# Student Movements and Decolonization of Higher Education

**Jairo I. Fúnez-Flores**∗

*Purdue University, United States*

## Abstract

This paper briefly contextualizes the sociocultural, geo-historical, and political formation of universities in Latin America to situate contemporary higher education reform in the region. As an alternative to dominant theoretical frameworks, a decolonial theoretical perspective is used to understand how neoliberal education reform in Latin America reproduces the coloniality of power and knowledge. A political ontological approach is used to analyze the data collected from the Honduran university student movement's Facebook page. This tentative analysis shows how the university student movement (MEU) transformed itself into a counter-structure and reconfigured the relations of power within the National Autonomous University of Honduras (UNAH).

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∗ Jairo I. Fúnez-Flores, Ph.D. Candidate in Purdue University in the field of Curriculum Studies. Indianapolis, United States. E-mail: jfunez@purdue.edu

## Introduction

The internationalization of higher education and the exportation of universities and curricula is not a new phenomenon. During the 16th century the Spanish Empire became the first to establish universities in the colonized lands of what is now called Latin America in the 16th century (Santos, 2005, 2012). The curriculum, organized by faculty (e.g., law, engineering, and theology), facilitated the expansion of Spain's political, economic, and religious institutions in the so-called "New World." Thus, knowledge organized in the university produced and reproduced the creole and peninsular subjects required to effectively administer the Spanish Empire and the Roman Catholic Church (Mignolo, 2011; 2012).

After many countries in Latin America became independent in the early 19th century, the university was reconfigured. Liberalism was the dominant political worldview that articulated itself most forcefully within the university, transforming it according to the needs of the nascent modern nation-state. The Latin American university at the time could be characterized as Napoleonic —an elitist model for and by "enlightened" men (Bernansconi, 2007; Brunner, 2014).

In the early twentieth century, however, student movements in Latin America began to crack the very foundations of the hardened colonial and Napoleonic traditions of the university. In Argentina, the Cordoba Manifesto of 1918 initiated the process of transforming the universities structurally and ideologically (Santos, 2005). Soon after, student movements formed and mobilized across Latin America to democratize the university. The goals to restructure the university from the bottom up was intended to rid it from hierarchical and monastic traditions. These efforts eventually led to national education reforms toward secularism, autonomy, democracy and co-governance, and free education, all of which were included in national constitutions.

If we fast forward to the last quarter of the 20th century, we begin to see the implementation of neoliberal education reforms and the erosion of previous reforms. The education policies passed in post-coup Chile under the Pinochet dictatorship, for instance, initiated the first "neoliberal revolution" (Hall, 2011), albeit without social

consent (Torres, 2011). All the democratic gains made during the Allende administration were immediately removed from the constitution, education policies, and university missions (Bellei, Cabalin, & Orellana, 2014; Cabalin, 2012; Stromquist & Sanyal, 2013). However, most countries, did not fully adopt neoliberal education policies as early nor as drastically as Chile (Bernasconi & Celis, 2007). Nevertheless, in recent years, major education reforms have been implemented in Latin America. It can be speculated that the financial crisis of 2007 and its lasting effects have played a significant role in reshaping universities globally.

Thus, higher education reforms reveal how neoliberal globalization is (not unlike the Spaniards' global project and mission centuries prior), more than anything, a recolonizing and restructuring process seeking to meet the demands of the global knowledge economy—an economy that, once again, ignores the local sociocultural, historical, and geopolitical context.

