

# Other pedagogies and their territories in Latin America: a dialogue with Lia Pinheiro

## *Otras pedagogías y sus territorios en América Latina: un diálogo con Lia Pinheiro*

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32870/dse.v0i31.1624>

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Debates about the relationship between education, school and territory in Latin America have been wide-ranging. Different educational and pedagogical proposals have been constructed by social movements as “other”, non-hegemonic options, which in everyday life strengthen the links between local knowledge, communitarian experiences, and the school. These other pedagogies, rooted in the land and in the territory, place at their center those, human and non-human, who inhabit the territories, and the relationships created between complex systems. For this Issue 31 of *Diálogos sobre Educación* we have invited Dr. Lia Pinheiro Barbosa, who in her experience and journey has gone through and accompanied different educational experiences, to talk about the different axes over which, in different ways, the territory and socio-educational processes have been articulated. Rather than offer a state of the art of the academic question, we have decided to present this dialogue as a way of building shared knowledge, which we believe enriches the debates presented throughout this issue of *Diálogos*.

**Julietta Briseño:** Lia, we are very grateful to you for having accepted our invitation to this dialogue, and we would like to begin by talking about experiences. We know there are several experiences that, from the ground up, from social and indigenous movements, have made proposals for *other pedagogies*. From your analytic perspective, which are the contributions of these proposals to link territorial processes and education?

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**Lia Pinheiro:** Well, first I would like to thank you for the time to think of this space for dialogue. That reflection upon the pedagogies of the territory has been something that I have been trying to look into, especially after the first experience I had a better opportunity to learn about, which was the case of the Zapatista experience and the whole proposal of the Zapatista Autonomous Rebel Educational System.<sup>1</sup> I believe that this is still an important contribution to think about some levels of that debate. First, this relationship between education, formation processes, and forging a historical-political subject, and the link of the educational process with territorial defense from an also political horizon that, in the case of the Zapatista movement, is the proposal of autonomy as a political principle and project.

We know that in different contexts of Mexico and other countries in Latin America the issue of education and popular struggle processes have a long history, but the case of Zapatismo was an important pedagogical experience because when they reflect on this they do it first through a criticism of the tenets of the State-Nation about a conception of education for the people, not only indigenous peoples but peasants. Despite the fact that in the case of Mexico, although the country has a history since the Mexican Revolution of teachers' experiences, rural education and the processes of planning communitarian education, there were still problems and fragilities in the way indigenous schools were characterized. Zapatistas denounced even the problems of the infrastructure, teachers' training, and rejection of a body of knowledge and know-how that indigenous peoples possess. So there was first this problematization of the way in which official education is conceived, the place of indigenous peoples and the statement of the pedagogical proposal, and even that it would later want to have a dialogue with other experiences.

But the second thing I find very powerful in the case of Zapatismo is how this formative, pedagogical process simultaneously involves recovering and strengthening the bases of indigenous philosophical thought, which in this case stems from a Mayan matrix. When I was in the autonomous Zapatista schools I had the opportunity to see the didactic books, and there's first a curricular matrix that works with contexts, with skills in the area of mathematics, the area of history, the area of geography, let's say what is expected from primary or secondary education. But there is also a body of knowledge that strengthens the matrix of the Mayan language, and within it some categories that are very important to understand this approach to the territory, such as the concept of *lekil kuxlejal*, of "Good Living", as well as other concepts; for instance, the Mayan word *Sak'an*, which is the concept of "Mother Earth", the land, seeing it as a living being. Or the concept of *ja 'altsili*, "everything lives", which is like a principle of the genesis of life. So these are concepts that work with this sense of the territory within the perspective of the peoples, of thinking of the territory as a living being, and from there articulating it with other concepts such as the concept of *ja 'altsili*, which has to do with the recognition of the fact that

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<sup>1</sup> An Educational System implemented in the Zapatista autonomous territory after the uprising of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) and the creation of an autonomous government in the state of Chiapas, Mexico.

everything lives and that everything is a living being, and articulating this with the idea of why the defense of the territory is important.

