GENDER AND EMANCIPATION BEYOND NEOLIBERAL REGULATION

Prof. Dr. Verónica Schild
Dahlem International Network Professorship for Gender Studies 2013-2014,
Freie Universität Berlin
Inaugural Lecture, November 6, 2013

*****

Einleitung

Ich möchte mich bei dem Präsidenten der Freien Universität Berlin, Prof. Dr. Alt, für diese freundliche Begrüßung und seine einführenden Worte bedanken; bei dem Präsidium für diese ehrenvolle Einladung und besonders bei Dr. Anita Runge, die sich für meinen Aufenthalt und dessen Realisierung eingesetzt hat.

Als die Journalistin, die mich neulich für den „Tagesspiegel“ interviewte, schrieb: „Schild ist nicht unbekannt in Berlin“, hatte sie recht. Ich war bereits als Fellow in einem Projekt des Netzwerkes DesiguALdades hier, welches in einem kongenialen Umfeld für einen lebendigen intellektuellen Austausch zwischen Lateinamerikaner/innen und Lateinamerikanist/innen sorgt. Sehr dankbar bin ich dem Forschungsteam und im Besonderen Prof. Dr. Marianne Braig für die herzliche Aufnahme in ihrem Projekt und dafür, dass sie mir in der wundervollen „Villa“ in der Bolzmannstraße erneut einen Arbeitsplatz zur Verfügung gestellt hat.

Zu Dank verpflichtet bin ich auch der wissenschaftlichen Koordinatorin Dr. Bettina Schorr und den Mitarbeiter/innen Dr. Paul Talcott und Anna Wickes-Neira, die mich stets tatkräftig unterstützt haben. Zuletzt möchte ich Dr. Teresa Orozco, Gastprofessorin am Lateinamerika Institut, meinen besonderen Dank für ihre solidarische Unterstützung bei meiner Lehrtätigkeit im Institut aussprechen.

Erlauben Sie mir an dieser Stelle ein paar Worte zum Sprachgebrauch:

Ich sehe, dass weltweit an den Universitäten die Bemühungen um Internationalisierung mit der Dominanz der englischen Sprache einhergehen.

Als jemand, die ursprünglich aus Lateinamerika kommt, genauer gesagt: aus Chile, bin ich sensibilisiert für historische Übersetzungs- und Übertragungsmuster und für die entsprechende Aneignung von Wissen, die dadurch entsteht. Wir erfahren jeden Tag aufs Neue, dass das Einzige, was heutzutage für relevant gehalten wird, das ist, was ins Englische übersetzt oder von Englisch sprechenden Menschen verbreitet wird. Ich nähere mich daher den Internationalisierungsprozessen mit Vorsicht.

Hinzu kommt, dass ich als Staatsbürgerin Kanadas, eines Landes, wo Sprache und deren Einsatz eine politische Bedeutung hat, da sie von einer kolonialen Erfahrung und deren Erbe geprägt ist, ausgesprochen sensibilisiert bin für das Dilemma und die Gefahren, die die Sprachwahl bei unseren Internationalisierungsbemühungen mit sich führt.

Ich selbst bin jemand, für den Sprache schon immer eine fundamentale Rolle gespielt hat. In den letzten 40 Jahren habe ich mich selbst vom Spanischen ins Englische übersetzt. Das waren eine berufliche Entscheidung und gleichzeitig ein persönlicher Überlebensakt. Aber ich muss gestehen, dass ich eine unendliche Erleichterung empfand, diesen Vortrag auf Englisch und *nicht* auf Deutsch, in meiner unvollkommen erlernten Vatersprache, halten zu dürfen.*

Introduction (Übersetzung)

I want to thank the president of Freie Universität Berlin, Prof. Alt, for his kind introduction, the Präsidium for extending this invitation to me, and especially Dr. Anita Runge, of the Division International Network University, for making the invitation happen. As the journalist who interviewed me recently wrote, “Schild ist nicht unbekannt in Berlin”. I have been here before in connection with the DesiguALdades.net project, a congenial environment for lively intellectual exchange among Latin Americans and Latin Americanists, and I am grateful to its principal investigators, especially Prof. Marianne Braig, for kindly welcoming me to Desigualdades, and, most recently, for offering me a space once again in „the Villa“.