## Neoliberal Globalization and Modern Theoretical Approaches

Within this conjuncture, it is imperative to conceptualize the parallel movement of neoliberalism and globalization. In relation to each other both concepts can be viewed in at least three ways: 1) as two separate yet universal and natural economic and cultural processes; 2) as late capitalism's globally restructured form whereby the unprecedented neoliberal economic forces drive contemporary globalizing processes more rapidly within a context of rapid technological advancements; and 3) as inextricably linked processes through which colonial domination finds its continuity in a reassembled geopolitical context in which the economic, political, epistemic, and technological power of the United States saw a rapid ascendance after World War II—a historical context in which decolonizing movements emerged and cold war geopolitics began (Jameson & Miyoshi, 1998). It is this last perspective many critical and decolonial scholars historically situate the current neoliberal globalizing conjuncture to conceptualize and contextualize the implications of knowledge-power (re)production around the world. Arturo Escobar (2010) labeled this process imperial globality and global coloniality, while Altbach (1975) phrased the initial stages of globalization as the 'servitude of the mind' (as cited in Arnove, 1980, p. 57). To understand these transformations Williams (1977) had already called for an "'epochal' analysis" that could map the residual and emergent sociocultural and economic practices in relation to the dominant form (p. 121).

According to Robertson and Dale (2015), the three dominant theoretical approaches informing higher education research within a neoliberal globalizing context are "world polity theory, world systems theory, and globalization as providing a 'structured agenda for education'" (p. 157). World polity theory adopts a cultural and cosmopolitan outlook toward globalizing forces and accepts Western modernity as the inevitable path of development for all nation-states. This perspective views these forces as a natural process through which a harmonious 'world culture' and 'world polity' will be brought into being through Western values and knowledge embedded through higher education reform (p. 157). What is left out from world polity theory is the "experiential" and the articulation of knowledge-power within and across the university. Similar in its global scale, world systems theory takes an economic perspective and looks at the ways in which decontextualized "narrow ranges of roles and scripts" are expressed in education reform. These "scripts" or curricula perpetuate dependency, on the one hand, and sustain the "ideology of progress and modernization" on the other (p. 158). If world polity theory overemphasizes a universal culture as a future imaginary, world systems theory underscores the global economy. The third dominant perspective is the structured agenda approach. This approach looks at the ways in which international mechanisms such as the World Trade Organization, World Bank, and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development promote neoliberal education reform in countries around the world. It proceeds from a political economy paradigm, usually informed by a Marxist perspective, and it emphasizes the role the nation-state plays in the "global project of neo-liberalisation" (p. 158). As Robertson and Dale argue, this approach ignores the cultural domain, "tends to reduce economy to the capitalist economy" and, for the most part, does not consider agency "beyond the contradictions of capitalism" (p. 158). In other words, what lies in the exterior of the modern dialectic is ignored in the analysis. Clear examples found outside of this totality would be the indigenous, peasant, and student movements reclaiming knowledge-practices of resistance. Some regions have begun the process of opening "pluriversities" in the Andes and in the Mayan communities of southern Mexico (Walsh, 2012).

It is not surprising that comparative higher education research greatly depends on the modern theoretical frames mentioned above to analyze Latin America. To use the nation state as the unit of analysis predominates, and it is argued to be the most effective way to obtain a comprehensive picture of the region's implementation of education reform and its outcomes (Bernasconi & Celis, 2017). To set limits on what

is understood as reform, Bernasconi and Celis define higher education reform "as a coherent set of public policies deployed by a national government with the goals of transforming totally or partially the structure or organization of a higher education system, its governance, its funding, its functions, or its results." (2017, p. 4). These reforms usually find their origin outside of the state, and, as mentioned previously, are integral to structural adjustments programs imposed by supranational organizations such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and World Trade Organization. What is typically ignored in much of the literature, however, is the resurgence of socialist governments in many Latin American countries. These governments created counter educational structures that increased availability and accessibility and simultaneously resisted neoliberal education reform (Muhr, 2010). Through South-South cooperation, for instance, several South American governments slowed neoliberalism's relentless march to deregulate and privatize higher education by establishing university partnerships and reciprocity programs. As Muhr sustains, "South-South cooperation as Third World emancipation, decolonisation, and collective self-reliance" is an emerging phenomenon which cannot be left out from our analysis (2016, p. 556). Although this emergence is important to consider in research, the reemergence of rightist governments should not be ignored. Efforts to revert regional, national, and even municipal counter-structures expose where problematic-spaces and tensions can be found (Grossberg, 2010).

