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Harnessing the Storm: Searching for Constitutive Moments and a Politics of *Ch'ixi* after the Pink Tide

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Abstract

Following the end of the progressive cycle in Latin America, new social movements and transformative social forces have emerged. This article develops an expanded reading of the work of Bolivian Marxist René Zavaleta Mercado (1937–1984) through the work of his most significant student, Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui (1949–), in order to offer a way to search for routes forwards future transformative projects. I argue the concept of ‘constitutive moments’ gives us pointers as to which historical threads to pick up and trace forwards and backwards through the contours of history to better grasp the current conjuncture and what is at stake. Moreover, *Lo abigarrado* and *ch'ixi*, concepts elaborated by Zavaleta and Rivera Cusicanqui to theorise the heterogeneous character of Latin American social formations, create space for thinking through futures drawn from both beyond/outside capitalism and within its contradictions.

Keywords: Latin American social theory, radical politics, Latin American Marxism, constitutive moments, *ch'ixi*

Resumen. Tras el fin del ciclo progresista en América Latina, han surgido nuevos movimientos sociales y fuerzas sociales transformadoras. Este artículo desarrolla una lectura extensiva de la obra del marxista boliviano René Zavaleta Mercado (1937-1984) a través de la obra de su alumna más significativa, Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui (1949-), con el fin de ofrecer una forma de buscar rutas hacia futuros proyectos transformadores. Argumento que el concepto de "momentos constitutivos" nos da indicaciones sobre qué hilos históricos recoger y rastrear hacia delante y hacia atrás a través de los contornos de la historia para comprender mejor la coyuntura actual y lo que está en juego. Además, *Lo abigarrado* y *ch'ixi*, conceptos elaborados por Zavaleta y Rivera Cusicanqui para teorizar el carácter heterogéneo de las formaciones sociales latinoamericanas, crean un espacio para pensar en los futuros que se dibujan tanto desde fuera del capitalismo como dentro de sus contradicciones.

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Palabras clave: Teoría social latinoamericana, política radical, marxismo latinoamericano, momentos constitutivos, ch'ixi

Introduction

For a period, the Latin American Left appeared to be crumbling from all sides, under attack from resurgent and increasingly belligerent right-wing forces. Following a decade in power in the form of progressive governments across Latin America—known the anglophone world as the ‘pink tide’—it appeared that the tide had turned on social and political movements pushing for radical change in the region. Crises enveloped Brazil and Venezuela, the two countries whose experiences of the pink tide sit at either end of the spectrum. On the one hand, the gains achieved under the most radical pink tide government, that of Hugo Chávez in Venezuela (1999–2013) (Ciccariello-Maher, 2013), were wiped out under his successor Nicolás Maduro. Falling oil prices, economic mismanagement and US intervention precipitated a disastrous economic collapse and the increasing authoritarianism of the Maduro government (Chavez, Ouviaña and Thwaites Rey, 2017; Vásquez Heredia, 2018). On the other hand, in Brazil, the moderate gains in poverty and inequality reduction floundered on the contradictions of the class conciliatory approach pursued by the Partido dos Trabalhadores (Workers’ Party, PT) (Loureiro and Saad-Filho, 2019). As deteriorating economic conditions forced the PT to distribute increasingly scarce resource rents between representatives of capital and its popular support base, the far-Right managed to exploit public discontent triggered by rising transport fares and direct it towards the PT government. The Lava Jato corruption scandal decimated the Brazilian political system, with centre-Right politicians happy to sacrifice themselves to force the PT from power. The result was a parliamentary coup d’état against Dilma Rousseff in 2016 that paved the way for former army general Jair Bolsonaro to assume power three years later (Saad-Filho and Boffo, 2020). In Argentina, the Peronists were forced from power as former banker Mauricio Macri assumed the presidency in 2015, whilst in Ecuador, Lenin Moreno distanced himself from his former mentor and assumed a more openly neoliberal governing stance. By 2019, it appeared as if the Latin American Left was in retreat, with Mexican president Andrés Manuel López Obrador its lone representative in power.

