de rendimiento y de comportamiento hacia chicas y chicos, los usos del cuerpo en la educación física escolar, las disciplinas expresivas y el patio de juegos en el recreo, la interacción entre pares y el uso de la palabra, etc. En paralelo, también fue indagada la cuestión de la docencia, como el trabajo femenino. Dado que la docencia en general, y en particular en la educación básica, es ejercida mayoritariamente por mujeres, las temáticas que

se indagaron giraron en torno a las formas de precarización económica y material que caracterizan al trabajo, la subordinación intelectual y organizacional que las mujeres sufren en el sistema educativo y orientadas, sobre todo, por las diferentes versiones del feminismo de la diferencia, los modos de "maternaje" y el cuidado que la docencia había desplegado. Retomando tanto la noción de *hegemonía* como la conceptualización *micropolítica* del poder, las investigaciones de tradición foucaultiana fueron herramientas significativas para la interpretación de la resistencia y la inestabilidad como condición social de "lo femenino" y "lo masculino", buscando comprender los procesos de imposición pero también de resistencia en relación con las significaciones de género y las escuelas.

Así, la producción original de los Estudios de Género fue definir con nuevos contenidos la noción de "sujeto" y de las "relaciones de poder" escolar, particularizando además las indagaciones en diferentes contextos y momentos para complejizar también la visión ultrageneralizadora "masculina, burguesa y blanca". Orientado por estos desarrollos, y a la vez dándoles un impulso con su fuerza política, el movimiento social de mujeres encaró una lucha "por" la educación escolar, abarcando tanto el problema del acceso a la educación para todas y todos, más allá de cualquier condición (género, orientación sexual, clase, etnia, edad, religión, nacionalidad, entre otras) como el "qué" y el "cómo" que se aprenden en las escuelas.

Hacia la última década del siglo XX comenzaron también a tener presencia en la investigación educativa los llamados Estudios de la Masculinidad. Su foco central fue indagar los modos en que ya no "la masculinidad" sino "las masculinidades" conviven y tiende a sostener un orden patriarcal y heterosexual. Robert (hoy Raewyn) Connell, uno de los principales investigadores en la tradición de los Estudios de la Masculinidad y la educación, muestra en 1995 y en el contexto anglosajón que en la escuela se refuerzan los sentidos de lo masculino definidos en su versión tradicional, soslayando o condenando la existencia de masculinidades subordinadas y, básicamente, la homosexualidad (Connell, 1995). En coincidencia con Connell, otros y otras colegas mostraron cómo el arquetipo dominante de la virilidad alimenta un mística de la masculinidad caracterizada por el vigor y la fuerza, el control sobre el dolor físico y el ocultamiento de las

emociones, el colocarse en riesgo, la tendencia a la competencia y a la conquista; en síntesis, una idea de cierta "superioridad" que haría inevitable a "la dominación masculina". Complementariamente, los estudios tienden también a indagar los modos de sufrimiento y en ocasiones, resistencia de los varones que no se adecuan completamente al arquetipo viril (Lomas, 2004).

Sin embargo, es más bien reciente la incorporación con fuerza de la cuestión de la materialidad corporal de la hegemonía que se ubica tanto en las "mentes" como en "los cuerpos". Y en este recorrido, resulta más fértil la noción de "prácticas discursivas" que nombran tanto la dimensión material como la dimensión simbólica de vida social, antes que la difundida noción de "representación social" o en lugar de algunas visiones de la "ideología". La primera está vinculada a perspectivas cognitivistas de la Sociología que ontologizan en representaciones mentales la relación entre los procesos psíquicos y las determinaciones sociales. La segunda está con frecuencia asimilada a visiones que parecen remitir más a un sentido que se le "agregaría" a una materialidad anterior o preconstituida.

Las más recientes producciones de la teoría "queer" –"de la rareza"– y las teorías "trans" son centrales en esta reconceptualización. Los desarrollos se vieron fuertemente nutridos por la producción política y teórica del movimiento de gays y lesbianas que aportó una denuncia: la conceptualización predominante de "lo femenino" y de "lo masculino", aunque desde la perspectiva de género, incluye también fuertemente un componente de heteronormatividad (Butler, 1990, 2002).

La noción de "construcción social del cuerpo sexuado", como veremos, alude entonces a las prácticas discursivas en las cuales materia y sentido se constituyen en subjetividades que de ningún modo están cristalizadas en representaciones simbólicas, ni que tampoco se las puede dividir en dos partes agregadas: materia, por un lado, e ideas preexistentes, por el otro. Con ese énfasis, emergen como objeto de estudio con más claridad "las sexualidades" y "las diferencias" en la orientación sexual, y la investigación tiende a hacerse cargo de la complejidad multidimensional del discurso hegemónico escolar. Si conceptualizamos al "cuerpo" como una construcción social de una materialidad, nos va a interesar mapear las diferentes

expresiones escolares en las cuales ese cuerpo se constituye como "diferencia sexual".

Entre otros trabajos significativos de los últimos tiempos subrayamos las investigaciones de Debbie Epstein y Richard Johnson (2000) en Gran Bretaña, quienes indagaron la producción de identidades sexuales en el nivel secundario, tanto entre estudiantes como entre docentes. Entre sus impactantes resultados concluyen que quienes son heterosexuales tienen muchas menos posibilidades que los docentes gays o lesbianas de sufrir las consecuencias de que sus desempeños se consideren insatisfactorios o inapropiados, y que la "educación sexual" no heterosexista ni homofóbica no puede sino ser "una práctica imposible". Mairtin Mac an Ghaill (1994) y Peter McLaren (1995) también en el campo anglosajón, y el grupo GEERGE en Brasil, coordinado por Guacira Lopes Louro, indagaron los modos micropolíticos en que las escuelas disciplinan los cuerpos… Así, parecería que actualmente en la investigación educativa estamos en condiciones teóricas y metodológicas de analizar e interpretar la relativa inestabilidad de las identidades (y las diferentes articulaciones en las que se producen) y a la vez, el sostenimiento de relaciones sociales de relativa estabilidad (y los diferentes dispositivos a través de los cuales se reproducen).

Estas herramientas de investigación también devienen fundamentos para los proyectos políticos educativos: si la experiencia escolar puede resultar, contradictoriamente, según las realidades y los contextos, en un espacio de construcción de autonomía o sujeción o un espacio de reproducción o resistencia será, en parte, una producción política intencional. Pero en parte también, como veremos, será un producto de las persistentes limitaciones de las categorías pedagógicas con las que estamos trabajando.

Voces autorizadas, proyectos político-educativos y cuerpos sexuados

La producción que acabamos de mapear rápidamente viene alimentando en parte a los diferentes proyectos políticos del campo educativo de América Latina. En el marco de los diferentes acuerdos y normas surgidas de los organismos internacionales, en particular de la CEDAW, desde hace unos

20 años, asistimos a diversas iniciativas sostenidas por gobiernos que con frecuencia apelan a la asistencia técnica de organizaciones no gubernamentales y de las universidades con acumulación académica en los Estudios de Género.

En todos los casos, las políticas que poco a poco fueron incorporando una perspectiva historizante y crítica de las relaciones de poder, fueron objeto de oposición de parte de los actores tradicionales que, a pesar de tener diferente incidencia y autoridad según los países, han enfrentado y enfrentan aún una resistencia política y cultural que con frecuencia es virulenta. En Argentina por ejemplo, el actor político más poderoso contra la incorporación del enfoque de género y de los derechos sexuales y reproductivos en la educación formal es la Iglesia católica. En 1995, una fuerte oposición en la discusión sobre los Contenidos Básicos Comunes, logró la eliminación del enfoque de género incluido en los documentos; en 2007, con su documento oficial "Educación para el amor", la Iglesia intentó, y aún lucha por ello, imponer su tradicional enfoque moralizante y atemorizante frente a la inminente implementación de la Ley Nacional de Educación Sexual Integral. En la misma arena disputan las tradiciones medicalizantes y sexistas propias de las políticas de salud en la educación. Sin embargo, no es objetivo de este trabajo poner énfasis en el análisis de esas tradiciones ya ampliamente analizadas y criticadas, sino avanzar en el análisis de los silencios que nuestras producciones aún mantienen en una pedagogía para una educación sexuada, analizando algunas producciones locales.

El Ministerio de Educación de la ciudad de Buenos Aires inició en 2006 una serie de acciones tendentes a dar cumplimiento a la Ley, que establece la inclusión de la Educación Sexual Integral en la educación formal en todos los niveles, a través del desarrollo de contenidos vinculados con el ejercicio responsable de la sexualidad, los derechos y la salud reproductiva, la equidad de género, la prevención de la violencia de género, y la prevención del VIH/SIDA –con base en un marco de derechos humanos. Los enunciados de la Ley y la política no podían ser más auspiciosos. El gobierno que promovió esta Ley integraba una línea dentro del partido gobernante a nivel nacional (el Frente para la Victoria, FpV) que también había impulsado y logrado sancionar una ley de educación sexual integral para todo el país.

Antes de adentrarnos en los contenidos, vale la pena subrayar dos cuestiones organizacionales de la política. Por una parte, en los documentos se establece adecuadamente que el proyecto es intersectorial; sin embargo, no se prevé ni se presupuestan los recursos de tiempo y financiamiento para la conformación de los equipos de trabajo entre sectores. El proyecto entonces se adosa a la ya abultada agenda de trabajo en las diferentes áreas. Esta cuestión no es menor, no solamente porque el proyecto viene a representar una "carga" adicional sino, y fundamentalmente, porque desconoce una conocida falencia del sistema educativo local que es, la escasa o nula tradición de trabajo conjunto entre áreas. En general, el área de salud o el área de desarrollo social acuden a las escuelas como ámbitos de atención desde sus propias lógicas. Las escuelas por su parte, tienden a acudir a otras áreas solamente en términos de "solución a un problema" antes que en proyectos políticos de prevención y cuando por lo general no tienen la solución inmediata, tienden a "confirmar" la visión de que están solas con todos los problemas sociales. Por otra parte, otra omisión relevante en este proyecto se vincula con las anticipaciones respecto del trabajo con los/as docentes. Aceptando a partir de los documentos la fuerte implicación valorativa y subjetiva de los contenidos propuestos, no se establece un programa de formación y menos de acompañamiento o contención docente. Las experiencias y las investigaciones tienden a señalar que la habilitación de la palabra en temas de sexualidad abre un repertorio de cuestiones frente a las cuales los/as docentes se sienten en la obligación de tener conocimiento, una posición valorativa para transmitir y, con frecuencia, información para orientar o inclusive defender la vulneración de derechos.

Dado su carácter "curricular", los materiales producidos presentan un conjunto de fundamentos teóricos, orientaciones y posteriormente, un repertorio de contenidos para incluir en los diferentes niveles de educación. Los materiales curriculares producidos en el marco de la Ley Nacional de Educación Sexual Integral toman una postura crítica respecto de los enfoques biomédicos más tradicionales en el tema, insistiendo en el carácter "integral" de una educación sexual que se propone abordar las múltiples dimensiones que atraviesan la sexualidad y la construcción de la subjetividad, la integridad del sujeto bio-psico-social, la valorización de lo humano,

de los sentimientos, las emociones, las actitudes, habilidades y destrezas como mediadores en el vínculo con los otros, así como la importancia de los roles asumidos por varones y mujeres. Este enfoque, que se reitera a lo largo del documento, se orienta en el marco de los derechos humanos referidos al tema.

Estas valiosas orientaciones del proyecto, sin embargo, no logran saldar al menos tres cuestiones críticas. Por una parte, una persistente noción de "tolerancia" en términos de una suerte de resignación frente a la existencia de otros y otras diferentes. Por otra parte, una cuestión nodal en nuestras investigaciones recientes: la norma heterosexual que orienta el discurso de género empleado, aún cuando se mencione a las diversidades sexuales… Por último, que la "salud" aparece en última instancia como el horizonte hacia el cual se orienta la política de educación sexual. Y si bien se adhiere a una visión amplia de la cuestión, queda omitida de manera sistemática la dimensión del "placer" vinculada con la sexualidad.

Nuestra investigación permite tensar desde otra perspectiva a las limitaciones identificadas en el texto de los documentos oficiales. Caracterizando en términos generales las visiones juveniles, podríamos anticipar que la incorporación de temáticas relacionadas con la sexualidad es deseada y bienvenida por los/as estudiantes quienes, en principio, se adhieren también a la visión biomédica de la "prevención de enfermedades" como sentido final de la política de educación sexual. Cuando la indagación promueve una profundización, se abre también un conjunto de interrogantes, de contradicciones y sobre todo de deseos de saber, que exceden fuertemente las perspectivas del proyecto oficial.

Una somera sistematización de los resultados de nuestras investigaciones permite identificar algunos de estos nudos de sentido:

- En los primeros años de escolarización secundaria, los/as adolescentes y jóvenes sostienen la mirada biomédica hegemónica; no obstante, a lo largo de la experiencia vital y escolar van construyendo una mirada complejizadora de los aspectos vinculados con la sexualidad.
- Los/as adolescentes y jóvenes subrayan la ausencia de espacios escolares en los cuales se trabaja sobre cuestiones afectivas o vinculares, en parti-

cular cuando los sentimientos personales se contraponen a los mandatos sociales, entre otros:

- La presión sobre el debut sexual para demostrar virilidad en los varones;
- La presión en las chicas por mostrarse enamoradas cuando reconocen las contradicciones intrínsecas al "amor romántico", sobre todo, el doble estándard de género;
- La presión homofóbica que impide la expresión plena de las diversas orientaciones sexuales;
- La presión de lo "políticamente correcto" que esconde los prejuicios y, a la vez, las posibilidades de revisarlos y cuestionarlos;
- La presión de las modas consumistas a videograbar relaciones íntimas y exponerse en la web;
- La presión consumista en los bares y fiestas de productos estimulantes;
- La presión de los mandatos de la delgadez y la belleza, etc.

Estas contradicciones suelen producir diferentes emociones inquietantes y eventualmente dolorosas que suelen tramitarse entre pares, suelen ser contenidos de los principales sentidos, discriminatorias hacia los/as jóvenes (por ejemplo, cuando se los/as caracteriza como "desbordados/as" o "sin límites") y solo en casos extremos reciben atención adulta o profesional:

- En general, los/as adolescentes y jóvenes reconocen que las experiencias sexuales se vinculan con la curiosidad y la búsqueda del placer y prácticamente no consideran que la abstinencia sea una opción real en los vínculos interpersonales, llegando inclusive a considerar que el placer y el amor no necesariamente van acompasados, aunque también en general, y sobre todo entre las mujeres, suelen valorar la relación sexual genital como una profundización de una relación amorosa.
- Los/as adolescentes y jóvenes conocen o han experimentado episodios de violencia de género o familiar, conocen casos de embarazos no deseados que culminan en abortos (prohibidos en la Argentina) o a jóvenes madres que quedan solas en el cuidado y atención infantil. Si bien

tienden a interpretar estos conflictos como "problemas individuales" y cuando el caso es muy cercano, moderan sus visiones condenatorias, tienden también a demandar espacios de tratamiento grupal para estas cuestiones. Los/as adolescentes y jóvenes de los sectores medios más acomodados disponen de un capital simbólico y económico que les permite atravesar esas situaciones con más posibilidades de atención especializada o profesional.
- Los/as profesores y profesoras no parecen referentes de confianza para abordar estas cuestiones porque, aun cuando no debieran abordar la intimidad o los problemas personales, los espacios pueden generar información usada en forma discriminatoria. Solo algunos/as pueden ser referentes académicos cuando se prioriza el discurso biomédico pero pueden llegar a ser considerados/as interlocutores/as válidos cuando se trata una visión amplia de la sexualidad, sin referenciamiento a una disciplina en particular. En síntesis, desconfían que el dispositivo escolar sea un espacio adecuado y cuidado para habilitar un tratamiento en profundidad de temas de fuerte implicancia individual.

Es evidente que los intereses y sentidos que las visiones juveniles permiten esbozar, abren múltiples cuestiones que no se resuelven solamente con nuestras más progresistas políticas dirigidas a promover el conocimiento de los derechos sexuales y reproductivos, o con el estudio de las dimensiones históricas, sociales y políticas de las relaciones de género hegemónicas.

Entendemos que el discurso de los derechos sexuales y reproductivos desde la perspectiva de género es, sin duda alguna, el enfoque emergente más complejizador al que se haya arribado en la academia y en las políticas públicas en temas de sexualidad. Este enfoque habilita, sin duda, que nuevas voces sean escuchadas y nuevas respuestas sean elaboradas. Sin embargo, entendemos que produce también nuevos silencios posiblemente, argumentaremos, no solamente porque no se hace eco aún de los desafíos de las teorías queer o trans sino, y sobre todo, porque el sujeto pedagógico que concibe continúa siendo el sujeto cartesiano de la razón (el *cogito*) y su dimensión instrumental propia del capitalismo.

Hacia una pedagogía para una educación sexuada justa

La pedagogía es la teoría de la educación y dado que la educación es una práctica social compleja, la pedagogía teoriza acerca de cuestiones variadas, tales como: la direccionalidad y los límites de la acción educativa; las dimensiones macro y micropolíticas, societales y culturales implicadas; las concepciones epistemológicas respecto del saber, del enseñar y del aprender; etc. En este sentido, las diferentes tradiciones de la pedagogía implicaron siempre una concepción de sujeto. Situando el carácter social y sexuado del sujeto pedagógico, los aportes de las tradiciones emergentes en los Estudios Culturales de Género y los Estudios Queer, las pedagogías feministas y las pedagogías críticas, nos permiten trazar algunos rasgos que aún están omitidos en las tradiciones emergentes en la educación sexual.

Una primera cuestión conceptual es que toda educación es sexual, ya que en todos los procesos educativos se producen, transmiten y negocian sentidos y saberes respecto de la sexualidad y las relaciones de género. En este sentido, la educación no puede *no* ser "sexual" y, por lo tanto, la lucha por la "educación sexual" puede llegar a diluir el potencial crítico del proyecto político emancipatorio que los movimientos sociosexuales (incluyendo al movimiento social de mujeres) vienen llevando adelante. Podríamos nombrar entonces la idea de "educación sexuada" a aquella educación que reconoce el carácter integral de los cuerpos que se encuentran en el ámbito escolar. Por otra parte, la tradición racionalista y enciclopédica de nuestras escuelas ha omitido la dimensión "sexual" de la educación, junto con el silenciamiento de la presencia de los cuerpos y las emociones que también siempre están ahí. Así como la educación siempre es "sexuada", la educación que se reconoce en tanto sexuada es aquella educación que reconoce al sujeto sexuado en su dimensión deseante, pensante y actuante.

En segundo lugar, si bien ya hablar de "educación sexuada" implica la adopción de una conceptualización descriptiva que avanza por sobre las omisiones, cabe preguntarse también por los sentidos, lo que implica una pedagogía consonante con las tradiciones críticas que nos orientan. O, en otras palabras, cómo "sexuar" a la educación más allá de los enfoques represivos o parcializantes que han venido siendo predominantes.

Entendemos que una pista posible es habilitar a la autoridad de las voces de los/as jóvenes y a la autoridad docente en términos de la propia afectividad y reconocimiento de las propias experiencias, tanto en sus sentidos dolorosos como en sus sentidos placenteros.

Algunas aproximaciones vivenciales han orientado algunos proyectos en esta dirección. Dos programas interesantes se han desarrollado recientemente en Iberoamérica: Charo Altable (2003), en España, inspirada en la psicosíntesis, ha trabajado desde la expresión corporal en la línea de la observación y el distanciamiento de las sensaciones corporales cambiantes, las emociones y los sentimientos, y los pensamientos y juicios, para avanzar en la desidentificación de las creencias y prejuicios más profundos e inconscientes. Entendiendo que en la escuela secundaria se trabaja con adolescentes y jóvenes que suelen estar confundidos con sus propias emociones contradictorias, su proyecto se dirige "a que tomen conciencia de sí, de su identidad, de sus sensaciones, emociones, pensamientos, para no dejarse dominar o arrastrar por ellas sino dirigirlas, aceptarlas y transformarlas, utilizándolas para su bienestar"(Altable, 2003: 45). José Olavarría (2004), en Chile, por otro lado, ha desarrollado una línea de talleres de "conversación sobre la vida cotidiana, la sexualidad, los mandatos culturales […] Se busca fortalecer la capacidad de reflexionar de los sujetos mediante el desarrollo de la conversación, lo que permite contar con mayores elementos para resolver distintas situaciones de la vida" (Olavarría, 2004: 38).

Algunas teóricas de los movimientos sociosexuales también vienen trazando algunos caminos para seguir estas pistas. Bell hooks (1999), por ejemplo, sostiene que "para comprender el lugar de eros y del erotismo en el aula, precisamos dejar de pensar esas fuerzas solo en términos sexuales, aunque esa dimensión no debe ser negada" (hooks, 1999: 123). Hooks sugiere "entrar en el aula enteras y no como espíritus descorporizados" y cambiar el propósito original de la escuela –transmisor de información enciclopédica universalizante– por el de "demostrar a los estudiantes cómo definirse a sí mismos 'auténtica y espontáneamente en relación' al mundo", lo cual requiere "descubrir el lugar de eros dentro de nosotros/as mismos/as y juntos/as permitir que la mente y el cuerpo se sientan y conozcan el deseo" (hooks, 1999: 123).

Sin embargo, tal vez nuestros resultados pueden ser interpretados más cabalmente desde los trabajos de Deborah Britzman (1999) que identifica tres versiones de la educación sexual: la "normal", normalizadora de los cuerpos y el deseo; la "crítica" que cuestiona a las relaciones de poder y reivindica los derechos sexuales y reproductivos; y la que denomina la "aún no tolerada", que apunta al cuidado de sí como práctica de la libertad.

Según Britzman (1999), la educación sexual "normal" genera no solamente un cuerpo de contenidos limitado por las voces dominantes sino que también genera los límites de lo que interesa conocer y lo cognoscible, las preguntas que "se pueden formular" y "lo impensable" y, de ese modo, limita también en estudiantes y docentes la imaginación de alternativas. La educación sexual "crítica" resulta un avance, sin duda, en su lucha por la incorporación de voces excluidas por la hegemonía, pero termina, desde su perspectiva, nuevamente fijando identidades, ahora diversas pero nuevamente inmutables. La "aún tolerada" es también aún un horizonte difuso… Dice la autora:

> El modelo de educación sexual que tengo en mente está más próximo a la experiencia de la lectura de libros de ficción y poesía, de ver películas y del involucrarse en discusiones sorprendentes e interesantes, pues cuando nos involucramos en actividades que desafían nuestra imaginación, que propician cuestiones para reflexionar y que nos hacen ir más allá de la indeterminación del eros y de la pasión, siempre tenemos algo más para hacer, algo más para pensar. (Britzman, 1999: 86)

Otra línea de trabajo en esta dirección son las investigaciones de Guacira Lopes Louro en Brasil. Particularmente en su libro *Um corpo estranho* (2004), Lopes Louro se inspira explícitamente en la teoría queer y, apoyada en las investigaciones del grupo GEERGE (Grupo de Estudios de Educación y Relaciones de Género), plantea la vigencia de la hegemonía patriarcal y heteronormativa en las aulas, perfilando como alternativa la posibilidad de una política post-identitaria para la educación: una pedagogía queer que supere la instancia en que la multiculturalidad, la homosexualidad o el género son toleradas o incluidas meramente como creaciones "exóticas", como menciones necesarias en un curriculum con corrección

política. Habla de una pedagogía que permita "albergar las preguntas más incómodas, las cuestiones que perturban, erotizar los procesos de conocer, de aprender y de enseñar, dando lugar al placer y a las curiosidades impertinentes" (Lopes Louro, 2004: 15).

En esta línea de trabajo podrían albergarse también los intereses y demandas de los/as jóvenes de la ciudad de Buenos Aires. El "amor", que en términos religiosos no es más que una expresión de un "amor a Dios", se transformará en una marca registrada de la Iglesia católica si no lo tomamos también desde nuestros desarrollos teóricos y políticos. Entendemos que nos enfrentamos al desafío de tensar las fronteras de la pedagogía y visibilizar los afectos y los cuerpos sexuados que las contienen. La ampliación de las fronteras teóricas y políticas que permiten ampliar también la comprensión del proceso de construcción social de la subjetividad, en su dimensión material y en su dimensión simbólica, se completaría al incluir las emociones y los sentimientos implicados en los vínculos consigo mismo/a y con otros/as. Pensamos en una ampliación que mantenga el sentido crítico y productivo de la justicia como horizonte vertebrador de las prácticas, la justicia en la división social y sexual del trabajo que persiste en la construcción social de sujetos que encarnan, que corporizan, la exclusión de la vivienda, el alimento, el abrigo, la salud y la educación, que hacen a la dignidad de las personas. En América Latina sigue vigente con toda crudeza la cuestión de la justicia redistributiva y la justicia de reconocimiento. Además, la situación financiera mundial por la que atraviesan nuestras economías desde 2008 pone nuevamente en "figura" la injusticia por la cual grandes sectores de la población son nuevamente desempleados, nuevamente excluidos, criminalizados, violentados. Y en situaciones de crisis, aparecen con crudeza los eslabones más débiles del frágil tejido social de nuestros países.

En síntesis, hablamos de una pedagogía para una educación que recupere e "incorpore" los saberes y las emociones en sociedades que se orientan hacia la justicia, en su expresión más completa.

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Cuerpo y ciudad: travestismo urbano

Carolina Páez Vacas*

Abstract

This work is a revision of my book entitled *Urban trasvestism: Gender, sexuality and politics* presented at the LASA conference in 2009 (Rio de Janeiro). Its original approach has not changed, but I have added new conceptual tools that uphold an approximation to interwoven concepts such as city, gender, sexuality, and the body, that is to say: corporality and social space. The central question here is, how to think about gender, sexuality, the body, and the city from an urban postcolonial Andean point of view, with a need for contextualizing and historicing. I argue that gender logic, framed, moreover, by class and race, is perpetuated and made visible not only in hetero-homo conflicts but through other forms of claim-making that highlight the "feminine" as subordinated to a patriarchal order. To do this, I initially focus on analytical approaches to the city; second, I am interested in the relationship between our bodies and the city; and third, I cite research that supports this analysis, fifteen years after the decriminalization of homosexuality in Ecuador.

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Esa cosa que llamamos ciudad…

En mis primeras aproximaciones a la imbricación corporeidad-espacio social, a principios del milenio, leí con fascinación las propuestas de la teoría queer sobre la sexualidad de los espacios (Myslik, 1996; Valentine, 1996; Duncan, 1996; Bondi, 2006) en un esfuerzo por revelar la heteronormatividad como un constitutivo de los espacios urbanos y su evidenciamiento a través de actos que irrumpían –y rompían– con su lógica. Era fascinante leer las propuestas que planteaban una visión de espacialidad más allá del binario público/privado, emergiendo entonces lo semipúblico, lo semiprivado, los *queer spaces*. San Francisco, Washington D. C., Nueva York, Londres o París aparecían, a través de esas páginas, como el paraíso de las libertades, de la individualidad, del sujeto de derechos, de las decisiones racionales, de la movilidad política hecha bandera.

En base a realidades más próximas (y a la vez tan lejanas) como la mexicana, se hacían páginas también en las geografías del deseo y la sexualidad (Cruz Sierra, 2001; Gonzáles Pérez, 2001; Granados, 2002; Lizárraga, 2001; Miano y Giglia, 2001; Sánchez y López, 2000), o la peruana (Motta, 1999), que vinculaban las dinámicas de lo urbano con procesos identitarios relacionados con la sexualidad, proponiendo como problemática y categoría de análisis *el ambiente* o los *sitios gay*.