And the importance of articulating these concepts and weave them together with that perspective of the defense of the territory, which in the case of Zapatistas also has to do with the defense of the territory against everything that was implied in the enactment of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), in which the offensive of capital was expressed by the signature of a trilateral cooperation treaty between Mexico, the United States and Canada, which opened the road for mining extraction, water resource exploitation, all exploitation of the territories, etc. And that just to mention a very concrete plan for the defense of the territory.

And then we must think about the processes of construction of autonomy, an autonomy that is seen through this link with the territory, recognizing it as the construction of an ancestral identity as Mayan peoples but at the same time of processes, of community fabrics in which there is in fact a link not only in the material plane, of the land for those who work on it – which is even the principle of the Mexican Revolution and the reason why they call themselves Zapatistas – as a way to reinforce the fact that this is a political identity, recognizing that dimension as a legacy of the Mexican Revolution.

But we must also think of the land, the territory, as more than that: as the place of Mother Earth and of this coexistence within the territories, which is fundamental not only for human existence but also for existence beyond humans. And there I think it was a process that I have tried to follow over the years, because it is not a given for those who approach the political process of the Zapatistas. It's not like things are already so explicit and systematized. But since they have approached this educational process through different perspectives in which the school is one of the spaces, though not the only one, they have built a much broader view in which this knowledge does not emanate only from an anthropocentric action of humans, as individuals with reason and thinking beings, but that we are a fraction of a whole of existences or, or rather we were the last to arrive. That's why the Popol Vuh is so important for them, and the origin of men and women of corn, even as being part of a creation through the will of the other animals, because when they bring corn seeds to the creator gods it is the animals who say "well, let's see if out of these humans that we are going to create from these corncocks something good and positive comes for us too as animals who inhabit the Earth".

In this sense, the actual humanizing process is much broader. It is not related only to humans but also to beings from nature, so that is also an important element of the deeper process of this pedagogical sense of education, which sometimes reminds me of Paulo Freire when he speaks of the humanizing process. Education for liberation should recover this dimension of humanizing, because we are going through a process of dehumanization. I agree with Paulo Freire but I think that Zapatismo opens more paths beyond humanizing, because [Freire] comes in part from an anthropocentric philosophical matrix, as if the whole point of our existence were

to place ourselves as humans again at the center, which is of course important within the historical process where that discussion was constructed, within the processes of oppression that we know historically. But Zapatismo broadens the view because it sees how humans coexist with something much greater, which is Mother Earth and nature. We are but a fraction of existence, and that is why they set in motion a whole set of concepts from the Tzeltal, Tzotzil and Tojolabal languages to show that such an education must understand and account for the fact that we are not at the center. What is at the center is Mother Earth, and that is why it is important to defend the land, the territory and Mother Earth, something that has taken shape through the path of Zapatismo.

Then, as I said, this first experience with the Zapatistas allowed me to think about this link between education and territory, which we find also in other perspectives of indigenous struggle. This led me to think that here, in the case of Brazil, with the Yanomami or with other peoples, the diversity of peoples who try to think that the main role of the school within their territories is to awaken in children and youths that ontological sense that the territory acquires within of their own identity as indigenous peoples. There, each people will have their particularities, their way of naming the processes within their foundational myths, their existence. But for example, in the case of the Krenak, when they speak of flying rivers to show how that territory is not only the territory on which we walk, but also what is beneath the territory, all this territory of the rivers below, but also in the sky when the rains begin and the flows of the rain, the flying rivers that allow, for instance, an equilibrium of this relation that is not only of the territory but even of that territory that we cannot see, like the air, the atmosphere, all these spaces that are part of thinking about that which exists in the world and that we may not necessarily see but is fundamental for our existence.