In this context, a vibrant debate about the end of the progressive cycle raged (Gaudichaud, 2015; Modonesi, 2015; Gago and Sztulwark, 2016; Modonesi and

Iglesias, 2016; Modonesi and Svampa, 2016; Salazar, 2016; Katz, 2017; Svampa, 2017b). This was a moment marked by impasse and uncertainty rather than a historic defeat for the Left. Despite success at ballot boxes across the continent, in the period following the end of the pink tide the resurgent Right was shown to be devoid of new ideas. Significantly, it proved unable to confront the multiple crises that had plagued the region since the 2008 crisis finally came crashing onto the shores of the continent following the fall in global commodity prices in 2011. Despite its new appearance, the Right was still unable to propose an alternative to neoliberalism and a set of policy tools fundamentally ineffectual against the multiplicity of crises at hand, leading to the return of the Left to power across South America.

In this sense, a storm has arrived in South America. The exhaustion of the popular legitimacy of neoliberalism in the 1990s means that neoliberal policies and parties cannot sustain any semblance of popular support in most of Latin America. In Argentina, Macri's turn towards International Monetary Fund (IMF) sparked popular protest and undermined his government's limited popularity. The Peronists returned to power in late-2019, with Alberto Fernandez defeating Macri in the polls (Semán, 2020). In Brazil, Michel Temer's neoliberal government was unable to garner any meaningful popularity or legitimacy in the wake of Dilma's impeachment. Only the imprisonment of Lula da Silva, one of most popular presidents in the country's history, on jumped up corruption charges prevented the PT from returning to power in 2019 (Saad-Filho and Boffo, 2020), although he may still do so in the presidential elections in late-2022.

Moreover, during 2019, protests against neoliberalism exploded across Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru, with the tactics and demands of the movements feeding off one another. This was significant, as the "revolutionary" and counterinsurgent violence in both Colombia and Peru had limited popular protest and stymied left-wing grassroot organisations.² In Peru, a rejection of the neoliberal status quo following a series of corruption scandals laid the ground for the election of rural teacher Pedro Castillo in mid-2021 (Miguel, 2020). The disgust felt by many towards neoliberalism was captured by the protest slogan *¡basta!* (enough!). Castillo won significant support in the areas that were greatly affected by the violent civil war between the Maoist Shining Path and the Peruvian security services in the 1980s and 1990s, particularly in Aymara and Quichua speaking communities in the Andean regions in the country's south (Martínez, 2021). In Colombia, protests formed the

² For an excellent analysis of the impacts of violence on Colombian civil society, see (Gill, 2016).

groundswell that carried the Left to power for the first time in the country's history, in the form of former *guerrillero* Gustavo Petro as president and Afro-Colombian feminist activist Francia Márquez (Brieger, 2022).

In Ecuador, the latter years of Moreno's presidency were punctuated with protests against neoliberal policies and austerity measures dictated by the IMF. These protests evoked memories of the protests against neoliberalism led by Indigenous groups during the 1990s. As Alejandra Santillana Ortiz contends,

the memory of the anti-neoliberal struggle is the expression of an insubordinate and rebellious people that have overthrown three presidents, stopped the signing of free trade agreements and that, even after 12 years of the apparent consensus [under Rafael Correa's government], massively protests. Popular forces have not left the streets in 25 years (Santillana Ortiz, 2020: 24).³

Coalitions between anti-extractivist, Indigenous and working-class started to form in the cauldron of social discontent. Although this was dampened somewhat by the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020 and Guillermo Lasso came to power on a neoliberal ticket in 2021, this anti-neoliberal sentiment was not extinguished and returned with vengeance in June 2022, when a broad-based movement spearheaded by the Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas (Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities, CONAIE) forced the government's neoliberal agenda onto the backfoot (Dávalos, 2022).

In Chile, a rise in transport fares ignited 30 years of fury towards the post-Pinochet political landscape. Fare evasion by students in protest of price hikes spiralled into mass civil disobedience, provoking spontaneous protests and a violent police crackdown (Bravo, 2020). A broad coalition of urban groups coalesced around the rallying cry '30 years, not 30 pesos', laying bare widespread indebtedness, extreme inequality, crumbling public services and political injustices. By forcing President Sebastian Piñera to pull out of hosting the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Economic Leaders' Meeting in November 2019 and the United Nations Conference of Parties climate summit scheduled for December, protestors made a mockery of Chile's status as an Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) country and its image as neoliberalism's poster child. The protestors traced back the current hardships they face to the neoliberal reforms and constitution ratified by the Augusto Pinochet dictatorship (1973–1990) (Ferretti and

³ All translations are the author's except where stated otherwise.