I am particularly grateful for the support I have received from Dr. Bettina Schorr, the Scientific Coordinator, Dr. Paul Talcott and Ms. Anna Wickes-Neira, scientific and administrative collaborators. I want thank Dr. Teresa Orozco, Visiting professor at the Lateinamerika Institut, for her support of my teaching activities there, and for her solidarity.

I understand that world-wide we have come to equate university internationalization efforts with English. As someone originally from Latin America, to be more precise from Chile, I have been sensitive to the historical pattern of translation, and appropriation, of knowledge produced in that region, we know very well, was until recently only relevant if it was translated into English, or, preferably, synthesized and appropriated by English speakers. I enter processes of internalization with caution. As a citizen of Canada, a place where language, and its use, are political because of our distinctive colonial experience and legacies, I am further sensitized to the dilemmas and perils of language choice in our internationalization efforts. I stand here as someone who for whom language has personally played a fundamental role. I have translated myself from Spanish into English for the past 40 years as a matter of personal survival and professional choice, and I must confess that being invited to offer this lecture in English, and not in German, my imperfectly acquired paternal language, is an enormous relief!]

One of my recurrent fantasies involves envisioning a space for speaking about the world according to Schild, simply “because I say so”. This statement reveals a deep-seated desire to

* For translation assistance from English to German, I thank Dr. Teresa Orozco and Ms. Ghiocela Biolan.

be released from the disciplining effects of my extensive training in philosophy, a training I undertook in English, not my second language, but my third. What *was* lost in translation? And what *was* lost in mastering a voice that was not really mine, in whose categories I *did not* see myself or my life reflected? For language is not merely a set of tools that we can mechanically deploy to make ourselves and our work understood. It contains cultural sediments, a mentalité, that structure and give content to our affects. Although this is perhaps also a deeply personal reflection, it contains a question for our internationalizing present and thus for me to offer a case for why it might be necessary to reconsider the question of what counts for emancipation and for whom.

LECTURE

The Significance of the Dahlem International Network Professorship for Gender Studies Initiative

I am honored to be able to contribute to the internationalization efforts of Freie Universität by inaugurating the Dahlem International Network Professorship for Gender Studies, an initiative that intends to highlight the rich and substantial contributions of this area of knowledge production and pedagogy. I should note that as a subject area, gender studies has been a preoccupation of very accomplished academics at this University for some time. My own initial contact with these talented colleagues was in 1988 when, as a visiting graduate student, I was invited by Professor Renate Rott, then director of the Lateinamerika Institut, to join her research training group on Gender and Development.

In order to raise some broader questions about the significance of gender studies in internationalization efforts, I have decided to strike a balance between reflecting on a certain number of methodological and theoretical issues and highlighting some empirical knowledge based on my longstanding research in Latin America, with a particular focus on Chile. For some of you, what I propose may be known, for others perhaps not, and for still others, it may be too polemical. It is my hope that at the very least this presentation proves thought-provoking.

Let me begin with the obvious observation that the institutionalization of gender studies as an area of research and pedagogy in universities is increasingly a global phenomenon. It is also, however, an incomplete task, and for many of us who have been part of this effort, and who teach in more traditional disciplines, it has been a disappointing one as well. This is especially the case in social science subjects like economics, and my own discipline, political science.

While it is true that we may include the odd course here and there with a focus on women, or on feminism, or on the more neutral category, "gender", feminist epistemological and methodological contributions of the past forty years remain largely marginal to the production of authoritative knowledge in the academy. Yes, increasing numbers of women are found in universities in Germany and elsewhere, as students and faculty members, and women's studies and gender studies programs, and even departments (as is the case in Canada), have become established in universities. Yet, those of us who teach in mainstream disciplines and fields, whether in Germany/Europe, in North America, or Latin America, to name regions I have experience with, know that when the word "gender" appears on the title of a course or seminar, mostly, and sometimes only, women register and show up. We need to ask ourselves why this continues to be the case. How are we educating our new generations of scholars and teachers? Why is such an approach still not mainstreamed into the curriculum? This is why the initiative of the Dahlem International Network Professorship for Gender Studies is so important. This issue is not, or not only, about bringing women in to teach about certain topics, but about highlighting an area of knowledge production – better yet, a *kind* of knowledge production – that includes by now a rich and diverse body of theoretical, methodological and empirical knowledge, one that offers new research questions and potentially opens up different areas for research in *all* fields of research and teaching.