That has gained strength in recent years, I think, because when the Zapatistas took up arms in 1994 it was clear that it was a war against the Mexican State but that there was an element of what the North American Free Trade Agreement entailed. And now, 30 years later, we see how this this model has expanded to all the territory of Latin America and the Global South, and how this is also framed within the educational system, as an amplifier of the storm that was to come and of what is involved today in all that offensive from NAFTA and BRICS (Block Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) over territories and indigenous territories. So I think that it was the seed to articulate that dispute of the territory in a curriculum within the schools, but also beyond them, in a weave of common reflection as peoples, that centrality of the territory for the existence of life and the need to advance also toward an ontological reflection. Hence the role of education to understand the transcendence of the territory in this debate of the peoples, I believe those are some elements.

**Margarita Sánchez:** Thank you, Lia. In our next question the idea is to delve into social movements. But before that, you mentioned some concepts or ideas that have been cropping up and that I think it is important to address. You told us about the epistemological and ontological matrices of indigenous peoples, and specifically of the Mayan philosophical thought. You spoke of the dimension of pedagogy, of nature, the defense of life and, you said that there is a relationship through the defense of life with the territory, but also through a very material thing that is the systematic attack to life. In that panorama, which would you say are the conceptual keys that have been created? You already mentioned many, but if you had to propose lines of reflection or conceptual keys that we would have to use to continue delving into and tensing the debates between territory, education and pedagogical processes, which ones would you identify as particularly powerful today, or conflictive ones, or tensioning ones, that would allow us to discuss?

**Lia Pinheiro:** Well, the question is complex. I think that there is an “other” ontological paradigm, even. In some of my writings I have tried to name it as an *onto-epistemic* paradigm, which emanates from these “other” ontologies, which is what supports that dimension of education, of pedagogy, believing that it is important even to think of what is the aim of educational and pedagogical formation that we want to consolidate within that process because finally, when we speak of pedagogies, we think of processes of formation of those who are formed, and of what they are formed for. Thus, I think this onto-epistemic paradigm would be a great key to think about each experience, of what is, how it is named, and from what place this educational process is thought of. And in the case of Zapatismo – I offered an example – there is also their own conception of the territory, which I think is something that emerges and even articulates this pedagogy of the territory.

I think that this ontological relationship has in itself an important pedagogical key, even to think about these geopedagogies, such as thinking about these places that are within of the territory as places that are part of this human and no-human formation, spaces from where knowledge and know-how emerge and which support an ancestral, collective memory that has been transmitted from generation to generation, a body of knowledge with ontological and epistemic bases, because they interweave the senses and the forms of organization of life in the territory. Here in Ceará, where I am, and in Brazil, I think that is very common. We speak a lot about the “pedagogies of the *retomadas*” fostered by indigenous movements to recover their territories as a pedagogical wager to retake this territory as part of the constitution of this collective subject, even activating also the ancestral memory of sacred places, of spiritualities, of the relationship with food, with their deities, with the waters, with each place’s biomas, each territorial specificity, as being part of those great matrices that are building this knowledge, and of how we must think pedagogically, from the standpoint of the tradition of Latin American pedagogical thought.

I see the case of the peasant experience, and it makes me think of the case of the Sin Tierra and the Vía Campesina movements and the approach to education in and of the field. This field is seen as a territorial approach and, in the case of the Vía Campesina, they regard as fundamental the concept of *education in the field* as part of recognizing the right to have the schools precisely in the territory of the movements, so they can confront the historical rural exodus which has among its historical causes the lack of schools in rural zones, forcing peasant youth to leave their territories in order to study, or rather work in the cities and submit to a more precarious access to the school or quit studying, which is precisely the project of the State to make them leave their land, not have an education and continue being cheap or enslaved labor. But there is also the right to an education in the field, because there it has an epistemological matrix that recognizes a whole body of knowledge and know-how that stems from this memory of peasants, and which has to do with this relationship with the land, with ways of cultivating it, with the transmission of the memory and of the seeds, and of how this comes from their upbringing, of that which I think of as an agroecological matrix.