Dragnic, 2020; Vargas Muñoz, 2020). This popular upswell forced Piñera onto the backfoot, forcing a popular referendum on whether to call a constituent assembly (Toro Vera, 2020). After voting for the constituent assembly (Sajuria, 2020), the Chilean public then elected a radical mix of delegates from social movements and unaffiliated leftist groups, with a representative of one of the most oppressed sections of Chilean society, Mapuche woman, Elisa Loncón, chosen to head the assembly (Montes, 2021). This was then followed by the election of Gabriel Boric, a former student leader, as the President of Chile in 2022.

This does not mean these new Left projects necessarily can weather this storm either, especially if their project is a re-hash of the progressivism of the pink tide. An alternative exit to this conjuncture is required. To this end, in this article I outline some theoretical lenses drawn from the scholarship of Bolivian Marxist René Zavaleta Mercado (1937–1984) and his most significant student, Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui (1949–), that offer potential guiding lights out of this historical mire. These lenses shine a light on the fragments of past historical events that could form the basis for future political movements. I contend that the Latin American Lefts need to ‘harness the storm’: that is to say, build political alternatives out of the contradictions of capitalism and their attendant crises that draws upon the human experiences and actions of subaltern movements and classes. In short, it needs to lay the foundations for a radical and transformative humanism.

Throughout the course of this article, I argue that reading this moment through the lens of ‘constitutive moments’ gives us pointers as to which historical threads to pick up and trace forwards and backwards through the contours of history to better grasp the political dynamics outlined above and what is at stake in the post pink tide historical moment. My aim is not to be prescriptive, rather to provide a theoretical lens that can orientate political analysis and action driving for change in the region. I do this by offering an expanded reading of the work of Zavaleta through the work of Rivera Cusicanqui. I sketch out Zavaleta’s understanding of crises and constitutive moments, before stretching them beyond the limitations of the nation and state to try and tease out threads for social and political movements operating across different scales to follow. I later explore the theoretical significance of the concepts of *lo abigarrado* and *ch’ixi* to search for a politics that can navigate some of the pitfalls of the previous pink tide period. Although developed in the Bolivian context, I show how both *Lo abigarrado* and *ch’ixi* are capable of capturing the heterogeneous character of Latin American social formations that emerged from the region’s colonial experience and its subsequent subordinate insertion and re-insertions into global capitalism. These concepts offer a temporally sensitive reading

of Latin American modernity, grounded in the region's political economy that also creates space for futures drawn from both beyond and outside capitalism and within its contradictions.

Crises and Constitutive Moments

How are we to make sense of this uncertain moment? What are the historical threads that we need to identify and trace to comprehend the significance of the conjuncture in Latin America following the death of Hugo Chávez in 2013?⁴ Here, I would like to argue that the notion of 'constitutive moments' first developed by political theorist René Zavaleta Mercado offers a fertile approach to analysing the political situation in Latin America following the pink tide. Constitutive moments demarcate historical paradigm shifts and capture how crises have the potential to create new collective subjectivities and intersubjectivities. They are points of inflexion that contain the embryonic material that congeals into the historical configurations of social formations and their accompanying zeitgeists.⁵ They offer an analytical bridge between the structural dynamics of capitalism and the interconnected processes forging political collectives and catalysing political action. However, here I want to do more than merely read the conjuncture following the pink tide through the frame of constitutive moments. Rather, I want to stretch the concept beyond its original bounding limits—that of the nation and the state—through re-reading Zavaleta through the scholarship of Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui. In doing so, I extend the open, critical Marxism that Zavaleta began to develop in the latter stages of his life in order to seek political alternatives that simultaneously take the dynamics of capitalism and the need for decolonisation seriously.