I should make clear, furthermore, that this kind of knowledge production is not about embracing a set of prescriptions, or perpetuating existing knowledge, *even* feminist knowledge. It is, rather, a critical stance, one that seeks to expose the paradoxes, contradictions and the inadequacies of any system of thought. Critique, as the historian Joan Scott reminds us, "does not offer a map that leads to a guaranteed future; rather, it disrupts our settled expectations and incites us to explore, indeed, to invent, alternate routes" (Scott 2008: 6-7). It is here where I locate my own commitments as a feminist scholar. I situate myself in that research situation, or that part of a research method, that takes for granted the claim that knowledge is *always* "situated knowledge". The Canadian sociologist Dorothy Smith was one of the first, certainly the first English-language feminist thinker, to make this important, phenomenologically-inspired point. The subsequent debate about feminist epistemology and methodology has unfortunately sidelined Smith's term in favour of the abstract formulation "feminist standpoint theory." Instead, as the Canadian philosopher and archeologist Alison Wylie has written, in insisting that our knowledge is always "situated knowledge", we recognize that our "social location systematically shapes and limits what we know, including tacit, experiential knowledge as well as explicit understanding, what we take knowledge to be." Furthermore, she adds "[w]hat counts as a 'social location' is structurally defined" (Wylie 2004: 343). In other words, Wylie insists that "what individuals experience and understand is shaped by their location in a hierarchically structured system of power relations: by the material conditions of their lives, by the relations of production and reproduction that structure their social interactions, *and* [my emphasis] by the conceptual resources they have to represent and interpret these relations" (Wylie 2004: 343). This methodological provocation, the insistence that "what we know is structured by the social and material conditions of our lives" – and, therefore, the recognition that power dynamics shape what we know – is a key feminist methodological contribution that reminds us that there is *no* such thing as a "view from nowhere", let alone a view "from everywhere", the ideal of neutrality vis-à-vis our world that researchers are asked to adopt if we are to produce scientific knowledge (Wylie 2004: 339).

This methodological insistence on situating knowledge has been one of the most controversial contributions of feminist thinking about knowledge and science. Yet, while it has been disputed, dissected, and often dismissed by newer generations of feminist scholars – only for it to start experiencing a recent revival – it continues to fall on the deaf ears of what we could call the mainstream academy. Indeed, gender emancipation, many colleagues believe, and perhaps some of you do too, has by and large met its goal and gender is a category we can safely put to bed, if not to a final rest. Instead, I want to insist on the continuing value of the project first articulated by Dorothy Smith, a pioneer in insisting that our research as feminists be "situated", and that it "returns us to the actualities of our lives as we live them in the local particularities of the everyday/everynight worlds in which our bodily being anchors us" (Smith 1997: 392); in short, a project that develops a critical consciousness – "a jointly empirical, conceptual, and social-political enterprise" (Wylie 2004: 344).

Emancipation as Neoliberal Regulation: Autonomy at what Price?

I have suggested that we need to move beyond our present conception of emancipation. I will argue that that conception is one that has become entangled with the neoliberal project, and more specifically, that it has become a form of regulation. But, what do we mean by neoliberalism as a "form of regulation"?

The British anthropologist John Gledhill recently remarked that "What would shock Adam Smith about the new liberalism is its extension of the concept of "market society" to embrace the production of personhood, identity and social life itself." The injunction on individuals to take responsibility for their futures by learning how to "market themselves", he adds, "acquires the force of an ethical imperative" (Gledhill 2004: 340). This abstract injunction of the appeal of the new liberalism, however, takes its real form as an appeal *not* to abstract individuals but to embodied beings whose lives and life chances are shaped by their gender, their class belonging, and race, among other critical vectors. For women, this injunction takes on a very specific meaning, as I discuss below.