Within this politically-charged and antagonist context, there is no doubt Latin American national autonomous universities, especially the ones in countries where student enrollment is high (e.g., Mexico, Uruguay, and Central American countries), will continue to hold on to their sociocultural, historical, and political idiosyncrasies. While Bernasconi (2007) believes that these universities are anomalies and allochronic, Brunner (2014) argues that the remaining democratic Cordoba principles found in Latin American autonomous universities carry oppositional value needed to resist neoliberal education reform. Contemporarily, the university's cultural, ideological, and ontological identity has certainly diminished, but much is still unknown how Latin American autonomous universities will regain lost democratic principles and adapt those which have remained.

Undeniably, the global economy exerts considerable pressure on nation-states and universities. As state governments find themselves trying to meet the demands of the global knowledge economy, its cadres, and, when pressure from below is high, the needs of civil society, students and faculty find themselves in the institutional

trenches. It is from and within this problematic space where the rest of the paper dwells.

## An Alternative Perspective

To dwell from and within the particularity of place, an alternative theoretical perspective is needed. The decolonial perspective, which should not be confused with postcolonial discourses, has been adopted in this paper elaborated by the loosely associated political intellectuals/activists who form part of the interdisciplinary modern/colonial/decolonial research program (Escobar, 2007). While postcolonial discourses draw heavily on postmodern and post-structural thought, decolonial theory aims at delinking from the dominant Western modern frame. In other words, it engages in the body and geopolitics of knowledge—i.e., the locus of enunciation— the place from which all words and worlds are spoken and created—in order to disrupt the coloniality of knowledge, power, and being. Thus, decolonial ways of theorizing "brings to the foreground a silenced and different genealogy of thought" (Tlastanova & Mignolo, 2012, p. 33), one that speaks to the historical specificity, in this case, the colonial difference of what is now called Latin America. If, therefore, postcolonial discourses depart genealogically from the enlightenment, as many "post" discourse do, the Latin American "decolonial option" begins in 1492.

Decolonial perspectives have seen a resurgence in political philosophy (Mills, 2015), anthropological and methodological approaches (Escobar, 2010; Smith, 1999), feminist discourses (Lugones, 2010), ontological (Maldonado-Torres, 2007; Wynter, 2003), and epistemological considerations (Connell, 2007; Mignolo, 2011; 2012). Because this emerging (Williams, 1977) way of theorizing works from alterity and with the situated-subjugated-subaltern knowledge found therein (Dussel, 2010; Foucault, 1980; Haraway, 1988; Mignolo, 2012), they tend to clash with dominant Western theories and the inert academy. Through conventional ways of doing research, additionally, the civilizational processes of Western modernity, including the ways in which knowledge-power is articulated and crystallized within universities, is hardly ever problematized. For this precise reason, a decolonial perspective is apropos in looking at the ways in which Western modernity, including its dualist onto-epistemology, reproduces coloniality through education reform, and the ways in which students challenge these impositions to know, do, and become otherwise.

Silova et al. (2017) maintain that Western theoretical and methodological approaches usually measure higher education in non-Western societies through an ostensibly universal yardstick. Consequently, nonwestern epistemic and ontological differences are portrayed as inferior, undeveloped, and without value. They believe a decolonial perspective can "disrupt the linearity and singularity" of Western epistemologies and methodologies by privileging forms of theorization from a grounded context that problematizes the nation-state as the central unit of analysis (p. 76). Silova et al. use Mignolo's (2012) border thinking to conceptualize how and where hegemonic Western knowledges encounter subaltern knowledges, and how the latter actively resists epistemic colonization. Border thinking works from this conceptual tension to understand how the insurrection of subjugated knowledges contest that which is imposed through education reform. Methodologically, they argue it is imperative to "disturb 'the tranquility with which we usually 'consume' research and its objects and subjects' (p. 77). To accomplish this, a polyvocal approach is preferred to include the voices (I will add enactments later) of others to fracture the coloniality of knowledge. I quote Silova et al. at length to clarify their approach:

> In addition to pluralizing…pasts, presents, and futures, as well as revealing the relations of different 'worlds,' we need to analyze the ways in which hierarchies of knowledge production position academics and create symbolic closures imposed collectively on people. To make research politically different would mean to empower researchers to study their own conditions through methodologies that encourage anti-essentialist and diverse research approaches, as well as multiple articulations and representations. Escobar (2007), for example, argues for ethnographies that would avoid the epistemological traps of the studies of modernity. These studies would engage with 'colonial difference and border thinking from the ground up, so to speak, for instance by engaging with gender, ecological, or economic difference'….Similarly, Mignolo (2013) contends that this could be done by engaging in "border thinking," that is, thinking within the borders we are inhabiting—'not borders of nation-states, but borders of the modern/colonial world, epistemic and ontological borders' (136–37). This means writing our own cultures, knowledges, and ways of being without constantly translating or comparing them to Western norms.

Research, therefore, should do more to upset the reproduction of coloniality sustained by the arboreal academic global structure located in the "lettered city" of Western modern civilization (Aparicio & Blaser, 2008). Because research practices tend to erase other ways of knowing through the application of "distinctively Western-

developed theoretical traditions" as Robertson and Dale (2015) detailed, it is crucial for hidden/forbidden knowledges to enter the conceptual space (Silova et al., 2017, p. 80). To do so, the binary constructions of policies facilitating modern temporality—from traditional to modern, from non-western to western university models, from underdeveloped to developing to developed—should also be interrupted.

Thus, modernity, and its hidden darker underside, coloniality, can be conceptualized as two coemerging and co-sustaining Western projects which find their instrumentality presently through neoliberal education policies (Mignolo, 2011). To counter hegemonic forms of doing higher education research, decolonial, anti-essentialist, and politically engaged approaches are crucial in making epistemologies of resistance and their alternatives more conceptually visible.

## A Political Ontological Approach

I draw on Mario Blaser's (2007, 2013) political ontological approach to dwell in the epistemological and ontological borders. This approach makes a "foundationless foundational claim" to conceptualize institutional culture more politically dynamic whereby people intersubjectively engage in reality-making knowledge practices (Blaser, 2013, p. 551). It looks for pluriversal "ways of conceiving what exists…give substance to the notion of multiple ontologies, [which means that] understanding ontology as performance or enactment" is crucial in understanding how knowledge-practices and actions resist modern forms of being and knowing (Blaser, 2012, p. 552). In relation to education reform, a political ontological approach works from the ground up to understand how students politically involved create knowledges of resistance to socially reassemble the political horizontally and unsettle the verticality of politics in times when community dissolves and when modernity's possessive individualism encroaches with its false promises.

An important heuristic device for this approach is storied performativity. I used this heuristic to understand how meaning-making practices and stories resist neoliberal education reform and the knowledges embedded within. From these stories and practices, the ways in which actors intersubjectively engage in the political domain to interpellate the institutions they seek to transform is elucidated. This interpellation, I argue, has the potential to create a counter-public pedagogical structure in the process where subaltern knowledges can emerge and unfold. Unlike the Althusserian top-down version, this inverted interpellation looks at the ways the

political is narrated and enacted collectively. By listening to counter-narratives in relation to their enactments, a more complete story of resistance can be told.

To understand the emerging university student movement within a post-coup neoliberal Honduran context, I needed to transcend the reductionist discourses emphasizing the privatization of education. By doing so I was able to identify the tensions between the various ideological discursive formations, the politically-charged university culture, and the practical and political involvement of students in resistance. Storied performativity allowed me to explore the relational dynamic between what is narrated and what is enacted within and between the various student associations and the broader university student movement, *el Movimiento Estudiantil Universitario* (MEU) of the National Autonomous University of Honduras (UNAH).

