

Unstable and diverse articulations around education and social mobilization

Articulaciones inestables y diversas en torno a lo educativo y la movilización social

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Introduction

Following the guidelines of the call for papers for this issue of *Diálogos sobre educación*, 1) learning generated intentionally in schools, or formative initiatives related to collective organization, 2) constructed knowledge that shapes subjectivities on the experience of inhabiting teacher/student or social movements, 3) the way in which certain educational policies produce organized resistance, and how these mobilizations gain such force that they succeed in generating changes in the formulation or reorientation of policies in this sector, I carried out a review of the literature that allowed me to give an account of the state of the matter in a panoramic view, to give our readers an idea of the number of papers that articulate the nodes of interest shown, the methodological-theoretical approaches employed, and the possible intersections between the field of educational research, the systematization, and social movements. My review is not exhaustive, and I must point out that there are already states of knowledge published that review texts mentioned here. However, what makes this exercise special is that out of these publications I drew out those with a “family resemblance”¹ and kinship with the intentions of this issue of *Diálogos sobre educación*.

By *articulation* I understand a provisional and precarious practice that makes a set of differences equivalent. By *the educational* I refer to the ontological aspect of learning, as it may happen to the individual at any time and in any space, since learning is not restricted to the exclusive realm of the school or the intentional, but may take place in other places outside classrooms, with or without an intention that it happens (an intentional training space may be a cultural facility, museum, workshop, and others, while unintentional education takes place when the individual incorporates a significant content to his or her knowledge repertoire and modifies his or her behavior. The latter may be shown through individual or collective reflexive processes).

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¹ That is, the texts selected are equivalent since they argue in favor of a possible link between education and social movements, while maintaining their differences as their theoretical and methodological ways to address the problem or object of study comes from different approaches or disciplines.

Based on this, it is claimed that social movements are spaces in which learning processes may take place that transform the views and practices of those who inhabit them. The point to be elaborated in this article of “Debate” is what characterizes approaches to the link between education and mobilization is interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity, which I believe becomes evident by tracing the production along this line of research.

The states of knowledge

We consulted the following sources: 1) Bertha Salinas Amescua, coordinator of the state of knowledge of the Mexican Council of Educational Research A.C. (COMIE), entitled *Educación, desigualdad y alternativas de inclusión. La investigación educativa en México 2002-2011*; 2) Sergio Gerardo Malaga, coordinator of the state of knowledge entitled *Política y políticas educativas. La producción científica a debate* del COMIE; y 3) *Estado del conocimiento informe analítico-descriptivo. Informe técnico 2018*, of the Mexican Network of Studies of Social Movements, specifically Chapter 9, “Movimientos Sociales y Educación” by Roberto González Villarreal, Guadalupe Olivier, Joel Ortega Erreguerena, Mario Arellano González, Lucía Rivera Ferreiro, Marcelino Guerra Mendoza, Eryk Iván Carmona Espíritu and María Elena Mújica Piña.²

I will begin with the state of knowledge “Educación, desigualdad y alternativas de inclusión. La investigación educativa en México 2002-2011”, coordinated by Bertha Salinas Amescua and Verónica González List, where we can already trace the link mentioned above between education and social mobilization, since among its inclusion criteria are papers on associative life, struggles, movements, community groups, civil society organizations, indigenous networks, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) development projects, and community-based organizations.

Salinas acknowledges that: “The issue of learning in social and civil organizations, with their own definition and a delimited corpus, is new in editions of the state of knowledge and we understand it as a field under construction that will gradually acquire visibility and interest in educational research” (Salinas, 2011: 155). Contrary to their expectations, the state of knowledge entitled “Educación, desigualdad social e inclusión, trabajo y empleo”, comprising the period 2012-2021, left addressing this out.³ We will later see that these papers were compiled following other criteria, in another state of knowledge by the COMIE.