The ethical imperative to reform oneself, to be responsible for one's own life and future, is a global trend. Underlying this imperative is a willful decoupling of individual lives from their social embeddedness, and a denial of the fact that we live our lives in sociocultural and discursive networks and relationships that are characterized by interdependence – even as these are marked by differences of gender, race, and class – but *not* by independence in some absolute sense. In Europe and North America the way was paved through a moral discourse that reinterpreted interdependence as dependence, especially in the case of citizens who relied on the support of the state, and which viewed dependence as a pathology. In the distinct American liberal tradition, autonomy is equated with the isolation of the individual from the collective, or the state, and the interdependence of state and citizens is treated as a threat to autonomy, or as a destructive force (Nedelsky 1989: 20). This stark opposition between autonomy and collectivity that is presumed in the American liberal tradition, to use the formulation of the University of Toronto legal theorist Jennifer Nedelsky, has influenced the moral vision of the global neoliberal project. And, this neoliberal project became, in Latin America, the new "modernization" model. How this moral vision is articulated as a language, however, and what knowledge is recruited for its production as a distinct cultural form, varies. The question of how neoliberalism works as a moral discourse with powerful effects in different capitalist regimes and localities requires a situated, empirical answer. There is no such thing, then, as the simple travel of ideas from one place to another.

Emancipation, with its focus on liberation from oppression, is not a disembodied idea that was simply imported into Latin America and installed in the social imaginary of individuals and movements for social and political change. In the case of feminism and the women's movement, it was a lived political project of organized women with some deep pre-existing roots. Autonomy has been a central goal of women's struggles. Autonomy, as Nedelsky tells us, is "an elusive problem in part because it is practically inseparable from an experience or feeling" (Nedelsky 1989: 23). That is, autonomy is a capacity, "but it is unimaginable in the absence of the feeling or experience of being autonomous. […] To be autonomous a person

must feel a sense of her own power" (Nedelsky 1989: 25). While economic independence was important from the start for women's movements in Latin America, what is distinctive about these movements is the concern with autonomy linked to a broader rejection of patriarchal relations and culture.

Neoliberalism is typically used to characterize global trends in social and economic policy reform that have led to reductions, in many cases radical reductions, in social spending, economic deregulation, a reorienting of production toward export, and the elimination of, or drastic reduction of, subsidies and trade barriers. However, this restructuring process that began in the Reagan-Thatcher years is about much more than this purely narrow economic reading may imply, that is, simply about getting the economic order right. Rather, it is best to think about it as a political project to adapt societies to an unencumbered economy, and, critically, as a model for *all* social relations. Critics have called it a camouflage for a sophisticated exercise in the restoration of class power. Neoliberalism, then, is a political program that offers a vision of the good society guided by market values, or market rationality, from efficiency, to accountability, and to autonomy, and one that relies on *social, cultural, and discursive* interventions for the extension and dissemination of these values to all institutions and social action. It thus has far reaching implications for the reorganization of social life and the state, particularly for the production of social and political subjects and new forms of citizenship (Brown 2003; Lemke 2001, 2007).

Emancipation as Neoliberal Regulation: Autonomy, Emancipation, and Solidarity as A Specifically Latin American, Catholic-Imbued Language

From the perspective of neoliberal regulation, the emancipation of women is predominantly viewed as a freedom to be exercised through the labour market. In general terms in the present context, why is this such a troubling proposition? First, because education, health, as well as pensions and social security, are increasingly viewed and rendered as commodities for purchase. Second, because the flexibilization or precarization of labour has rendered the work that is available to increasing numbers of people unstable, unsafe, and unregulated. And third, because women are the most vulnerable of all workers. Equating emancipation with access to the labour market in this context is both contradictory to and paradoxical from the point of view of feminism's ideal of women's freedom, as a number of critics have suggested. For emancipation is today an injunction to autonomy understood in individualistic terms, to be cultivated through public and private efforts. Yet, this ideal of autonomy is one that systematically erases the reality of interdependence that shapes our lives, and its implicit emphasis on individualism erodes our bonds of solidarity. What this does, I want to suggest, is to regulate women's behavior and through them the behavior of their families and their communities, in the name of women's freedom. Nowhere is this clearer than in the area of social assistance. For example, anti-poverty programs that have become widespread, in particular the so-called Conditional Cash Transfer programs pioneered in Latin America, do not promote social solidarity or social cohesion; instead, they seek to individualize and make the poor responsible for themselves. Conditional Cash Transfer programs are a form of social assistance that make much needed financial support conditional on certain behaviours on the

part of their targeted clients. These clients are typically women within families living in poverty. The question that interests me is what visions and practices of emancipation are encouraged, forcibly if need be, by the hand of the state, and whether these, or alternative ones, may be embraced and desired by women themselves. My own position is that some of the key goals of over thirty years of feminist activism in Latin America, and resulting knowledge production about women there – including, centrally, the meaning of empowerment for emancipation – have become resources for the moral regulation of women, and for adapting them to the new economy.