La posibilidad de aproximarse a la "cuestión urbana" en América Latina ha estado vinculada con dos tendencias mayores: la "objetiva" y la "subjetiva". En la primera se han ubicado la economía, la sociología, la demografía, la planificación urbana. En la segunda han emergido los Estudios Culturales urbanos y específicamente, los imaginarios urbanos (Lindón, 2007; Hiernaux, 2007). Los imaginarios urbanos han buscado evidenciar el proceso de producción mutuo entre la ciudad y sus representaciones. Dentro del proceso de producción mutuo es necesario considerar que las dramáticas transformaciones de las ciudades latinoamericanas han estado vinculadas con las iniciativas de modernización y urbanización que iniciaron a mediados del siglo XIX. Los imaginarios urbanos se han relacionado con aspectos más cercanos a los proyectos de planificación, como posibilidad de "comprensión de nuestra cultura urbana" (Gorelik, 2004: 2).

Los círculos intelectuales latinoamericanos, especialmente aquellos preocupados por las cuestiones urbanas desde los Estudios Culturales, a partir de la crisis del marxismo, han seguido un "in-modelo": "se han estado moviendo con tanta libertad como imprecisión, dentro del vasto arco que tensa entre los dos polos" erigidos entre Jameson y De Certau, en torno a la metáfora cartográfica, con sus opuestos resultados dependientes del autor de referencia (Gorelik, 2004: 4-6). Así, la ciudad y sus habitantes se hallan, a través de estos usos teóricos, entre "formas de identidad liberadas y liberadoras" y la "completa determinación que los espacios-poder tienen sobre los sujetos, convirtiendo a la vez a los imaginarios urbanos en mecanismos ideológicos de la manipulación" (Gorelik, 2004: 6). Según mi entender, esta ambigüedad gatilla viejas preguntas sobre la relación entre el sujeto y las instituciones y dan cuenta de la ambigüedad teórica de sus definiciones, construcciones y, por tanto, análisis.

En el giro cultural (y su versión de los Estudios Culturales urbanos) se trató de evidenciar la distancia entre la planificación urbana y la vida diaria hecha recorrido, se trató de "hacer presente lo que la gente desea o siente, la multiplicidad de sus experiencias frente a la ambición reduccionista de los planificadores" (Gorelik, 2004: 7). Cayó el relato de la ciudad como el lugar habitado por la comunidad política natural, como el lugar de la planificación y el uso racional. Pero entre las secuelas de este giro, se da la vuelta al argumento y:

> el pensamiento técnico ya ha internalizado las críticas posmodernas a su ambición proyectual y las viene esgrimiendo como argumento (a veces preocupado, muchas otras, cínico) de su impotencia frente al *statu quo*; cuando el caos vital de la sociedad urbana legitima el caos vital del mercado como único mecanismo de transformación de la ciudad, y el motivo cultural de la diferencia y la fragmentación legitima el motivo político de la desigualdad y la fractura. (Gorelik, 2004: 7)

Los nodos de ordenamiento urbano a merced del capital global se alimentan y producen, y el mapa urbano se desmantela. Gorelik sigue a García Canclini (1991) al preguntarse sobre la crisis, el estallido del espacio pú-

blico, los mapas de la ciudad y los modos de valorarlos. La primera parte de la respuesta de García Canclini es diferenciar las ciudades europeas y las latinoamericanas en torno a la "atomización" y las "identidades móviles":

> La imagen celebratoria que valora la dispersión y la multiplicidad como fundamento de una vida más libre tiene un sentido cuando aparece en ciudades que vienen de un largo periodo de planificación que reguló el crecimiento urbano y la satisfacción de las necesidades sociales básicas, de modo tal que la pérdida de poder de los órdenes totalizadores puede verse como parte de una lógica de descentralización democrática. En cambio, en ciudades que tradicionalmente padecieron crecimiento caótico, caracterizadas por un uso depredatorio del medio ambiente y por la existencia de masas excluidas al borde de la sobrevivencia, una política de radicalización de la diseminación lleva el alto riesgo de hacer explotar las tendencias desintegradoras y destructivas, con el resultado de mayor autoritarismo y represión. De modo tal que, en estas ciudades, una verdadera democratización debería apostar a que se "rehaga el mapa, el sentido global de la sociabilidad urbana". (Canclini, 1991, citado en Gorelik, 2004: 8)

El sobre-lugar que han tenido, en la cuestión urbana, el símbolo, la poética, la estética, el imaginario, el deseo, el discurso; han dejado desatendidas las "necesidades materiales" limitadas, en tanto que el "[…] el nuevo modo social y urbano apuntala la proliferación de universos incomunicados a los que se les niega toda intervención" (Gorelik, 2004: 8). La hiperfragmentación poética del abordaje de la cuestión urbana en América Latina han acompañado procesos de quiebre de la ciudad y la sociedad. Lo que para otras latitudes fue una liberación del proyecto autoritario de la modernidad, en ésta ha significado un respaldo a los marcos normativos implementados desde la lógica del mercado (Gorelik, 2004: 8).

Para aproximarnos a lo urbano en nuestras ciudades es necesario tener en cuenta que aquella división rural/urbano es difusa, más que en un sentido arquitectónico o de dotación de servicios, en términos de comportamiento y visión del mundo. En palabras de García Canclini: "son ciudades invadidas por el campo […] es decir, intersecciones, entrelazamientos entre lo rural y lo urbano, que vuelven insuficiente e insatisfactoria esa

definición de lo urbano por oposición con lo rural" (2007: 70); por lo que, para poder abordarlas necesitamos también considerar los procesos históricos y sociales, los aspectos económicos e ideológicos, así como el habitar la ciudad (2007: 71).

En la recuperación de los imaginarios urbanos como categoría analítica, se busca un fundamento sociológico para pensar metodologías cuantitativas que permitan salir de la sola crítica literaria, de la hiperfragmentación poética, del mero "recorrido distraído del *flaneur* [de Benjamin], la lectura a 'contrapelo' de los productos de la más crasa realidad del mercado […], la atención a las prácticas desterritorializadas o la búsqueda de identidades tribales en cada esquina" (Gorelik, 2004: 8).

En palabras de García Canclini, "Las ciudades no son solo un fenómeno físico, un modo de ocupar el espacio, de aglomerarse, sino también lugares donde ocurren fenómenos expresivos que entran en tensión con la racionalización, con las pretensiones de racionalizar la vida social" (2007: 72), de aplicar modelos de civilidad y desarrollo basados en ciertos supuestos naturalizados, tales como la oposición rural/urbano. La ciudad es el "lugar para habitar y para ser imaginado […] se configuran con imágenes […] se vuelve densa al cargarse con fantasías heterogéneas. La urbe programada para funcionar, diseñada en cuadrícula, se desborda y se multiplica en ficciones individuales y colectivas" (Canclini, 2007: 107), signadas por sus propios procesos, materializando jerarquías.

Fantasías y ficciones se materializan y encarnan en los cuerpos que habitan la ciudad. En la bibliografía sobre el espacio urbano en general, y el espacio público en particular, sobresale la idea de la naturalización, de las estructuras de poderes y relaciones sociales que aparentan neutralidad (Bondi, 2006; Velázquez, 2000). Guerra, siguiendo a Grosz, sostiene que "[l]a ciudad es así una condición y un medio más a través del cual se produce la corporalidad a nivel social, sexual y discursivo" (2003: 289). Estas afirmaciones me llevan a la siguiente pregunta, ¿de qué cuerpo hablamos cuando hablamos de cuerpo, más aún, de cuerpo y ciudad? En el siguiente acápite retomo algunas preguntas sobre el cuerpo y su (des)naturalización y la ciudad.

Carne, huesos y sangre: la corporeidad

Afirmemos con McDowell (2000: 101) que "el espacio y el lugar son sexuados y tienen un carácter de género, las relaciones de género y la sexualidad están 'espacializadas'". Las geógrafas feministas nos hablan del cuerpo como lugar (si el cuerpo es un lugar entonces es sexuado), un lugar flexible y fluido, más allá de su materialidad, constructo social o discurso (McDowell, 2000). El cuerpo también se ha vinculado con la sexualidad (apareciendo la sexualidad como algo del cuerpo) y la diferencia corporal; estas diferencias corporales no son solo "sexuales". Las diferencias de los cuerpos no son *per se* diferencias jerárquicas.

Las geógrafas feministas de "países industrializados avanzados" sostienen que "con el paso de una economía industrial a otra de servicios, la corporeidad del trabajador ha dejado de ser fuerza muscular para convertirse en parte de un producto de intercambio" (McDowell, 2000: 63); un cuerpo deseador que debe ser deseable, lo cual se evidencia en la obsesión por la dieta, el ejercicio, el dispositivo de la salud; deseable gracias también a la "ciencia médica", a la "cirugía estética" para "eliminar, reformar, arreglar y ocultar" (McDowell, 2000: 64).

Pero el cuerpo no tiene conceptos, hay conceptos sobre el cuerpo[1]. Existe un contenido obsesivo que se fundamenta en lo visual y artificioso que aparece en la deconstrucción de la separación del cuerpo y la mente. El contenido antes mencionado sugiere que *ver* lo masculino y lo femenino se alimenta del consumo de los cuerpos en tanto objetos de intercambio. Si el cuerpo es materia transformada y transable, cabe las preguntas: ¿el cuerpo "natural" es inexistente? ¿Los atributos biológicos se crean a través del discurso científico y otros discursos sociales? *Defeco*: ¿qué de discurso científico tiene eso?

Intentar "borrar" naturaleza de la dicotomía naturaleza/cultura, conlleva la pregunta de que tal vez lo que se debería borrar es la barra inversa. Lo

1 Varias de las interrogantes que surgen aquí parten de mi visita a distintos discursos y saberes sobre el cuerpo, la sexualidad y la reproducción; entre estos cabe mencionar el discurso médico, la magia y la sanación natural energética. Tales interrogantes se han nutrido, o más bien explosionado, por las conversaciones llevadas con José Vacas, aunque la responsabilidad por su interpretación es toda mía.

naturalizado son los conceptos: ¿es del cuerpo de donde vienen las "hegemonías masculinas y el poder heterosexual"? ¿Por qué "deconstruir" lo natural del cuerpo? El cuerpo no es el lugar de donde surgen las inequidades, sino el lugar en el que aterrizan.

En palabras de Verena Stolcke, "La naturaleza y la cultura no son los extremos de un *continuum*, sino que los seres humanos somos organismos dotados de esa facultad específica de simbolizar el mundo en que vivimos […] El desafío de la antropología [y de otras formas de conocimiento] consiste en tener siempre en cuenta esta bi-unidimensionalidad en lugar de oscilar entre un determinismo material y un interpretativismo simbólico-cultural" (citada en Ventura, 2011: 143). El ser seres vivos con capacidad de simbolización me lleva a la pregunta de, ¿qué quiere decir que se simbolice el cuerpo como un discurso científico y social? Más aún si consideramos que el "sustento de las doctrinas esencialistas de las desigualdades y exclusiones sociopolíticas […] [es] la disociación ontológica entre naturaleza y cultura" (Stolcke citada en Ventura, 2011: 143).

El estructuralismo pondría delante de nosotros y sin máscaras, la dicotomía naturaleza/cultura como fundamento de las "sociedades occidentales modernas", el pensamiento ilustrado y la primacía de la razón. Lo que hace el pos (estructuralismo, modernismo, si para algunos son la misma cosa o cosas distintas) es intentar suprimir del todo "la naturaleza" a través de la primacía discursiva.

Tal vez sexo y género puedan ser característicos de los cuerpos sin convertirse en una condición de subordinación. En el cuerpo también hay dolores (y la impostergable muerte) y sensaciones, funciones y atributos que van más allá del lenguaje. Siguiendo a Laqueur (1994), es necesario rescatar la carne de las tensiones permanentes entre lo lingüístico y lo extra lingüístico, si hacemos del sexo (y del cuerpo) puro constructo, lo vaciamos de contenido.

Nos guste o no, hasta ahora los humanos crecen en un útero y reciben oxígeno y alimento hasta el alumbramiento, aunque el óvulo pueda ser fecundado de manera que no necesite del acto sexual reproductivo y se den las consecuentes discusiones sobre lo que es la familia (que develan principios organizativos y presupuestos sociales). Estas discusiones evidencian

la bi-unidimensionalidad del cuerpo en tanto organismo natural y cultural; entonces en el cuerpo hay relaciones sociales, históricas, es "un lugar cultural con significados de género" (Judith Butler citada en McDowell, 2000: 68).

Estas relaciones sociales e históricas nos llevan al lugar en el que están los cuerpos, a lo que habitar la ciudad significa para un cuerpo. La ciudad se ha entendido como un espacio de saturación cultural en oposición a lo rural que se ha vinculado con la naturaleza; la distinción pone en evidencia la conceptualización de la naturaleza como sujeto de dominación. El cuerpo, al ubicarse en el espacio urbano entendido como espacio cultural, se transforma a través de lo visual; la transformación que atraviesa el cuerpo implica que se ha convertido en un "producto cultural" (Elizabeth Grosz, 1992, citada en McDowell, 2000).

Si de acuerdo con García Canclini la separación entre lo rural y lo urbano en las ciudades latinoamericanas es difusa, entonces hablar de ciudad es hablar de esa extraña relación inacabada entre lo rural y lo urbano, por tanto, es hablar de una no desasociación entre naturaleza y cultura. Hablar de corporeidad es hablar de llevar la conquista, la colonia, el mestizaje, el racismo, las políticas de blanqueamiento, la dependencia, el subdesarrollo, el patriarcado y la imaginería de género[2] en la piel.

Travestismo y ciudad[3]

Con esta periodización que intenta vincular cuerpo y ciudad, no pretendo narrar una historia monolítica, sino seguir a lo femenino en una de sus expresiones: los hombres feminizados y su tránsito y ubicación en los espacios urbanos. Lucía Guerra afirma que las ciudades latinoamericanas se fundan sobre una lógica en la que predominan los valores otorgados a

2 Al hablar sobre imaginería de género en América Latina se ha discutido extensamente acerca del marianismo y el machismo (Stevens, 1973; Fuller, 1995; Navarro, 2002) y de las cualidades con las que se ha dado forma a lo femenino y constituido el sujeto mujer. Al respecto, los trabajos de Stolen (1997), Goetschel (1991), Cuvi y Martínez (1994) mapean los significados atribuidos a lo femenino y a las mujeres a nivel local.

3 En esta sección me referiero, en varios pasajes, mi texto en cuestión *Travestismo urbano*.

lo masculino: el dominio y control de la naturaleza, "la proeza, el poder y la aptitud bélica […] Y es desde los cuarteles de esta epistemología y sus diversos discursos y ordenaciones que se erige el sujeto hegemónico a través de la devaluación de los otros: indígenas relegados a la categoría de salvajes y herejes, mujeres en el polo negativo de las construcciones binarias y homosexuales castigados en la época por practicar 'el pecado nefando', sinónimo de 'lo detestable' y 'lo innombrable" (Guerra, 2003: 290).

Estudiosos del proceso urbano de Quito se aproximan a la fundación de la ciudad y su lógica de implantación durante la conquista, el papel de la Iglesia católica como aparato de control ideológico manifestado a nivel de planificación y arquitectura; así, el plano damero evidenciaba el acceso a los poderes religioso y administrativo relacionados con clase social y raza en el proceso de jerarquización social en los territorios conquistados (Achig, 1983: 38). Siguiendo a Bourdieu:

> [e]n una sociedad jerárquica, no hay espacio que no esté jerarquizado y no exprese las jerarquías y las distancias sociales, de un modo (más o menos) deformado y sobre todo enmascarado por el *efecto de naturalización* que entraña la inscripción duradera de las realidades sociales en el mundo natural: así, determinadas diferencias producidas por la lógica histórica pueden aparecer surgidas de la naturaleza de las cosas (basta con pensar en la idea de "frontera natural"). (1999: 120)

Esta lógica fundacional hace referencia (siguiendo a Artieda, 2003; Achig, 1983; y Kingman, 2008) a un sistema construido sobre una base ideológica judeo-cristiana que remite al papel de la Iglesia católica como ente normativo de la vida social y doméstica fusionado con el Estado, su rol y acciones, basadas en una economía política de base rentística (Kingman, 2008: 154); lo que se extendería durante la república y que empezaría a transformarse a finales del siglo XIX y principios del XX a partir del proyecto liberal (Kingman, 2008: 41). El proyecto liberal buscaría la separación de la Iglesia católica y el Estado, la ampliación de las libertades ciudadanas y la dinamización del mercado (Kingman, 2008; Prieto, 2004).

Los límites de las libertades en la ciudad debían definirse de manera explícita en una noción de ciudadanía limitada a partir de ser varón: *el* individuo libre de la sociedad civil. A fines del XIX solamente los varones adultos alfabetos con cierto capital económico, eran ciudadanos. El acceso, control y dominio sobre las mujeres y su sexualidad representó también una de las marcas definitorias de la ciudadanía. Durante el liberalismo se suprimió el sexo del ciudadano dentro de las leyes y en 1924, se otorgó el derecho al voto a las mujeres (Prieto y Goetschel, 2008: 302-304).

A decir de Guerrero, la ciudadanía (en el pasado y en el presente) "puede convertirse en un campo social donde se arman y se juegan relaciones de dominación. En esas situaciones los *ciudadanos naturales*, el grupo de aquellos que ejercen el poder y se consideran entre sí *interpares*, los miembros de la 'comunidad legítima' (la que se autodefine como 'natural' por estar dentro de sus 'fronteras internas': su historia y su cultura), sean cuales fueren los criterios precisos y concretos (desde luego siempre arbitrarios) que se emplean para definir dicha comunidad en el mundo del sentido común […]" (Guerrero, 2010: 413).

Tras la Revolución Liberal "una alianza de intereses entre la burguesía comercial de la Costa y los terratenientes de la Sierra constituye un proyecto oligárquico de desarrollo del capitalismo" (Kingman, 2008: 89). En el proceso urbano de Quito, se lotizaron los terrenos del norte de la ciudad, pertenecientes a los hacendados y se construyeron ciudadelas residenciales de tipo burgués, como la Mariscal (Gómez, 1979), modificando las formas de implantación de la población, dando paso a una transformación urbana: de la radial concéntrica que había caracterizado el período anterior, a una longitudinal (Jaime Erazo, comunicación personal, 2012). En el sur de la ciudad se asentaron obreros y trabajadores (Achig, 1983). A finales de la década de 1930 el perfil urbano de la ciudad se modificó por la construcción de edificios modernos y otros estilos arquitectónicos (Aguirre *et al.*, 2005: 38, 39) y la creación del Plan Regulador de Quito a mediados de 1940. La planificación generó un territorio estratificado que ubicó ciertos segmentos sociales en zonas designadas (Jaime Erazo, comunicación personal, 2012).

Durante el período radial concéntrico de la ciudad los habitantes que renunciaran al derecho de acceso y dominio sobre las mujeres y su sexualidad, que asumieran características de género "femeninas" serían categorizados como "viciosos"[4] o desviados. Más tarde se denominarían delincuentes, cuando se estableció en 1938 el Código Penal con el artículo 516 del capítulo II (del atentado contra el pudor, de la violación y del estupro), en el título VIII (de los delitos sexuales): "En los casos de homosexualismo, que no constituyan violación, los dos correos serán reprimidos con reclusión mayor de cuatro a ocho años". Al finalizar la década de 1930 la ciudad y la sexualidad se regularían a partir de normativas institucionales de corte planificador y legal.

En las décadas de 1940 y 1950, los encuentros entre varones empezaron a conocerse. Se llevaban a cabo en espacios públicos, clandestinamente; a través de las prácticas de encuentro, viaje y recorrido por las calles del centro histórico (anterior núcleo del plano damero), se interpelaron a las instituciones eclesiales y estatales. A partir de 1960 arrancó un incipiente proceso industrial, si bien Quito se caracterizaba por una dinámica burocrática de tipo administrativa (Gómez, 1979; Achig, 1983). El perfil urbano se re-significó y se estableció una tendencia modernista por la que se "redefin[ió] el concepto de espacio público (parques y escenarios deportivos) […] dentro de un punto de inflexión en su desarrollo urbano" (Córdova, 2005: 173). Los parques y escenarios deportivos se transformaron en el lugar en el que lo público adquirió sentido; se dieron cambios drásticos a nivel poblacional, de urbanización, de proyectos habitacionales cobijados bajo el boom petrolero y los regímenes militares. La incorporación de los valles aledaños o conurbación constituyó una idea de metrópoli.

Ciertas zonas (como la 24 de Mayo) se convirtieron en zonas de desfogue sexual, aceptadas y promovidas en el caso de la prostitución femenina, mientras que los casos conocidos sobre homosexualidad (que se denomi-

4 Baso esta afirmación en el análisis del cuento de Pablo Palacio "Un hombre muerto a puntapiés" publicado en 1929. En los arrabales de Quito de los años veinte aparece mal herido un forastero. Un investigador aficionado reconstruye, a partir de las fotos que le entregan en la comisaría, una fisonomía afeminada, una personalidad mediocre, "una desviación de los instintos". El futuro muerto recorre las calles del centro y se aleja paulatinamente porque no pudo satisfacer sus deseos, empieza a abordar a hombres, aborda a un muchacho quien pide auxilio, el padre del muchacho lo rescata y propina una paliza al hombre. Lo encuentran mal herido, lo llevan a la comisaría y allí muere… por los puntapiés.

naba comúnmente "estar en la huevada") se trataron bajo la dinámica del escándalo, en un contexto fuertemente anticomunista (Manuel Acosta, comunicación personal, 2008).

Hacia mediados de la década de 1960[5] el barrio residencial de tipo burgués (la Mariscal) se transformó en un sector comercial, administrativo y turístico (Gómez, 1979). El anterior período longitudinal de la ciudad pasó a un longitudinal polinuclear con la creación de nuevas centralidades, específicamente los sectores conocidos como el Aeropuerto y La Carolina (Jaime Erazo, comunicación personal, 2012). Sobre la disputa respecto de una ciudadanía universal se extendieron "derechos políticos a la población analfabeta, en su mayoría indígenas y mujeres" (Prieto y Goetschel, 2008: 32).

Los encuentros clandestinos seguían ocurriendo en el centro histórico, los cines y el parque de El Ejido (que marca el límite entre el viejo norte y el centro). A principios de la década se reúnen "las damas Bolivia", que es el nombre de la calle donde se ubicaba la casa que rentaron como sitio de reunión (Jorge Medranda, comunicación personal, 2008; Manuel Acosta, comunicación personal, 2008). Hacia finales de la década llegan lesbianas a la casa y surge la idea de convertir "el ambiente", "esto", "la huevada" en "comunidad". Las nuevas centralidades fueron el escenario de ubicación de las sexualidades, la memoria registra presencias "extrañas" a las definiciones de género en el contenido de lo femenino y lo masculino circulando por ciertas zonas de la ciudad (Margarita Camacho, comunicación personal, 2008): tal es el caso de la Plaza del Teatro en el centro histórico, la transición entre El Ejido y la Mariscal, la transición entre la Mariscal y la Carolina, entre la Carolina y el Aeropuerto en el sector conocido como la "Y".

Se crea el primer club nocturno (bar de ambiente) en la década de 1980, que al ser el único lugar de encuentro y socialización (más que de comercio e intercambio sexual) aglutinaba a las diversidades de la diversidad; sin embargo, gays, lesbianas y travestis al interior de este espacio mantuvieron barreras (Jorge Medranda, comunicación personal, 2008). Durante las redadas policiales las lesbianas daban lucha mientras los gays

5 En el contexto de la reforma agraria y la implementación del proyecto de inclusión del campesinado a la vida nacional.

huían, porque lo penalizado era la homosexualidad pero quienes "sufrían la peor parte en estas batallas eran las travestis y los gays más afeminados" (Jorge Medranda, comunicación personal, 2008).

El encuentro clandestino como práctica que ponía en juego regímenes y normativas sobre la sexualidad y el género, recibieron el aporte del activismo LGBT hacia finales de la década de 1980; esto frente al aparecimiento del VIH/SIDA y trabajos sobre salud sexual. La discursiva oficial puso en la picota a los homosexuales a nivel local y global, mientras que el virus era un castigo de una moral sexual deprimida (Ingenschay, 2007). Las iniciativas que trabajaban salud y virus, con un componente de identidad sexual diversa, de cara a la ilegalidad de la homosexualidad, conjugaron sus acciones e hicieron de su frente de lucha los derechos humanos.

Condicionados por un marco de ilegalidad, en la búsqueda y creación de espacios de interacción, se fusionaron lo lúdico, el activismo, la identidad. Los sitios de encuentro clandestinos –como bares y discotecas– devinieron espacios para pensar la lucha, posicionar la orientación sexual como referente de respeto como otras formas de hacer política: "[…] formas inéditas de implicación cívica […] se trata de formas de participación que algunos autores vinculan con la difusión de una 'política de la protesta', esgrimiendo diversos motivos para explicar el aparente alejamiento de los ciudadanos de los canales de participación tradicionales de las democracias liberales […]" (Morán y Revilla, 2008: 161). Las formas clandestinas de acción no convencional en espacios demarcados entre las instituciones y los movimientos sociales se convierten en formas de protesta en la audacia de las estrategias de encuentro, socialización y enfrentamiento.

A partir de las redadas realizadas en Abanicos Bar (en la ciudad de Cuenca), se creó un frente de respaldo por organizaciones LGBT y de derechos humanos (Salgado, 2008: 21) que denunciaron la inconstitucionalidad del artículo 516. Fueron especialmente organizaciones en las que trans femeninas daban la cara visible: Triángulo Andino y Coccinelli. La primera sería un grupo de FEDAEPS (una de las primeras organizaciones en trabajar el tema de salud VIH/SIDA, diversidades sexuales que en un principio se llamaría SOGA) (Jorge Medranda, comunicación personal,

2008). La segunda estaba conformada casi en su totalidad por travestis trabajadoras sexuales organizadas por el grado de represión policial, abusos y humillaciones (Rachel Erazo, comunicación personal, 2008).

Los colectivos se visibilizaron pública y políticamente en espacios públicos y familiares, se movilizaron para presentar la demanda por inconstitucionalidad. La participación preponderante de transfemeninas nos habla, a la vez, de una reivindicación del cuerpo, del cuerpo como lugar, que evidenció la lógica binaria de género dentro del marco estratégico de la consecución de derechos.

En 1997 se logra la despenalización de la homosexualidad en Ecuador y la constitucionalización de la no discriminación en 1998. Aquí se presenta una paradoja. En el marco de derechos, las normas jurídicas facilitan la emancipación; la interpelación a las regulaciones públicas hacen frente al Estado, cuando es precisamente el Estado el que funciona como "instancia de control y definición histórica de lo minoritario sexual como lo excluido, inaceptable, punible" (Araujo, 2008: 35). El derecho (los derechos, la juridización y judicialización) regulan entonces la vida social, diluyendo en su dinámica los cuestionamientos sobre las esferas éticas y morales, sin embargo, son precisamente las esferas éticas y morales las que enardecen cuando los derechos se cuestionan. Tambalean las nociones tradicionales sobre ciudadanía –el individuo y su relación contractual con el Estado y el mercado (Bonan, 2007), las definiciones tradicionales de ciudadano– y se apeló por la ciudadanía sexual. Esto cuestiona la ciudadanía de la teoría clásica porque objeta al Estado como único interlocutor y al ciudadano como sujeto pasivo, receptor de derechos; cuestiona los principios de igualdad y universalidad, proponiendo la diferencia; llama la atención sobre las definiciones de individuo; intenta reconstruir las nociones de lo público y lo privado para desmantelar la idea del poder como relativo a la esfera de lo público a la negociación política.

Estas reivindicaciones fueron posibles también por el giro cultural preponderante en la región durante las décadas de 1980 y 1990. El avance neoliberal conllevaría cambios en las agendas políticas y académicas, los reconocimientos constitucionales de lo pluriétnico y lo multicultural (Reygadas, 2007).