To ground this political ontological approach, I analyzed the virtual dimension of the student movement and used a decolonial perspective along the way. The Facebook page used by the student movement includes videos, photographs, and documents which function as a democratic organizational and informational tool. Although I did not collect "real" data on the ground, the embedded discourses included on Facebook nonetheless showed how the political is enacted and how the onto-epistemological is storied to resist the modern ways of knowing and being underpinning education reform directed at the (UNAH).

### A Tentative Analysis: The Faceless Facebook

Unknown faces hide behind makeshift ski masks made from ragged T-shirts. Though faces hide, many pairs of dark brown eyes resolutely reveal themselves to the world. In a way they resemble the Zapatistas of southern Mexico. In many ways they resemble no one.

The faceless students, *los encapuchados*, march the streets of the Honduran capital city of Tegucigalpa. Those in front collectively carry an enormous banner. On it, the timeless image of Karl Marx is accompanied by a cigar-smoking Fidel Castro, a contemplative Che Guevara, and a piece-sign-wielding Berta Caceres, the recently murdered environmentalist indigenous leader. Superficially, these images simply illustrate some well-known thinkers and revolutionaries. At a deeper level, the images signify what the university student movement believes the route to political change is—a stance which includes both militancy and peace and the refusal to choose one over the other. The wording surrounding this image reads: "Sociology is Woman,

Culture, Ecology, and Struggle." Do the images and the words contradict each other? Indeed, the words do challenge the androcentric and dualist (nature/culture) views held by modern perspectives. Instead of sociology signifying the abstract concept of society, the ontological word "*is*" shows how knowledge, being, and power are inextricably linked. A body of knowledge such as sociology, for instance, becomes one collective formed by women, first and foremost, and the political, ecological, and cultural domain. Can this be a sign of intellectual decolonization or is this my own interpretation?

Other banners are not sociological but poetic. They hold the poems of Pablo Neruda, Rubén Darío, and José Martí. Poetic words from Marti's *Nuestra America* (Our América) whisper seductively to willing ears (1974). The faceless listen. The specters of their/my past are summoned to conspire against the specters of the West.

The faceless continue their march under the beating sun. Cars honk, flaming tires block the streets, and brown bodies are on the move. Brown bodies move and resist. Resistance as movement and social movement as resistance. Meanwhile, the military police wait for the right moment to repress, kill, torture. For now, they smile at the cameras. In the silent night, their smiles will disappear under horrid balaclavas. They, too, will conceal their identities as they hunt down known activists. This is how the game is played out in post-coup Honduras.

The faceless walk in unison toward the legislative palace where congress meets. Students chant unity and solidarity slogans. "*El pueblo unido, jamás será vencido*"—"the people united, will never be defeated." This translation does not show the semantic difference between *pueblo* and people. *Pueblo* means much more to those who enunciate their world in the Spanish language, to those who let out an existential cry of resistance. It conceptualizes the intricacies between the communal, cultural, and political instead of the individual collection of contractual relationships forming part of the modern nation-state. A united *Pueblo* is always already connected to power, and the ways it can be taken back through collective action directed at institutionally mediated power. In the streets, the faceless students are the actors enacting and narrating the collective. They are enacting a very dangerous story in times of colonially possessive individualism. If the individualistic and social Darwinist neoliberal ideology of progress and development is a colonizing global force, can the revindication of the collective be a decolonizing force in its own right?

The student movement demands the resignation of the university president, Julieta Castellano, who [was claimed as] is only the neoliberal agent of the state and a minor figurine in a brutal transnational game.  Another demand is for the state to respect the autonomy of the university. Autonomy, in this case, does not only mean public; rather, it means the right for self-determination, the right to govern what is taught, how it is taught, and who it is taught by. Autonomy, more than anything, means to reclaim and decolonize the curriculum—i.e., the right to have collective power over matters that have historically been held by the powerful grip of the few.