My reflections are situated in a specific geographic location, that of Latin America, and relies on research I have conducted in Chile since the mid-1980s. I present them with the conviction that they offer an illustration of phenomena which are neither exotic, nor simply reducible to the plight of a region plagued by high levels of inequality, nor even because of their mixed results in addressing questions of poverty and of social and political exclusions. Rather, these phenomena are an example of more general socio-political and cultural trends that characterize efforts to adapt societies to our present form of global neoliberal capitalism that must, nevertheless, be best understood as embedded in particular contexts. And, as I have mentioned before, these are contexts that contain distinct cultural sediments, a mentalité, that structures and gives content to them.

For over 25 years I have studied political processes in Chile *not* as if women mattered, but as if women living in conditions of poverty mattered. In 1986 I returned to Chile, a country still in the throes of the Pinochet dictatorship, and that bore little resemblance to the place I had left fifteen years earlier. My return was a journey of translation, and of finding a point of entry into research in what seemed at the time unfamiliar and often frightening circumstances. My own strategy as a researcher, then, of finding out what local forms of organizing meant for women in a poor urban area of Santiago's periphery had much to do with my own, complex location in this specific context, at once geographic, cultural, linguistic, and affective. I began my study with a focus on women who were active – at great risk I may add – in their own neighbourhoods during the dark days of the dictatorship in the 1980s; they were the critical, yet invisibilized, footsoldiers of the popular urban movements that the literature on new social movements in Latin America was celebrating at the time. In time, my study evolved into a focus on the social networks these dynamic women were inserted into; and, eventually, I understood that this focus necessarily meant a further focus on the formation of institutions, most centrally the state. The particular place from which I began my research, in the actuality of the local lives of the women whom I had encountered in late 1986, brought into view a range of social relations and organizational practices which offered new insights into processes of social and political transformation that reached well beyond this local space.

Since 1990, following the referendal defeat of the dictatorship, and the election of the first centre-left Concertacion government, the intensification of a neoliberal capitalist model of production based on the radical flexibilization or precarization of labour and of social life, coincided, in Chile and in the Latin American region more generally, with processes of democratization and of institution building that offered new opportunities to women,

including feminist activists and experts, but – and this is the major BUT! – which also *excluded* many of those I had met during the 1980s, as well as turning many others into clients of gender-sensitive and increasingly women-focused "residual safety nets introduced to compensate for market failures, and to tackle the question of poverty relief" (Lavinas 2013). It is important to point out that access to cash bonuses, to preferential treatment in health clinics, and to other social services available to women clients of these programs, is available only to some, typically only to those among the poor who qualify and who agree to stringent conditions, who meet their "co-responsibilities." These are *not*, in other words, basic standards guaranteed for *all* women as a condition of citizenship, but a benefit granted to the *poorest among the poor*. Clearly, the logic of the market, or neoliberal rationality, with its focus on individual responsibility and efficiency, has been entrenched through these institutional innovations as the new project of "modernization." It is in this context of restructuring and transformation that feminist victories have been scored. We have seen a steady increase in many parts of Latin America, including Chile, in the numbers of women joining the labour market. We have also seen an explicit recognition of women's rational talents and potential as partners in efforts to battle poverty and indigence, one family at a time. This is a region-wide trend that is celebrated as an important feminist victory, and, more specifically, as an important marker in the pursuit of women's emancipation. My question, however, is what does this achievement look like from the standpoint of women who are entangled with the programs, and of those who manage to access paid employment? What are these women being asked to do in the name of their own empowerment and emancipation, with what resources, and with what effects?