In order to grasp the explanatory power of constitutive moments, we need to start with Zavaleta's definition of crisis. This is part of the reason why I have

⁴ Although largely symbolic, Chávez's passing does coincide with (and therefore appear to mark) the beginning of the end for the pink tide.

⁵ I would argue that, re-reading the work of Antonio Gramsci through Zavaleta, one can find the embryonic and undeveloped theoretical components that congealed into 'constitutive moments' in Gramsci's initial formulation of 'passive revolution' in his *Notes on Italian History*: 'One may apply to the concept of passive revolution (documenting it from the Italian Risorgimento) the interpretative criterion of molecular changes which in fact progressively modify the pre-existing composition of forces, and hence become the matrix of new changes'. (Gramsci, 1971: 109, my emphasis).

chosen to take Zavaleta as a starting point, as his framing of crisis as both a structural feature of capitalism and an epistemological tool we can use to study social formations at particular historical conjunctures provides a theoretical approach that, to paraphrase Karl Marx's (1998) famous eleventh thesis on Feuerbach, interprets the world in order to change it. For Zavaleta (2008: 19), crisis is an 'anomalous instance in the life of a society, that is to say, a time when things do not present themselves as they are in everyday life, but, for a change, a time when things appear as they truly are'. Here Zavaleta is not claiming objective truth or positing the singularity of truth under capitalism, but highlighting how, in crises, the politicisation of social relations draws connections between the different constitutive parts of a society and places them in relation to one another, allowing previously invisibilized aspects of society to be read through the plane of politics.

This is what Zavaleta (2013b: 104–07) means when he states that crisis is a 'method'. Crises can be more than simply historical moments. Sometimes, they can be *constitutive* moments within society, moments of rupture and renewal that lay the foundation for the form that a social formation assumes over a historical period. It is in these moments that we find the foundational elements that illuminate the character of social formations. Constitutive moments are forged when a shared history [*aconteciminetos comunes*] and a shared psychology—what we might call worldview—combine to produce a willingness to embrace social change amongst a community (Zavaleta, 2008: 37). The rupture implied by crisis and the renewal encompassed in constitutive moments does not imply an erasure or emptying of history, but an accumulation of the historical sediment that can be transformed in moments of definite political action (Calla, 1989: 133). Constitutive moments capture moments which leave an indelible mark on the historical trajectory of a social formation:

This is the tragic role of the past in history, because in a way one never does anything but what was planned. Great epidemics or famines, wars, revolutions in our time, are the classic hours of general willingness, when [people] are ready to replace the universe of their beliefs (Zavaleta, 2008: 37).

Willingness, or what Zavaleta calls *disponibilidad*, encompasses 'a society's readiness (a cognate would be "disposition") to receive or respond to the interpellation of a new hegemonic project, to fundamentally alter its conception of the world and of itself' (Freeland, 2016: 272). Here we can see Louis Althusser's influence on Zavaleta, with Zavaleta using 'interpellation' to bring ideological

processes of self-creation producing new subjectivities and intersubjectivities—that is to say, communities—to the fore (Freeland, 2016: 278).

Constitutive moments are historical conjunctures which lay the foundations of the political institutions and their accompanying ideological edifices that predominate in a social formation during a historical period. They can be weaker and stronger and, importantly, not all crises, not all wars, and not all natural disasters congeal into constitutive moments. In Zavaleta’s work on Bolivia, he explicitly identified two constitutive moments: the 1899 Federal War and the 1952 National Revolution. These moments both had national reach, although the 1899 Federal War was not a truly “national” moment as its main consequence was to reforge the dominant social bloc. However, it is a constitutive moment because this reconfiguration through the notion of social Darwinism was felt over the entire national territory (Zavaleta, 2008: 15). The 1952 National Revolution was the first articulation of the nation-state within the Bolivian social formation, as it encompassed the wide spectrum of Bolivian society (more on this below).⁶ Interestingly, however, the loss of the seacoast during the Pacific War (1879–1983) and the Chaco War (1932–1935) are *not* constitutive moments, despite their historical importance. Rather than revealing a shared project and a willingness for change, these moments reveal the weakness of the territorial unity of Bolivia and the schisms between the Bolivian elite and the Indigenous majority who occupy Bolivian territory. ‘Constitutive moment’ is not, therefore, an infinitely stretchable, capacious concept, capable of capturing every historical conjuncture. Far from it. Constitutive moments are those that leave historical residue in political organisations and ideologies in a social formation—moments that are *constitutive* of the contemporary form assumed by social formations.