En la Constitución de 1998 se enunciaron los derechos sexuales como derechos humanos, sin embargo, los primeros estuvieron ligados a los derechos reproductivos, lo que apuntaló una visión que liga sexualidad y reproducción. Al abarcar los derechos reproductivos a los derechos sexuales, las mujeres –el control de su sexualidad– ocuparon el centro del debate por la asociación de lo femenino con la reproducción como vocación. Esto dejó a los hombres fuera, salvo se incluyeran en el matrimonio heterosexual, quedando excluida de la titularidad de derechos cualquier otra diferencia: la única familia reconocida como fundamento de la sociedad era la familia nuclear conformada por un hombre y una mujer (Salgado, 2008: 57 y ss.).

Lo anterior generó un vacío normativo explícito (recogido, diez años más tarde, en la Constitución de 2008 que norma la no discriminación por identidad de género) porque las demandas trans evidencian el fundamento binario de las leyes constitutivas bajo las cuales se han conformado los Estados nacionales (Falcón y Pérez, 2005: 65; Salgado, 2007); lo cual tiene efectos en el espacio público, su apropiación frontal y la explosión de divergencias o atomización de las identidades. Antes de la despenalización había pocos lugares de encuentro y donde se aglutinaban las personas sexualmente diversas, si bien en ellos los límites entre las diversidades eran claros. La ciudad y los recorridos, los tránsitos por las calles –considerados espacios tan clandestinos como los deseos– se transforman en escenarios en los que se despliegan estrategias políticas a través de cuerpos que irrumpen en áreas públicas.

Camacho (2007) reitera la importancia de las identidades travestis como el núcleo que posibilitó el cambio y el reconocimiento como sujetos de derechos de la población LGBT. Pese a ello, la población sexualmente diversa y específicamente la población trans, soportó el rechazo y el estigma al interior del propio conglomerado LGBT, no solamente frente al orden heteropatriarcal, sino en el acceso a espacios diferenciados y derechos legales, según esta misma autora, posiblemente por su renuncia voluntaria al estatus masculino.

Durante la despenalización y el cambio constitucional se habló de un sujeto sexualmente diverso que apuesta por la ciudadanía sexual (Rojas, 2008). Las identidades sexuales fueron conceptualizadas como "homosexuales" y también "lésbico-gay", convirtiéndose en el paraguas que aglu-

tinaba las formas de diversidad sexual y de género que habían participado en el proceso de despenalización[6]. Después, lo gay es interpelado por lo lésbico y lo trans (Rojas, 2008). La segregación por sexualidad y clase, así como por identidad de género, se plasmó en los espacios y se hizo evidente por medio del acceso a ellos.

La irrupción en el espacio público despliega estrategias políticas a la vez que transforma los escenarios de existencia, pero al mismo tiempo evidencia el imaginario sobre lo femenino. Una vez efectuado el proceso de legalización de las sexualidades diversas, la reivindicación gay se manifiesta a través del rescate de la masculinidad en el compulsivo intento de invisibilizar lo lésbico y mantener el estigma de lo trans. La pugna gay-trans se vuelve evidente en las prácticas transgenéricas sobre la sexualidad y la estética y las demandas gays de diferenciación entre lo gay y lo trans. Mientras que lo trans (a partir de comentarios y testimonios) reivindica la "completud femenina" por la posesión de un pene[7].

El límite temporal de mi investigación me limita, a la vez, para argumentar sobre los momentos posteriores al cambio constitucional de 2008 y la inclusión de la no discriminación por identidad de género, la ambigüedad sobre la constitución de las familias en el marco legal, las uniones de hecho "entre dos personas", el lugar de la naturaleza en el marco normativo, el papel del Estado, la construcción de sujetos a partir de las políticas públicas y sus ideales de sujeto. Otras investigaciones de acceso público como las de Rojas (2010), Aguirre (2010) y Sancho (2012, para el caso de Guayaquil) pueden dar luces y han hecho relevantes aportes al entendimiento de la imbricación corporeidad-espacio social.

Somos testigas de fuertes movilizaciones (de la sociedad civil y de la institucionalidad del Estado) que permiten afirmar que Quito es una ciudad fuertemente politizada en los temas de género y sexualidad[8]. La conjunción

6 Baso esta afirmación en trabajo de hemeroteca recopilado entre los años 1997-2008, especialmente en los archivos de los diarios *El Comercio* y *El Hoy*.

7 Camacho (2008) hace un análisis interesante en base a los ingresos por trabajo sexual de las transfemeninas, en el que resalta la hibridez corporal y de género, así como una "acumulación de saberes".

8 En el último año se han podido observar acciones frente a las clínicas de deshomosexualización, la Marcha de las Putas, o la campaña del Municipio "Quiero andar tranquila, calles sin acoso".

entre el espacio público y el cuerpo; el espacio social y la corporeidad, a través de las movilizaciones, ponen en evidencia el cinismo del patriarcado. Miradas que conjugan la politización del espacio urbano social en relación con la actual flexibilización y globalización de la economía, la imaginería de género y la construcción del sujeto femenino, están en marcha[9].

Conclusiones

Al aproximarnos a las ciudades andinas no podemos olvidar los largos procesos mediante los cuales se configuran el género, el cuerpo y la sexualidad, que a su vez están marcados por clase y raza. Las conceptualizaciones jerárquicas de estas configuraciones se materializan en la ciudad, en los espacios sociales, pero no se expresan en ubicaciones concentradas y opuestas: son formas zigzagueantes y ambiguas de aparecimiento y apropiación del espacio urbano.

El cuerpo que aparece en la ciudad no puede ser reducido a una sola forma de conceptualización respecto de su género. A partir de lo anterior, puede sostenerse que tanto la interpelación a la normativa de los poderes oficiales como el establecimiento de un principio de organización por parte de esos poderes, ocurren en el mismo espacio; entonces la ambigüedad de género no se encuentra *en los bordes*, ni circunscribe lo *normal*, sino que está en todas partes.

La visibilización y el reconocimiento son, en principio, fundamentales porque manifiestan la existencia de las diferencias. Sin embargo, lo que se entiende como femenino o masculino no depende tanto de la visibilización, sino de las formas de simbolizar los cuerpos.

Si entendemos la heterosexualidad como un régimen político que configura lo normal y lo anormal –el tipo de sexualidad edificada sobre las

9 Tales son las investigaciones en curso de: Annie Wilkinson (sobre las clínicas de deshomosexualización y su relación, por un lado, con la construcción de sujeto y, por otro, con el neoliberalismo global y la arremetida de las religiones monoteístas como la evangélica); Cristina Rosero (sobre la experiencia del aborto y su relación con la clase); Magaly Benalcázar (sobre las formas de reproducción de la lógica de género a través del piropo callejero); Mónica Tobar (sobre la relación de las mujeres con el trabajo por cuenta propia y las negociaciones en torno a la construcción del sujeto mujer, el trabajo de cuidados y el empoderamiento).

ideas de masculino y femenino, de hombre o mujer, que expresan la intención manifiesta de las leyes por la *naturalización* de los contenidos de las diferencias corporales– también necesitamos desmantelar las relaciones unívocas entre cuerpo, sexo y género, sin perder de vista la relación existente entre estos. Las preguntas que comparten tanto las aproximaciones académicas como la militancia de lucha política, deben considerar que esta relación es ontológica.

Las transformaciones sobre el cuerpo –sus adecuaciones estéticas– reproducen una compulsividad hacia lo binario y la recreación de lo masculino o lo femenino, sin incidir sobre sus contenidos heteronormativos. Asumirse como varón o mujer no cuestiona esos contenidos, sino que los reifica, al tiempo que denota la intención de la supremacía de la tecnología sobre la naturaleza reforzando la división naturaleza/cultura y borrando la dimensión "natural" de la vida y de los cuerpos. Lo que parecería una acción liberadora (la cirugía estética), deviene un dispositivo de control: ni la confesión, ni el diván producen seres más bellos y una intervención de las características mencionadas tampoco aborda el problema de una aproximación plural a la simbolización de los cuerpos.

Esta aproximación no pretende deslegitimar las revoluciones estéticas, como no pretende sobreponer un principio "natural" o caer en un determinismo biológico incuestionable. Lo que se sugiere es pensar antes que la forma, el contenido que le damos a la forma. Mientras escribía esto las noticias recogían dos casos. El primero el de un hombre-transfemenina que quiere concursar en Miss Universo; el segundo dos mujeres británicas que quieren inscribir a una menor, como sus madres, en el Registro Civil de Ecuador. El primer caso deja la impresión de que las rebeliones estéticas ayudarían a romper y cuestionar rígidos esquemas sobre lo masculino y femenino; el otro caso evidencia la permanencia de la patriarcalidad del sistema y sus leyes, pues en el papel se reconoce a familias diversas y la libre inscripción. No se trata, insisto, de elegir una aproximación o defender una causa en detrimento de la otra; se trata de que el contenido que llena la forma apunte a cambiar las injusticias.

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What, no tie? Political campaigns, gender, and leadership in Chile*

Gwynn Thomas**

Resumen

Este ensayo analiza la campaña presidencial chilena de 2005-2006 para poner en relieve la influencia compleja y continua del género en definiciones culturales de liderazgo político, y el acceso diferencial de mujeres y hombres y su inclusión en la política chilena. Argumento las múltiples formas en las cuales los tres candidatos principales, Michelle Bachelet, Joaquín Lavín y Sebastián Piñera, utilizaron creencias marcadas por género en las conexiones entre masculinidad, feminidad y liderazgo político para presentarse como la persona ideal para liderar Chile. Lavín y Piñera utilizaron conexiones tradicionales entre hombres, masculinidades y la política para promover sus candidaturas y cuestionar las habilidades de Bachelet. Bachelet confrontó estas críticas categorizándolas como sexistas y argumentando que ella representaba una forma alterna de liderazgo femenino. La ideología de género continúa representando un factor contextual importante que condiciona los tipos de estrategias utilizados por los y las candidatas políticas.

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* A later version of this article has been published as "Michelle Bachelet's Liderazgo Feminino (Feminine Leadership): Gender and Redefining Political Leadership in Chile's 2005 Presidential Campaign," in the *International Feminist Journal of Politics* (Volume 13, Issue 1, 2011). Research for this article was funded by the Baldy Center for Law and Social Policy and the Gender Institute, both at the University at Buffalo.

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Michelle is a brave woman […] but to be President much more is required […] Leadership, character, and will are required.
–Sebastián Piñera

A president also needs to have independence, credibility, and I am the candidate because my only interest is the interest of the citizenry.
–Michelle Bachelet[1]

In January 2006, Michelle Bachelet made history by getting elected as Chile's first woman president. Her emergence as the official candidate of Chile's center-left governing coalition, the Concertación, caught the world's attention. This interest reflected both on Bachelet's own personal charm and charisma, as well as the seeming paradox presented by her popularity in a country often seen as one of the most culturally conservative countries in Latin America. The paradox depended not only on her status as a woman but also on her unique personal biography. Bachelet freely admits that she is "a woman, a divorcee, an agnostic, and a socialist […] all [the] possible sins together"[2], all of which make her a very unusual political figure in Chilean politics. Surprisingly, during the presidential campaign, her position as a divorced, single mother was not part of an explicit attack on her personal qualities, nor her abilities to serve as president of Chile. Instead, as demonstrated in the opening quotes, Michelle Bachelet was often attacked in terms of whether she had the type of political leadership needed to be president. During the campaign, Chileans were asked, both implicitly and explicitly, to weigh the following questions: are men and women equally capable of serving as president? Do women and men possess the same qualities and characteristics of political leadership? In other words, how and in what ways is political leadership gendered? In the Chilean election, the above questions were often posed in the following

1 Exchange between Michelle Bachelet and Sebastián Piñera during the presidential debate January 4, 2006. "Elecciones Chile 2006: Debate Presidencial", *El Mercurio,* January 8, 2007. Available at: http://www.emol.com/especiales/elecciones_debate2006/loquedijeron.htm.

2 *International Herald Tribune*, December 11, 2005.

way, did Michelle Bachelet posses the crucial, if sometimes hard to define, qualities of "presidentialness"?

In this article I analyze the debate over Michelle Bachelet's "presidentialness" as a way to reveal the complex and continuing influence of gender on cultural definitions of political leadership, and women's and men's differential access to and inclusion in Chilean politics. While it is not a new strategy to question the capability of a candidate to successfully fulfill a political appointment, the particular ways in which these charges were both leveled against Bachelet and how she and her supporters responded, provide a unique window into how traditional gendered understandings of political leadership are being both challenged and reproduced within the Chilean context. All three major presidential candidates, Michelle Bachelet, Joaquín Lavín, and Sebastián Piñera, used gendered beliefs about the connections between masculinity, femininity and political leadership to present themselves as the person best qualified to lead Chile and to question their opponents' political capabilities. Lavín and Piñera incorporated specific qualities often characterized as masculine to present themselves as the best people to be president. By referencing traditional connections between men, masculinity, and politics, they simultaneously implicitly and explicitly questioned the ability of Bachelet, as a woman, to be president.

Bachelet, on the other hand, presented herself as embodying an alternative leadership style, a style that she defined as "*liderazgo feminino*" (feminine leadership). Feminine leadership, she claimed, was based on more egalitarian principles of teamwork, participation, and inclusion, and was an alternative to the form of traditional masculine leadership. She argued that her particular style of political leadership allowed her to have a better connection with and understanding of everyday problems of most Chileans. Bachelet not only sought to construct a definition of leadership that included traits more often associated with women, but also directly challenged criticisms of her leadership style by labeling these attacks as sexist. She re-cast criticisms against her as part of a long-standing pattern of attacks on women's attempts to enter into politics, and presented her historic candidacy as both a result of women's past struggles and representative of a promise for greater equality in the future. Through a detailed

analysis of the campaign strategies used by both Bachelet and her male opponents, I reveal the complex intersection between gender and political leadership. The Chilean election demonstrates how the strategies pursued by political candidates of both sexes are influenced by the broader cultural understandings of gender ideology.

While based on a close analysis of the Chilean case, my study has broad implications for understanding the continuing gendered nature of politics, even as beliefs about both gender and politics undergo important changes. Given the relative scarcity of women who have won national presidential elections, much can be learned from a close analysis of how Bachelet and her campaign confronted doubts about a woman's abilities to serve at the highest level. My analysis is based on a close reading of visual and textual sources from the campaign (newspaper articles, editorials, web pages, billboards, pamphlets, and television propaganda), as well as over fifty interviews with political and intellectual elites, supporters, campaign workers, and participants from various campaign events I attended during my observation of the Chilean campaign between December 2005 and January 2006. My experiences, especially my participant observation of a variety of campaign events –from rallies, marches, and community organizing meetings to door-to-door canvassing– revealed that political campaigns represent a unique space in which to explore the shifting meanings of gender and politics within communities. Chile's 2005-2006 presidential campaign provided a space for both political elites and everyday Chileans to discuss and debate the gendered nature of political leadership, women's inclusion and exclusion from politics, and the relationship between the quality of Chile's democracy and these two issues.

This article does not attempt to examine the relative influence of gender in terms of the electoral result, but instead analyzes the different ways of using gender in constructing alternative meanings of political leadership. In taking this approach, I focus on the importance of gender as a contextual factor in defining political leadership. Recent studies have argued that gender is crucial in understanding political leadership. Indeed, the absence of interest in a gendered analysis of political leadership actually reveals the often times assumed masculine bias of these studies. Most studies assume political leaders, especially at the national level, to be men and ignore the importance of gender in rendering men's dominance unproblematic (Duerst-Lahti and Kelly, 1998). Genovese and Thompson (1993: 2) argue that all aspects of political leadership, including the importance of influence –being able to convince others to follow you, to accept your ideas, and to place faith in your political vision or project–, interact with gender. Currently, political leadership cannot be considered gender neutral because of the power of gendered beliefs and stereotypes in assessing leadership styles. The classic example here is assertiveness. As Duerst-Lahti and Kelly (1998: 28) note, while we might expect both male and female political leaders to behave assertively, women are limited in the level of aggression they can display without being seen as overly aggressive instead of assertive, while men are punished if they are seen as being too passive. These limits vary according to the gender ideologies in different cultures.

Importantly, current research does not show that voters will never be able to picture an individual woman as an expert in defense, or a man in education, but they reveal how gender shapes the political context differently for male and female candidates (Lawless, 2004; Panagopoulos, 2004; Hansen and Otero, 2006). Men and women do not compete on an equal playing field. Women candidates might benefit when citizens want characteristics associated with women candidates and be disadvantaged when the political context privileges areas seen as traditionally masculine. Men face the same issues but have an advantage because of the widespread relationship between men, masculinity, and politics. Both male and female political candidates must decide whether and to what extent they wish to confront or conform to gender stereotypes. Although many of these findings were produced in the context of the United States, their broad implications are suggestive in the Chilean context. While gender ideology in the two countries certainly differs in important ways, the larger perspective that gender functions as a contextual factor that affects both male and female candidates is highly relevant. What is needed is an understanding of the gendered nature of politics and political leadership within the Chilean context.

I develop my argument in three parts. I begin by setting the context of political leadership within Chile. I examine how gender ideology has

helped to define politics and political leadership differently for men and women. In the second section, I analyze the gendered appeals of Joaquín Lavín and Sebastián Piñera. The first round of the presidential campaign was dominated by an attempt to force a second round of voting and making sure that Bachelet received less than 50% of the vote, and through the contest between Piñera and Lavín, to see which of them would prevail as the Chilean right-wing candidate. The second round, between Piñera and Bachelet, was marked by Piñera's attempts to cast doubt on Bachelet's ability to be president. Finally, I turn to the use of gender in Bachelet's campaign. I analyze how Bachelet mobilized alternative symbolic resources to fight accusations of her lack of leadership and in her attempts to broaden the definition of a political leader, to include characteristics and qualities associated with women.

Gender and political leadership in Chile

In my discussions with Chileans about the ongoing debate around Bachelet's leadership qualities, I was routinely told that their culture is very "*machista*" (sexist). As María Esperanza Bonifaz, a participant in one of Michelle Bachelet's rallies, explained to me, "Chile is also a very conservative country, *machista* […] Presidential leadership was seen as masculine, the force, power against someone. Piñera is more aggressive and people like that, he is a very smooth speaker and people also like that" (personal communication, December 28, 2005, Santiago). As María Esperanza reveals, the debate over the candidates' political leadership was not gender neutral. Rather, the qualities and the characteristics needed by a president were intimately tied to larger beliefs about the relationship between gender and politics and the on-going struggle to redefine this relationship in ways that promote greater equality and inclusion. A complete discussion about the growing and evolving scholarship that examines how politics is gendered and gender is political, is beyond the scope of this article. Instead, in the following section, I focus very narrowly on the intersection between gender and political leadership in Chile since women were granted the right to vote in the mid-twenti-

eth century. This scholarship details the historical processes through which political leadership has overwhelmingly been defined as a paradigmatic sphere of participation for men, and as an activity requiring characteristics defined as masculine. This understanding of politics has served as a barrier to women's full participation, and women have had to struggle to change the relationship between gender, politics, and political leadership in order to be fully included in the process. The 2005-2006 presidential campaign and the debate over the gendered nature of political leadership cannot be understood without referring to this context.

Chile's traditional gendered division of society separated spheres of activities into public and private, and it assigned men the public domains of work and politics, while women were associated with family and the home (Chaney, 1979; Dore, 1997; Dore and Molyneux, 2000; Grau *et. al.*, 1997; Stevens, 1973). Feminist scholarship has shown the importance of recognizing that this dichotomy functions on a level of ideology rather than as an accurate reflection of women's and men's lived experiences (Cubitt and Greenslade, 1997; Pateman, 1988; Okin, 1989). But, at the level of ideology, it has had important and lasting effects on how politics and political leadership have been defined. The public/private dichotomy traditionally served to justify men's long-standing dominance of the arenas of formal politics (the right to vote, control of political parties, elected and appointed governmental positions at all levels) and to render women's exclusion from these same areas, unproblematic. When Chilean women began to challenge their political exclusion, they often sought to justify their inclusion by re-negotiating the boundaries between the public and private spheres. Women from across the political spectrum legitimized their entrance and interest in politics through referencing the unique perspective that they could bring because of the roles, responsibilities, and character traits associated with women, particularly those linked with motherhood (Lavrin, 1995; Power, 2002).

Elsa Chaney (1979), in one of the earliest studies done on the political involvement of women in Chile, coined the phrase "supermadre" to describe how women's political activity was seen by both themselves and by others, as an extension of their traditional roles within the home. Based on

her interviews with women involved in formal politics in Chile and Peru in the 1960s and 1970s, she argued that, "the female public official often is forced to legitimize her role as that of a mother in the larger 'house' of the municipality or even the nation, a kind of *supermadre*. The command echelons however are reserved for men" (Chaney, 1979: 5). Further she found that, "women overwhelmingly agreed to a division of labor in the polity that parallels the traditional, unequal roles of men and women in the family. Both men and women believe that women should participate in politics but in a style that is a 'reflection in the political institution of the divisions of tasks in the family'" (Chaney, 1979: 21). Thus, while women were increasingly participating in politics, they did so by re-interpreting the line between what was considered private and public. Women's political participation and leadership were easier to justify when they reproduced gender distinctions within politics. This division assigned to women the more stereotypically feminine tasks and issues, while maintaining men's overall dominance.

The relationship between gender and political leadership in Chile continued to be redefined during the years of military rule under Augusto Pinochet (1973-1990). During this time, the general definition of what was political shifted, as Pinochet ruthlessly suppressed the realm of formal politics by banning Chile's political parties, closing the Chilean Parliament, and exiling and arresting former political leaders. The attack on avenues of traditional political activities had a paradoxical effect on women's political participation. As the arena of formal politics shrank, women's activities and leadership in a wide range of social movements –including popular women's movements, human rights movements, and feminist movements–exploded. The traditional link between women and familial and community concerns meant that women justified their political activity in terms of trying to fulfill traditional gendered roles, roles often upheld, at least rhetorically, by the conservative military regime (Valenzuela, 1987). A wealth of studies on women's political mobilization under dictatorships have highlighted the importance of motherhood as a "mobilizing referent" for women (Alvarez, 1990; Jaquette, 1994). The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo in Argentina often serve as the paradigmatic example of this tendency (Feijoó and Nari, 1994). In Chile, while less pronounced, both human rights groups and popular women's organizations frequently framed their demands and justified their political actions through appealing to motherhood and women's social roles in taking care of families (Baldez, 2002; Chuchryk, 1994; Valdés 1993; Thomas 2011).

The "militant motherhood" embraced by these organizations argued that the qualities and characteristics demanded by women's social roles as mothers stood in direct contrast to the type of political leadership being promoted by Pinochet. While Pinochet disappeared family members and promoted policies that impoverished their communities, women organized to protect their families and sustain their communities. While Pinochet embraced the image of a traditional family under the control of the male patriarch as the guiding image for his government, women activists argued that true democracy was only possible by rooting out the patriarchal nature both at home and in the country (Valenzuela and Marshall, 1983). Therefore, the use of "politicized motherhood" helped to justify women's political involvement and expanded the definition of political leadership to include qualities and characteristics generally seen as "feminine". While expanding the definition of political leadership, the strategies pursued by women leaders as they organized against Pinochet also continued to maintain a distinction between women and men's styles of political leadership.

With the return to democracy in 1990, women in Chile pressed for their full incorporation into all aspects of Chilean politics. They were only partially successful. Following the election of the Concertación[3] candidate, Patricio Aylwin, women were appointed to the executive branch of government, including at the level of the cabinet. The creation of the National Service for Women (SERNAM), which works to promote education around women's issues and gender equality in public policy, provided a permanent home for women's issues within governmental agencies. However, women were much less successful in their attempts to increase women's participation in electoral politics and to change the masculine culture

3 The "Concertación" or Coalition of Parties for Democracy was a center-left alliance among several political parties that organized the opposition to Pinochet in a national referendum that brought an end to military rule. Concertación presidents governed Chile from 1990-2010.

of Chile's political parties. Susan Franceschet (2003: 3) argues that Chilean politics remains organized around a gendered distinction between formal and informal politics. Women are seen as more suited for informal politics which center around "issues that directly affect their families and their communities", while men have continued their dominance of the institutions of formal politics (Franceschet, 2003: 5-10) For example, during the first democratic election in 1990, only 5 women (or 5.8%) were elected to the Chamber of Deputies, the lower house of the government, and only one woman was elected to the Senate (Hardy, 2005; Ríos Tobar and Villar, 2006)[4]. In 2000, women continued to dominate community organizations, holding the vast majority of leadership positions in informal political organizations like community soup kitchens (95%) or solidarity and community workshops (82%), while holding only 16.2% of leadership positions within political parties (Franceschet, 2003: 3).

The continuing gendered division between informal and formal politics has shaped current beliefs about political leadership. Both men and women often see formal politics as dealing only with issues of power and self-interest, as opposed to informal politics that are organized around feminine concerns such as altruism and the general interests of families and communities. Thus, a common perception is that women's activities are not properly political. Furthermore, formal politics remain dominated by men and are associated with masculine characteristics of power, competition, and aggressiveness, as was observed by Maria Esperanza above. The masculine bias of current politics extends to the culture within Chile's powerful political parties. Based on her interviews with women involved in Chilean political parties, Susan Franceschet (2003: 91) argues that, "women have been socialized to behave at odds with current political practices, which is overwhelmingly masculine", and women are discriminated against if they do not behave in a masculine way. As María Rozas, a past member of Parliament for the Christian Democrats, notes, "In order that they [men] do listen to you, women have to shout

4 It should be noted that the number of women in the Senate has been very stable. Before the military coup in 1973, there were two women senators, and the highest number of women senators, three, occurred during the presidency of Eduardo Frei from 1964-1970. See also: www.camara.cl and www.senado.cl.

or swear, but that means adopting masculine behavior and it should not be like that" (Franceschet, 2003: 91).

The distinction between formal and informal has helped to maintain a definition of political leadership based on qualities associated with men and masculinity. Drawing on past political struggles, women political leaders often argue that they bring a different style of leadership that focuses more on teamwork, altruism, and reconciliation. It is important to note that these are generalizations that help set a broad context for discussions on political leadership and are often mobilized to serve as symbolic resources by different campaigns. Particular candidates craft strategies that at times might embrace, reject, or create new combinations of these beliefs. As explained below, the 2005-2006 presidential campaign invoked a range of gendered beliefs about political leadership including both traditional masculine definitions of political leadership, as well as beliefs about more feminine leadership styles.

Gender and political leadership in Chile's 2005-2006 presidential campaign

Since the return of democracy, Chilean politics have been dominated by two opposing political coalitions. The Concertación for Democracy –the center-left coalition composed of the Christian Democratic Party (CD), the Radical Social Democratic Party (PRSD), the Party for Democracy (PPD), and the Socialist Party (PS)– that has governed since the return of democracy, and on the right the Alliance for Chile, composed of two major parties, the Independent Democratic Union (UDI) and National Renovation (RN)[5]. Going into the presidential campaign, the Alliance for Chile hoped to capitalize on recent bribery scandals involving members of the Concertación and a growing sense that after sixteen years in power,

5 In the 2005 election, a coalition between the Chilean Communist Party and the Humanist Party fielded Tomás Hirsch, the founder of the Humanist Party, as their candidate. In the first round of the voting, he received 5.4% of the vote. For the sake of brevity, I do not analyze the gendered aspects of his campaign.

the leaders of the Concertación had grown arrogant and disconnected[6]. Political leaders within the Concertación were also worried about growing criticisms of their anti-democratic internal decision-making process and with the perception that they were generally out-of-touch with the grass-roots activists that had supported them in the transition, as well as with concerns of everyday Chileans.