Based on my empirical research I will make three arguments in relation to neoliberalism as a form of regulation: First, feminist knowledge production and practices have led to what I call the *feminization* of the state. Feminist critics of neoliberal reforms in Europe and in Latin America have characterized the restructured, or socially reduced state, as a "remasculinized" state. This description, however, only captures the moment of *roll back* or retrenching of the social state of the 1980s and 1990s, not the *rolling out* of the neoliberal state (to borrow the geographer Jamie Peck's term). While it is true that social spending has been increased for over a decade, and with this, the socially interventionist state expanded, it is worth repeating what I have mentioned previously, that this does *not* constitute a turn to, or a return to, the ideals of a social democratic state or a commitment to universal entitlements of citizenship. On the contrary, as some of us have insisted for some time, what we have witnessed is a further neoliberalization of the state. This neoliberal state as an "enabling" state continues to be underpinned by coercive power. The criminalization of dissent (in Brazil and Chile most recently), the punitive management of poverty through policing, the courts and prisons, make this very clear. The question, therefore, really is: what form has the increased social spending taken and with what effects? What is clear is that feminist discourses and practices have been *central* in these efforts *and* their effects. As embodied and grounded in myriad practices of women in their capacity as agents – whether as clients, experts, or practitioners – the *rolling out of* the state relies on distinctively feminist legacies in the form of discourses and practices of emancipation. These feminist legacies are not simply the outcome of the diffusion of a North

American feminist emancipatory project, but are, rather, the outcome of the articulation of transnational discourses with local forms of knowledge and practices of solidarity. The state also relies on the work of women who access new employment opportunities in ministries and agencies of the state. However, this is a contradictory achievement because the generalized precarization of work reaches well into the public sector and renders these women's work conditions vulnerable.

My second argument is that the cultural sediment, or mentalité, which feminist projects of emancipation have constructed in Chile, and Latin America more generally, have their own distinctive markers. Here I would highlight the strong presence of the so-called new Catholicism with its focus on the self, and liberation as a form of self-discovery in language. The contributions of Paulo Freire's popular education program, however much appropriated by social movement activists since the 1960s, are critical, yet woefully neglected, as we weave our own self-congratulatory secular feminist narratives. In Chile, the solidarity work of feminist activists with other women, typically women from the so-called popular sectors, took the form of a pedagogic encounter intent on helping those women become empowered. This feminist pedagogic innovation is today at the heart of the state's efforts to empower women to pull themselves and their families out of poverty.

To return to John Gledhill's observation, social policy has been a crucial mechanism for turning societies into entrepreneurial societies through the "self-responsibilization" of individuals. Seen from the bottom up, this is clearly an explicitly gendered project that relies on women's resources, including networks of friendship and practices of solidarity. Freire's popular education techniques have provided the grammar for such policies and practices.

My third, and final, argument is that women as subjects of rights, or *sujetos de derecho*, is the driving idea of the new social programs, their implicit starting point. And this, I would insist, constitutes a singular victory of feminism, albeit, again, a contradictory one. The goal of these programs is to help families overcome their condition of poverty by empowering women to both take their rightful place in the world of paid work, and to help break the cycle of poverty and vulnerability in their homes and communities. It is an appeal to woman as autonomous, sovereign subjects, with the capacity to choose their own path in life, or, as a new generation of women in Chile put it, to have *proyectos de vida propios*, or their own life projects. Thus, if in the past feminist activists in Chile and Latin America saw it as their own political commitment to reach out to other women, to help them overcome their oppression and become empowered, today it is the responsibility of the state to empower women as autonomous subjects. The catch, of course, is that the call to empowerment comes with an appeal to women's ostensibly natural duties, that of mothers and care givers. We need to stop and ask: is this really about emancipating women? Are the social conditions and social relations in which women are inserted, and are encouraged to exercise responsibility and sovereignty, really ones that foster autonomy?

As Jennifer Nedelsky reminds us, "the value of autonomy will at some level be inseparable from the relations that make it possible; there will thus be a social component built into the meaning of autonomy" (Nedelsky 1989: 36). That is, while autonomy should recognize, and respect, the

individuality of each person, our use of this value term and our commitment to it cannot neglect to consider that "individuality cannot be conceived of in isolation from the social context in which that individuality comes into being" (Nedelsky 1989: 35-36).

Emancipation, in other words, must revisit the conception of autonomy. In its present, liberal form, it has become a tool for the moral education of the "deserving poor" in the name of emancipating women. This is an emancipation, however, that comes at a great cost for women, as they are also expected to continue providing care and bear the responsibility for pulling their families out of poverty.