² It is worth remembering that the prolific link between education and social movements would not have been possible without all the work of the tradition in Latin American Popular Education, as well as the Pedagogical Alternatives and Educational Prospects in Latin America Program (APPeAL), which dates back to 1981 in the School of Philosophy and Literature of Mexico's National Autonomous University (UNAM), coordinated by Adriana Puiggrós and Marcela Gómez Sollano. This program sought to conduct research on alternative and emergent educational practices other than those from the hegemonic educational system, which had until then been carried out by different sectors of society in both institutional and social contexts, at different times in the recent history of Latin America. Another one of its objectives was to contribute to the training of experts in the field who were able to build links, understand, and transform reality.

³ This operation of inclusion and exclusion explains the political character of the field of education and the lines that shape it, which is linked to emergent topics through contextual and urgent issues, the reshaping of the field based on the interests of young researchers, and the theoretical trends and approaches that open paths to interpret such issues, among others.

Continuing the work coordinated by Salinas (2011), it is in Chapter 3, “Aprendizajes y saberes en organizaciones civiles” where we find more equivalences with the papers in this Issue of *Diálogos sobre Educación*, because in that text there were texts selected that address the following topics: “a) Organizational knowledge generated inside social organizations as a result of their collective action and not always due to an intention to educate or learn, and b) Learning that emerges from systematic reflection upon the practice, as in the case of NGOs for development, through devices of systematization of experiences that recover the organizational life, the strategies and methodologies, or the social struggle processes”⁴ (Salinas, 2011: 156-157).

Salinas & González believe that these spaces are “organization schools” that represent alternative sites of educational inclusion that generate reflection, formation of values, negotiation, conflict resolution, social and technical capacities, personal and collective development, organization, and agreement on rules and sanctions. Students also learn to make decisions through consensus, new words, how to conduct assemblies, and to cooperate with money: “organizations have accumulated experience that enables them to make regional articulations and alliances, assert their identity, become empowered, learn about their rights, collaborate with local governments, and make proposals for specific impacts. They have also been able to make demands of public servants and governmental programas” in cases related to NGOs, community promoters, and self-managed and gender processes (2011: 192).

Their theoretical reference to sustain the learning aspect of these other places is the classic work by Schugurensky (2000), who created a typology of learning processes (formal, non-formal, and informal), which also helps to argue the educational character of the aforementioned “organization schools”.

Among the papers compiled in that volume, “systematizations” occupy an important place, understood as qualitative research work conducted by the organizations themselves with or without the accompaniment of specialists, widely practiced in the south of Latin America under the banner of Popular Education, with the aim of having a practical and collective impact on an issue detected by them: “What remains constant through the 34 experiences is to always begin with community diagnoses to outline objectives and plan together: generate spaces, thoughts and feelings that bring together different knowledge, memories, and know-how” (Salinas, 2011: 180). As an example of this type of work they mention the systematization coordinated by Reygadas (2011), *Memoria del movimiento cívico Todos Somos Zimapán*, which reports as learning having become aware of the fact that “public servants must protect the interests of the people ... Another instance of learning is the strength of unity. There was also personal learning, as the citizens of Zimapán transformed their ways of thinking and of seeing themselves” (Salinas, 2011: 170-171).

⁴ The other two items addressed by the coordinators are not related to this Issue of *Diálogos sobre educación*.

On the other hand, there was a retrieval of the contributions of Mercedes Ruiz, who uses the Political Discourse Analysis (PDA) and proposes concepts such as “daily learning”, “daily or local knowledge”, “social learning”, “production of know-how”, and “socially productive know-how”. Ruiz believes that PDA is a pertinent form of analysis for the study of these learning processes, “pointing out the limitations of a descriptive analysis of the world of popular organizations to explain the complexity of local processes, and points to the importance of using the theory critically as a mediator in the construction of knowledge” (Salinas, 2011: 189). Other theoretical referents employed in the papers compiled come from disciplines such as studies on development, gender, environmental studies, agroecology, and solidarity economy. Although in these papers the educational does not appear as nodal, they do address learning and knowledge as an explicit axis of study.