There, peasants have established this relationship between a peasant, agroecological pedagogy and the processes of defense of the territory to have food sovereignty, popular sovereignty, water sovereignty, and this is interesting because we can make an analogy: if, on the one hand, indigenous movements defend the territory to have autonomy, the peasant movement defends the territory to have sovereignty. And when they speak of sovereignty they speak from a similar perspective, of having territorial autonomy, and I'm talking especially about the movements linked to Vía Campesina, which is already a great movement, the largest multinational agrarian movement. Their sovereignty is not only popular sovereignty: it is food sovereignty, water sovereignty, animal food sovereignty, wind power sovereignty, even mineral sovereignty. All the elements have a link with the territory. Then, that perspective of agroecology would be another important matrix within this educational process and the link with the territory.

A third element that I think is important here is that both indigenous and peasant women are trying to articulate that dimension of communitarian feminism, peasant feminism and popular feminism as central lines to think, within this formative process, about a change in this gender relationship, understanding another perspective to think about an existence that is not binary, recognizing that there is a complementarity, a gender diversity, and that it is even similar to nature itself, the territory, which is also diverse.

We must also remember that in their social relationships human beings must be considered in this *pluri-verse* dimension of their existence; that is, it cannot be determined by merely a binary heteronormative pair, the heterocis, but one has to recognize how this is becoming a debate within the schools, an educational debate, even establishing these parallels. There is a Master's degree thesis recently defended by Iván Aguilar, from the Master's degree in Agroecology of El Colegio de la Frontera Sur (Ecosur), in Chiapas, that examines precisely this relation-

ship from the agroecological perspective, that I could share with you if you are interested, or we could cite here to show how that has also been part of those educational processes within peasant schools, but that one also finds within the indigenous schools.<sup>2</sup>

**Margarita Sánchez:** In other papers you have spoken about “pedagogical re-territorialization” and the need to territorialize pedagogical practices, and now, well, you combine it with the education in the field, the educational or pedagogical places within the field, the “pedagogies of the *retomadas*”, and I believe that provides us with keys to see. I have been thinking about the education that has taken root in Colombia; that is, there are a lot of experiences.

**Julieta Briseño:** I’m very interested in what you are saying. These three matrices, and the ontological question. In this sense, I’d like to ask you two questions with respect to these matrices, these debates... What challenges are there between the experience and the new matrices? What challenges have been found? Because, well, we are confronting a very strong, centuries-old school tradition. That could be one question, and another the importance of your way of walking and being, which has to do with this commitment, what has been called participatory action research (PAR) or committed research.

**Lia Pinheiro:** I think that the main challenge when thinking about the school has to do with the pedagogical matrix and the curriculum of the school, where these other ontologies enter in the curricular matrix and also into that of the teachers; for instance, beginning to reflect on the debate, or in the case of Zapatismo, that they solved in a radical way. That is, their educational system does not have to go through being recognized by the State and by Mexico’s Secretariat of Public Education (SEP), and having a technician come to tell them if it is right or wrong. They – the Zapatistas – usually say “it is our problem, we decide and we are the ones who are there”. In this case, in reference to the school, and a school approached through an educational system that places the territory as a central axis of their autonomy. So they already have a full autonomy of the process and build up their educational materials, their didactic books, their curricular matrix. And the classes are already in their mother tongue, so there is no challenge against the official school.

But in other cases where there is a dispute over the constitutional right to education, for instance in the case of Brazil, where we have experiences of schools in the field of the Sin Tierra movement and other movements such as the Vía Campesina, we have the indigenous schools that are also public schools, the Quilombolas schools in the Quilombolas territories, and now there is also some pressure so that the schools of the peoples of Terreiro, a territory of religions

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<sup>2</sup> The Master’s degree thesis alluded to is entitled: “La otra raíz habla: experiencias sentidas, significados construidos y sinergias entre disidencias sexogenéricas y la agroecología en México”.

of African matrix, that is, the peoples of Santería, because there is a whole issue of rejection and demonization of these religions. They now have the challenge of getting these other matrices recognized within of the curriculum, and that implies a process of negotiation with the Secretariats of Education with regard to an articulation, a curricular matrix design which incorporates both the body of knowledge, which is part of the tradition of formal school education, and other knowledge and know-how that emanate from the territory and of the ontological and epistemic senses attributed by the peoples and their movements.