A distant observer unaware of the sociocultural, historical, and geopolitical context might ask why students hide behind masks. A university student's Facebook post on this topic answers this question unequivocally: "If we take off our masks, they will expel us, and the death squads will assassinate us. This is the reality lived in the UNAH." Another student adds to the post and says, "They will be able to frighten us, violate our rights, imprison us but never, never will they take away the courage and love that makes us raise our voice. With our peaceful conscience, we will rise to face this dictatorship, this oppression." And yet another student expresses that "for us education means to think, not to obey" and "everything in life is achieved through social struggle." By listening carefully to what students say and do, one can get a clear sense of what students are up against and what they believe can lead to social, cultural, and political change. The *pueblo* is the only way forward—a pueblo that always privileges the collective "we" before the individualistic "I."

If one were to decontextualize the student movement, the deep structures would clearly remain hidden and the student actors involved in creating counter-structures would be left omitted from the story (Muhr, 2010). Students are not organizing, protesting, and blocking major highways within a militarized post-coup context only because higher education is increasingly being privatized. Rather, the real sociopolitical, economic, and historical structures of Honduras are what drives many to disrupt and reconfigure them, even if slightly.

Understanding that Honduras has literally been the United States' strategic Central American military base since the 1980, allows us to place the social unrest in a broader historical and geopolitical context. From this military presence, it can be speculated that Honduras could not possibly create a counterhegemonic movement in the 80s. As history plays a sadistic game of catch up with Honduras, events have unfolded rapidly. It became the first country in Western hemisphere to have a successful military coup in the 21st century, in 2009 to be precise. Immediately after,

Honduras found itself in an unstable milieu many conservative and liberal political and military leaders believed time would assuage. Actuality proves that the coup had drastic sociocultural and political effects. Many students involved in the protests grew up in a political climate in which they had first-class seats to witness the two-party system crumble along with the liberal-conservative social consensus of the past. As modern institutions crumble before their eyes, the energetic and youthful intellectual contingent rebuilds the collective to face the storm to come.

Together, university students create knowledges of resistance along the way, and they reassemble the sociopolitical and cultural domain horizontally instead of vertically. Possessive individualism now finds it more difficult to recolonize institutional space and disrupt the verticality of politics in times when community dissolves and when modernity's possessive individualism encroaches with its false promises. Because of their political involvement, I believe these students are the first organic intellectual bloc to form in the nation. Paradoxically, never have so many students questioned traditional political parties yet taken the political domain so seriously. Indeed, they are contesting the geopolitics of knowledge and power, including the economic interests represented by the curricular changes implemented through education reform. What knowledges students will create and what actions they will take to continue to distance themselves and *their* public university from future neoliberal education reform is yet uncertain. What can be concluded is that modernity's developmental path, to the very least, was slowed down through knowledge-practices of resistance. These epistemologies of resistance have prevented neoliberal education reform and the knowledges embedded therein from crystalizing within public university space. They have, in other words, interrupted neoliberalism's ideological normativity from settling in institutionally. I argue that, in this case, the ideological state apparatus that discursively interpellates outwardly and ostensibly mechanistically toward the so-called complacent masses to reproduce itself was not effective. When the fourth education reform was passed in 2014, students from every department created their own student organizations. The few democratic Cordoba principles written in the national constitutional had finally been reclaimed. This form of organization began an unforeseen political project. In 2015, with the implementation of new academic standards and curriculum (Escobar & Barahona, 2017) the University Student Movement (MEU) was formed, and it became the student front for all departmental student organizations. By converting itself into a macro student organization, MEU also became a counter-structure able to ideologically interpellate the very institution the state wanted to use as a neoliberal

instrument. They have, additionally, disrupted all university activities and took over all building for one semester in 2016 and almost an entire school year in 2017. The dominant discourse was contested through student assemblies, social mobilization, public speeches, and even Facebook served as a virtual democratic platform for collective decision-making and voting. Unlike other dissipating social movements, MEU is characterized by constant horizontal movement that articulates itself within and across university space. It thus cannot be seen simply as activism nor as a transient protest never to be seen again. It has now become a political collective within the autonomous university—one that, from the strength it has gained, will not disappear any time soon.