Thirteen years later, as mentioned above, the state of COMIE that gives continuity to this volumen did not retrieve the same line of production of knowledge. However, the SK that retrieved another possible link between the educational and social mobilization was the one coordinated by Sergio Gerardo Malaga Villegas, *Política y políticas educativas. La producción científica a debate*, in Chapter 5 of its second section, “La política de las políticas educativas” in which Ernesto Treviño Ronzón and Guadalupe Olivier Téllez also participated. If in the SK coordinated by Salinas the aim was to describe non-formal and incidental learning beyond the school environment and within the CSOs, in this SK:

We anticipated that there would have been an increase in critical studies regarding: reforms/counter reforms, mobilizations, protests, and resistances... treated through the view of research on educational policies ... we assumed the presence of studies that through different sub-thematic enclaves would question the conventional approaches in politics and educational policies, and broaden the traditionally central issues... positioning others that reclaim differentiated ways to look at educational objects and the way to “do politics and policies” (Treviño, 2024: 411).

Thus, this SK underlines the political aspect of educational policies, the effects it produces in collective identities antagonistic to them, and the agonistic way to solve disputes, not leaving out the formative aspects that the SK coordinated by Salinas pointed out, with the exception that here the most recurrent term is “formation of subjectivities” through questioning and offering models that are resisted or resignified. We also observe an important displacement of these objects, studied in the social sciences (Sociology and Political Science), towards inter- and cross-disciplinary approaches that nourish the educational object (added to those two).

This SK describes an important amount of research on educational policy that incorporates topics about student actors such as the 1968 and #yosoy132 movements, as well as teaching actors mobilized around reforms such as that of Peña in 2013 in different local and national

spheres. Some examples of these papers are Gibrán Guillermo Mariano Guzmán's (2019) *Relación estratégica del Gobierno federal y la CNTE en el marco de la Reforma Educativa de 2012*, which reflects on the educational reform during President Enrique Peña Nieto's term and the opposition of Section XXII of teachers in Oaxaca, who called themselves "dissident".

Mónica García Contreras (2014) did her doctoral dissertation in the Department of Educational Research of the Center for Research and Advanced Studies (DIE-Cinvestav), entitled *Formación en movimientos estudiantiles: Género y memoria de mujeres activistas de México*, in which she observes how the women who participated in the 1968 movement learned from their practice in their political militance. García's work was conducted from a gender perspective, through interviews with women, and intersect the register of the political through Political Discourse Analysis (PDA), which allows her to identify relationships of inclusion and exclusion, hegemonic practices, and positions of subject in the identity formation processes of the activists themselves.

The article by the writer of this section de "Debate", López Nájera (2022), "La 'reforma educativa' como solución al conflicto de 1968: La demanda no solicitada por el movimiento", available in the book *Cien años de la Secretaría de Educación Pública. Diálogos desde el presente*, describes how the student mobilization produced important educational effects during the period from 1968 to the presidential term of Luis Echeverría Álvarez. In short, none of the items in the petition paper of the Consejo Nacional de Huelga made any educational demand. However, Gustavo Díaz Ordaz responded in his presidential address that year that the movement was caused by a crisis in education, so a broad scope educational reform was gestated and enacted. This paper followed the PDA approach and included archival research.

In the article *Reforma educativa y resistencia en México: Emergencia y disolución de identificaciones políticas en el ámbito magisterial* by Ernesto Treviño and Marian Mendoza (2018), the authors discuss the latest cycle of reforms of Mexico's basic education and some of the actions of resistance deployed by teachers in the state of Veracruz. They argue that, although the reform managed to trigger a number of mobilizations that articulated broad segments of the teaching sector, its effects were short lived in visible political terms but longer lasting in terms of its implications for the political formation of the teachers who participated in it.

José Rojas Galván, of the University of Guadalajara, in his article "El movimiento estudiantil de la Escuela Normal Rural de Atequiza. Un análisis de sus prácticas sociales y políticas, 1988-2015" (2017), analyzes the sociopolitical factors that made the student movement of the Atequiza Rural Teachers' College a protagonist in the structure of the Mexican educational system during the 1988-2015 period. The results of his research show that the social and political practices generated by the movement enabled it to cope with the repression against it. It shows how its members exercised their reflexion and action to uphold and defend their social and political conquests. It also describes the generation of a historical awareness that aspires to build

a better world. Its theoretical referent relied on Alain Touraine's proposal, documentary analysis, and participant observation.