New Intersubjectivities and the Nation-State

Constitutive movements, for Zavaleta (2008: 37), are precisely *nationalising* moments.⁷ They are historical moments when there is a willingness or receptiveness across

⁶ On the role of Indigenous peoples in the 1952 revolution, see Gotkowitz (2007) and Rivera (2003).

⁷ Zavaleta was by no means alone in his focus on nation building and state formation. This was a central concern of many Latin American intellectuals of the twentieth century, not least the other critical Marxist giant of the period, José Carlos Mariátegui (see Giller, 2016).

society to new ideas and ideologies. The disposition of a society to a new set of political ideas, *disponibilidad*, is the foundation of a hegemonic political project. In Zavaleta's (2008: 78) analysis, this hegemony was limited to that of the nation-state. For Zavaleta, nationalisation was part and parcel of the homogenisation of social formations by the logic of capital and, in particular, the generalisation of the value-form (Zavaleta, 2013a: 615). 'The nation is commonly understood as the construction of a self and collective', (Zavaleta, 2013c: 538) argues, 'that is, the complex construction of a certain degree of centralization and homogeneity around the internal market'. In other words, the generalisation of value is accompanied by the emergence of grand abstractions capable of mediating this increasingly homogenised society: namely the nation and the state (see Tapia, 2002: 194–95).

Part of the reason for Zavaleta's focus on the state lies in the connection he draws between *disponibilidad* and economic surplus as its necessary but insufficient pre-condition (see Thomson, 2019: 87–88). On the one hand, Zavaleta (2008: 25–33) argues that capitalist production not only transformed economic relations but also the political foundations of social formations. The *sin qua non* of capitalism is the juridically free person, dependent on the market, as opposed to interpersonal relationships, for survival (Zavaleta, 2008: 36). These are the conditions needed for exploitation, the source of surplus value creation. The freeing of people from the land enables communities between strangers to be constructed beyond kinship or personal connections, creating intersubjectivities with a greater social and geographical reach, opening the possibility of becoming a nation. On the other hand, surplus endows the state with the resources to manage populations like never before. This is essential for the expanded reproduction of capital, as the state is charged with mediating the numerous contradictions thrown up by the production of surplus-value (Zavaleta, 2008: 40). The expanded reproduction of capital rests not only upon the legal rights of private property but also on the social reproduction of the labour force. These responsibilities, Zavaleta argues, are both tasked to the state under capitalism. A corollary of its responsibilities is that, despite its violent foundations, the capitalist state is both capable of presenting itself as a legitimate and historic-moral force within society (Zavaleta, 2008: 41). The capitalist state has the means and the motivation to rule through a combination of consent and coercion.

Constitutive moments therefore furnish the state with the material and ideational resources to become hegemonic in front of society (Zavaleta, 2008: 148). They also are precisely the historical moments in which collective subjects and intersubjectivities—most notably the nation—are formed. However, although Zavaleta offers a theoretically sophisticated account of the place of the nation-state

within capitalism, the focus on the nation-state as a unit of analysis is more the consequence of the concrete historical approach of Zavaleta than a bedrock of his theoretical concept of ‘constitutive moments’. As he himself says when discussing the state in Latin America,

Unfortunately, there is a certain tendency to seek theoretical solutions for theoretical obstacles, which in the main would seem reasonable if they were theoretical acts constructed by looking at facts. This, however, can acquire a certain expository logic, where the impression of a trade in closed pure categories in a universe of pure categories cannot be avoided. These categories lose their significance in the real world. As far as our discussion is concerned, these inclinations translate into structuralist and instrumentalist views of the state (Zavaleta, 2013a: 616).