The second challenge has to do with the teachers who enter, because they are from schools where teachers usually have to compete to enter. So any teacher can arrive who is not necessarily part of the movement and of the process of thinking the educational and pedagogical proposal of these schools; that is, the ones who are there did not necessarily participate in the historical process of a view of a school closely linked to the defense of the territory, even if this is disputed by the State and the official educational policy, and if they are approved they would have to undergo a pedagogical formation to understand the project of a school articulated by these movements. On the other hand, there will also be those from the movements who are trained in university courses and will have to compete with the others. Maybe you can come to some agreement, have a Gramscian sort of consensus and be allowed to enter as a collegiate for the pedagogical conduction of the school or specifically there for the lines of this diversified matrix of the curriculum. But that will depend a lot on the capacity for pressure, and yes, of hegemonic dispute. On the other hand, there is the challenge with the university, because in some cases the movements are seeking to dispute the right to this college formation, and the university is the top lens of this educational model. The pedagogy courses, for instance, already have their own way of training teachers. But the pedagogues, I would say, are not the main problem, because we also have an important tradition there. It is an area over which we have fought a lot precisely to think of an education within that more diverse approach. The problem is if you are from the areas of a Bachelor's degree in Mathematics, a Bachelor's degree in Physics, a Bachelor's degree in Biology... These other areas of knowledge, what happens there? For example, working with contents such as thinking the *Sak'an* –everything lives, everything has life; as the Zapatistas say, the living earth, the being. It may be that you even say “Well, yes, the biology, the ecology, we agree with this perspective”, or it may be that they say “No, not that, rational knowledge is what we will validate as legitimate, good knowledge”, and there is no true dialogue of knowledge. So I think that there is a great challenge, because each country will have its structure to be able to understand these other kinds of knowledge which are part of that conception and for that reason it is important to validate as part of this legacy of a whole body of knowledge of which the school and the university have been the space for the task of transmitting this knowledge within a formative process.



Still another challenge is if these schools are allowed to function, when we think of what this dispute of the territory by capital has involved. Here [in Brazil] there is a huge process of closing schools in all the zones of interest of capital, where the existence of the schools has been threatened by the State itself, who arrives and says “this school is going to close because it is too much expense to maintain few students”, or if this cannot be achieved legally it can be made to happen in other ways, such as the presence of drug dealers and/or organized crime.

We are facing concrete challenges here in some indigenous settlements and territories, criminal factions who use the method of terror as a threat, and the people are scared... These factions have not yet expelled [the population] from these territories that are organized, but where there is no social or articulated movement they are already expelling the people. This has been happening for decades in Mexico and Colombia, but this new scenario is suddenly arriving to other countries and the people are still trying to understand the presence of organized crime in their territories. That, like the challenges, let’s say, within what would be that structure of domination, exploitation, dealing with the capital, dealing with the State. In regard to our position – and I define myself as a militant researcher, because I am also participating, concretely there in some instances of work with the Sin Tierra movement (MST) – we have tried, first, to defend education in the field, defend the schools within of the territories of agrarian reform of the MST. It started with four schools in the field in Ceará, a state in the northeast of Brazil, and now there are 12, so we are making progress. And now we are with the process of territorialization of agroecology, with the methodology of “peasant to peasant”, to start articulating that agroecological formation, involving the schools in the field and incorporating these schools as facilitators of the process, as well as the families within of the territory, understanding precisely what I was telling you, that it is not limited to the school, but we are creating the links to strengthen this educational process, in a very close relationship with the defense of the territory and the agrarian reform.