Another important referent to understand the link between the educational and movements is the paper written by the Mexican Network of Studies of Social Movements, the *Estado del Conocimiento. Informe analítico-descriptivo* (2018). One of its teams, comprised of Roberto González Villarreal, Guadalupe Olivier, Joel Ortega Erreguerena, Mario Arellano, González, Lucía Rivera Ferreiro, Marcelino Guerra Mendoza, Eryk Iván Carmona Espíritu and María Elena Mújica Piña, wrote Chapter 9, "Movimientos Sociales y Educación". Their search and systematization of research works allowed the group to classify them according to their themes: "social movements of educational actors, in the processes of production and transmission of knowledges, know-how, and values; in the modes of organization and forms of power in educational systems; innovation, creation of know-how and pedagogical models by social movements; and their participation in political movements" (RMEMS, 2018: 309). They identified the use of mainly four theoretical referents: 1) Political Struggle, 2) New Social Movements, 3) Marxism, and 4) Theory of Emotions. From these papers we have chosen some that allow us to illustrate the link of interest mentioned above.

Renate Marsiske (2012), in her article "Crónica del movimiento estudiantil de México en 1929", argues that it was part of a sequence of university reform movements in Latin America and took advantage of the experience of students from other countries such as Argentina, Peru, Chile, and Cuba. These movements showed a change in the social structure of Latin American countries, with middle classes who pressed for greater political participation. In Mexico, students protested the measure that implemented a greater number of exams and for the years added to complete high school. The government responded by offering some degree of autonomy for the university and changing the administrative staff. The student movement ended with the reforma instituted with the Organic Law of Mexico's National Autonomous University (UNAM).

Antonio Gómez Nashiki (2003), in his article "El movimiento estudiantil mexicano. Notas históricas de las organizaciones políticas, 1910-1971", analyzes the emergence and development of some of Mexico's university student organizations in that period. He describes the struggle among organizations for their positions over events such as autonomy or socialist education, which led to the formation of two large currents: the liberal one and the popular one. He also describes the circumstances in which these trends attempted to unify. However, the Mexican state repression in 1968 would polarize them again, resulting in two antagonistic currents: democratic, and revolutionary.

Alicia De los Ríos (2016), in her article "La huelga de 1967 en la Escuela Superior de Agricultura Hermanos Escobar", reconstructs the history of that student strike through the memory of some of its actors and documentary sources. This movement achieved the creation of the Agro-

nomy School of the Autonomous University of Chihuahua and became a national organizational landmark towards the 1968 student movement of a generation that demanded education and democracy.

Finally, the papers with a view from “Popular Education” with a Freireian provenance are also nourished by different intersectional emergent approaches that highlight issues related to the body, affections, diversity, and decolonialization, with the aim of contributing to emancipation processes of groups in conditions of vulnerability to historically unfair structures.

Contributions from Discourse Analysis and Education

Different conceptual proposals and papers have been made that articulate tools in objects related to education outside the exclusive realm of the school, and some of them are linked to the formation of subjects in organizational and social mobilization spaces. It is therefore another wager in the production of knowledge on this issue. I will do now a brief review of the proposal to address them, as well as present some papers along this line. In order to discuss how the subject is formed in spaces of social mobilization it is first necessary to untie the classical sense knot that learning takes place exclusively in school institutions with an organized schedule and curriculum, and in a vertical relationship between the subject of knowledge and the subject willing to know. For this reason Buenfil (1993: 14 y 16) proposes to

Insisto n the need to reconsider what is understood by education and by educational practices... Identifying education with school is a very comfortable way out in regard to the precision of the concept... All the population that has no access to schools – indigenous, “marginal”, peasants, or simply those who did not find a “place” – are anyway constituted as subjects in those other spaces traditionally looked down upon by intellectuals.