In the run-up to the election, these concerns within the Concertación provided an opening for candidates who had not previously been considered for the presidency by party elites. My interviews revealed that many people believed that many party elites were surprised when the names of two women repeatedly rose to the top of the public opinion polls, Michelle Bachelet from the Socialist Party and Soledad Alvear from the Christian Democrats. Alvear and Bachelet had both been popular ministers in Ricardo Lagos's cabinet and had taken on posts never before held by women. Alvear had served as Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Bachelet was the first woman in Latin America to serve as Minister of Defense, having previously served as the Minister of Health. While Alvear and Bachelet were clearly politically experienced, they also benefited from the opening created by the internal political crises and broad public criticisms of the Concertación. The fact that they were women created a perception that they were political outsiders and would bring about the changes that many Chileans felt were needed both within the Concertación and in Chile in general. As noted by President Lagos in the early part of 2004, "The greatest change would be to have the first female president in the country"[7]. In this case, by having a female candidate, the Concertación could both promote a perception of change while still maintaining their political control. Both women also benefited from the perception that women political leaders are more honest, less corrupt, and more in touch with concerns of everyday Chileans (Franceschet, 2006).

6 This was considered to be general knowledge during the campaign, but for a thorough discussion of the election in terms of the politics between the two coalitions, see for example, Ricardo Gamboa and Carolina Segovia (2006), "Las elecciones presidenciales y parlamentarias en Chile", *Revista de Ciencia Política* 26 (1): 84-113.

7 *El Mercurio,* February 3, 2004.

While coming in as perceived political outsiders benefited both Alvear and Bachelet, this perception also had its disadvantages. One of the initial criticisms of both Bachelet and Alvear was that neither candidate had a solid power base within their respective parties. This criticism partly reflected the difficulties faced by women within Chile's political parties. Alvear's inability to consolidate the Christian Democratic party behind her candidacy was widely discussed as one factor in her decision to withdraw her candidacy and support Bachelet. Bachelet, while a member of the cabinet of a socialist president, had not been part of the governing elite within the Socialist Party structure and was not initially supported by this party. According to Clarissa Hardy, the outsider position of Bachelet in terms of party elite was one reason that fueled questions about her leadership. As she noted, "women are not incorporated into the leadership of the parties, the socialization [how you become a party leader] remains masculine […] the trajectory of women in the parties is very slow […] Women have the same qualifications, but the percentage of women [within leadership positions in the parties] remains very low" (personal communication, January 6, 2006, Santiago). Bachelet's candidacy, in particular, was initially driven by her popularity among Chileans as demonstrated by a number of opinion polls[8].

Many political party elites initially viewed Bachelet's candidacy with some suspicion. This hesitancy stemmed not only from her position as a relative outsider, but also from worries about her political leadership style. A review article in the popular right-leaning *La Tercera* (on February 15, 2006) about important campaign issues, published after the first round, reported that one of the phrases dominating the election had been "No da el ancho" or "She does not have the weight". This phrase was used to imply that Michelle Bachelet was a political lightweight and that she did not have the capacity to govern. *La Tercera* claimed that this was the, "Expression used to refer to the capacity of the candidate to the presidency of

8 The importance of opinion polls in propelling Michelle Bachelet's candidacy was the consistent answer I was given when conducting interviews in Chile between December of 2005 and January of 2006. I was told this by people in the street that were demonstrating in favor of Michelle Bachelet, women who had joined some of the earliest groups of citizens to support her candidacy, and Chilean intellectuals and party activists such as Clarissa Hardy and Danae Mlynarz, and feminist activist and social scientist, Teresa Valdez.

the Concertación. Although the phrase 'She does not have the weight' only was articulated and verbalized publicly by adherents to Piñera and Lavín, it was also heard from the mouths of high members of the governing party, who in private questioned [the capacity] of Bachelet." A former member of the Concertación Chamber of Deputies, Fanny Pollarrolo, told me that casting aspersions on the abilities and capacity of women is the typical way of criticizing and disqualifying women who are in positions of power (personal communication, January 4, 2006, Santiago). Certainly, skepticism about women's capacities helps to justify keeping women out of positions of political power. Danae Mlynarz, a city council member from Ñuñoa and a personal assistant to Bachelet during the first round of the campaign, noted that it continued to be a fierce fight to get the political parties to run more women for the positions of Deputies and Senators (personal communication, January 5, 2006, Santiago).

Political leadership: a man's prerogative

If certain sectors of the traditional political leadership of the Concertación questioned the political capacity of Bachelet, then it is not surprising that Bachelet's opponents also attacked her leadership capabilities. During the campaign, the connections between gender and political leadership presented different opportunities and challenges for the candidates. Both Lavín and Piñera needed to establish their own leadership abilities as well as criticizing Bachelet's. Lavín entered as the favorite. He had been the previous presidential candidate of the Alliance for Chile and had almost defeated President Lagos in the 2000 elections. He was later elected the mayor of Santiago. Piñera, as the relative newcomer, needed to introduce himself to the voters and establish his credentials as a credible candidate for the right, as well as a strong opponent to Bachelet. In pursuing these goals, both Lavín and Piñera drew upon masculine definitions of leadership in shaping their political strategies.

One concrete strategy used by both candidates was to highlight their role as fathers in what were projected as their traditional Chilean families. In presenting themselves as fathers, both candidates drew upon a long-standing tradition of male politicians within Chile. While fatherhood has been less important in justifying men's political participation than motherhood has been for women, men have routinely invoked their status as fathers as a way of claiming the types of qualities needed by political leaders (Thomas, 2011). This tendency cuts across the political spectrum and has been part of both left-wing and right-wing political campaigns. For example, Radomiro Tomic, the presidential candidate for the Christian Democratic Party in 1970, frequently mentioned his family and the fact that he was a father of nine children as proof that he had the qualifications needed to govern. In that same campaign, the candidate for the right Jorge Alessandri, a past president and a bachelor, was ruthlessly attacked in ads that questioned his virility and masculinity, often by questioning Alessandri's ability to "father" Chilean children and by implicitly accusing him of being homosexual (Thomas, 2011). Pinochet presented himself as a father protecting Chilean families from dangers and providing a firm and authoritative hand for the country (Thomas, 2011). In positioning themselves as "presidential", many male leaders have presented themselves as embodying the qualities of good fathers.

The belief that the qualities and characteristics of a good father means a man would be a good president still retains its political appeal. Both Piñera and Lavín positioned themselves as fathers in their campaigns. Lavín's position as head of the large family was well established in his previous campaigns. In the 2005-2006 campaign, a Christmas card used as a piece of political propaganda captures this image. On the front of the card there is a photo of Lavín with his wife and seven children. Lavín stands slightly in front of the rest of his family and seems to be caught in the motion of walking towards the viewer. The rest of his family is roughly grouped in a triangle with Lavín at the pinnacle. The picture is designed to promote an image of the traditional family, united and under the authority of a father who is at its head both figuratively and in actuality. Inside the card, Lavín, with much affection, wishes the reader a Merry Christmas and a "great year for 2006 full of love and happiness". The message draws on the implied love and happiness of the larger Lavín family.

Lavín's paternal imagery was part of his political appeal for many Chileans. In interviews, I was repeatedly told that Lavín embodied the image of the patriarch of the traditional Chilean family: socially conservative, very Catholic, and with numerous children. Carmen Dominguez Espinosa, a young lawyer who had worked on Lavín's 1999 campaign and later with him when he was Santiago's mayor, explained that Chileans liked Lavín's paternal style. She argued that the poor and working class women –among whom Lavín was popular– recognized that he was interested in people's concerns, especially in terms of issues of poverty and security. As the good patriarch, he would both protect and provide for their families as well as his own (Carmen Dominguez Espinosa, personal communication, December 30, 2005, Santiago). How he used his role as a husband and a father to relate to everyday Chileans could also be seen in the appearances made by his wife on television. María Estela frequently appeared in Lavín's advertising supporting her husband and attesting to his abilities to govern, his character, and his commitment to and understanding of the less fortunate Chileans. Thus, Lavín used his position as a husband and father as evidence of his leadership qualities, and to relate to people in ways that resonated with their beliefs.

To compete with Lavín, Piñera promoted an image of himself as embodying the same values as Lavín. He drew on traditional definitions of masculinity that served as a way to both appeal to Alliance's core conservative voters and to certain sectors of the center that might be uneasy with Bachelet as a candidate, either because she was divorced, a single-mother, or because of her affiliation with the Socialist Party. There was also the perception of Piñera as a political opportunist, and he needed to convince the conservative voters that he truly believed in their values[9]. Given these

9 This was especially true among supporters of Lavín. In 2004, there had been an agreement between the two parties of the alliance, the UDI and the RN, to field only one candidate, Lavín, as a way of maximizing their potential to win the presidency. However, when early opinion polls showed that Lavín was having a hard time competing against the popularity of Michelle Bachelet, Piñera saw an opportunity to further his political ambitions. In addition to attempting to win the presidency, his campaign would help to establish himself as the leader of the right and to move to the right, away from its traditional association with Pinochet's military regime, whom he had voted against in the 1988 plebiscite. The difference between the Concertación and the Alliance would then need to be more about values and policies, rather than which parties in the past had opposed Pinochet.

issues, the way masculinity was used in framing the qualities needed by the president was perhaps more explicit in Piñera's campaign. In this area, his family played an important role. As one woman noted to me, Piñera presented his family as a reason for supporting him, the fact that he had a good family. In doing so, she thought he was simply following the common practice on the part of Chilean politicians (Belgica, personal communication, January 5, 2006, Santiago).

However, what seemed to come naturally for Lavín –with his known Opus Dei affiliation, familial roots in rural Chile, and paternal role both within his family and his politics– could seem forced for Piñera. The contrast between Piñera's Christmas card and Lavín's card highlights this distinction. Giving a more glossy overall impression, Piñera stands in the middle of his family. In his arms, he holds his first grandchild, a small baby. While the card promises to "raise up Chilean families", his family seems less typically Chilean, a sense strengthened by the fact that most of the family were wearing jackets or sweaters with the snow-topped Andes in the background, giving the viewer a perception of winter. For some Chileans, this picture showed the influence of political strategists and media consultants from the United States for whom Christmas is celebrated in the winter and not in high summer as in Chile.

Interestingly, the presentation of their families on the part of both Piñera and Lavín, also served to implicitly criticize Bachelet. In my observations of the first round of the election, I was struck by the lack of a formalized attack on Bachelet in terms of her position as a divorced mother who had also given birth to a child out of wedlock from a long-term relationship. However, the attention given by Piñera and Lavín to their position as fathers within traditional families and the extensive use of images of their families in their campaigns, functioned as an implicit critique of Bachelet that positioned her as not being presidential material. As noted by Danae Mylnar, Piñera and Lavín were essentially saying "here is my family, let me show you, here are my children. This was an [implicit comparison] with Michelle Bachelet, this Señora that does not have a family, her children have different fathers […] The image of the family is used to also present other differences [between the candidates] tradition, church, and gender

roles" (personal communication, January 5, 2006, Santiago). Thus, Piñera and Lavín could question Bachelet's ability to be the president because of her status as a divorced mother by focusing on how they embodied the traditional familial image of Chilean presidents. After all, what is more Chilean than the well-constituted Chilean family? This implicit strategy allowed them to attack Bachelet's personal life without the danger of explicit attacks that might hurt their chances with working class women. In order to win the presidential election, they needed the votes of this group of women who tended to support the Alliance, but like Bachelet, many were single mothers and heads of households.

In the second round of the campaign, in the run-off between Piñera and Bachelet, Piñera increasingly turned to explicit attacks on Michelle Bachelet's ability and capacity to be president. In an interview with *Ercilla*, Piñera repeated what was to become the standard attack on Bachelet's leadership qualities promoted by his campaign. While noting that he considered her to be a nice person and capable, he remarked, "but to be president of the Republic, you need much more than this. It requires leadership, fortitude, knowledge, capacity to organize teams, capacity to lead a boat so that it arrives at a good port. In my opinion, when she was the Minister of Health and Defense she did not demonstrate these qualities" (Hafemann, 2006: 13). This critique was made in a number of ways, from a general questioning of Bachelet's "presidentialness", to attacks on her lack of strong leadership characteristics. Rodrigo Hinzpeter, one of Piñera's campaign directors, cast aspersions on Bachelet's ability to be an independent leader by saying, "when we see that she needs to be permanently accompanied by and defended by 'godfathers' and 'godmothers'; when we see that she had serious problems in forming her command and [she] entered into important and essential differences with Soledad Alvear" (*Ercilla,* 2006). Thus, he critiqued Bachelet as not being able to stand on her own, and in essence, needing to be led by other people within the Concertación.

In making these critiques, Piñera and his campaign recognized the danger of being accused of not valuing Chilean women and attempted to mitigate the claims of sexism made by the opposition. He knew he could not afford to lose the vote of lower-class Chilean women who had voted

for Lavín[10]. He thus tried to distinguish Bachelet as an individual and made clear he was questioning only Bachelet's qualities and not the capacity of Chilean women in general. For example, he stated that he firmly believed "in general terms the woman is absolutely and perfectly prepared to be president, but [a woman] has to have the qualities that this position requires and demands" (Hafemann, 2006: 13). Alberto Espina, a senator from the National Renovation party and director of Piñera's campaign, managed to both critique Bachelet and compliment Chilean women at the same time by stating, "Bachelet is not representative of the promise of the Chilean woman. The Chilean woman can be much more than Bachelet: she [the Chilean woman] can have professional training, knowledge of the issues and leadership, that are the not the fundamental characteristics of Michelle Bachelet"[11].

While criticizing Bachelet for not being the right type of leader to be president, Piñera presented himself as embodying those qualities that were lacking in Bachelet. In addition to his use of family and an explicitly paternal discourse, his campaign presented him as embodying a traditional masculine style of leadership: aggressive, competitive, and authoritative. Piñera made it clear that he was the one in charge, the one who would wield the power, and a man that would lead the government rather than making decisions in a more collective fashion. The pamphlets passed out in the streets emphasized his personal abilities as a leader. The back of one card read, "Piñera, More President. Because he has the capacity to carry the country forward... Because he is a family man… Because he has the capacity to work. Because he is a modern man... Because he has the character to lead the country. Because he has the presidential standing to represent us better… Because he is a man of action." As presented by his campaign,

10 In the first round of voting, a noticeable gender gap had emerged between the two candidates on the right. Lavín had maintained his strong showing among women while Piñera had captured more men than women. Lavín had received 24.85% of women's votes compared to 21.37% of men's votes, while Piñera had received 24.1% of women's votes and 26.8% of men's. This gender gap was significant because the right has traditionally garnered a greater percentage of its support from women. If only women's votes had counted, Lavín would have beaten Lagos in the 2000 elections. Piñera could not afford to lose the vote of more conservative women if he was to win the presidency. For a more detailed discussion, see Gamboa and Segovia (2006: 102).

11 *El Mercurio,* January 8, 2006.

the reasons to elect Piñera were based on his abilities, what he represented and what he could do for Chile. The focus was on what Piñera could do as an individual. As noted by Clarisa Hardy, "Piñera presents himself as the seat of authority […] His rhetoric is, 'I know, I can, I did'" (personal communication, January 6, 2006, Santiago). Thus, his campaign was all about him and his qualities. It was his leadership that would bring a better future to Chile. As one of his supporters told me, "Chileans like a strict, ordered father", and partly for this reason they liked both Lagos and Piñera (Alvaro Undurraga, personal communication, January, 2006, Santiago).

In the second round, Piñera further "masculinized" his campaign. His strategy during the second round was to frame the election as a choice between himself and Bachelet as individuals, rather than between two political coalitions or between different political ideologies. The argument for Piñera as the better choice ultimately rested upon his leadership qualities –qualities traditionally associated with male political leaders. Piñera continued to use his family, especially the participation of his wife Cecilia Morel, to present himself as the candidate that understood and would protect traditional Chilean values. As he noted in one of his television campaign spots, he was prepared to be president because of his leadership, political will, and his life experiences which included being the head of his family, a professor, a businessman, and a senator. His campaign slogan for the second round, "Piñera, More President", meant both that Piñera was more presidential than his opponent, and with Piñera as president, more was possible for Chile. Finally, the masculine style of his leadership was perhaps best captured in the car air fresheners passed out on the streets as campaign tokens made to resemble the traditional symbol of professional men, a blue tie striped with red and white, emblazoned with his campaign slogan. What could be more presidential than a tie?

Certainly, positioning the central debate around issues of political leadership was driven by a number of factors and political calculations. The generally good economic conditions of Chile at the time of the election, the broad support enjoyed by departing Concertación president, Ricardo Lagos, and the weaker position of the Alliance for Chile as the opposition coalition, all benefited Bachelet's position as the Concertación candidate

and weakened Piñera's position as the challenger. Bachelet was more vulnerable in terms of her individual characteristics than as the official candidate of the Concertación, whose candidates for Congress in the first round of voting had won a combined total of 54.31% of the vote, and for the first time since the return to democracy gained a majority of seats in the Chamber of Deputies. Thus, Piñera had a number of reasons for trying to focus the campaign on his and Bachelet's personal qualities and qualifications, rather than trying to frame the campaign as a choice between opposing political coalitions. In constructing his arguments about why he was the better candidate for the presidency, gendered understandings of politics and political leadership provided him with a number of advantages in his contest against Bachelet. Piñera drew upon the traditional understanding of political leadership as embodying male characteristics in crafting his arguments about both his strengths as a candidate as well as Bachelet's weaknesses. Even when not explicit, gendered beliefs helped to set the context and the content of Piñera's campaign. His claims to be "presidential" and his attacks on the "presidentialness" of Bachelet were embedded within a gendered definition of political leadership.

She is a woman's woman: gender in Michelle Bachelet's campaign

While conducting interviews with participants in marches, rallies, and other street activities that were organized in support of Michelle Bachelet, I was told again and again by women that they were supporting Bachelet because she was a woman. Her being a woman symbolized a variety of things for my respondents: a challenge to Chile's sexist culture, a greater commitment to citizen participation and inclusion, more democracy, and new role models for their daughters. Many people also told me that what they really liked was that Bachelet was a woman's woman. This saying also had multiple meanings. For some it meant that Bachelet understood their lives, that she knew what it was like to be woman, a mother and the head of her household. Many people recognized that Bachelet represented a change not simply because she was female, but also because she was chal-

lenging the traditional masculine style of Chilean politics. Many Chileans, especially women, felt that while Michelle Bachelet was pursuing the most masculine job in Chile, she was not doing so by taking on the traditional masculine leadership style, but by bringing in her own style of feminine leadership. These sentiments in part reflected the strategies of Bachelet's campaign in promoting her style of feminine leadership as a challenge to the traditional status quo and as a response to closed, anti-democratic and elitist politics. Her leadership style, more than simply her candidacy, represented a challenge to traditional Chilean politics, a system that had excluded not only women in general but many other marginalized groups, including Chile's indigenous population, the youth, and poor women. Bachelet's campaign, however, did not simply highlight her unique qualities; it also sought to generally redefine the qualities needed by a political leader away from the traditional masculine bias, by explicitly labeling attacks on Bachelet's leadership as sexist.

Early in the first round, Michelle Bachelet's campaign embraced the slogan "Continuity and Change". The continuity was, of course, that a Bachelet presidency would be the fourth consecutive government for the Concertación. The most obvious change was that Bachelet, if elected, would become the first female president to govern Chile. But Bachelet also argued that her candidacy symbolized the inclusion of all groups of Chileans. Many women that I talked to at different campaign rallies had been active during 1980s in the women's movement and had participated in the social mobilizations that helped to bring democracy back, but had stopped participating in politics because they felt that the reorganized political parties did not welcome their participation. Many felt that Bachelet's campaign re-opened these spaces for women in politics.

My conversation with Soledad Quiroz at a march in downtown Santiago was typical of many responses I was given when I asked participants why they were supporting Bachelet's candidacy. She told me, "I am voting for her because it is historic for the country. She is the fruit of the fight and work of the women of Chile. Just five years ago, I could not have thought it was possible to have a woman president. It is an opening up of possibilities, especially for the young girls –now that they have in their heads

the possibility of being president. It will mean… more democracy, more citizen participation" (personal communication, December 20, 2005, Santiago). This woman identified with Bachelet's presentation of herself as similar to all Chilean women. This strategy was promoted throughout Bachelet's television campaign as well. In one of her campaign spots, she talks about her daily schedule: she gets up, makes breakfast for her family, takes her daughter to school, and goes to work. She also noted how through her work as a doctor, she knew about the problems and struggles of everyday Chileans, especially Chilean women and those who had been discriminated against.

Bachelet's recognition of the importance of greater citizen participation, a strong focus of her early campaign, was also part of her argument about her style of leadership. Bachelet claimed that rather than having the traditional masculine style that was more formal and authoritarian, her style was grounded in her experiences as a woman and was more open, more participatory, and more about working for consensus than imposing her will. Bachelet was careful to note, however, that her more feminine style of leadership did not mean that she could not, when needed, make decisions and remain firm in those decisions. Michelle Bachelet claimed, "Chileans are looking for a new kind of leadership, one that a woman symbolizes"[12]. The type of leadership that women embody, according to Bachelet, is partly based on a "different kind of ethics than men. Usually the woman tries to find a win-win solution. They are more interested in considering the process than men, who are interested mainly in the results. It's not a thing about being hard or soft. Women can be firm, but they can also be caring, nurturing […] I was Minister of Defense and nobody thought I was soft like jelly" (Powers, 2006: 268).

Her argument resonated with many Chileans. As one woman told me, "women have a different style of governing, of doing democracy" (personal communication, January 2, 2005, Santiago). Sergio Bitar, the Minister of Education in Lagos' cabinet, who left his position to help run Bachelet's campaign in the second round, stated, "Character is not pounding on the

12 *Newsweek,* August 22, 2005, p. 32.

table. Character and leadership are not about imposition and authoritarianism; it is not being the leader of a company that gives instructions. Modern leadership is arousing the will of the majority to advance together" (Guerra, 2005). Bachelet supporter, Sofia Vergara, expressed this distinction between the leadership qualities of the two candidates slightly differently. She highlighted Bachelet's choice of career and what that said about the type of leadership she would have: "Michelle is a doctor. Doctors do not have to express their leadership abilities; it is a type of leadership that they do not have to publish; they do not have a discourse of leadership" (personal communication, Santiago, December 20, 2005). Bachelet's type of leadership and its connection to gender were explained to me by journalist Monica Silva in the following way, "Women have common sense, they know the real problems of a person, she knows the problems. Bachelet has lived in the hospitals […] the political men, they know the problems of the world as they present them, not the world as it is […] It is natural that gender is in play, this is a sexist country, a country where machismo circulates among the men. She is the best of our politics, and this is something that many people know […] She might not win the vote of older men, but the culture is changing. The vote of the conservative woman is now with Bachelet and this is a very strong change" (personal communication, January 7, 2006, Santiago). As noted by Silva, the idea that Bachelet possessed a different style of leadership, a style rooted in her gendered experiences, was an idea that resonated with many Chileans, even many women who had not traditionally supported the Concertación candidates.

The final strategy pursued by Bachelet and her campaign was to directly confront the criticism of her leadership capacities by labeling them as sexist (or machista) and the typical response by men when women challenged their historical dominance in politics. This strategy was displayed in an interview given by Sergio Bitar at the beginning of the second round of the campaign. He stated, "if someone thinks that to have character is to be a man, they are mistaken" (Guerra, 2005). As Fanny Pollarrolo noted, "Piñera knows that machismo is evident [in Chile]. He is using terms like capacity, but these terms are historically a way to disqualify women in our culture of sexism –that women are less qualified. In this way, it appears

to say that equality is good but this person is less qualified. It is a trap for women" (personal communication, January 4, 2006, Santiago). By forthrightly labeling Piñera's critiques as sexist, Bachelet's supporters confronted the critiques that framed the issue in terms of Piñera's qualities rather than Bachelet's.

The first television advertisement that aired during the second round of the campaign, on the first of January, encapsulated all three of these strategies. In it Bachelet began by calling on those that do not want to vote for her because she is a woman. Bachelet then went on to note all the positions of leadership that Chilean women have held, by saying:

> Female scientists, engineers, workers –we are all accustomed to working twice as hard. We have always had to give 100%, at home and at work, to be there 24 hours a day, and of course never to have headaches. Every family is a kingdom in which the father rules but the mother governs. Your wife, your girlfriend, your daughter and your mother can do it –they demonstrate it every day of their lives. Strength knows no gender and neither does honesty, conviction or ability. I bring a different kind of leadership, with the perspective of someone who looks at things from a different angle. Let us change our mentality; when all is said and done, a woman President is simply a head of government who doesn't wear a tie.

This statement directly addresses the concerns about her leadership. She explicitly compares herself to Chilean women in general and draws on the leadership qualities embodied in the diversity of Chilean women. Therefore, to doubt her leadership abilities is to doubt the capabilities of both women in general and the particular woman that the viewers know. She then goes on to claim that while strength, honesty, and conviction do not have a gender, her gender does allow her to bring a different perspective into politics, a perspective that has been excluded.

Bachelet's campaign argued, through their framing of Bachelet's personal strengths and qualifications, that she represented a new type of leadership, a feminine leadership style. Her feminine leadership style would combine the particular strengths associated with her position as a woman –greater knowledge of every day life, more participatory leadership styles,

less interest in personal power– with certain characteristics that were traditionally considered to be more masculine, but which she argued were actually universal such as, the ability to stand firm in your decisions, to take charge when necessary, and to provide a shared vision. What is rejected in this feminine leadership style is the association of political leadership with a more authoritarian decision-making style, a style that Bachelet's campaign explicitly linked to the traditional masculine style of politics in Chile. This can be seen in the above distinction Bachelet drew between "rules" and "governs". The rule of the father connoted the traditional position of the father as the head of the family, in which authority and power within the family are vested in the father. The idea of the mother governing represents the idea that modern families and leadership styles represent a more democratic and participatory model, one based in the everyday experiences of the family and in which the mother consults with the other members of the family rather than ruling over them. This model has "strength […] honesty, conviction and ability"; it can be authoritative without being authoritarian.

The above ad also clearly demarcates the differences between Bachelet and her two opponents on the right in terms of her use of family and its connection to questions of political leadership. While both Piñera and Lavín drew upon traditional understandings of men's roles within the family to strengthen their claims about political leadership, Bachelet's campaign pursued a more modern conception of her role within the family. Bachelet eschewed the most traditional definitions of motherhood and instead drew heavily upon ideas associated with the women's movement in Chile that argued for the interconnected nature of democracy in both familial as well as political relations. The women's movements more progressive understandings of women as "militant mothers", and a greater emphasis on women's political equality, provided Bachelet with a more fluid political context in which to craft her image as a political leader and to argue for a new style of political leadership, one that could be based partly in traits considered feminine. She also attempted to redefine leadership qualities like "strength" and "decisiveness" away from their past connection with specific character traits usually associated with men. Thus,

strength could mean more than imposing your will on others, and decisiveness did not need to mean making a decision without consulting the opinions of others.

As the campaign drew to a close, issues of leadership continued to dominate the debate. In the last opinion polls, while Bachelet continued to perform well in terms of citizens' perceptions of her as honest and trustworthy, Piñera increased his numbers in terms of "leadership", "the ability to make difficult decisions", and "firmness when facing pressure"[13]. These gains possibly reflected the success of Piñera's attacks against Bachelet's leadership style that referenced continued gendered perceptions of political leadership. In the end, Bachelet won the second round against Piñera as she managed to bring back the Concertación's traditional vote among Chilean men, while for the first time, getting an overall majority of Chilean women to vote for the coalition. Although an election is never decided on any one issue, many Chileans seemed to want a president with the type of political leadership that Bachelet had presented –someone who seemed to understand their daily lives– would bring about greater citizen participation and inclusion in politics, and would prove to be honest and trustworthy.