The peasant movement is learning a lot from the indigenous movement, because people used to think only about the land and now they speak of the territory, because they understood that now the territory, not just the land, is the reason to approach this ontological existence as a collective being. That strengthens us politically, but in my case, we also ran into challenges within the university; in sociology, for example, the challenge of understanding that this is a part of formation. Right now, ten days ago we came back from the territory and we have interns in the Social Science course. They told me that they talked with other students, with their friends in the course, and that they said that fortunately they were not interns, because they wouldn’t want to be in a peasant territory. And they are sociologists! I said Oh, my god, if they were business managers I wouldn’t say anything, but these are the sociologists we are forming and they still think that analysis is office work and see field work in the territory as a very rudimentary thing. I mean, you find more empathy among pedagogues, those are more *heartened*,

more sensitive, more thoughtful. But the sociologists, for example, are not. So this is also a challenge within the formation in the university, these myths of rationality, of objectivity in science, that some processes are ideological exaggerations, that they are not objective at all, that it is communism... Anyway, it's like that is something that is present, communist indoctrination, they say. These are the times we are living in, of polarization within our countries and between the extreme right or the right and anything in the left, that any defense of human rights is seen as communist indoctrination. Speaking of the rights of nature... "Please, no!" Nature, the territory, all that is *pachamamismo*, it's hippies, and so on. And then we have to bring this debate back to the university. I think that is also another challenge.

**Julieta Briseño:** Thank you very much. Yes, I believe there are a number of challenges and I think it's important to mention them, to avoid falling into this naïve and simplistic idea of the processes of social movements. And there are always these tensions, challenges, that don't stop what is happening in Latin America but have to be acknowledged to learn how to deal with what is going on.

**Margarita Sánchez:** Also in the sense of the challenges to the feminist movements of recent decades, I believe that they have placed in a lot of spaces not only denunciations but, centrally, a criticism and a need to make visible specifically the violence against women, and that has also started other debates about the articulations between violence, body, and territory, which have been growing and that I believe have been placed by the most diverse feminisms; in plural, because there are communitarian feminisms, afro feminisms, a variety of experiences that I would say have a full epistemological and political framework but also have much to do with experience. So, keeping that in mind and going back to what you were telling us, in recent years the approach to education in the field has placed or has had to place the issue of gender from another perspective, from other ontologies, the place of women, of the duality, all that... How do you see, in your experience in the field and in territorial agroecological pedagogical work, that all these movements, all these debates, all these practices become interwoven, specifically in the action? And how would they be expressed in the educational – let's call it that – processes, which may or may not take place in schools? How do you see what is happening?

**Lia Pinheiro:** Yes, I think that, thinking about the context of the official school, the schools in the field, for example, have tried to adopt a gender approach, and not only the hetero binarism but also thinking about sexual dissidences in concrete actions within the school, in which each one has a task. So, for example in the schools in the field of the MST, all the youths (they are nucleated, as we say, in these base nuclei of each classroom, each level of education), and they take responsibility for their own pedagogical schedules and, within their pedagogical schedules, the

schedules of dividing the tasks of taking care of the school space. We have the dinner schedule: in the traditional school you have dinner and then leave everything you used, your utensils, for someone else to take care of cleaning, who would usually be a woman, who typically occupies the spaces of the kitchen. Not in those schools. In the structure of the school itself you see that they organize spaces or several sinks for the children to wash their utensils after eating, to start working on this dimension of the equal division of tasks. There are no tasks for boys and tasks for girls. That has already caused devolutions in the families, for example, that now see changes in their sons who didn't use to do anything at home and now are changing their outlook. At the beginning, within the school they refused to do it, saying they had never washed a dish, that it was something for their mothers, their sisters, their aunts or their grandmothers, that they wouldn't do it, and now the school says yes, you will do it because it is part of your formation. That approach to an anti-sexist education in official schools is an example of the fact that these movements are trying to change concrete practices.