Zavaleta’s method was to interrogate theoretical problems (like that of the nation and the state) through historical investigation. As such, there is a fraught relationship between the *life* and *work* of Zavaleta, who could not escape the clutches of the 1952 Revolutionary State and the *nacional-popular* configuration of Bolivian society during the third quarter of the twentieth century (Rodas Morales, 2018). This, argues Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui (2018: 21), is the underlying cause of the methodological nationalism that frames Zavaleta’s work. Zavaleta was, in a sense, unable to free himself of the dream of the 1952 National Revolution in Bolivia: the production of a modern nation and state. Subsequently, there is no reason why we cannot break free from (or at the very least challenge) Zavaleta’s methodological nationalism and further develop constitutive moments into a category capable of grasping the potentiality for change generated by diverse communities and movements across Latin America. Indeed, at the heart of Zavaleta’s investigation of nations, the nation-state and nationalising processes is an interrogation of the type of human collectivity that emerges from the uneven and halting processes of capitalist development (Tapia, 2002: 197).

Beyond Nation and State

One of the tasks at hand, then, is to turn Zavaleta’s concept of constitutive moments onto the processes of change in Latin America at a regional level. As a region, Latin America does share some important characteristics: (1) residues of Spanish and Portuguese colonial projects; (2) imperial relationships with the regional (and global) superpower, the United States; (3) shared communication and literature, particularly

revolutionary magazines and presses, resulting from exiled political actors that moved across the continent fleeing political persecution in the second half of the twentieth century; (4) the more or less synchronous implementation of neoliberalism across the region (Acha and D'Antonio, 2010: 234). One could add to that list the political reaction to neoliberalism, which sparked social movements that carried Left-leaning governments to power across Latin America at the beginning of the twenty-first century. This regional political wave has been called many things, including the cycle of struggle against neoliberalism (Ouviaña and Thwaites Rey, 2018), an era of progressivism (Barbosa dos Santos, 2019), and, as I have already alluded to, the pink tide in the anglophone literature (see, for example, Lievesley and Ludlam, 2009; Antunes de Oliveira, 2018; Grugel and Fontana, 2018; Mendes Loureiro, 2018).

However, despite the evident regional trends and features shared by Latin American countries, cities and peoples, this shift of scale on a theoretical level is undoubtedly challenging. There are several reasons for this. Firstly, Latin America is more an imagined project that acts as an orientating “compass” than a collective subjectivity (see Gobat, 2013). This not only makes it difficult to analyse in any great depth, it also erects historical barriers to political activity and revolutionary praxis on this scale—despite the best efforts of notable historical figures across the ages, from Simón Bolívar and Ernesto “Che” Guevara to Hugo Chávez. In short, although Latin America shares certain histories, it is also marked by particular national histories, cultural differences, economic alliances and variegated relationships with the imperial core and the world market. Secondly, the regional trends experienced by Latin America, particularly during the latter half of the twentieth century, were part of broader transformations of capitalism itself. Theoretically speaking, several of the regional trends outlined above get tangled with debates over the “long twentieth century” (Arrighi, 1994) and how we should understand neoliberalism. William Robinson (2003) contends that capitalist production has increasingly been spread across the globe, producing truly global factories rather than centres of production connected by flows of international trade. Robinson (2003: 12–13) calls this shift one from the world to the global economy. Ben Fine (2012), takes a different tact and emphasises financialisation (rather than the transformation of production) as the central feature of neoliberalism, whilst David Harvey (2005) makes a forceful argument for neoliberalism as a class project.

I highlight these three differing yet complementary approaches to neoliberalism as they all help shed light on the regional transformations experienced by Latin America and offer ways forward in exploring constitutive moments on the regional scale. Part of the making of global factories was the slating of Latin America

as places of “cheapness” across numerous spatial scales: places of cheap labour, cheap nature and, by extension, cheap resources.⁸ The region’s economy was orientated to export markets elsewhere, leading to an explosion of agroindustrial production, the cultivation of non-traditional export crops and manufacturing based on the low wage *maquiladora* model (Robinson, 2008). Transnational production chains have increasingly become financialised, as commodity derivatives such as future and other financial instruments gained prominence in the accumulation of capital, and the expansion of neoliberal production models has also, in many cases, been accompanied by an expansion of debt and private finance (Arboleda, 2020: 175–205). Simultaneously, organised labour was eviscerated to lay the ground for these transformations, increasing the power of different sections of the capitalist class across the region (Spronk and Webber, 2014).