Conclusion

Michelle Bachelet's election as Chile's first woman president certainly reflects the immense gains that Chilean women have made in terms of gaining equal inclusion into the political system. Her election, however, does not signify that gender equality has been achieved, or that Chilean politics have lost their masculine bias. My analysis of the campaign strategies of Bachelet and her two main opponents reveals that gender continues to be an important factor in Chilean politics. It also shows that the relationship between gender and politics is much more flexible and complex than it was in the past. Gender continues to influence the contextual nature of

13 *La Tercera*, January 8, 2006.

political leadership by both providing and limiting the types of opportunities and resources available to political candidates. The debate around the connection between gender and political leadership during the 2005-2006 Chilean campaign demonstrates that more traditional gendered meanings coexist with more recent and oppositional understandings of political leadership that emerged both during the struggle against Pinochet and in the process of democratization. Importantly, the strategies pursued by Bachelet and her opponents had to take into account the current gendered definitions of political leadership, regardless of whether as candidates they sought to challenge or uphold these different meanings.

The importance of gender in setting the political context can be seen by looking at the different ways in which the candidates drew upon familial connections to present their leadership qualities. Both Lavín and Piñera, for example, consistently presented themselves as fairly traditional fathers of large Chilean families. The use of their families in their campaigns drew upon imagery, symbols, and discourses within Chilean culture that continue to link the qualities and characteristics of a father with those needed by political leaders. They were able to incorporate into their campaigns traditional connections between being a good father and being a good president. Promoting their traditional roles also allowed them to establish their connection to the generally conservative values of the Chilean right. In using their families, Lavín and Piñera were not just invoking a general connection between men's position in the family and politics, but they were also presenting their adherence to a particular type of masculine political leadership, one that linked a traditional understanding of paternal authority to political rule.

In her campaign, Bachelet did not position herself in terms of traditional understandings of motherhood. Unlike the political "supermadres" described by Elsa Chaney in the 1960s and 1970s that justified their participation in politics by referencing motherhood, Bachelet did not use motherhood to justify her participation in politics, but rather to show her personal character and to make connections with the experiences of everyday Chileans. Her position as a single mother, therefore, became part of her general campaign strategy that highlighted her connection to the lived experiences of Chileans, especially women.

Bachelet's treatment of motherhood reveals that Chilean women now have a greater variety and flexibility of cultural resources available to them in creating claims about their leadership strengths. The significance of Bachelet's campaign in this regard can perhaps be best seen through a brief comparison between herself and Violetta Chamorro who was President of Nicaragua from 1990 to 1997. In pursuing her candidacy, Chamorro projected a political identity centered around her martyred husband, Pedro Joaquín Chamorro and her family, and argued that it was her identity as a traditional Nicaraguan mother (apolitical, self-abnegating, subservient to the wishes of her husband, even though he was dead) that provided her with the political skills that were needed. Her political leadership was based on the symbols of "wife, widow, mother, and virgin" and she claimed that as a mother, she had the leadership necessary to "reconcile the Nicaraguan people, torn by more than a decade of war" (Kampwirth, 1996: 72-67). Bachelet's personal history and political development would have made it impossible to embrace the traditional gender ideology used by Chamorro. Without the changes in the relationship between gender and politics brought about by women's activism, Bachelet might not have had the cultural resources necessary to craft her version of "feminine leadership".

The difference between Bachelet and Chamorro and between Bachelet and Lavín and Piñera also partly reflects the intersection between gender and political ideology. Lavín's and Piñera's gendered portrayal of their political leadership fit well within the gender ideology of the Chilean right with its emphasis on "family values" and the importance of conservative Catholic social thought. Certainly, some of the unease Lavín supporters felt towards Piñera in the second round of the elections was based in a sense that Piñera was using his family as a way of claiming particular values that he did not really embody. In terms of Bachelet, her position as the candidate for the center-left Concertación provided her with more flexibility. Bachelet could draw upon the Concertación's official support for women's political inclusion and equality, as well as the arguments put forward by different women's movements about the qualities and strengths of Chilean women. As I discuss above, this did not render Bachelet's claims about her political leadership immune from criticism, but it did provide her with resources to respond.

Whether Bachelet's successful presidency will ultimately result in breaking the traditional links between masculinity and political leadership is still a matter for debate. The strategies pursued by Bachelet's campaign reveal that questioning the linkages between masculinity and leadership and stressing the importance of traits more often associated with women can open political space for women in pursuit of the highest elected office of their country. Bachelet's presidency will continue to offer important lessons for understanding the evolving and complex relationship between gender and politics. Whether Bachelet succeeded in legitimizing a more feminine style of political leadership will ultimately depend, in part, on her ability to convince Chileans that her leadership style promoted the larger political goals and visions for which she was elected.

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More than reproductive uteruses: women and the politics of abortion in Argentina

Barbara Sutton*

Resumen

Este artículo aborda las experiencias de mujeres y las políticas acerca del aborto en Argentina, como resultado de un estudio cualitativo realizado durante el 2002-2003. En este proyecto de investigación, analizo la relación entre las experiencias corporales de las mujeres y los contextos políticos, económicos y sociales. Enfatizo el rol que tiene la clase social, el Estado y la Iglesia católica en las experiencias y posturas de las mujeres ante el aborto. Se pone de manifiesto la influencia de las ideologías sobre la maternidad en la sociedad argentina y las múltiples formas en que el aborto está penalizado no solo jurídica y estatalmente, sino también social y religiosamente.

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On January 12, 2003, the Sunday magazine of the Argentine newspaper *La Nación* published a powerful statement about women's bodies and their relationship to reproductive politics. It was an advertisement showing a full-page photo of a woman's naked belly. It could have been one of many other ads that depict fragments of a woman's body, but this ad had a distinctive feature: the contours of a small fetus were inscribed like a tattoo on the woman's belly. On one side of the page, in small white print, read the following: "The defense of abortion covers up its criminal nature through confusing or evasive terminology, hiding murder with phrases like 'voluntary interruption of pregnancy' or with concepts like 'the right to decide' or 'the right to reproductive health'. None of these language artifices can hide the fact that abortion is a crime. The Perfect Crime"[1]. The woman's belly occupies the entire space, but since the body is fragmented, the woman disappears as a whole person, as a subject. Her belly is just the backstage of the perceived principal actor: the fetus. Thus the woman's body becomes merely a container of her seemingly unavoidable social duty: to be a mother.

As September 2003 came to the end, thousands of women from diverse grassroots and political organizations marched in Buenos Aires and other cities in the country as part of actions calling for the decriminalization/legalization of abortion in Latin America and the Caribbean. In Buenos Aires, women protesters gathered in front of the national parliament and many marched to the Plaza de Mayo, where the executive government palace and the Cathedral are located. Young women in informal clothing, older women who did not shy away from the frontlines, women wearing the colorful vests of unemployed workers movements, professionals, students, feminists, lesbians, women with indigenous clothing and babies on their backs, women from neighborhood assemblies, labor unions, human rights organizations, and leftist political parties demanded contraception and legal abortion through eloquent speeches, signs, and chants. Even some men joined women in their demands.

During this march, Mujeres Públicas (Public Women) –a group that specialized in artistic interventions– pasted cartoon bubbles with phrases

1 This and all subsequent quotes, extracted from interviews and published materials in the Spanish language, are my own translations.

on top of street advertisements. These messages promoted women's bodily self-determination and broader sexual possibilities. In that way, Hollywood star Nicole Kidman announced from a poster advertising the film *Dogville* that "women enjoy a sexuality external to the vagina, without pregnancy risks". And Chayanne, a famous Latin American pop singer, looked at passersby from his ad, saying, "The right to decide over our bodies". A few days after the march, the lesbian feminist music and activist group Caramelitas en Calzas performed in a crowded recreation area in the city of Buenos Aires, advocating for legal abortion through their music and poetry[2]. Their purple, glittery outfits satirizing nuns' clothing, their funny and flippant demeanor, and their songs raised awareness with a creative approach, about serious issues such as women's right to make decisions about their bodies.

These episodes highlight the ever more contested nature of procreation, contraception, and abortion in Argentina. The first episode, the publishing of the antiabortion ad, demonizes women's ability to control their reproductive capacities. The second, women's protest, reflects women's agency and efforts to promote women's bodily self-determination. As in other societies across the world, women's bodies in Argentina have historically been the playing fields of cultural wars and state decisions concerning population size and women's position in society (CLADEM, 2002; Hadley, 1996). Feminist scholars and activists have long pointed out that the social control of women's bodies, particularly attempts to control women's sexuality and reproduction, are crucial ways in which sexist oppression is expressed and perpetuated. From a feminist perspective, women's access to safe contraception, abortion, and other reproductive options on their own terms are key to ensuring women's rights (e.g., Gordon, 2002; Morgen, 2002; Petchesky, 1990). Although this argument is well known by now, it remains relevant in twenty-first century Argentina where women from all walks of life, but particularly those socially and economically marginalized, continue to struggle to make meaningful decisions about their sexual and reproductive lives.

2 *Caramelitas en Calzas* literally means "Little Candies in Spandex", a play on the name of the pious order of nuns *Carmelitas Descalzas* (Barefoot Carmelites).

Feminists have developed fruitful frameworks to understand and assert women's bodily rights, and many of their elements have been usefully applied in concrete political struggles in Argentina. As Rosalind Petchesky summarizes:

> [The] feminist ethics of bodily integrity and personhood [...] requires not only that women must be free from abuse and violation of their bodies but also that they must be treated as principal actors and decision-makers over their fertility and sexuality; as the ends and not the means of health, population and development programmes. And it applies this imperative not only to states and their agents but to every level where power operates, including the home, the clinic, the workplace, the religious centre and the community [...] [T]his feminist perspective links the rights of the body and the person directly with social, economic and political rights –the enabling conditions– necessary to achieve gender, class, and racial-ethnic justice. (1998: 4)

In Argentina, reproductive politics, especially struggles around contraception and abortion, reveal how social inequality plays on and via women's bodies. Diverse activist women, from middle-class feminists to women in poor people's and working class-movements, and women in leftist political parties, have framed demands for legal abortion and reproductive health as a matter of social justice and as integral to women's right to decide over their bodies.

This article examines women's experiences and the politics of abortion in Argentina based on a broader 14-month qualitative study in which I explored diverse women's *bodily worlds.* "By this I mean women's varied, overlapping and context-related bodily experiences –including both everyday and extraordinary events– marked by the gamut of human emotions, and absorbing, expressing, and challenging multiple forms of social inequality" (Sutton, 2010: 2). The primary data emerges from interviews with women in the capital city, Buenos Aires, and its metropolitan area. I conducted the study during 2002-2003, a time of heightened social turmoil and activism in the midst of an economic and political crisis after years of neoliberal policies. In the study, I combined analysis of print media; ethnographic observations of everyday life and culture, political protest, and women's movement organizing; fifty in-depth interviews with

women aged between 20 and their early 60s and from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, about half of them activists[3]; and four targeted focus groups comprised, respectively, of lesbians in a reflection group, Catholic charity volunteers, domestic workers, and women living in poverty and participating in a social assistance program. During interviews, I asked general questions about women's bodily awareness, feelings, and practices, as well as questions about their bodies in relation to the economic crisis, work, sexuality, reproduction, and the meanings of womanhood[4]. Focus groups covered similar themes and showed how gendered discourses are collectively and interactively constructed.

In the following sections, I first offer an overview outlining the role of key players in the field of reproductive politics, including the state, the Catholic Church, and the women's movement. With this frame of reference, I then focus on interviewees' attitudes about abortion, their embodied experiences of pregnancy termination in a context of illegality, and the consequences of such criminalization.

The role of the state

While a number of developing countries have experienced international pressures to reduce their population by controlling women's fertility (Hartmann, 1995), this was not the case in Argentina given its relatively low population (Margulis, 2003: 200). In fact, since the dawn of the nation, different governments in Argentina implemented policies to increase population size. The nineteenth-century maxim "to govern is to populate" helped promote the idea that Argentina needed a larger population to progress politically, culturally, and economically[5]. In the second half of the

3 Including feminists, lesbians, labor activists, *piqueteras* (members of a movement of poor/unemployed workers), and members of popular assemblies, communal kitchens, leftist political organizations, human rights groups, and organizations of Afro-descendants, indigenous peoples, migrants, women in prostitution, and people with disabilities.

4 I also experimented with a technique based on the use of "concept cards" to help elicit embodied experiences (see Sutton, 2011).

5 This maxim is associated with one of Argentina's most influential nineteenth-century ideologues,

twentieth century, the 1974 constitutional Peronist administration and the succeeding military dictatorship (1976-1983) promoted pro-natalist policies, including restrictions on the commercialization of contraceptives and bans on activities aimed at birth control (Lubertino, 1996; Ramos *et al.*, 2001). Despite efforts to make access to contraception more difficult, this move did not completely prevent people from regulating their fertility, and the fertility rate in Argentina remained relatively low[6].

Difficulties in reconciling issues of sexuality and reproduction through public policy have been reflected in years of debates, advances, and retreats in the national parliament around projects addressing these matters. A national law on reproductive and sexual health (Law No. 25673) finally passed during the period of social turmoil following the economic collapse of December 2001[7]. Although women's organizations pointed out serious limitations with this legislation, it was still recognized as a step toward the promotion of women's rights. This law stated a commitment to universal access to sex education and allocated funds from the national budget for the massive purchase and distribution of contraceptives that are temporary, reversible, and nonabortive, and that these contraceptives are to be provided for free at public health care facilities and covered by medical insurance. According to the Consorcio Nacional de Derechos Reproductivos y Sexuales (CONDERS, 2003a), a network of nongovernmental organizations monitoring the implementation of the law, this was the first time in Argentine history that this kind of budget allocation took place.

In addition to that law, a number of legislative changes signaled a budding shift in sexual and reproductive politics in Argentina, including the creation of similar programs in several provinces and the passage of Law

Juan Bautista Alberdi (1915), who believed in the necessity of populating the country but with the supposed right people (from Europe) to assure social and economic progress. These views were reflected in racist policies encouraging European immigration while indigenous populations were being decimated.

6 During the 1970s and 1980s, the overall fertility rate in Argentina was around 3.2 and 3.4 (Valdés *et al.*, 1993: 27). In contemporary Argentina the overall fertility rate is 2.3 (Ministerio de Salud and Organización Panamericana de la Salud, 2010).

7 National Law No. 25673 passed in 2002, to create the National Program of Sexual Health and Responsible Procreation.

No. 1044/03 in the city of Buenos Aires, which allows for induced "early delivery" (which in effect terminates the pregnancy) when the fetus presents anencephaly or other severe pathologies or malformations that would make extra uterine life impossible after birth[8]. In 2006, Law No. 26150 ordered the creation of the National Program of Integral Sexual Education. In 2010, Argentina also passed a national law (Law No. 26618) allowing the marriage of same-sex couples, and many saw this expansion of rights for people of diverse sexualities as anticipating the debate on the legalization of abortion. Although contraception and sex education remain contested political terrains, especially because of the opposition of the Catholic Church and its allies, the single most controversial issue concerning women's reproductive self-determination in the country is abortion.

In Argentina, induced abortion continues to be largely illegal. The Penal Code establishes a prison penalty (1-4 years) for "the woman who causes her own abortion or consents to someone else causing it" (Art. 88, Código Penal de la Nación Argentina)[9]. While enforcement of the prison punishment has not been a priority of the law enforcement system, and in actuality women who undergo abortions are generally not going to jail, the prohibition still has significant negative effects for women. The criminalization of abortion sends the practice underground, and as we shall see later, women do pay a high price for the clandestine and illegal conditions in which abortions are performed.

Not all induced abortions are punishable[10]. The Penal Code establishes some exceptions to the penalization of the practice, stating that abortion

8 In order to do the medical procedure, the law requires that the fetus must have "reached twenty-four (24) weeks of gestational age, or the minimum gestational age at which fetal viability is recorded in fetuses intrinsically or potentially healthy" (Law No. 1044/03, Legislatura de la Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires, 2003).

9 The Penal Code also states that individuals who cause an abortion are to be punished: "1º with reclusion or prison from three to ten years, if acting without the woman's consent. This penalty may be raised up to fifteen years, if the act is followed by the woman's death. 2º With reclusion or prison from one to four years, if acting with the woman's consent. The maximum penalty will be raised to six years, if the act is followed by the death of the woman" (Art. 85, Código Penal de la Nación Argentina).

10 In addition to pursuing the decriminalization/legalization of abortion more generally, abortion rights activists have also worked hard to make sure that women can access the abortions already permitted by law, which is often ridden by various obstacles for the women involved.

is not punishable when done by a diplomaed doctor with the consent of the pregnant woman in the following situations: "1º If done in order to avoid danger to the life or health of the mother and if this danger cannot be avoided by other means. 2º If the pregnancy comes from a rape or an *atentado al pudor* committed on an idiot or demented woman. In this case, the consent of her legal representative shall be required for the abortion"[11] (Art. 86, Código Penal de la Nación Argentina).

The women who in theory are allowed to have a legal abortion (i.e., because their situations fit within the exceptions to punishability indicated in the Penal Code) have faced many obstacles, including the judicialization of the intervention due to some doctors' refusal to perform permitted abortions without the authorization of a judge (judicialization that takes time and imposes a burden on the affected women as the biological process of pregnancy continues)[12]. A key aspect of the problem has been the disagreement over the interpretation of the letter of the law, which has contributed to making access to permitted abortions very restrictive in practice. In the case of the first clause, with regards to women's health, the dispute has centered on the interpretation of the meaning of "health". While narrow interpretations of health limit it to the physical dimension, feminists and others in the legal and health fields have argued that a correct interpretation should adopt the more expansive definition advanced by the World Health Organization, which includes mental and social wellbeing, besides physical health (FDR, 1997; Ramos *et al.*, 2009). The second clause, concerning rape, has been subject of long-term controversy in the courts and among criminal law academics, partly because of the grammatical structure of the article and the translation of sources that inspired the language on the exception. One side has argued that the exception applies to all cases of rape and a more restrictive interpretation has maintained that it only applies to the rape of women with mental

11 The phrase a*tentado al pudor* roughly translates as "assault on chastity/modesty". The article also retains the obsolete language of *mujer idiota o demente* ("idiot or demented") to refer to women with mental disabilities.

12 See Ramos *et al.* (2009) for an account of the legal, economic, information, and geographical barriers that women (particularly those in vulnerable social conditions) face to access permitted abortions.

disabilities (see explanations on these disputes in Htun, 2003; Ramos *et al.*, 2009; Bergallo and Michel 2009).

In 2010, the Asociación Argentina de Profesores de Derecho Penal (Argentine Association of Penal Law Professors) issued a statement asserting a broad interpretation of the law in relation to the permitted abortions in the Penal Code (both with regards to health and rape) and arguing that non-punishable abortions do not require authorization of medical committees or judges (De Luca, 2010). In March 2012, the Nation's Supreme Court of Justice issued a landmark decision ("F., A. L. s/ medida autosatisfactiva") in the case of a teenage girl who got pregnant as a result of sexual abuse (Centro de Información Judicial, 2012). The Court rejected the restrictive thesis with respect to rape, asserting that abortion is not punishable when it results from rape, regardless of the mental capacity of the victim. This has been a significant victory for the abortion rights movement in Argentina and most especially for the women who have had to navigate countless obstacles in the judicial and medical systems due to conflicting interpretations. Still, despite the Court's decision, a number of practical barriers persist for women who meet the criteria for permitted abortions (Defensora General de la Nación, n. d.).

Furthermore, the figure of non-punishable abortions leaves out the situations of many other women who want to end their pregnancies. There have been various projects in the national parliament proposing different levels of decriminalization/legalization of abortion but none have passed yet. While the general prohibition of abortion remains, the practice still continues in large numbers. In a country with over 745,000 annual live births in recent years (Ministerio de Salud and Organización Panamericana de la Salud, 2010; Ministerio de Salud, 2010), the estimated number of yearly abortions is somewhere between 371,965 to 522,000[13]. Seen from a global perspective, "Argentina has one of the highest abortion ratios in

13 Given the conditions of clandestinity imposed on the practice of abortion, it is difficult to calculate exact figures. A study by Mario and Pantelides (2009) used two different methods to estimate the number of abortions in Argentina. One of the methods, based on hospital statistics related to abortion complications, yields the following estimated number of abortions in one year: between 371,965 and 446,998. Another technique, the "residual method", resulted in the following estimated number of abortions in one year: between 486,000 and 522,000 abortions.

the world, with one abortion estimated to occur for every two live births" (Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2001: 31).

Influence of the Catholic Church

In Argentina the Catholic Church hierarchy has historically and contemporaneously opposed abortion, most contraceptive methods, non-heterosexual sexualities, and sexual activity outside of marriage. Given the political clout of the Catholic Church in Argentina, this institution's perspectives are not inconsequential for women's rights (Borland, 2002; Gutiérrez, 2002; Novick, n. d.). Most of the population is nominally Catholic, and the church has traditionally had strong ties to the state, receiving subsidies from it and striving to influence its policy. During the neoliberal 1990s, the Catholic Church found a partner in then president Carlos S. Menem, who supported the conservative international agenda of the Vatican with respect to women's sexuality and procreation. One visible sign of such backing was Menem's Decree 1406/98 instituting March 25 (the day the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary is celebrated) as the "Day of the Child to Be Born" –a clear message against the legalization of abortion. According to Blofield (2006), in a climate of economic restructuring and growing inequality, this strategic state-church alliance helped to prevent criticism from the Catholic Church concerning the neoliberal economic plan implemented by Menem.

The Catholic Church has also attempted to mold the population's attitudes and behaviors on sexual and reproductive matters through several avenues. Besides the church's involvement in state politics, its views are disseminated through religious, educational, charity, and media organizations. Moreover, the Catholic Church has tried to influence other important spaces of political exchange such as the annual Encuentro Nacional de Mujeres (National Women's Meeting), a vital women's movement venue that has attracted tens of thousands of women from all over the country. Since 1997 the church has adopted several intervention or sabotage strategies, ranging from attempts to impede the event, to the promotion of

parallel meetings with women subscribing to the church's perspective, as well as the training of Catholic activists to attend the Encuentros. At the beginning of my research, I was rapidly introduced to these ideological battles through my participation in the 2002 Encuentro, which took place in the province of Salta. Banners and flyers distributed around the city, encouraged people to adopt the stance of the Catholic Church and demonize those who did not agree with it. A flyer I picked up in the area surrounding the Encuentro's main location said, "Lord of the Miracle, Redemptory Christ of the people of Salta, do not withdraw your love. People of Salta: You, who have a fidelity pact with the Lord of the Miracle cannot allow by any means neither abortion, nor the destruction of the family" (underline in original). A large street banner read: "Abortion and infanticide are abominable crimes. God's Commandment is: DO NOT KILL." Street messages linking abortion to murder or sin, or conflating womanhood with motherhood (e.g., addressing women as "woman-mother") were disseminated around the city during the period of the meeting.

In addition to arguments based on religious or moral issues, Catholic Church representatives have also resorted to or co-opted anti-imperialist and nationalist discourses to support their views (Vasallo, 2003). In the 2002 Encuentro, Catholic activists argued that feminist demands around sexual and reproductive rights respond to the designs of international organizations that are trying to depopulate Argentina in order to dominate the country. When the law on sexual and reproductive health was sanctioned, a so called pro-life group argued that it "corroborates the mandates imposed by the new world order over our Argentina, and therefore, the complacency of many public officials who legislate against life and family, and above all, against our national sovereignty" (AICA, 2002). This line of argument is not new and resembles the confusion between population control initiatives imposed from international centers of power (like abusive sterilization campaigns that have nothing to do with promoting women's rights) with projects that attempt to empower women to make free decisions about their sexuality and reproduction (Hartmann, 1995).

From a feminist standpoint, access to contraception and abortion are rights that should be guaranteed in a democracy (Durand and Gutiérrez,

1999). According to this view, when the Catholic Church and other conservative groups pose obstacles to those rights, they fail to recognize women as citizens entitled to make meaningful decisions about their lives and bodies. An interesting question, given the church's efforts to shape gender norms and arrangements, is: to what extent women internalize and/or resist these teachings that are directly related to their bodies? As it is shown later in this article, a number of the women in this study grappled with these kinds of contradictions and dilemmas.

The women's movement

The generalized wave of social protest against the neoliberal economic model, governmental corruption, and the many problems confronting Argentina in the post-2001 crisis, were opportunities for renewed demands and struggles concerning women's sexual and reproductive rights. Paradoxically, while U.S.-dominated conservative trends in global politics (e.g., President George W. Bush's reinstatement of the abortion "global gag rule"[14]) had created adverse conditions for the promotion of women's rights in international arenas (Corrêa, 2003), in Argentina the opposite pattern seemed to be unfolding. The economic crisis shook key institutions and dimensions of social life, and the context of social movement activism nourished women's movements demands. Argentines loudly demanded deep social transformations, and women were actively engaged in those struggles. The gains made by women's movements in sexual and reproductive rights must be situated against this backdrop of broad social mobilization. As long-term women's movement members argued in activist forums, the public debates about women's sexual and reproductive rights flourishing at the time of this study were hard to imagine only a few years earlier. Yet recent legislative accomplishments in that field, and the societal support many of these issues were gaining (CEDES, CELS, and FEIM, 2003), cannot be understood as separate

14 The administration of Barack Obama overturned the abortion "global gag rule" in 2009.

from the steady political organizing of women activists at least since the 1970s (though negatively affected by the last military dictatorship) (Bellotti, 2002; Cano, 1982).

Women's grassroots organizing during the Encuentro Nacional de Mujeres, starting in 1986, and the proliferation of feminist and women's organizations since the restoration of democracy have constituted important resources for women across the country and have exerted pressure on the government to enact political changes favorable to women. During the term of my research, women's meetings, workshops, conferences, and protests occurred across the city of Buenos Aires and the surrounding metropolitan area. Not only feminists but also many women in popular assemblies, *piqueteras*, women in recovered factories, and human rights organizations were reflecting upon and making demands about their sexual and reproductive rights. Long-term feminist demands such as access to contraception and legal abortion are now being adopted by wider sectors of the women's movement and political organizations. For example, during my fieldwork, groups of piqueteras in Buenos Aires marched to health centers to demand contraceptive devices, putting the recently passed law to the test. In the 2003 Encuentro, the sight of thousands of women in the streets of the city of Rosario joined in the demand of *anticonceptivos para no abortar, aborto legal para no morir* (contraceptives to prevent abortion, legal abortion to prevent death) was an eloquent testimony that more and more women were willing to take a political stand on these issues (CONDERS, 2003b).

In 2005, the National Campaign for the Right to Legal, Safe and Free of Charge Abortion was launched by a wide array of organizations from different political sectors. The campaign includes members of feminist and other women's movement groups as well as human rights, labor, health, peasant, student, religious, and unemployed workers organizations and networks. As of 2011, more than 300 organizations had adhered to the campaign. The law project spearheaded by the campaign promotes the right to abortion in inclusive terms, that is, beyond its decriminalization. It aims to guarantee access to abortion to all women by creating an obligation for the state to make abortion available for free in

the public health system and that it be covered by the private and social insurance systems[15].

Women's movement organizations have disseminated information on reproductive rights through several venues, including public protests, flyers, graffiti, participation in multiple political groups, and contributions to more formal settings such as governmental institutions, professional societies, workplaces, and nongovernmental organizations. During different women's protests, slogans like "Take your rosaries out of our ovaries", "If the Pope were a woman, abortion would be the law", "Neither god, nor master, nor the state decide about our bodies", and "Down with Capitalism and Patriarchy", identified and publicly exposed sources of women's bodily oppression. Some activists have stressed the need to obtain legal and free abortion on demand as a public health issue and in order to avert poor women's health risks or death. Others emphasized women's rights to decide over their bodies or rejected the imposition of religious morality on what should be a secular democratic state. Some groups emphasized pregnancy prevention, demanding better access to contraceptives, and still others made connections to broader issues of sexuality, questioning the role of compulsory heterosexuality in unwanted pregnancies[16].