But we also include in the calendar contents of a more political character to think about femicide. And here the indigenous movement has been an important space. We see the case of Zapatismo, with the revolutionary women's law, or once I was speaking in a class with Maggie, that approach of the pedagogy of the word as an important dimension to convince other women to join the struggle. But the pedagogy of the word, even to reach community consensus within the territory, in an assembly, in defining a revolutionary law of the EZLN that is not only for the women, it is conceived also for a good coexistence of the peoples, considering men and women. That was first debated among the women, and of the 33 items proposed, as they say, they only managed to get 10 approved and the others are still being discussed. But they reached a consensus between men and women, and that has also been important for the feminisms that are constructed by indigenous women, or black feminism, peasant and popular feminism, to think that the process of emancipation and antipatriarchal structured cannot be accomplished individually, or as something exclusive of the women, but that it is something that must emancipate men and women. That's why they have thought of those pedagogical processes. Although they are defending a space for women, to debate among women, a space to debate with the men, with all the community, gives it a communitarian dimension.

And there the specific case of indigenous women, the concept of *body-territory* has gained enormous power to think about how to restart this dialectical unit of existence of human beings, the territory, the non-humans, as part of a unity. And to understand that yes, this violence that women historically suffered in their own bodies since Colonial times, but also within of the process of capitalism, is violence that is tearing apart the territory as a body, an inhabited body, the same marks left on the territory when, for example, they blow up a mountain, a hill, for mineral extraction, or when they denounce the presence of agrotoxics in their bodies. And how this has been affecting the generation of life, which biologically is gestated in the body of

the women but is not only their body, it is their offspring and that of their men, who are also affected by this biocidal policy. And how this is an educational process, precisely to build this critical awareness of that territory for life and the sustainability of life. And that leads me to think about the case of the movement of indigenous women in Brazil who now, in the time of a pandemic, created the National Articulation of Indigenous Women, Warriors of Ancestry (ANMIGA), and that they also created the political platform called "Reforesting minds", in the sense that we must reconstruct this ontological dimension of our rationality, that we are part of a whole, and not only the rational being in this Western, modern approach of "I think, therefore I am", right? We exist because others exist, that which the Ubuntu philosophy, also of the Afroafrican, Afrodiasporan matrix, defends: "I am because we are". That is, this communitarian, collective link, like an ontoepistemic matrix of this educational and pedagogical process they are trying to strengthen in the schools, as well as in other formative spaces beyond the school, as a political wager for the defense of the territory that shows that pluriversal power, that considers that process of pedagogical re-territorialization, which is important because we have been educated to want to leave the territories. And now, for example, the peasants say "We were wrong when we said 'You have to study to be something other than a peasant, study to leave'" and now there's a change: to have a school education and formation, but to continue defending those forms of life that they are discovering that have sustained life on the planet, precisely all this bases of an ancestral knowledge that understands the time for everything.

This weekend I was in an experience of peasant cooking with some members of the Sin Tierra movement, and a peasant, who is an illiterate poet, told us "We know even which ox can work and which one cannot". Here, in the semiarid region of Brazil, he says "We are not going to put a black ox to work, it's not an ox to work under the sun, he will have another task, it is the white ox that can work from this hour to that hour, because its white skin will withstand the heat". But one has to understand, and he taught us all the signs that the ox gives to say "Well, I've worked all the hours I had to and I'm not going to keep on working". He said that he knows all the signs, how they move their ears this way and how they move their tail that way. He gave us a whole explanation of the ox's behavior to say "I've told you I worked up to here already", and how they respect that. He told us "Me, to kill an ox... If it were up to me, my oxen would die of old age because I know they are important for us. Sometimes we have to kill some, commercialize and everything, but it is not something we're going to do that approach of large production" as in the case of agrobusiness. And I thought it was beautiful, because there's something to understand there. And he said that because the women made vegan products, the female peasants, and they even said "Well, whoever wants to eat vegan, we produce vegan stuff, but we also like to eat meat", and that was the beginning of a dialogue, which is part of the ways to understand each one's function. Anyway, as we see, these approaches are presented by the women, but they are broadened and discussed with the men within this process. It has been a

beautiful debate bonito, but also challenging with urban feminisms, in the sense of understanding these other forms of thinking about an educational and pedagogical formation that is not exclusive of a gender, that excludes other genders. And there is always this referent of the territory, like when the Zapatistas say “We are like a forest”. Metaphors are always territorial when speaking about this self-recognition process. This forest of women, as the Zapatistas said when they conducted the first International Encounter of Women who Struggle, and a forest will have a diversity of trees, so this is very powerful as a pedagogical key, I think.