Subjects have learned throughout their lives in different spaces, through interactions with different people, since the times before there were schools, or did people not learn in other ways when this device did not exist? In ontological terms, we might say that the “self” is predisposed to learn by the mere fact of its existence, and chooses among options, makes informed decisions, inserts itself in communities of practice, relates affectively with others, and from some experiences, something remains and leads him/her to incorporate changes in his/her discursive habitat. Questioning processes are defining in this sense:

What concerns specifically an educational process consists of, through a practice of questioning, the agent constitutes him/herself as an active subject of education, incorporating from that questioning some new appraising, behavioral, conceptual content that modifies his/her daily practice in terms of a transformation or a more grounded reaffirmation; that is, that through the models of identification pro-

posed by a specific (religious, family, school, mass media) discourse, the subject recognizes him/herself in that model, feels alluded to, or accepts the invitation to become that which is proposed (Buenfil, 1993: 20).

We might add to the spaces mentioned between brackets that other formative space of social organizations and movements as sites where projects of collective life, struggle, demands, and defense of rights are proposed, where in the coexistence with other views adherences to petitions and complicities are generated; in short, these are places of formation that cut deep into subjectivities because they touch sensitive fibers, ideals, and alternative models of society with to people come to feel a lasting commitment (whether because they are the victims of some injustice or because they are affected in solidarity by what happens to others). María del Pilar Padierna Jiménez summarizes the importance of these other possibilities in function of spaces, temporalities, agents, and intentionalities, as they are elements that are conjugated in many diverse ways, so “the educational process takes place in any space where the subject appropriates elements to modify the ways in which he/she relates to the social... there does not necessarily have to be an educational intentionality; the subject appropriates those factors that are useful for the performance of his/her daily practices” (Padierna, 2012: 29).

Identification, in its link with the educational, accounts for an open process in which different questionings or calls “compete”⁵ to have an effect on the subject (that is, in which different models or horizons are offered to people’s desires). This process is precarious because it is continuous, since the subject identifies constantly with different calls throughout his/her life, and can also de-identify with something with which he/she previously agreed, having at stake what the subject would like to be or how he/she would like to be seen by others. Finally, “the desires, expectations and forms of recognition offered by social movements may be seen as models of identification in which the subjects recognize themselves and potentially adhere to, transforming with this participation one or more poles of his/her identity” (Padierna, 2012: 104-105). Playing with the intellectual tools of PDA, different papers contribute to the articulation between the educational and social movements. I will show here some examples of this.

In the book *Lo educativo: teorías, discursos y sujetos*, María Mercedes Ruiz Muñoz (2002) presents the chapter “Proyectos populares y alternancia educativa”, focusing on the meanings acquired by popular sectors proposals. She wonders how the social fabric and the networks built between popular organizations, education, and social movements are interwoven, problematizing the position of “formation in alternance” coined in the field of adult education, and resignifying that notion to place the educational proposals developed in popular groups and organizations, the Church and intellectuals, among the most important actors that alternate, coexist, or antagonize with governmental policies and programs for adult education. These are proposals that emerge at the edges of governmental discourse.

⁵ Allow me this expression, without intending to assign agency to the projects.

Marcela Gómez Sollano (2012: 205-206), in her chapter “Saberes, sujetos y alternativas pedagógicas. Recortes de observación y articulación conceptual”, is interested in considering what is seen as alternative as a particular sociohistorical, political and pedagogical operation which condenses the historical knowledge of struggles (conceived through its buried or submitted knowledge) and the experience that becomes a project when it is inscribed in a horizon that gives meaning to the practices of the agents and summons language, history, and body around it.

Mónica García Contreras (2015), in her chapter “Mujeres en movimiento: subjetividad y procesos de identificación” of the book *Investigación y teoría. Tensiones y juegos*, intersects a view of gender and a perspective that analyzes the educational as a significant discursive configuration whose object is recognized in the formation of subjects within the social space. She analyzes the subjective makeup of activist women through their participation in student movements in the period 1960-1980, through in-depth interviews.