For many of the women involved, the importance of these protests, performances, and interventions around sexual and reproductive issues, and particularly abortion, was that they have helped to more firmly establish an overdue debate in Argentine society and to provide alternative frameworks to understanding sexuality, procreation, and women's bodies. Instead of naturalized motherhood and sexual guilt, many in the women's movement

15 See additional information about the campaign and law project on its website: http://www.abortolegal.com.ar.

16 See Borland (1997) for an analysis on how abortion rights activists and advocates in Buenos Aires have historically framed the issue of abortion. Sutton and Borland (2013) conducted a content analysis of abortion rights framing in the context of the Encuentros Nacionales de Mujeres (specifically focused on workshops on reproductive rights issues). The study shows that overtime participants who support abortion rights have deployed multiple framings, including arguments based on the notion of abortion as a public health concern, a social justice issue, a right to make choices about one's life, a right to the body, a matter of pragmatism, a defense of women's lives, and a human rights issue (very rarely abortion is presented as a eugenics strategy, such as poverty reduction). The Catholic Church appears as a key political opponent that has attempted to block the right to abortion.

assert women's rights to sexual pleasure, to a sexuality not necessarily linked to reproduction, and to decide about the number of children they want to have. Instead of women's bodies as public property, many women have been claiming their rights to make free decisions about their bodies as a basic citizenship entitlement and a human rights issue. They also recognize that these decisions are not a just matter of personal choice, but that basic economic and social conditions need to be in place in order to be able to make real choices. In the words of the national campaign for abortion rights, the debate and enactment of a law to legalize abortion constitute *una deuda de la democracia* (a debt of democracy) toward women in Argentina (Campaña Nacional por el Derecho al Aborto Legal, Seguro y Gratuito, 2011).

Unwanted and unplanned pregnancies: abortion as an option

While motherhood is socially glorified and encouraged in Argentina –and while many interviewees reported positive experiences and joyful feelings in relation to pregnancy– pregnancy is not always a voluntary or happy event for women. Forty-two percent of the women I interviewed individually reported that they became pregnant at some point in their lives unintentionally and/or when they were without the means or desire to have a child. The reasons behind these pregnancies were varied, including the failure of contraceptive methods, inconsistent use of contraceptives, sexual violence, inadequate information about sexual matters, silence and shame around sexuality, and unequal power relations between the women and their sexual partners which prevented the former from asserting their bodily needs and desires.

As Chaneton and Vacarezza argue, the field of sexuality is a complex one and not always predictable:

> We venture into a terrain where bodies blend and mix, they push their limits and get lost in each other momentarily. Meetings that are enigmatic to the human conscience and whose results are not entirely predictable. Occasional and involuntary events, accidents, technical failures, shortage of economic and/or cultural resources, forgetfulness, neglect, disinterest,

> things that happen, the *fragosidad* [uneveness, roughness] of love, lapses, weaknesses, spills. (2011: 45)

Even when sexual partners plan ahead and use contraception, the World Health Organization (WHO, 2003: 12) indicates that "no contraceptive method is 100 per cent effective [...] Even if all contraceptive users were to use methods perfectly all the time, there would still be nearly six million accidental pregnancies annually." In this study, some of the women who became unwillingly pregnant had taken precautions to avoid pregnancy but "the condom broke", "the diaphragm failed", or other contraceptive strategies did not work out as expected. Sometimes contraception was used inconsistently, and the reasons reported ranged from psychological factors (e.g., an "unconscious desire" for motherhood), socioeconomic reasons (e.g., unsteady access to contraceptive methods or services), unequal power relations (e.g., difficulty negotiating the use of condoms), and lack of sufficient planning (e.g., sexual intercourse happened in a moment of "negligence" or "just the minute when I did not have the diaphragm with me").

The women who had unwanted, unplanned, or unexpected pregnancies took one of two different paths: continuation or interruption of the pregnancy. However, the boundary between these two options was not always clear-cut. Ambivalences, fears, moral dilemmas, economic constraints, family pressures or support, health practitioners' attitudes, and the length of pregnancy shaped women's actions. Seventy-one percent of the women who reported unwanted pregnancies underwent abortions.

The controversial and emotionally charged positions heard in public debates about abortion also emerged during conversations and interviews with the women I met in the context of my study and women's rights activism. The in-depth interviews and focus groups revealed the complex feelings, needs, and constraints embedded in women's decisions on sexuality and procreation, and on abortion in particular. Through small workshops, conferences, women's meetings, and political protests in which abortion was the central topic, I also gained a deeper understanding of the quandaries, ideologies, and intricacies involved in abortion discussions.

Attitudes toward abortion

The majority (72%) of the women I interviewed individually were decisively for or at least sympathetic with the legalization/decriminalization of abortion; some (20%) were opposed; and a few women (6%) made ambiguous or ambivalent statements about this issue[17]. Although the three groups included women from different social classes, middle-class women were more concentrated in the first group (pro-legalization or decriminalization), while working-class and poor women were more heavily represented in the other two groups (opposed and ambivalent). A survey conducted by Römer & Asociados in Buenos Aires and the surrounding metropolitan area, reported in *La Nación* (2004), found that 30% of respondents accepted abortion without any conditions, 47% of respondents would accept abortion in special circumstances (risk to the mother's life, pregnancy as a product of rape, or fetal malformation), and 23% were completely opposed to the practice of abortion.

The women in this study who supported legal abortion offered two main lines of argumentation echoing the frameworks used by women's movements activists. One argument was that abortion is a personal decision that women have the right to make because it concerns their own lives and bodies. The words of Tania, an Afro-descendant activist, exemplify this position:

> I support those who say that women own their bodies and have [the right] to decide. I believe that, many times, abortion is necessary, and I'm in favor of that. I'm not in favor of abortion per se, but of the woman who has decided to [have an abortion]. I respect her reasons, and I think that if she decides to do it, then it is all right. This [decision] belongs to the private sphere, to the realm of personal decisions, and I believe that we need to have absolute freedom –in that sense, I'm in favor. (personal communication, June 12, 2003)

17 This information is absent for one interviewee with whom I had to finish the interview earlier than expected. I tried to contact her again in her workplace, but she had switched jobs.

Tania's distinction between being in favor of women's decision to undergo abortion yet not of abortion per se is important, for it clarifies a common misunderstanding in polarized political debates. Many of the people who advocate legal abortion *are not promoting* abortion but supporting women's right to decide and to try to avert risks to their lives and health. In fact, many of the women who were in favor of decriminalization of abortion emphasized the need to provide good access to contraception and sex education in order to avoid abortion in the first place.

The other main argument for the decriminalization/legalization of abortion was that the law's prohibition fosters dangerous procedures that put women's bodily integrity and life at risk. Eugenia, a flight attendant and union member, illustrates this position:

> If you legalize abortion you are preventing that they be done illegally. You are protecting the lives of many women who die because of illegal abortion practices. Because [abortion] exists; it exists. [...] So if it is illegal you have to go to those hovels where a midwife does it with a knitting needle, and people get a hemorrhage and die. So then you are giving priority to the embryo and you are killing the mother. I think it is a bit contradictory. [Abortion] should be legislated, well legislated. (Personal communication, May 23, 2003)

Like Eugenia, other women in the study brought up dramatic examples to support their perspectives, such as cases of raped women, pregnancies that endangered women's lives, pregnant girls, and fetuses with serious malformations. The reasons offered were not mutually exclusive but often additive, that is, women offered multiple reasons to justify their views. A few women also pointed out the difficulties faced by low-income women supporting too many children, resorting to a discourse somewhat reminiscent of population control arguments (e.g., reducing poverty by reducing poor people's fertility). The need to end corrupt abortion business practices was also mentioned. Given the complexity, the emotional and bodily costs, and the moral dilemmas involved in this issue, it is not surprising that even those who supported the decriminalization of abortion stressed that abortion is something to be avoided if possible, emphasizing the need to prevent unwanted pregnancies.

One-fifth of the women in the sample of individual interviewees strongly condemned abortion, equating it with murder. Estela, a low-income woman in a poor people's movement, illustrates this position. She had several children, and when her teenage daughters got pregnant she convinced them not to undergo abortions. She explained why: "I'm an enemy [of abortion]. I think that at the same moment that you engendered a child, at the same moment that you make love, you could say, and you get pregnant –*that* already has life. It is as if you got a one-year old kid and you cut his throat with a knife. That's how I see it" (personal communication, January 14, 2003). Some of the women who took this position were fairly committed to the Catholic Church or to other Christian denominations (e.g., taught catechism or were involved in the religious community) or had subscribed to religious teachings. Despite their condemnation of abortion, some of these women felt that rape should be an exception to penalization.

Three women (6%) in the sample were ambiguous about whether abortion should be penalized, seemingly leaning to one direction or another but without making a definite statement. These women negotiated perspectives that condemn abortion with feelings of guilt, fear, and/or empathy for the women who go through abortions. Luciana, a middle-class woman of Asian descent, suggested that abortion is a personal decision, and she brought up the case of rape to support her point. When I asked about nonrape cases, she was less sure and said that "she should be in the woman's place" in order to know. She focused her attention on contraceptive prevention and said she was not sure who the law should penalize (personal communication, June 4, 2003). Yolanda, a working-class Peruvian immigrant, also encouraged contraception, but she said that she was very much an "enemy of abortion". Still, during one of her pregnancies she had considered undergoing abortion herself but did not do it because of family pressures. When I asked her whether abortion should be penalized, she responded:

> Well... but... well... I say... there are sometimes pregnancies… that you get pregnant because of rape. And well, you do not want to have that child,

> so there are people who decide to take it out. So well... sometimes I say... no? If you do not know who the father is, if you got pregnant because of rape ... But the Catholic religion never allows abortion, no matter what. (Yolanda, personal communication, May 9, 2003)

Yolanda's statement shows that she was struggling to articulate her position on a matter that she did not perceive as clear-cut. She seemed to be sympathetic to abortion decisions in some instances, but she tried to negotiate that position with the perspective of the Catholic Church, which repudiates abortion. She did not clarify what the stance of the state in these matters should be.

Candela, a young woman who lived in a shantytown, also provided a mixed view of abortion. Above all, she was fearful of the risks of undergoing abortion, given the dangerous conditions in which it is usually carried out in her neighborhood. Candela knew that abortion was prohibited, but she did not know that it was defined as a crime that could carry a prison penalty. She was surprised about that because she knew many women who underwent abortions, and because it was "so common" in the shantytown where she lived. She spoke about friends of hers who performed the abortion themselves, either with pills or with the *sonda* (catheter), and about the case of a friend who died in the process. With respect to her attitudes, on the one hand, she experienced feelings of guilt regarding the procedure. These emotions were partly grounded in religious beliefs: when her mother encouraged one of her sisters to have an abortion, she thought, "Oh God, forgive her because she is not saying that with a bad intention." On the other hand, she was empathetic toward other women who undergo abortions:

> I try to put myself in the place of that person, and the reason she did it. Because she thought that if she brings that creature, what could that creature expect? What could she offer? Many people say that love and affection. But I had a friend who said: "I can't feed [the baby] just with love, and I can't clothe [the baby] just with affection" [*laughs*]. She always said, "the budget, the budget." Everyone was upset when she said that, but she was somewhat right. (Candela, personal communication, February 11, 2003)

Candela's position highlights the difficulty of making abstract moral statements about abortion and how multiple forces may shape women's views, including religious influences, women's economic situations, the experiences of friends or family members, and the conditions in which abortions are done. Candela's willingness to imagine herself in other women's shoes (bodies), shows the contrast between moral abstract views and concrete embodied positions, which also inform moral standpoints.

The discussions within the focus groups also reflected the contested nature of abortion in Argentina. The focus group with poor women enrolled in a social assistance program exhibited differences of opinion, with some supporting abortion in certain cases and others completely opposing it. The content of this exchange raises questions about the reasons for some poor women's opposition to this practice. In some instances, disagreement seemed to be grounded in the high value these women placed on motherhood (an important source of status and perhaps influenced by cultural and religious beliefs too), but it might have also been a way to resist discourses that suggest it is morally wrong to have children if one does not have sufficient economic resources (economic arguments that sometimes inform population control policies). For women living in conditions of chronic poverty, endorsing acceptance of such arguments would foreclose their possibility of having children, making fertility control not so much a choice but a mandate (Solinger, 2001). Ana, one of the women in the focus group, articulated her opposition to abortion by suggesting that women can support their children even if they have few economic resources:

> I have five [children], and they are with me. To me, abortion is the worst thing that exists. [Why?] Because you are throwing the child to the garbage can. A [bad] conscience remains knowing that you... you could have perfectly had it, like I do. I have five. I have a *plan* [workfare subsidy]. I do not have a luxury job. I only have 150 pesos [approximately fifty dollars per month at the time], and the 150 are for my children. And my children do not lack anything. (Focus group 2, June 10, 2003)

Ana's effort to raise her children in the midst of poverty was certainly a great challenge, and she was proud of her efforts. Although she faced severe

economic hardships (it was next to impossible for a large family to survive on only 150 pesos), she tried to demonstrate that she could still be a good mother who satisfied her children's needs. While Ana's having five children might have been the result of lack of real contraceptive choices and/or the moral repudiation of abortion, she might have also been asserting her desire and right to have children like any other woman with greater economic power. Yet, Ana used her own experiences and efforts to raise her children as a platform to reject the decision of other women to undergo an abortion, implying that they are bad women or that they are unwilling to sacrifice themselves enough (reverberation of maternal sacrifice discourses).

Abortion was a particularly touchy issue in the focus group of domestic workers. One of the women in the group had strong feelings against abortion, equating it with murder, while another –her good friend– shared her own abortion experience during the meeting. At some point the discussion could not go any further because the woman who opposed abortion insinuated that she did not want to offend her friend. In a sense, her personal relationship took precedence over her moral convictions, casting doubt on whether she could really take her abstract position to the logical conclusion: that is, her friend would be a murderer under her definition of abortion. While the difficult interaction revealed the emotional responses and ethical dilemmas that abortion elicits, the group still recognized that abortion was a widespread practice. I mentioned that one perspective on abortion was that women who undergo such a procedure should be punished with a prison sentence. One of the women in the group responded in the midst of generalized laughter: then "all women would be *en cana*" (slang for "in jail"). This group also highlighted the social inequalities that mark the conditions in which abortion takes place and how lack of economic resources sometimes means having to wait more time to be able to pay for an abortion. Some in this group conveyed that the longer the wait the more troublesome the decision, as the abortion goes from being the expulsion of "just blood" to the extraction of something that more closely resembles the human form.

The focus group of lesbians showed the most uniform support for women's abortion decisions. None of the women in the group opposed it.

This group expressed a clear sense that women should be the ones to decide over abortion matters, citing women's ownership of their bodies, and suggesting that women should not be forced to lend their bodily resources to carry an unwanted pregnancy to term. Myrna, one of the women in this group, expanded her reasoning to other realms, arguing that women have a right to decide over their bodies both in relation to abortion (often framed as a reproductive right) and in relation to their sexual identity (usually defined as a sexual right). This connection echoes efforts by some activists and scholars to bridge the work of people more strongly aligned with either one or the other side of the sexual/reproductive rights split. According to Brown, with a "focus on the axis of (sexual) freedom and not just on (social) equality, the demand for the legalization of abortion functions as a hinge between reproductive and sexual rights" (2008: 280). Myrna, a focus group participant, identified the Catholic Church as a crucial player that has also made the connection between issues of sexual identity and reproduction, but with opposing goals –that is, restricting women's capacity to make decisions about their bodies in both areas:

> [According to the church,] God is the one who gives you life and who takes it away. Then, of course, [the church] is opposed to the notion that women are the owners of their lives. If they are the owners of their lives, then they can also decide about their *sexual identities*, they can decide on everything else they want. On the other hand, like all theories, it is difficult for me to put into practice, that is, to break with the mandate that the only objective that women have, the only reason they are in the world for is to *procreate* [emphasis added]. (Focus group 3, June 11, 2003)

The focus group with volunteers in a Catholic charity organization clearly demonstrated the contradictions between Catholic teachings and the reality of women's lives. It showed how difficult it is, even for committed Catholic women, to sustain the discourse of the church. The discussion on contraception and abortion was initially somewhat dominated by Francisca, a sixty-nine-year-old woman who seemed to enjoy respect and authority in the group. She clearly endorsed the ideas of the Catholic Church advocating natural contraceptive methods and talking about the promis-

cuity of teenagers today. Her words started to lose some of their power in the face of uncomfortable silences or other women's remarks about how contraception is really a "personal decision" or how the Church does not allow condoms but "AIDS is the other side." Another woman added: "I have sons and I see condoms in their drawers. They are taking care of themselves. What am I to do? They are twenty-five and twenty-seven years old, and I'm happy to see the condoms, to see that they are taking care of themselves." Perhaps the most surprising part of the conversation, given the focus group setting (church-related premises) and the fact that these women said they were devoted Catholics, came when we reached the topic of abortion. I had expected these women would reject abortion outright, or at least be very cautious in their words. Yet I was wrong. They were very agitated about this issue, and some of them offered passionate arguments about why abortion should be allowed in certain cases:

> Pupee: It is something very personal, it shouldn't be prohibited, and each person should be able to choose according to her own criteria, her way of being, her environment, her social and economic situation, her principles and moral beliefs [*another woman repeats*, "according to her morals, to her principles"]. There should not be a prohibition. Each person should be free to choose. I wouldn't say "do it," but it is each person's criteria, right?
> Delta: I'm in favor of therapeutic abortion, or if there was rape.
> Chiqui: Yes, that, of course.
> Delta: That little girl of fourteen years old who got pregnant –I think she was not from here, in another country– and she got authorization...
> Francisca: To legalize abortion brings promiscuity along. Free love is promiscuous.
> Delta: And what do you think, that there's not free love today?
> Francisca: I'm not saying there isn't.
> Chiqui: To legalize [abortion] is to avert a lot of problems, like women...
> Francisca: Well, that's one way of thinking.
> Chiqui: ...like women who undergo abortions with a knitting needle and get to the hospital with a hemorrhage.
> Delta: It is terrible.
> Chiqui: That could be averted.
> [*Silence*.]
> Pupee: It is very personal.
> Chiqui: Anyway, I believe that abortion is a very personal issue, and I agree with what she says about therapeutic abortion. And it is essential because of rape. Suddenly, they get a ten-year-old girl...
> Delta: Like it happened in a Central American country...[18]
> Chiqui: Or a drunk in the streets...
> Francisca: That's a very particular case.
> Chiqui: Why not authorize abortion in those cases?
> Francisca: Well, it is probably authorized.
> Chiqui: No, it is not authorized.
> Delta: Not here, you have to go to the judge, you have to...
> Chiqui: Meanwhile the nine months [of pregnancy] went by.
> (Focus group 4, June 18, 2003)

The conversation continued with more examples in which different participants felt the law or the justice system should have supported women (e.g., rape, unviable fetuses). Yet as shown above, the idea that women have a right to make abortion decisions, even if not in these extreme cases, was also mentioned. While as practicing Catholics these women subscribed to many of the church's teachings, they also had their own ideas, many of which contradicted the church's ideologies on contraception and abortion. They came to these ideas by reflecting on their own observations and trying to make sense of information they gathered from sources like the media and from their everyday life. These processes evidenced fissures in the rigid frame provided by the Catholic Church. Some of these women's statements resonated with feminist arguments, though they would probably not identify them as such.

The attitudes of the women in this study toward abortion reflected the ethical, religious, and practical quandaries that abortion poses in a society influenced by the Catholic Church, plagued by social and economic inequalities, and in a period of crisis when gender relations were

18 This is a reference to a real case of a Nicaraguan girl who was raped and got pregnant, but Nicaraguan government authorities and the church opposed her undergoing an abortion. This case received considerable media attention in Argentina.

in flux. The public debates on reproductive health that surrounded the sanctioning of the new national law, the renewed activism and visibility of the women's movement, and the media exposure of dramatic cases (e.g., the ordeal of raped girls or of women pregnant with seriously malformed fetuses that precluded viability) prompted the public to interrogate their beliefs and positions on abortion and reproductive rights. For example, studies suggested widespread support for increased access to contraception and sex education (CEDES, CELS, and FEIM, 2003). While the Catholic Church perspective filtered or shaped the views of different women in this study, feminist perspectives were also implicitly and explicitly enlisted. Having reviewed the attitudes of women I interviewed about abortion, I will next examine the actual embodied experiences of women who terminated their pregnancies.

Experiencing abortion

Fifteen out of fifty individual interviewees reported that they had undergone abortions. Some other women experienced the process secondhand via close female friends or relatives. Since I did not ask women directly whether they had undergone abortions –this information was volunteered by the interviewees– it is possible that some women experienced abortions but chose not to report them. The majority of the women who reported abortions were middle class (ten women); the rest were poor or working class (five women). Besides these fifteen women, a working-class interviewee whose period was delayed said that she used an injection "to get her period" but was not sure whether this procedure was abortive or not. Only one woman in the four focus groups reported having had an abortion, but the less intimate context of focus groups may have made it more difficult to share this kind of information.

In the following sections I explore several questions: what are the effects of the clandestine and illegal status of abortion for the women in this research? How did women decide to have an abortion? How did they frame their decisions? What were the conditions in which abortions were

performed? These women's voices challenged cultural assumptions that deny the reality of abortion and marginalize or vilify women who make this decision. They also relate the inherently gendered (and classed) bodily dimensions of these experiences.

Motivations

Ideologies that reflect the criminalization of abortion either disregard or downplay many women's reasons for having abortions, concentrating mainly or exclusively on fetal rights. Since women's bodies and existence are so deeply enmeshed in processes of pregnancy and abortion, it seems appropriate to hear what they have to say. In general, the women who had abortions explained that the timing of the pregnancy was not right either because they were too young, had other projects that were not compatible with a child, already had other children, and/or faced economic problems. One woman said that at the time of her unwanted pregnancies, she was just not interested in having children or forming a family. Some women terminated their pregnancies because their partners did not want the child or because they themselves did not want to have a child with a particular partner. Often, it was a combination of several conditions that shaped women's decisions to undergo an abortion. About two-thirds of the women who reported abortions had children at some point before or after.

Frida, a forty-year-old middle-class woman, stated that the factors that intersected in her decision to have an abortion included domestic violence, marital dissatisfaction, already having a child, and her career plans. She was married and had a child with a man with whom she did not enjoy sex and who was becoming increasingly violent. They had sexual relations very sporadically, and she got pregnant. Frida had already decided to separate from her husband and pursue other projects and knew that he could use a future child to trap her:

> I was clear that I wanted to finish my studies. I was clear that I already had a child, that I wanted to work on something related to my studies, that I wanted to separate [from my husband], and that this kid would have made all that more difficult... I was clear that [the kid] should not come because [he/she] would be burdened with a shitty history. (Personal communication, December 5 2002)

From Frida's perspective, continuing the pregnancy had high costs: resigning an emergent independence derived from career opportunities and being stuck in a violent and unhappy relationship.

Although from a very different economic and social background, Alexandra (twenty-four years old) also had to weigh multiple and complex life conditions in her decision to undergo an abortion. At the time of her pregnancy, Alexandra was living in a shantytown and was already raising a small child on her own given that the father had left them. Her new pregnancy was the product of a casual relationship with another young man. Her decision to have an abortion was not easy, for she experienced tension between her Catholic upbringing and her inclination to terminate the pregnancy. She finally rejected the hegemonic Catholic perspective. When I asked about her abortion experience, she lowered her voice and explained:

> I didn't want, I do not want [to have another child], because of the situation I was in, and my relationship with that guy was nothing serious. We were together, but no... each of us was leading one's own life, so no, there was not a relationship like saying "let's have a... [child]". So I said "no". I thought about it, I thought about it, and we decided. Even though I was raised in a nuns' school –which means that [abortion] is wrong– I was not going to bring [a child] to make him suffer. (Alexandra, personal communication, February 24, 2003)

Alexandra's economic difficulties, her previous experience of male abandonment, and the casual relationship with her last sexual partner influenced her decision. If she were to birth another baby, she wanted to offer her child the possibility of at least basic well-being. Her fear of hardship was based on the economic difficulties facing a poor single mother in a

depressed economy. She already knew what it was like to raise a child alone, without the father's contribution and childcare support, and she knew much about the challenges a second baby would pose. She also did not envision the man she was dating as a person she would want to have a child with, given that their relationship was "nothing serious" –and she felt that having a child was serious business.

Although women are socially condemned for having abortions, few ask what role men play in these decisions, almost as if women got pregnant by themselves. Sometimes the identity or the wishes and situations of the women's sexual partner are key in their decision about abortion. While many women raise children by themselves, supported by extended families, or with partners (male or female) who are not their child's biological parents, for others it is very important to be able to count on the support of the men who impregnated them. When the future father withdraws his support, or when he is not someone a woman wants to have a child with, this may tilt her decision toward abortion. Ursula, a middle-class woman who got pregnant when she was a teenager, stressed how much her boyfriend's lack of support weighed in on her decision to terminate the pregnancy. At the time she felt that abortion was "the only thing I could do, because I couldn't do it alone, and if I chose this [to continue the pregnancy] everything was going to be harder, because he did not want it, and if I didn't have his support, I was not going to do it" (personal communication, November 28, 2002). In the case of Franca, an indigenous woman from a northern province, the decision was partly based on her desire to spare her lover any trouble since he was married to another woman. These women took into account their relationships with men, their ideas of what constitutes a suitable family and home for the child, and their partners' desires.

Yamila, a working-class woman who identified herself as a sex worker, got pregnant when the condom a client was using broke. Her description of how she tried to convince her gynecologist of her reasons for wanting an abortion show the various threads entangled in her decision-making process:

> I realized [that I was pregnant] one month later, when I missed my period. It looks like the condom broke when I was ovulating, and I became

> pregnant. I went to talk to Berta [the gynecologist], and I told her, "I can't have it." And Berta said, "Why not?" Of course, doctors want to brainwash you to have it. [I said], "No, you don't understand, he is a customer, a person whom I don't love." She said, "But it is a life." [I replied], "Yeah right, but I can't have a child now, not at this moment. Perhaps if it would had happened at another time I would have had it, no matter who the father was." But it was not a good time to have a child. I was coming out of a separation, out of many problems, you know, and I did not want to... So I did it myself. I inserted a pill in my uterus. (Personal communication, March 12, 2003)

Abortion decision-making is a context-related process. Yamila did not want to have a child with someone "she did not love" and right when she was splitting up with her partner, but she might have had a baby at another time, under different circumstances. Ursula, who at the time of the interview was in a committed lesbian relationship raising her children with another woman, mentioned that when she was eighteen years old, having a child without her former boyfriend's support was not a viable option but the situation would be different now.

I presented different cases of abortion motivations to underscore that, though abortion decisions are personal, they do not happen in a social vacuum. They are influenced by broader social conditions, power relations, and inequalities. Simple assumptions about women who undergo abortions hide the multifaceted and often painful nature of these decisions, particularly in a context where women who take this path are socially demonized or marginalized. This adverse social milieu also shaped the conditions in which abortions occurred.

Abortion conditions

The unsafe conditions in which millions of abortions are performed worldwide present this practice as a serious public health issue. According to a World Health Organization report on the incidence of abortion in 2003, the estimated annual number of abortions around the world was 42 million, and about 20 million of those abortions could be considered unsafe (WHO, 2007)[19]. Legal restrictions on abortion did not seem to avert the practice: the great majority of unsafe abortions (around 98%) happened in developing countries with such restrictions (WHO, 2007). As of 2007, legislation in most countries (98%) permitted abortion to save a woman's life, but only 28% allowed abortion on request (WHO, 2011). Although legalization is not enough to ensure access for all women (for example, because of economic or geographic constraints), in places where abortion is illegal women face additional challenges (Mundigo and Indriso, 1999).