The Task of Rethinking Emancipation

The Peruvian feminist Virginia Vargas has recently reminded us: "las palabras en política no son neutras ni tienen el mismo significado al ser enunciadas desde otras experiencias, pero ha sido la igualdad pensada hegemónicamente, desde algunas(os), la que ha acallado la palabra de las otras(os), de los diferentes" (Vargas 2004: 14.

"In politics, words are not neutral, nor do they have the same meaning when enunciated from other experiences. But, it has been equality, thought about hegemonically from the vantage point of some, that has silenced the words of others, of those who are different."

When I began my research in Chile in the mid-1980s, the "others" of Chilean feminism, and of feminisms throughout the region, were those whom we placed, and who also placed themselves, in the category "popular women." These feminisms were, to quote Leila Gonzales, a black feminist from Perú, "racist, no por acción, sino por omission" or, "racist not due to their actions but because of their omissions." (quoted in Vargas 2004: 14). Indigenous and Afro-Latin American voices were not heard. These "others" are today a complex, multivoiced group on our continent. Challenging a simplistic notion of equality that takes it to mean access to what is already given, and rethinking emancipation beyond neoliberal regulation, requires new approaches, and, above all, new political allies.

In this complex context, what is the challenge facing gender studies? The late Norbert Lechner, a German political scientist who opted to live in Chile, eloquently reminded us, that "a politics that does not take ownership of the hopes, the fears, and the uncertainties of people in their everyday lives, turns into an insiginifcant politics" (Lechner 2003). To this I will add, that this politics requires a solidarity that includes the recognition of other forms of knowledge. For, as Portuguese philosopher Boaventura de Sousa Santos put it:

"ya que la solidaridad es una forma de conocimiento que es adquirido mediante el reconocimiento del otro, el otro puede ser conocido solo si se le acepta como creador de conocimiento" (quoted in Vásquez 2004: 19)

("Since solidarity is a form of knowledge acquired by recognizing the other, the other can only be known if he/she is accepted as a creator of knowledge.")

Bibliography

Wendy Brown: Neo-Liberalism and the End of Liberal Democracy, in: Theory & Event 7 (1), 2003

John E. Gledhill: Neoliberalism, in: A Companion to the Anthropology of Politics, edited by D. Vincent Nugent, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford and Carlton, Victoria, 2004, pp. 332-348.

Norbert Lechner: Nuestros miedos. En las sombras del mañana, in: Norbert Lechner, Obras Escogidas, Vol. 1, 2003, chapter 3.

Lena Lavinas: 21st Century Welfare, in: New Left Review, 84 (Nov/Dec) 2013.

Thomas Lemke: The 'Birth of Bio-Politics': Michel Foucault's Lecture at the College de France on Neo-Liberal Governmentality, in: Economy and Society 30 (2) 2001.

Thomas Lemke: An Indigestible Meal? Foucault, Governmentality, and State Theory, in: Distinktion: Scandinavian Journal of Social Theory 15, 2007.

Jennifer Nedelsky: Reconceiving Autonomy, in: The Yale Journal of Law and Feminism 7 (1989).

Dorothy Smith: Comments on Hekman's 'Truth and Method'. Whose Standpoint Needs the Regimes of Truth and Reality?, in: Signs 22 (2), 1997, pp. 392-398.

Virginia Vargas: Los feminismos Peruanos: Breve balance de tres décadas, in: 25 años de feminismo en el Perú, edited by Centro de la Mujer Peruana Flora Tristán, Lima, Peru, 2004.

Roxana Vásquez: Interrogantes mirando el future del feminismo en el Perú, in: 25 años de feminismo en el Perú, edited by Centro de la Mujer Peruana Flora Tristán, Lima, Peru, 2004.

Joan Wallach Scott: Introduction: Feminism's Critical Edge, in: Joan Wallach Scott (Ed.): Women's Studies on the Edge. A Differences Book, edited by Joan Wallach Scott, Duke University Press, Durham, London, 2008, pp. 1-16.

Alison Wylie: Why Standpoint Matters, in: Science and Other Cultures: Issues in Philosophies of Science and Technology, edited by Robert Figueroa and Sandra Harding, Routledge, New York, 2003, pp. 26-48. Reprinted in The Feminist Standpoint Theory Reader: Intellectual and Political Controversies, edited by Sandra Harding, Routledge, New York, 2004, pp. 339-351