Daniel Saur (2016), in his text “Lo educativo más allá de la escuela. Experiencia educativa y subjetividad” of the book *Formación de sujetos. Reformas, políticas y movimientos sociales*, offers some elements to contribute to a debate about learning outside school spaces through a theoretical and critical reflection on the state of this field of knowledge and the features that constitute the educational, in an attempt to contribute to promoting a problematization that broadens the scope of a restrictive and dominant conception.

Rosa Nidia Buenfil Burgos, in her chapter “Júbilo y dolor: Memoria narrativa y formación de mujeres activistas” published in the book *Política y afecto. Investigaciones educativas* (2019), seeks to highlight the affective dimension (feelings, passions, and emotions) interwoven in the narrative memory of activist women and the way in which they refer to the educational actions implied in their militant participation.

In the chapter “Los movimientos sociales y la conformación política del orden social” of the book *Política y afecto. Investigaciones educativas* (2019), Leonor González Villanueva reopens the debate on social movements and the formation of political subjects. Her text constitutes an analytical exercise within the field of post-foundation, which intends to contribute elements to understand collective action, particularly the formation of student movements.

López Nájera, I. (2020), in his article “Pugnas en torno a la gratuidad: los huelguistas del movimiento estudiantil 1999-2000 en la UNAM” argues that this movement, which increased its demands as the student politization grew, represents an emblematic moment of questioning of “neoliberal” policies. The paper revolves around the free character, which according to the General Strike Council (CGH) was encroached upon by the threats of “privatization”, one of the steps promoted by international financial agencies, supported by actual regimes of some economic theorists. The article features testimonies of people who participated in the movement and maintained the demands until the strike was interrupted by the intervention of Mexico’s Federal Preventive Police (PFP) in the UNAM.

Ilse Ekatherine Argüelles Nakase (being printed), analyzes a text to be published soon on the cycle of protest triggered by the implementation of the educational reform of 2013 and identifies the political threats executed in multiple ways by the State in the central north zone of the Mexican state of Veracruz. She identifies the violence, harassment, and repression as the main threats that triggered affective identifications before and during the mobilization, which involved the circulation of power and the displacement of the subjects. Her discussion relies on Laclau's notions of discourse, Tarrow's about political threats Tarrow, Ahmed's about affections, and Mouffe's about affective identifications. The paper uses a qualitative methodology to analyze the discourse of teachers from Papantla de Olarte, Espinal, Misantla, and Martínez de la Torre, recorded through interviews and focus groups.

By way of closing

As mentioned at the beginning of this section of "Debate", what the states of knowledge make evident is that there is a diversity of studies that link the educational with all kinds of social movements, and that what characterizes the way they are addressed is inter- and cross-disciplinary work. This exercise also allows us to observe the historicity of this phenomenon in the production of knowledge in Mexico. It was in the 1970s with Popular Education that this relationship emerged, and was further consolidated in different fronts such as the Pedagogical Alternatives and Educational Prospects in Latin America Program (APPeAL), in 1981, the systematization papers written by Civil Society Organizations in the 1990s and 2000s, and the approaches through conceptual tools inclined towards social disciplines, as well as papers through PDA that since 1995 have contributed in this direction.

We must point out the meaning of the fact that the link mentioned was omitted from the state of knowledge that continues the one coordinated by Salinas in 2002-2011. However, it remains in the SK coordinated by Malaga, which speaks of the persistence of papers oriented towards this line (some even consider the possibility that they constitute a field), as well as the versatility of approaches that articulate in one SK or the other.

This persistence shows the importance of this issue for Educational Research (ER) and studies of social movements. The discussion of how the topic is positioned when it emerges from one side or the other – how it is positioned from the field of ER and how it is constituted when addressed by researchers interested in social movements sociales, how they intersect to support, for several decades now and with constant efforts, a line placed against the traditional conception of the educational – remains for further debate. I briefly anticipate that in ER, according to the SK of COMIE, papers have appeared in smaller numbers but they survive. However, in the study of social movements, the SK of the Network mentioned reports a consolidated group of researchers interested in the issue, which makes this link central to that approach.

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