The main effect of the criminalization of abortion in Argentina is not incarceration of women or the eradication of abortion, but clandestine abortion practices. Consistent with global trends, restrictive laws have an impact on how abortions are conducted, under what conditions, and with what economic, emotional, and bodily costs. In this section, I offer a glimpse of the disparate circumstances in which abortions are performed in Argentina and how women in this study experienced this procedure, given the context of illegality. All of the abortions of the women I interviewed were clandestine, with different degrees of safety and quality of treatment. Most of the abortions reported were performed by health care practitioners (doctors, midwives), but this did not always guarantee minimum hygiene conditions, good medical attention, or humane treatment. Against the backdrop of criminalized abortion, safety and good quality health care cost significant amounts of money. Women with fewer economic resources had fewer choices of methods to use or places to go, which could mean taking greater risks. Yet even for middle-class women, abortion in better facilities was very costly. Women's economic resources and support networks, as well as their relationships with and reactions of their doctors, shaped how they navigated the different clandestine circuits of abortion. In what follows, I explore these circuits and how women enlisted support for or tried to overcome the obstacles to their decisions to terminate their pregnancies.

19 In 2008, the estimated number of unsafe abortions throughout the world rose to 21.6 million, but the overall unsafe abortion rate ("14 unsafe abortions per 1000 women aged 15-44 years") did not change "mainly due to the growing population of women of reproductive age" (WHO, 2011: 1).

Among the most economically and socially disadvantaged women, two resorted to "homemade" abortions. In one case the procedure was performed with the infamous sonda and in another with a medication containing misoprostol, which taken in certain amounts produces uterine contractions. Alexandra, the young woman living in a shantytown, could not afford to have an abortion in a clinic. Even one that was relatively inexpensive was still beyond her economic reach. Thus, she contacted a friend of her sister who made her a special deal (approximately seven dollars) to practice the abortion with a sonda in Alexandra's sister's home:

> Author: How was the experience?
> Alexandra: Ugly, because she inserted the sonda [in the vagina]. I don't know if you heard about it or …
> Author: I don't know the procedures really well.
> Alexandra: Well, it is because it is illegal, you know. Well, she inserted that [the sonda] [...] She asked me to lay down on a bed. I mean, I went to my sister's home to do [the abortion], because I would have to stay two or three days in bed, more or less [...] First I was scared, and then I did it, and I got up the following day and I felt something that fell, and when I went to the bathroom, the placenta fell and then I was losing [blood]. I had a strong hemorrhage, a strong hemorrhage, and my mom told me, "Why don't you go to the doctor? Go and find out what you have." But I did not want to tell her. Well, then I was, [the hemorrhage] started to decrease, but I couldn't get [my body] straight for about a week. I got stuck like that, bent over. Because I still had it there, I hadn't expelled it yet.
> (Personal communication, February 24, 2003)

After a few days, the abortion was completed and luckily she did not suffer further side effects. This very dangerous procedure put Alexandra's health and life at risk, but it was the only method she could afford. The illegality of abortion, combined with her poverty, influenced the dangerous conditions in which it was done. Alexandra relied on one of the methods that often result in health problems requiring medical attention. Yet like many other women, Alexandra never went to a medical center, adding to the nonregistered numbers of abortions that take place in Argentina every day.

Yamila, who made a living through prostitution, had what she called a homemade abortion and found out about this method from information that circulated among her *compañeras*. She reported using an analgesic and anti-inflammatory medication with misoprostol, inserting some of these pills in her vagina and taking additional pills orally in order to produce contractions that cause an abortion:

> I laid down, and I got up the following morning, but it hadn't come down. I came to the office and when I got home I started to have cramps, like in my belly, and I went to the bathroom and expelled everything. [...] I felt pretty bad, because I also have gastritis, you know, and those pills are for the bones, so they are really strong, you know? They killed my stomach, and for one week my stomach did not get better, but I expelled everything, even the placenta. (Personal communication, March 12, 2003)

Yamila could not afford a fancy clinic or an expensive doctor to do the abortion or to give her sound advice about abortion procedures. When she talked to her gynecologist in a public hospital, she did not help her. Rather, the gynecologist tried to convince her to continue the pregnancy. Thus Yamila relied on the informal network of women in prostitution to find out how to do the abortion herself. While in certain conditions abortions with misoprostol can be done safely, the information that circulates informally is not always reliable and misinformation can lead to health risks that could be averted[20].

Legislation that makes it difficult for women to access safe abortions, influences the high proportion of abortion-related deaths among maternal deaths in Argentina. Particularly for poor women, the dangers of clandestine abortions and justified fears of going to the hospital to obtain post-abortion attention may place their lives in jeopardy. At the time of this research, the Ministry of Health had estimated that 31% of maternal

20 A group of lesbians and feminists have tried to remedy this situation and have taken the initiative to provide reliable information through a hotline (called "Abortion: More Information, Fewer Risks") and through a book (*Lesbianas y Feministas por la Despenalizacion del Aborto*, 2010) about how women can perform abortions with misoprostol safely. The book gives information in an accessible language and specifies in which conditions it is safe to use misoprostol.

deaths in Argentina were caused by botched abortions (Ministerio de Salud, 2002), that is, abortion constituted a chief cause of maternal death in the country (see also Ramos *et al.*, 2004)[21]. These numbers, however, cannot be considered exhaustive, because of the clandestine nature of the procedure. It is also suspected that some of the maternal deaths that are registered as produced by other causes are, in fact, related to abortion (Ramos *et al.*, 2001). Furthermore, women who undergo clandestine and unsafe abortions may also suffer infections that jeopardize their organs, including ovaries, uterus, lungs, liver, and kidneys (Mormandi, 2001). As Mundigo and Indriso state: "Death is not the only tragic cost of unsafe abortion. Many more women survive the experience, only to suffer lifelong consequences of serious complications. Sepsis, hemorrhage, uterine perforation, and cervical trauma often lead to problems of infertility, permanent physical impairment, and chronic morbidity" (1999: 24).

While some women seek medical help because of abortion complications, many more do not. For example, in the province of Mendoza, it was estimated that "for every woman who arrives at the hospital during the course of an abortion or abortion complications, there are three or four cases more who never reach hospital attention, and thus are not part of the records" (García, 2003: 4). In the province of Buenos Aires, about 32,000 women per year were reported to seek medical attention in public hospitals because of abortion-related complications (*Clarín*, 2003). As long as abortion remains illegal, and safe abortions expensive, women of low economic means will continue risking their lives and bodily integrity in order to control their fertility. While Argentina joined over 190 countries that pledged to fulfill the United Nations Millennium Development Goals –one of which is to improve maternal health– the 2007 Argentine government report avoided a discussion on the legalization of abortion as one of the necessary steps to reduce maternal deaths. While the report (Presidencia de la Nación, 2007) endorsed humane post-abortion attention, this does not solve the inadequate conditions in which currently illegal abortions are carried out in the first place.

21 In more recent years, the Ministry of Health estimated that "over 20 percent of deaths recorded due to obstetric emergencies were caused by unsafe abortions" (Human Rights Watch, 2010).

In a society where abortion is a crime, where women have been traditionally subordinated, and where women who do not choose motherhood are viewed with suspicion, one of the risks of undergoing abortion is mistreatment by those who perform it. Even the women who could pay more money for an abortion could not count on humane treatment. For example, the first abortion of Diana, a middle-class interviewee, was in a doctor's private office. Yet Diana recounted that this doctor treated her badly:

> When I woke up from my first abortion, I saw a bucket with blood and other things next to the bed, which they could have placed in the bathroom. The guy [the doctor] complained the whole time, before and after the abortion: "This [pregnancy] is too advanced. I don't know if this should be done or not! Later, if you have an infection, it will be your own responsibility, do not call me!" [He said] those kinds of things. (Personal communication, December 4, 2002)

In Diana's case, the doctor did the abortion and was paid for it, but washed his hands of any responsibility or accountability in relation to the procedure or her physical health and emotions. The fact that she was doing something illegal meant that she would be unlikely to report medical malpractice to the justice system or, if she did, she would probably find no sympathy.

Lorena, a university student in her twenties accompanied her best friend to have an abortion in a private house with a terrible smell that stayed with her for many days. This place was run by two women who performed the abortions, but Lorena was not sure whether they were doctors. Lorena described the mistreatment of women undergoing abortions:

> [The abortion practitioners] would tell the women, "Oh, what are you whining about?" –and [my friend] was hurting– "What are you whining about? You liked it, right?" It means that if you did it [having sex], you should have thought about it before. And when my friend was hurting, they would tell me. "Oh, don't pay attention to her, don't pay attention to her. They play the role of victims, but they are very manipulative." And I was very scared. I did not say anything because, at that moment, I was not interested in what they told me. They take advantage and make money. (Personal communication, November 7, 2002)

In Lorena's narrative it is possible to infer multiple reasons for why abortion in such conditions jeopardizes women's physical and psychological well-being: the implied lack of hygiene in the building (the terrible smell), a corrupt business set up ("they take advantage and make money"), and abusive or disrespectful practitioners whose discourse is infused with negative cultural scripts about women's sexual bodies (e.g., the idea that women should suffer if they had sex –and abortion is that punishment). This context contributes to heightening women's pain and fears. Abortion practitioners like the ones Lorena described are obviously not concerned about promoting women's rights or well-being. While there are networks of activist women and health practitioners who support women who decide to terminate their pregnancies, many women end up in the hands of corrupt people who are more concerned about profit-making and who lack any accountability.

Some of the women who had abortions were able to access quasi-normal medical facilities or at least relatively safe and hygienic places. Yet this kind of attention required monetary resources that women themselves often lacked, so they had to collect or borrow money from other people in their circle of friends or relatives. When Diana decided to have a second abortion she did not want to risk being mistreated again, and she aimed for a better abortion facility. This time the abortion took place in a clandestine clinic that cost her a "fortune" but afforded adequate treatment and some level of tranquility:

> The second time it was more institutional. I went with my partner. It was very expensive. I was able to rest there for a while, and the guy [the doctor] bothered to explain that –what he probably tells himself– that this was not more complex than a dental extraction. He gave me a medication to take with me, he told me I could call him at any moment, I mean, as if he was a normal doctor. And, I was less paranoid about being busted by the cops. I don't know, the first time I was scared about that. (Personal communication, December 4, 2002)

Diana's second abortion was done in a "first class" facility (as another interviewee would call it). The high cost of this type of abortion offered

the bottom line of what "normal doctors" are expected to do: explain the procedure, be available to patients, and be mindful of patients' bodily and emotional needs. Diana's reference that the doctor treated her as if he were a normal doctor resonates with another interviewee's experiences in expensive abortion facilities; this woman mentioned that the procedure almost seemed legal. This sense of normalcy or legality contributed to making the abortion experience less problematic to these women.

Still, even some women who had abortions in relatively good conditions, and who supported the legalization of abortion, referred to abortion as a hard embodied experience. In some cases, the difficulty of abortion has partly to do with the physical pain of that type of bodily intervention, but also with how such pain is merged with the social context, moral dilemmas, and cultural expectations of Argentine society. Ursula, who had an abortion in a good site, without complications, and who believed in women's right to decide over their bodies, offered a poignant explanation about why abortion can be such a difficult decision and experience for women:

> In the best case scenario, [abortion] is an unpleasant procedure. In any case, it is not like having a dental extraction, which is another unpleasant procedure. It is not like having a mammogram, which is another unpleasant procedure. This is big. And it is big because it goes against everything that we talked about, things that are taught and learned, things that are culturally transmitted. And you were raised and taught to believe that that thing that they are taking out from you at that moment [the embryo/the fetus] –because you decided to have it taken out– you were supposed to carry it full term, breastfeed it, raise it, educate it, clothe it, and give your life for it. And you are taking it out. How can that not be violent? It is [violent], in the body, the mind, the soul, in everything you can think of. You did not want that; you did not want to be in that situation, but you are and it is horrible, horrible. In fact, it hurts less than giving birth, but when you give birth the whole culture is supporting you. "You shall give birth in pain." [...] but then you have the baby. And even if what you are aborting is not a baby; it is not a person. What I'm trying to say is that you are still aware of all of its potentialities, and they are there, inside. (Personal communication, November 28, 2002)

From Ursula's perspective, abortion is a painful experience that affects the whole embodied self, even if it can be conducted with minimal physical pain and risks. She suggested that the embodied pain experienced during abortion cannot be isolated from cultural expectations promoting motherhood and encouraging a deep embodied attachment to the potential human being developing inside the woman's body. Culturally, this embodied attachment is supposed to transcend pregnancy and may even entail the ultimate sacrifice a person can make (i.e., to give one's life for another being). Thus, interrupting the course of a pregnancy, cutting that connection, going against the cultural expectations, was disturbing to Ursula even if she did not regret her decision.

Rocío, who had two abortions with a medical doctor, and who also thought that abortion should be decriminalized, talked about these experiences as leaving "a kind of wound". She recounted how it is to "wake up after an abortion, and the pain that one feels, the sensation that one was asleep the whole time, but was not completely numb. It is a feeling of pain, there in your belly. It is something very hard. I don't know, because of lack of contraception. [We need] greater awareness, more information" (Rocío, personal communication, February 19, 2003). Rocío would have preferred to avoid abortion and to prevent an unintended pregnancy. She regretted not having used contraception. In telling her experiences of abortion, she talked about the physical environment of the doctor's office and how during the second abortion she perceived the surfaces as older and not too clean (even though he was a "first class" doctor). She reported crying and experiencing emotional and physical distress. She also compared abortion to other bodily experiences, saying that abortion is not like taking out a breast lump: in the case of abortion, "you are hurting something vital, you are wounding, cutting, extracting, bleeding, not letting the natural course of events to continue." She argued that there is an energy, a spiritual connection that is at stake when undergoing an abortion. Even though she is not Catholic, she attributed such perception to the church's influence. The physical pain she experienced was intertwined with the meanings she attributed to abortion and the social context of such procedures. Interestingly, when she was waking up after one of her abortions, she looked at the doctor and said to him

"never again." The doctor immediately connected such expression to the name of the book *Nunca Más* (Never Again), which reports the tortures and other human rights violations during the dictatorship. This episode evokes associations among different kinds of distressing physical experiences taking place in clandestinity (experiences of torture under the dictatorship vis-à-vis abortion in a situation of illegality) and shows the social character of the embodied experiences and meanings attributed to abortion.

Women's relationship with doctors and support networks influenced the conditions under which abortion was carried out. Doctors' attitudes are not irrelevant in abortion cases, as they have the power to obstruct or support women already making a difficult choice (Ramos *et al.*, 2001). Doctors' ideas about women's bodies and rights, their moral convictions, their interpretation of the law, and their relationships to the women involved affect abortion decisions and experiences. In this study, doctors sometimes facilitated the process of abortion by connecting women with fine practitioners or providing good quality attention during abortion interventions. That was the case of Ursula, who recalled: "Given that abortion is illegal, I had a relatively good experience. I was lucky [...] It is illegal, and well, my own obstetrician recommended someone in a relatively good place. There were two women who treated me well. It was easy and I didn't have any complications" (personal communication, November 28, 2002). Ursula's experience of abortion was easy in the sense of taking place in a good facility, without undergoing major health risks (though it was hard in the ways she described before). Her own doctor helped her in the process.

In contrast to Ursula's experience, doctors' fears about legal repercussions and/or their moral convictions may mean that they are unresponsive to women's abortion decisions and needs. Viviana, also a middle-class woman, described a doctor's unresponsiveness when she decided to undergo an abortion. Viviana suspected she was pregnant right away and wanted to interrupt the pregnancy, but the doctor she reached did not assist her:

> I remember that when I thought I was pregnant, I looked for a doctor in my health plan in order to do the pregnancy test. And I looked for a

> doctor, and I said, "I will make an appointment with this one whose name is Pagan, because he probably is not Catholic" [*laughs*]. And it turned out that Pagan was more Catholic than the pope. And I told him, "Well, I think I'm pregnant." I believe that the guy realized that I wanted to do [an abortion] and he treated me really badly. [...] I don't remember exactly what he said, but that he could give me the prescription for the pregnancy test, and if I was pregnant he would continue with the care I needed. And I said, "Well, no, in fact, if I'm pregnant I would not want to continue the pregnancy." [He said], "Then there's nothing to do!" (Personal communication, December 3, 2002)

In this case, the doctor abided by a law or personal beliefs that made it hard for Viviana to follow her own moral convictions. The effect of this kind of response was not to deter Viviana from abortion but to risk further complications because of the delay. She ended up having an abortion anyway. Similarly, the case of Frida, who also benefited from middle-class status, shows her frantic efforts to obtain medical help:

> First I felt desperation and loneliness because of not knowing with whom to share this. So, I went to a gynecologist, and after the [test] was all right, I forced him to give me an address [of an abortion place]. Of course, he told me that he did not know any. No to this, no to that. I told him that if he didn't do something, I would do it myself, in a different way, and that I would risk my life, and it would be worse. I asked him to please help me with this. (Personal communication, December 5, 2002)

The doctor finally gave Frida an address of a place to get an abortion, but it was so expensive that she could not afford it despite her middle-class position. It was through her mother's support that she was finally able to get the abortion elsewhere.

The abortion experiences that turned out to be relatively less troublesome for the women I interviewed combined good health care (often expensive) with a network of people who offered different levels of support: emotional ("she accompanied me", "she took care of me"), practical (child care, money), or a combination of both. Beatriz, a working class woman who became pregnant during particularly difficult economic times, was able to talk about

her decision to undergo abortion with her family and received extensive support from her relatives. Franca, an indigenous woman who migrated to Buenos Aires, was able to find fine medical attention with the help of a women's network. Nina, a middle-class woman who had her first abortion when she was young, also relied on networks of friends who pooled money to get the abortion with a "super, super, super doctor" so that everything turned out "perfect" (personal communication, March 18, 2003).

Family support was also key in the case of Frida, the woman who almost had to threaten to do the abortion herself in order to obtain an abortion referral from her doctor:

> I asked my mom for money. My mom asked me for what. I asked her to sell her jewels and give me the money. She asked me for what. So then I told her. She said that she knew a person, that we could go to see her. Well, it was my midwife. [...] Then we went to see her, and she examined me, and there was no problem. And my mom accompanied me with this. So, I went to a hygienic place, with good care. [...] I went with my mom and I was all right. I stayed at home when we came back and [my mom] took care of me. She took my child [temporarily out of the house] and she took care of me. So no problem. (Personal communication, December 5, 2002)

Many of my interviewees' testimonies show the strong impact of support networks: mothers, sisters, friends, and partners were crucial to different women's abortion experiences and their bodily effects. These networks helped somewhat to cushion the consequences of a social environment adverse to abortion. The actions of third parties suggest that in a context in which abortion is illegal, it is not only individual women who are forced into clandestinity and illegality but also a whole web of "accomplices", including those motivated by altruism or solidarity, and those who aim for financial gain. A flyer by the Foro por los Derechos Reproductivos (Forum for Reproductive Rights), a women's movement organization that was calling people to demonstrate in support of legal abortion, shows such interrelationships, emphasizing the social nature of abortion practices. The flyer states:

> Women of all ages, social and religious conditions, resort to abortion to avoid involuntary motherhood. But a woman never has an abortion alone. Behind an abortion there is:
> *a male* who helps or abandons,
> *women* who take care or censor,
> *professionals* who collaborate or deny their help,
> *parliament members* who do not legislate, and
> *a whole society* involved. (FDR, 2002)

The effects of clandestinity and illegality

Sonia Corrêa argues that laws that criminalize abortion "remain in place basically to sustain a cultural climate of moral condemnation of women who resort to the interruption of pregnancies" more than to actually incarcerate the millions of women worldwide who have abortions every year (2003: 2). This adverse climate has several damaging effects, such as facilitating corrupt businesses, depriving women of needed support, and impinging on women's subjectivity and bodily integrity (Checa and Rosenberg, 1996).

The stories of the women interviewed here highlight the profits that clandestinity and illegality nourish. Rocío suggested that the "first class" doctor who did her abortions had probably bribed the neighborhood police officers to look the other way. Lorena commented how the practitioners in the abortion clinic she went to with her friend benefited economically from illegal abortions, implying that clandestinity serves corrupt people's interests. Jesusa, who did not undergo an abortion herself, but is a medical doctor, pointed out the profits, and sometimes the hypocrisy, of many physicians who take part in the "business of abortion" (personal communication, November 7, 2002). Her views coincide with feminists who criticize the double standards of doctors who are against abortion in their public practice but perform abortions underground for handsome profits.

Clandestinity and illegality also enhanced the sense of secretiveness and silence around abortion, which reduced the support women could obtain

in these situations and heightened their feelings of loneliness or despair. For example, these women had to pick and choose carefully with whom they would share their decision to undergo abortion out of fear of disappointing or angering family members (because asking for help would reveal their sexual activity and/or because their relatives were morally opposed to abortion). Others asked family members for help only as a last resort. Doctors were not always helpful, and getting other institutional support was virtually impossible because of the illegal status of the procedure.

Abortion legalization advocates often mention how clandestinity increases the risks to women's life and health, especially for poor and working-class women. Illegality widens the inequality gap between well-off women who can pay to have an abortion in fancy or relatively safe places and women living in poverty, many of them with brown bodies already socially devalued and facing multiple forms of discrimination. Intersecting inequalities are likely to magnify the risks of clandestine, unsafe abortions to poor women's health, bodies, and lives. The kinds of bodily risks poor women may undergo are best exemplified by Alexandra's experience with the sonda and her post-abortion refusal to seek medical help. Other studies show that this reluctance to reveal abortion to doctors is fairly common because women fear they will be reported to the criminal justice system (Ramos *et al.*, 2001). Of course, the women I interviewed who told me about their abortions were able to talk about these experiences because they survived. Other women were less lucky, and I heard of some of these women's death secondhand through my interviewees' stories.

The women I interviewed also revealed a less-mentioned effect of clandestinity: the effects on women's sense of self and embodied emotions. Although going against the mandate to be mothers may be sufficient to provoke upsetting emotions in many women (Checa and Rosenberg, 1996; Rosenberg, 1994), feelings of fear, guilt, shame, and humiliation cannot be completely understood without looking at the context of clandestinity, lack of practitioner accountability, and the kind of treatment women receive. Some suggested that what makes abortion a particularly bad situation in Argentina, or in the words of Diana, "a shitty experience", is its clandestine, illegal nature. Different interviewees mentioned how

illegality and clandestinity heightened their sense of danger, fear, loneliness, or guilt in relation to abortion. Diana mentioned her "paranoia" about being caught by the police during her first abortion. Other women described a feeling of eeriness in relation to the underground abortion facilities they attended. Clandestinity also contributed to women's sense of precariousness, feeling that they might die or damage their bodies in a "bad death" clinic or "butcher's shop" clinic, that they were at the mercy of unscrupulous abortionists who did not care about their emotional or bodily integrity or of expensive doctors who would take economic advantage at women's expense, that if something turned out wrong they would have no protection from the state or from medical institutions.

In summary, abortion is a difficult decision per se for many women, but abortion illegality, the condemnation of the Catholic Church, and a polarized political debate that does not leave space for nuance, ambivalence, or contradiction, all contribute to making abortion experiences quite problematic for women in Argentina. Yet the silence, secrecy, and shame that clandestinity encourages is being counteracted by more and more women who are organizing, speaking up publicly, and pushing society to look honestly at one of the most controversial social issues affecting women's lives and bodies.

Conclusion

Argentine society attaches high cultural value to maternal bodies, and the special place reserved for mothers is not always a blessing but a burden. It is a burden to the extent that motherhood is a hegemonic expectation that often requires heroic sacrifices. The demonization of women who deviate from the motherhood mandate and the obstacles these women face reveal the compulsory nature of the social norm. While women are the ones who become pregnant, give birth, and disproportionately assume the responsibilities of rearing children, some institutions and individuals want to limit women's abilities to decide about their reproductive bodies. Maternal embodiment in Argentina is enforced through the state, religious ideologies, cultural norms, and economic arrangements such as the sexual division of labor.

While women in this study tended to value motherhood, many of them were unwilling to be just maternal bodies, or in the words of one interviewee, just "reproductive uteruses". These women aimed to interrupt the link between sexuality and reproduction by resorting to contraception and/or abortion. Yet women's ability to make decisions about their bodies was not merely a matter of personal choice but was profoundly embedded in a web of social inequalities. Contexts of sexual violence, economic scarcity, inaccessibility to reproductive health services, and punitive laws contributed to restricting women's reproductive options and bodily self-determination. The context of the economic crisis during the period of my study heightened the social inequities entrenched in women's reproductive options and posed additional burdens to motherhood requirements (for example, the hardships poor women faced to feed their children in the midst of increasing poverty, declining living conditions, and widespread unemployment).

On the other hand, the crisis also triggered new openings and spaces of contestation, including the questioning of gender norms and arrangements as well as other social injustices created through neoliberal economic policies. The intensification of political protest during this period included women's renewed demands in the area of sexual and reproductive rights. Discussion of women's difficulties asserting reproductive decisions took place not only in feminist circles but also within other women's and gender-mixed social movement organizations. Many of these groups organized to influence public policy on sexual and reproductive health. The undeniable context of the economic crisis meant that these demands were not just for formal laws but were often linked to broader economic and structural changes regarding jobs, health care, and food access. It is interesting that during one of the worst economic crises in the country's history the passage of a national law allocating economic resources to expand women's reproductive freedom was finally achieved.

One of the reasons that activist women's vocal demands for universal access to abortion and contraception faced the repudiation of institutions like the Catholic Church is that such demands counter mandatory maternal embodiment, a central piece in hegemonic conceptions of what constitutes a "normal" family and "natural" relationships between men and

women in Argentina. Increasing sectors of the population, particularly women, are now challenging such views. Yet, while public opinion and policy reflect greater willingness to expand access to sex education and contraception, abortion remains a thornier issue. The criminalization of abortion continues to be a way in which the state regulates women's bodies, forcing women into involuntary motherhood or into illegality, and in the case of women with few economic resources, into the bodily health risks or death associated with unsafe abortion practices. The terrain of reproductive politics is centered on the female body to a large extent because pregnancy happens inside women's bodies, but also because social attempts to regulate women's reproductive capacities continue to be crucial ways to sustain women's social subordination.

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Traduciendo lo "queer"en Ecuador: negociaciones alrededor del género y la sexualidad*

María Amelia Viteri**

Abstract

This article critically analyzes the multiple and possible initial readings, translations and negotiations of "queer" in Quito, Ecuador, based on two academic projects that engaged with art and activism and took place in the summers of 2007 and 2008. I am interested in illustrating the production of contradicting meanings around gender and sexuality in the framework of a trans-national America. This implies a geo-political analysis that questions, re-interprets, and gives a new meaning to "queer", taking into consideration that "queer" has its beginning in the United States. As it travels, queer is translated and takes new meanings in Ecuador.

* Este artículo que obtuvo la tercera mención del Premio Elsa Chaney Award en LASA, Río de Janeiro, fue la base para la publicación "Arte-acción: Re-pensando el Género y la Sexualidad" que forma parte del libro *Segundos Encuentros de la Razón Incierta: Cultura y Transformación Social, Organización de Estados Iberoamericanos*, Programa de Antropología Visual, FLACSO Ecuador y Universidad San Francisco (2010).

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Introducción

> Nos vestimos, nos desvestimos y nos volvimos a vestir;
> disimulando los pechos, simulando un bigote.
> Más allá de la visión carnavalesca con la que,
> por lo general, ha sido tratado, lo drag y lo travesti
> ofrecen la posibilidad de jugar con la piel, cuestionando lo dado y desmitificando la carne.
>
> –Carolina Páez

Este ensayo busca ilustrar algunas de las formas en las cuales una combinación estratégica entre los espacios materiales del aula de clase y la universidad (academia), el Teatro Bar Dionisios (teatro drag), la calle, las salsotecas tradicionales quiteñas, l@s activistas LGBT y l@s estudiantes de la Maestría de Género y Desarrollo de FLACSO, Sede Ecuador, emergen como mapas alternativos que habilitan negociaciones alternativas alrededor del género y la sexualidad en Quito. Para realizar este ejercicio parto de dos proyectos arte-acción "políticos, artísticos y visuales" conocidos como Proyecto Drag y Proyecto Desbordes que surgieron como un paralelo a dos cursos cuyo título inicia con "re-inventando cuerpos" que dicté en los veranos de 2007 y 2008 como parte de la Maestría de Estudios de Género en FLACSO, Sede Ecuador. Este proyecto no puede ser problematizado sin insertarlo en las políticas de "raza", etnicidad y clase construidas a lo largo del tejido social; sin embargo, esta discusión no constituye el tema del presente ensayo.