**Margarita Sánchez:** Thank you very much indeed, Lia. I find what you have shared with us very interesting and powerful, because it goes from everyday practices in school spaces to the fundamental approach, where there is a questioning of the roles of gender in the practices to sustain collective care. And I think this is very important for children when we think about their educational. But there is also a whole reflection and action in terms of the defense of the territory and the defense of life, which I believe has been the articulating axis of the reflection. I’m especially interested in how there is a wager for an education to defend the territory, to defend life, and that takes shape in a lot of spaces, of forms that have been built, which also has a lot of tensions and difficulties, as far as we know and as far as we’re concerned. Is there anything you would you like to add, Julieta?

**Julieta Briseño:** No, there’s a lot to think about here. I like what you said about how the peasant movement and the indigenous movement are not so far from each other anymore, and how in education and territory, and the political or political-pedagogical formation of the new generations, they are already making connections and seeing that these are not different things, and placing life and this collective subject where it is not only us humans, but all the living beings in these territories, visible or not visible, in which we share certain moments and certain spaces. I’m very happy to learn that it is happening, and it gives me some hope to know that there are real transformations. I don’t know if it will help in the fight, but it is closer and it gives us hope that it will be possible to stop the damage to Mother Earth, which in the end is what we share. And well, I loved it. Thank you very much.

**Margarita Sánchez:** Yes, thank you very much, Lia. I don’t know if there was anything you wanted to. I mean, there are many things, but...

**Lia Pinheiro:** Well, I don’t know if I would have a final reflection. I think I would rather like to congratulate you for organizing this dossier for *Diálogos sobre Educación*, because I think that it is important to start making these articulations between education and territory. Because I think that they were already there, but we had not reflected on the fact that it was all there

in the whole process of the trajectory of indigenous peasant struggle, of popular education, which had already made this link also between education and territory, even within the urban space. Because the other day I was thinking about the struggle of the Black movement and of black women, where there has also been a lot of discussion about how the peripheral areas of large urban centers are the territories where violence is worse and all the process of genocide of black children and youths because they are part of a territory abandoned by the State, or rather the project of the State for these territories is to leave them out of any dignified life process. So this is also a territory where we would have to advance, moving that territorial conception that becomes clearer when we speak of the processes and struggles in the field. But how should we think of those processes within the cities, the large metropolis or urban centers? As a first task, we would have to name these places as territory and think how we can imagine an educational process there. Perhaps among the articles [of the Issue about to be published] there are some that study the contents from these places. But I think that yes, it is of the utmost importance to pay attention to cities and how to encourage discussion there too.

**Margarita Sánchez:** I'm thinking about two things. First, what has been the process so that we felt effectively that it is now impossible to speak about pedagogical processes without taking into account their territorial dimension. Because, I feel that it was there, in the popular education linked to situated education. But, what happened so that now it seems to us to be much more organic? Perhaps because it is now moving towards another horizon. And what is striking for me is the urban thing, because the urban is very heterogeneous. Only here, in Mexico City, the place occupied by territory in the different neighborhoods is very diverse. For example, in Milpa Alta or Xochimilco, it seems that the territory is still closely linked to peasants, to work in corn plantations, in the *chinampas*, there's much to reflect on. But then there are also the neighborhoods where there are processes of territorial resistance, and I wonder what spaces or pedagogical forms can be used for the defense of water, the defense against realtors, the defense of small shops, forms of popular, urban life. And there the question arises: are educational processes being generated, or not? And maybe we are taking a very biased approach, because that also comes from a genealogy, as you said, since we are grandchildren of popular education, of education in the field, but I wonder if we are asking too few questions or we are *de facto* excluding the territorial dimension in the urban, and the power or pedagogical and educational processes in urban contexts, which are very diverse.