Ultimately, thinking and doing otherwise was effectively employed through political action that shifted some power back to the *pueblo*, an organized collective from which a new social-cultural-political imaginary was formed. Regarding political action, one student expressed:

> Sometimes we confuse the political with party politics. All humans are political, but not all are supporters of party politics. Unfortunately, today we are confusing that, and many think that when students summon their will to mobilize against a political party and the president acting against the constitution and the people [pueblo] they are simply entering party politics.

Another student adds to the post and says the:

> UNAH is a state institution. If the state is corrupt, the university will also be corrupt. Decisions made at the presidential level affect the university population, working class professors and students. We are not a country within another country; we are a part of Honduras and therefore we must defend it, defend ourselves! If we let this government do what it pleases, then the future rulers will not fear the *pueblo* and will have them as their slaves once again!

Both students make a distinction between traditional politics and collectively enacted political actions. How they view the university in relation to the state also conceptualizes the greater forces they are up against. Inaction, as one of the comments illustrates, will only allow "future rulers" to enslave them once again. The historical perspective and conceptual distinction between leader and ruler also provides clarity to what some students perceive as the goal of their political project, one that will effect change within the university, the state, and the *pueblo* as a whole.

It should not go without mentioning that MEU has a strong opposition. Some students troll the internet, particularly Facebook, and have free rein to regurgitate the dominant rhetoric. Others show genuine concern against the political alliance the student movement has with the nascent political party formed after the coup. The primary concern, however, aligns with the pervasive discourse of modernity and the material reality it promises. Students and faculty express fear of losing yet another semester of classes, and vehemently criticize the students involved in the social movement for lacking a strong work ethic. Adjunct professors were not paid when the UNAH was occupied by MEU, thereby creating an additional contingent opposed to political action.

One student hopes that MEU's proposal to return to classes is true, "for the student movement's sake since, given that many Facebook comments show a clear opposition against the student movement." Another university student replies by saying that the student movement once "had the support of the students, but at this point has earned the repudiation of the student community." Making a connection to party politics, one student adds that the student movement is "just as uncompromising as the authorities they hate so much. We want classes!" Faced with this oppositional reality, as the well-documented student movements in Chile encountered between 2011 and 2014 (Bellei, Cabalin, & Orellana, 2014; Cabalin, 2012; Stromquist & Sanyal, 2013), MEU will undoubtedly have to adapt politically if it is to remain a counter-structure and interpellating ideological force. Additionally, because MEU was successful in forcing the resignation of the university president, their continued political involvement will determine, on the one hand, who will be elected as the official university president in 2018, and, on the other, how students will reclaim co-governance, one of the democratic Cordoba principles.

## Concluding Thoughts

What is important to note is the *Movimiento Estudiantil Universitario* goes beyond conventional forms of politics in that it challenges various forms of knowing and being in a world that increasingly portrays individualism as a key to success. The following questions are left unanswered: What other factors motivate students to put their lives on the line in a truly deadly post-coup context? What motivates faculty to join this struggle? How did they organize to take over buildings and paralyze the national university for an entire year? What are the new challenges and what will they do to adapt? How does the involvement of students majoring in medicine, engineering, and law—the highest paid professions in the country—reveal neoliberal

globalization's unfulfilled and untenable promise? Why do students sacrifice their future careers for political action? What are the collective implications of these actions? Are the seductions of modernity being disrupted? Is a post-developmental, post-growth, and post-liberal imaginary part of this process? To conclude, it is clear the faceless student movement in Honduras refuses to center an individual at the expense of the collective. Instead of being a centripetal movement revolving around the charisma of a leader, the faceless have created a centrifugal political force which expands horizontally, toward the streets linking them to national and transnational political, economic, and military power structures. How events will unfold will only depend on the actors themselves, the faceless students, leaders, and organic intellectuals who are already in political formation and in constant movement.

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