Para localizar este proyecto es necesario mirar a la traducción cultural como posibilidad de análisis de conceptos que están no solo en tránsito sino en constante diálogo con los contextos a partir de los cuales se producen y re-producen[1]. Lo "queer" conforme lo discute Spargo (2004: 15), puede funcionar como sustantivo, adjetivo o verbo aunque en todos los casos va a

1 Conforme menciona Lind (2009: 10), mientras el término "gay" fue introducido en muchos países del Sur global en los años 1970, el término "queer" inició su circulación entre académicos/as y activistas en los años 1980 y 1990.

definirse en contraposición a lo que ha sido definido como "normal" o normalizador, siendo su traducción literal al Español "raro". Autoras como Juana María Rodríguez (2003: 24) discuten la imposibilidad de traducción del término "queer" en español. Rodríguez utiliza las palabras divas, atrevidas y entendidas en un esfuerzo por sobrepasar una simple traducción, al proveer al concepto un significado en constante movimiento y una vida material. Si insertamos los proyectos "drag" y "desbordes" bajo la teoría "queer", se podría hacer una lectura del mismo como negociaciones "queer" en donde los espacios del aula académica y FLACSO son "queerizados". Sin embargo, esta lectura sería demasiado simplista y lineal. En su lugar me interesa problematizar, a partir del lugar de una posicionalidad trans-nacional, cómo lo "queer" al viajar es traducido localmente en intervenciones que denominamos "arte-acción". Al hacerlo, pongo de relieve una reflexión entre la mirada antropológica, la de género y el performance. Inicio proporcionando el contexto en el cual se desarrollaron dichos proyectos.

Re-inventándonos

En Ecuador, al igual que en una gran mayoría de países a través de las Américas, las categorizaciones alrededor del género, la "raza" y la etnicidad están rígidamente divididas. El salirse de lo que se conoce como una normatividad heterosexual implica una seria ruptura en la imagen tradicional de la familia nuclear y por tanto, es rechazado. Fue únicamente en 1998 que se revirtió el Art. 516 que penalizaba la homosexualidad en la Constitución ecuatoriana gracias a la movilización exitosa de la comunidad de mujeres trans, apoyadas por otras organizaciones tanto de gays como de lesbianas. Sin embargo, existen variaciones determinantes a lo largo del país que van desde poblaciones muy conservadoras en los Andes hasta poblaciones costeras en Manabí que han sido interpretadas como lo más cercano a un paraíso "queer" en Ecuador, por su aparente flexibilidad en cuanto a relaciones con el mismo sexo (Bravomalo, 2002).

En el verano de 2007 viajé a Quito desde mi lugar de residencia, Washington D. C., para dictar el curso titulado "Re-inventando Cuerpos:

Discusiones sobre Transnacionalismo, Subjetividad y Etnicidad". Lo que hemos denominado como "proyecto drag" tuvo su inicio después de una discusión en clase sobre la teoría de la performatividad de Judith Butler, mientras explorábamos los significados, posibilidades y limitantes al analizar el género como un performance entendido más allá del mundo "drag". Ahora bien, al ser la performatividad una posibilidad de dotación de nuevos significados, no debe ser reducida a un performance (Butler, 2006).

Con el objeto de mapear, por un lado, y críticamente analizar, por otro, las múltiples negociaciones y alianzas críticas realizadas a través del "proyecto drag", es necesario mirar a la composición del aula en términos de género e identidades sexuales y el rol que jugaron las varias instituciones participantes. El aula estuvo compuesta de siete estudiantes mujeres y dos estudiantes hombres. En la fase inicial se unió un colega también profesor de FLACSO. El grupo contó con la presencia de dos reconocidas activistas, únicas en el grupo que se identificaban como lesbianas. El grupo provenía de distintos sectores de la ciudad, no estando superditado al "norte" que trae consigo representaciones particulares alrededor de una clase media/alta blanco-mestiza. La red LGBT de las dos estudiantes lesbianas y de Margarita Camacho incluyó al único artista drag queen, Daniel Moreno, quien maneja el Teatro Bar Dionisios ubicado en la zona central de Quito, conocido mayoritariamente por sus espectáculos "drag queen". La participación de Daniel y el Teatro Bar Dionisios fue clave para asegurar un entrenamiento intensivo de tres semanas enfocado en performances conocidos como "drag" en donde mujeres exacerban lo "masculino" para interpretarlo y hombres exacerban lo "femenino". En este marco, "el cuerpo es tanto herramienta como producto… [convirtiéndose] en significado y significante, en objeto y sujeto de acción" (Alcázar, 2008: 333).

Es importante anotar que este cruce de fronteras conocidas como de género van a tener distintas implicaciones en el caso de hombres o mujeres. Utilizando el "proyecto drag" como punto de partida, la participación del único hombre heterosexual no redundó en los mismos cuestionamientos e incluso críticas generadas por la participación del grupo de mujeres, un análisis que no es foco de este ensayo pero necesario a futuro. Sin embargo, alude al planteamiento de Stryker, Moore y Currah (2008: 12) en cuanto a

lo que el fenómeno "transgénero" parece visibilizar: que algunos hombres tienen la opción de utilizar vestidos sin renunciar a sus identidades sociales como hombres. Es esa no-neutralidad de las formas en las cuales se realizan las categorizaciones y sus efectos en el mundo (Valentine, 2007: 5).

En palabras de Leticia, activista lesbiana en este performance o arte-acción, como lo denomina Alcázar (2008), implicaba tomar una postura más allá del binario explorando otro tipo de masculinidades como mujeres y también como lesbianas. Las apariciones a modo de arte-acción fueron acompañadas de un trabajo visual de ocho minutos de duración a través de los cuales el grupo compartía conceptos de género y sexualidad a partir de sus cuerpos "femeninos", "masculinos" e híbridos. Las geografías del trole y la calle próximas a la FLACSO fueron los escenarios iniciales de lo que se pensó como una "toma" de la universidad, desde la biblioteca hasta oficinas claves como la de servicios a estudiantes, para lo cual nos dividimos en grupos de dos y tres personas. Esta toma de la universidad concluyó en la ocupación de la cafetería durante el receso de las clases de la tarde en la cual los y las estudiantes de otras maestrías tales como Economía, Ambiente, Relaciones Internacionales, Antropología, Sociología y Ciencias Políticas ocupan dicho espacio. La idea en torno a lo dicho fue la de habitar los varios espacios que ocupamos diariamente en la institución, interactuando con las personas en el ascensor y en las varias oficinas desde esta otra estética leida como, "otro género". Nos interesaba visibilizar la maleabilidad de los cuerpos en relación al género entendido únicamente en la ecuación hombre=masculino y mujer=femenino.

El proyecto drag funcionó paralelo a la clase. Ser parte del mismo era completamente voluntario. La producción de dos apariciones al final de la clase fueron algunas de las metas trazadas. El tiempo y los recursos eran limitados, mas la importancia de este experimento cultural servía como telón de fondo para la documentación fotográfica y la planificación de un documental sobre la experiencia. Las dos apariciones fueron planificadas cuidadosamente como una forma de ilustrar las múltiples negociaciones alrededor del "género" y la "sexualidad", al mismo tiempo que se rompía incluso con la linearidad de lo "drag" a través de personajes híbridos. Los personajes escogidos por cada participante incluyeron un rapero, un dan-

dy, un chulo con su puta, un hippie, un "trans" en transmutación, dos personajes híbridos hombre/mujer mujer/hombre, un militar con una rosa en la solapa, un cowboy con un slogan que leía: "los cowboys reales pueden con todos y con todas".

Fotografía 1
Más allá del performance

Foto: Francois Laso.

Hablando en términos generales las reacciones pueden aglutinarse bajo el adjetivo "incómodas" unido a la pregunta del por qué de nuestro "disfraz". Si insertamos este comentario dentro del binario femenino/masculino que buscábamos romper, una lectura del proyecto a partir del "disfraz" tiene la capacidad de borrar el abordaje político de las apariciones. En palabras de Juan Carlos, estudiante de mi clase en el verano 2008 y colaborador del Proyecto Desbordes: "Que se piense, se viva, se interactúe desde la diversidad recordando que hay ciertos 'disfraces' más aceptados que otros" (Juan Carlos, comunicación personal, 2008).

La geografía del Teatro Bar Dionisios fue utilizada como el lugar quinta-esencial que aludía directamente al carácter performativo del "proyecto drag" invitando expresamente a colegas, familia, amigos/as, la comunidad LGBT, la comunidad académica, artística y público en general a ser partícipes de este evento. Como parte de esta estrategia de visibilización bajo el marco de "teatro drag" –conforme lo encuadra Dionisios– cada integrante interpretó unos minutos de una canción escogida. Organizamos al final de dichas presentaciones un debate en donde Daniel, afamado Drag Queen, y Cayetana, afamada Drag King, interpelaban a l@s integrantes del "proyecto drag" sobre la "autenticidad" y objetivos de este performance.

En este contexto nos aborda una vez más la pregunta de un análisis teórico del "proyecto drag". Si la interpretación y análisis se lo hace desde la teoría "queer", tanto el espacio habilitado como las múltiples subjetividades podrían ser leídas como "queer". El problema radicaría en que signos como "queer" –particularmente en el marco actual de la política gubernamental de izquierda del presidente Correa– nos relegan a una ontología "occidental" y por tanto no demasiado lejana a lo que muchos leen como pretensiones colonialistas y post-colonialistas (Viteri, 2008). Por un lado, consideramos que significantes como lo "queer" han servido como fundamento de proyectos políticos de reconocimiento dentro de democracias disputadas conforme lo argumenta Butler (1993: 4-5). Por otro lado, nos enfrentamos a lo que Andrade (2007) denomina prácticas de tráfico en donde la mirada antropológica se entrelaza con lo que podría considerarse como intervención urbana artística, en esta ocasión, el arte como performance de y a través de un género acentuado que sobrepasa cualquier linealidad.

El foro-debate organizado en FLACSO, Sede Ecuador, dos meses después de las apariciones, argumentaba precisamente que tanto la palabra como el concepto de lo "queer" están lejos de la agenda LGBT social y política ecuatoriana. Conforme lo discute Lind (2009: 32), de acuerdo a algunas activistas del medio son los términos como "trans" y "transfeminista" que conllevan un potencial para organización –al contrario de "queer"– al estar relacionados con entendimientos locales sobre identidades no-normativas, formas de expresión y arreglos de convivencia. María Fernanda, una de las estudiantes participantes en el Proyecto Drag con una

estética híbrida describe su experiencia precisamente utilizando el prefijo "trans": "Trans es lo mismo que al otro lado. Así fue como me sentí, al otro lado de lo acostumbrado. Al otro lado de lo impuesto, de lo supuesto" (comunicación personal, 2008).

Lo "trans" cobra nuevamente una multiplicidad de significados al hablar de una posible transformación que evoca una confrontación a los supuestos alrededor de "ser hombre o mujer", conforme lo discuten Stryker, Moore y Currah (2008). Son varias voces al unísono y en constante tensión las que permiten desestabilizar –así sea momentáneamente, o en un proceso de camino y retroceso– lo que entendemos como "nuestro cuerpo". Es decir, al transitar de múltiples e inesperadas formas, "queer" convoca una posibilidad risomática (Deleuze y Guattari, 1987) y polivocal (Bakhtin, 1981) en donde sus usos y significados están sujetos a constantes cambios conforme varía tanto el marco referencial como el lugar desde donde hablamos. Lo dicho incluye a cierto segmento de la clase trabajadora LGBT estadounidense que ha rechazado el uso de "queer", al mirar su paralelo y referencias a una clase pudiente (Smith, 1994).

Conforme lo dicho, al trascender lo "queer" como signo, es posible abordar sus desplazamientos y continuar mapeando las formas en las que transita. Hubieron diversos tipos de negociaciones que los y las estudiantes "heterosexuales" tuvieron que confrontar al ser cuestionadas sobre su identidad sexual –inmediatamente después de las apariciones– por colegas, amigos/as, familia y conocidos/as. Dichas negociaciones pueden ser analizadas utilizando la teoría de la interpelación de Althusser (1971). Mas cuáles son las implicaciones de "ocupar más espacio al andar y sentarse", de "reconocerse poco o nada en el reflejo del espejo", de, en general, andar por el mundo en esta otra estética. Se podría jugar con la multiplicidad de voces que aluden –al mismo tiempo que confrontan– la lectura tradicional del género como hombre/mujer, masculino/femenino. Estas voces han sido denominadas por Juana María Rodríguez (2003) como manifestaciones de la identidad y que como tales, están sujetas a una constante re-significación.

El hablar de una "queerización" del espacio de FLACSO me desplaza a los Estados Unidos mientras me posiciona nuevamente en una posición

de "gringa", es decir, en una posición en donde mi viaje alberga ciertos conocimientos lejanos a lo considerado como "local". Esta lectura ilumina al mismo tiempo los espacios intermedios por lo cuales transito con lo "queer", al tiempo que visibiliza la no-neutralidad de mi posición tanto como profesora como de "quien viene de afuera". Lo dicho produce imaginariamente una idea de temporalidad pues mi estadía en Ecuador es limitada a los cursos de verano que enseño. Considero que el ser leída momentáneamente como "gringa" me permite adoptar lo "queer" sin miramientos en un tipo de privilegio adquirido al no habitar el cotidiano ecuatoriano. ¿Es esta misma posición la que facilita la realización de los proyectos "drag" y "desbordes"? En palabras de Giroux: "las fronteras de nuestras diversas identidades, subjetividades, experiencias y comunidades nos conectan más que nos separan, particularmente cuando dichas fronteras están continuamente cambiando y mutando bajo las dinámicas de la globalización" (2005: 5-6, traducción propia del inglés), visibilizando las múltiples e inesperadas formas a través de las cuales los deseos y placeres transitaron y tomaron forma y cuerpo a través del Proyecto Drag.

Un año más tarde el Proyecto Desbordes surge en el verano del 2008 facilitado por la experiencia y plataforma montada por el Proyecto Drag. Es decir, una gran mayoría de l@s estudiantes que tomaron mi curso conocían del proyecto realizado y existía una serie de expectativas ante la posibilidad de continuar ese trabajo.

Fotografía 2
Trayectorias y bordes

Foto: Francois Laso

Las intervenciones con Desbordes fueron más allá del espacio de FLACSO y de Dionisios para centrarse en desestabilizar la heteronormatividad de dos clubes tradicionales de entretenimiento de clase media ubicados en el norte de Quito cuyo éxito gira alrededor de la salsamanía: Seseribó y Mayo del 68. Desbordes estuvo conformado inicialmente por ocho estudiantes mujeres en su gran mayoría auto-definidas como heterosexuales y Patricio, activista gay, que luego sería Fabiola. Los personajes de Desbordes incluían una mujer fatal, una drag queen, una sado-masoquista, una drag king, tres mujeres "hombres", dos mujeres góticas, un hombre "mujer" al cual se unió otra integrante del Proyecto Drag. Posteriormente se unió al grupo otro activista gay que adquirió la estética de una mujer por primera vez. Desbordes fue más allá de lo "drag" para, en palabras de Patricio/Fabiola: "re-pensar desde lo político, desde el propio cuerpo: quién define que es un disfraz" (comunicación personal, 2008).

"Desbordes: Cuerpos, Placeres, Deseos" se origina como una intervención política articulada en un performance musical –en el sentido escénico– para, partiendo del espacio hetero-normativo y binario de la salsa, cuestionar la exclusión de las personas no hetero-normadas de los espacios públicos de socialización (productivos, reproductivos o de esparcimiento). El travestismo y la movilidad de identidades en los roles de la salsa se convierten en una metáfora de la sociedad inclusiva, que proponemos en palabras de Yasmin/Rogelio. En un tipo de "happenings", Desbordes torna visible la maleabilidad de los cuerpos al tiempo que estos cuerpos se convertían en un llamado de atención al resistirse a ser naturalizados a partir de órganos genitales que a su vez adscriben un sinnúmero de representaciones y juicios de valor.

Del compromiso e interés suscitado a partir de la clase y el Proyecto Desbordes surge la propuesta de continuar con el trabajo con el grupo Juego de Puñales. Dicho grupo se crea al mes de los "happenings" y en una comunicación virtual y transnacional liderada en Quito por Janina, pues me encontraba de regreso en los Estados Unidos. Es importante recalcar que una de las estrategias para horizontalizar los proyectos Drag y Desbordes fue la posibilidad de las estudiantes de liderar los procesos y tomar la posta como fue el caso de Carolina con el Proyecto Drag y de Janina con el Proyecto Desbordes. Janina y Carolina continúan como ejes y puntos de comunicación trascendentales en las decisiones, intervenciones, eventos, ensayos y difusión, incluyendo un proyecto documental y fotográfico.

Juego de Puñales busca irrumpir en espacios sociales tradicionales para desestabilizar lecturas normativas alrededor de lo que se considera como hombre/mujer y masculino/femenino, aterrizando la teoría en una práctica política a través de intervenciones artísticas. Estas formas implican un análisis no únicamente político sino también espacial en el sentido geográfico: qué tipo de conocimiento es producido a través de espacios como los del Proyecto Drag y Desbordes y los alcances y límites de este tipo de intervenciones para cuestionar, a partir del cuerpo reflexivo, conceptos tradicionales alrededor del género y la sexualidad. En este aspecto, la identidad no debe ser entendida como aquella que marca una ecuación matemática con los deseos y/o prácticas sexuales y de género.

Contestando la pregunta formulada en el abstracto de este ensayo, no existe un espacio de enunciación de lo "queer" sino varios que estarán delimitados tanto por los límites de dicha enunciación, como por los usos que damos al término. El proyecto conceptualizado como laboratorio lúdico se puede leer siguiendo a Lancaster: el juego se convierte para la identidad lo que el sentido es al cuerpo, nos sitúa y nos orienta, pero también va más allá y nos excede (1998: 61). Esta discusión fue expandida en un nuevo foro-debate organizado ya bajo el nombre de "Juego de Puñales" y realizado transnacionalmente en octubre de 2008 en FLACSO, Sede Ecuador. La discusión iniciada en el verano fue moderada por Carolina, co-coordinadora del Proyecto Drag.

¿Cuáles son las implicaciones de "ganar un espacio nunca antes explorado, del cuerpo ocupando más espacio, de los pasos más largos de lo acostumbrado, de una voz fuerte y gruesa, de ese (mi) otro lado" del que habla una de las participantes (comunicación personal, 2008)? Siguiendo la reflexión de Roger Lancaster en su discusión del travestismo de Guto en Nicaragua, como grupo ¿estábamos actuando una actuación? Para ello, nuestra actuación debía ser "convincente" pues continuando con Lancaster "el travestimo eficaz produce 'los efectos de lo real'" (1998: 48).

Mi intención es pues la de desviar la atención del signo "queer" hacia posibilidades conceptuales "queers o no" que induzcan a un debate sobre la traducción de significados no-heteronormados en lugares como el de FLACSO y Dionisios. Ilustrar simultáneamente la necesidad de que lo visual y lo textual encuentren un diálogo productivo que a su vez confronte lo que se categoriza y define como "arte". En la discusión sobre *Arte Contemporáneo y Antropología*, Schneider y Wright (2006: 1-3) invitan no únicamente a fértiles colaboraciones a partir de las cuales estas dos disciplinas puedan marcar nuevos enfoques bajo el conocido giro etnográfico, sino que exploran los límites de la representación.

Otro de los intereses alrededor del campo del género y la sexualidad en relación con la Antropología y los Estudios del Performance es mirar cómo estas prácticas denominadas arte-acción pueden extender prácticas antropológicas y viceversa, considerando que el Proyecto Drag formó parte de la página web de arte contemporáneo y cultural urbana en Ecuador

titulada "Experimentos Culturales". Esta página virtual expuso a partir de fotografías en blanco y negro del fotógrafo Francois Laso tanto la conceptualización teórico-metodológica como política y reflexiva de quienes la conformamos. Las imágenes en este sentido se abrieron como abanico a una audiencia global, trans-nacionalizando tanto sus interpretaciones como desplazando el lugar de la enunciación.

Otra locación que es importante resaltar fue la del foro-debate realizado en octubre de 2007 en FLACSO, Sede Ecuador, que convocó nuevamente a grupos académicos, activistas y políticos interesados en el tema y en el Proyecto Drag, pero también a una audiencia no directamente relacionada con dicha área. Como mencioné anteriormente, un tercer momento del Proyecto Drag se tradujo en una instalación fotográfica/multi-media/performática denominada "Re-pensando el Binario" que tuvo lugar en junio de 2008. La misma formó parte de los eventos de clausura del Congreso organizado por el Departamento de Estudios de Género y Cultura de FLACSO, denominado "Cuerpos y Fronteras". Esta instalación convocó a nuevos participantes en el proyecto trazando el camino para lo que se convierte en Desbordes.

Como nos recuerda Butler las funciones del performance en relación con el género son las de brindar la "apariencia de una sustancia, de una ilusión de una identidad que está siempre ausente" (1990: 271). En este aspecto tanto el Proyecto Drag como Desbordes muestran vívidamente esta ilusión pues rompen las adscripciones a partir y alrededor de lo genital, desdibujando a su paso un sinnúmero de representaciones normativas alrededor de los sexos.

Retomando el performance como un tipo de distanciamiento crítico, la metáfora de la teatrilidad se expande hacia cada aspecto de los esfuerzos modernos por entender nuestra condición y actividades en todas las áreas de las Ciencias Humanas: entre ellas, la búsqueda de la subjetividad e identidad contemporánea que se torna visible en las confrontaciones alrededor del arte y las relaciones de poder en los campos del género y la sexualidad, trazados por los campos de la etnicidad, raza, clase (Carlson, 2007: 72).

Conclusiones

Conforme la discusión planteada, la necesidad de ilustrar la importancia de mapear cómo se traducen y viajan términos como lo "queer" parte de un marco antropológico contemporáneo como una alternativa a la delineación rígida de categorías alrededor del género y la sexualidad. "Queer" en este contexto particular, se convierte en una crítica a las categorías de identidad (Valentine, 2007; Vidal-Ortiz, 2005; Cameron y Kulick, 2006; Leap, 2005; Peña, 2004; Almaguer, 1991, 1994).

Considero que no existe una forma teórica-metodológica "ideal" de teorizar e interpretar proyectos como el descrito pues abren el campo de cuestionamiento en lugar de delimitarlo. Algunas de las inquietudes reflexivas a futuro son las de mirar cómo este tipo de intervenciones conectan el género con la vida material de las y los estudiantes; el aula con el performance y la performatividad; la academia con el arte y el activismo del Teatro Bar Dionisios, Sudamérica y Norteamérica.

Metodológicamente hablando considero que la posibilidad de aterrizar debates teóricos a partir de la experiencia vital material del cuerpo posibilita no únicamente teorizar sobre el género y la sexualidad a partir de un proceso reflexivo sino también ocupar momentáneamente –y en espacios mas bien protegidos– aquella cotidianeidad dolorosa y violenta que vive en mayor escala la comunidad "trans" y en menor escala quienes se deciden por otra estética que rompe la normatividad. El performance se torna en otra herramienta metodológica para crear rupturas y por tanto, ampliar el alcance y dimensión alrededor de lo "queer", reconfigurándolo.

Traspasar fronteras no es sinónimo de transgresión, Foucault (1978) bien nos alerta sobre los malos usos de este término; es más bien cruzar líneas difusas que han sido trazadas como permanentes e inamovibles. Es decir, este cruce hace incluso más visible la inestabilidad de lo heterosexual. No obstante, sí se podría hablar del Proyecto Drag como transgresor al considerar que este tipo de performances han servido como una transgresión de una moral hipócrita particularmente en sociedades que reprimen los deseos (Alcázar, 2008: 334).

Como grupo, confrontamos constantemente la necesidad de mediar tanto las lecturas y representaciones basadas sobre nuestra estética como también otros deseos y placeres en juego, mientras articulamos discursos alrededor de dichas fronteras. Estos cruces no estuvieron limitados a las apariciones sino que marcaron el proceso a partir del primer día de entrenamiento en Dionisios. Si seguimos el concepto de Giroux de cruce de fronteras, los proyectos Drag y Desbordes podrían ser un lugar no solo para romper el binario de y alrededor del género sino para romper la oposición entre arte, Antropología y activismo. ¿Es posible bajo este marco más amplio hablar de los proyectos Drag y Desbordes como un tipo de "queer local"? Las formas de nombrar –marcadas por jerarquías– invitan a la pregunta de quién decide (cómo nombrarlo) y cómo estos proyectos quedarán plasmados finalmente en discursos que podrían incluso volverse normativos.

Para finalizar, no basta con desnaturalizar el género sino que es primordial distorsionar, desviar las normas heterosexuales para resignificarlas, visibilizando así su ineficacia (Butler, 2003). A través de los proyectos Drag y Desbordes confrontamos la reducción de la sexualidad al género de la cual nos advierte Butler (2006). La lectura de una buena parte de la audiencia post-intervenciones –conforme analizado anteriormente– fue que quien se trasviste ("disfraza") está fuera de la norma heterosexual. Lo paradójico es que esta lectura subsume el género a la sexualidad y no viceversa.

Sea cual fuera la ventana a partir de la cual se busca analizar estas intervenciones, tanto el Proyecto Drag como el de Desbordes marcan además la posibilidad de desplazar el aula de clase fuera de la academia y dentro de la política de los experimentos culturales en identidades, género y sexualidad. En este sentido, a pesar de sus limitaciones, el aula de clase continúa siendo un lugar que posibilita el cambio conforme lo argumenta bell hooks (1994: 207). Proyectos como Drag y Desbordes pueden constituirse en un marco para buscar nuevas direcciones en aquellos puntos de encuentro entre las teorías queer y feministas para abordar en conjunto preocupaciones centrales alrededor del género y la sexualidad, conforme nos recuerdan Richardson, McLaughin y Casey (2006: 6).

La decisión de trabajar horizontalmente, teniendo puentes a lo largo de las redes sociales e institucionales tales como Dionisios y l@s activistas

LGBT, se convirtió en una forma estratégica para enfocarnos en el complicado mundo de ese "otro" que estábamos habitando en lugar de continuar articulando discursos alrededor de teorías. Lo dicho generó esa tensión productiva de la que nos hablan Schneider y Wright (2006) al ilustrar el dilema nada resuelto entre lo que se considera ciencia en relación con la escritura, la representación y el arte, bajo un marco que re-define cómo hacemos Antropología, es decir, reonocer estos espacios como prácticas reflexivas que interpelan el binario bajo el cual se clasifican no solo los cuerpos sino las áreas de estudio de los mismos.

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Este libro se terminó de
imprimir en mayo de 2014
en Impresores Fraga
Quito-Ecuador

Esta publicación aborda temas de vital importancia para el campo de los Estudios de Género y Feministas: la educación y el ámbito político. Las autoras exploran el cuerpo, el liderazgo, la organización social y su importancia en el nuevo espectro latinoamericano de inequidades sociales. Los textos muestran las limitaciones y obstáculos aún presentes en los procesos de cambio social en América Latina y proponen reflexiones puntuales frente a los actuales desafíos en el marco de los Estudios de Globalización, la Antropología, la Sociología, los Estudios Culturales, la Teoría Queer y la Literatura.

This book addresses key topics for the field of Gender and Feminist Studies which are education and the political environment. The authors explore the body, leadership, social organization and its importance in the new Latin American spectrum of social inequalities. The articles make visible the constraints engrained in the work for social change in Latin America presenting timely reflections that illustrate the current challenges faced within the framework of Globalization Studies, Anthropology, Sociology, Cultural Studies, Queer Theory and Literature.

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