Whilst Robinson overstates his claims of a transnational state and, especially, a transnational capitalist class (see Robinson, 2008), his analysis of global capitalism in Latin America does bring the common threads of neoliberalism across the region to the fore. The dispossession of land from Indigenous communities and the peasantry, the informalisation of previously formal employment and the feminisation of the labour across the region, coupled with the financialisation of production and reorientation of the state away from social welfare provision towards market making, were common experiences across the region in the 1980s and 1990s (see, in particular, Portes and Hoffman, 2003; Hite and Viterna, 2005). This produced new collective subjectivities and intersubjectivities mediated by market relations and marked by the precarity and instability this entails. Whilst the pink tide represented a rebellion against this historic form of capitalism, progressive reforms have been underpinned by natural resource rents, which were historically high thanks to a commodity supercycle driven by Chinese economic expansion (Jenkins, 2011; Ocampo, 2017). This has intensified certain aspects of cheapness established under neoliberalism, leading, argues Maristella Svampa (2013), to a ‘commodity consensus’ between governments of all political stripes across the region. The consensus is around development models driven by the extraction of cheap nature, leading to common ‘keys’ that we can use to read regional trends (Svampa, 2017a).

Given the ways that Latin America was re-scaled under neoliberalism and the regional trends outlined above, there may be increased theoretical scope for the

⁸ On cheapness, see Moore (2015).

concept of ‘constitutive moments’. Discussing Zavaleta’s edited volume *Bolivia Hoy* on the thirtieth anniversary of its publication (see Zavaleta *et al.*, 1983), James Dunkerley (2013: 201–203) gently draws our attention to its limited international scope. He highlights how ‘in the text itself there are few and fleeting mentions of the international scene’, something that he suggests is, at least initially, somewhat puzzling given ‘what might in global terms be deemed a “*momento constitutivo*” second only to 1945 or that ending of what Eric Hobsbawm termed the short twentieth century with the fall of Communism in 1989–1991’. The constitutive moment Dunkerley is referring to is, of course, the genesis of neoliberalism on a global scale.

The transformation of capitalist production and the capitalist state does pose some questions of Zavaleta’s distinctly *national* focus, a question that Felipe Lagos Rojas has gone further in answering than anyone else. Lagos Rojas (2018: 148) tentatively points to the possibility of de-centring the nation-state in Zavaleta’s framework to grapple with

a new, constitutively *transnational* process of subsumption over territories and populations which not so long ago were only formally or downrightly not at all integrated into nation-state arrangements. Nowadays, flexible patterns of accumulation function by directly (i.e. without “national” mediations) subsuming the production (“economic” as well as subjectivity) into capitalist circuits at a global scale. Even in those cases of ill-completed nationalization processes (motley societies), these populations are to an important extent already subsumed into global power structures, but arguably still not “represented” in any meaningful sense of the word (Lagos Rojas, 2018: 148; my emphasis).

Whilst I would argue that Lagos Rojas underestimates the continued importance of national mediation through nation-states, he does point to common threads that we can pick up in our search for constitutive moments beyond a national frame. The transformation of Latin America under neoliberalism are driven principally by transnational capital, with marketized actors even in the popular economy subsumed by international production and distribution networks. Financialisation is a distinctly global phenomenon and accompanied the move to globalise production regimes. Given this re-scaling of production also transformed the relationship between accumulation and the state, the rise of globalisation sparked a series of debates over the end of the nation-state (Hirst and Thompson, 1996; Rosenberg, 2005). Whilst the death of the nation-state was overstated (and misunderstood the role of capitalist state), it does point to the existence of material capable of constructing collective subjectivities and intersubjectivities beyond the nation-state. Felipe Lagos Rojas’ (2018) attempt to analyse neoliberal globalization

through Zavaleta represents an attempt to draw Zavaleta's methodology beyond Bolivia, a resounding answer to Anne Freeland's (2016) call to learn *from* Bolivia and, by extension, Zavaleta. Lagos Rojas' arguments centre on a generative reading of another of Zavaleta's concepts, one which is vital if we are to read constitutive moment on a scale beyond the nation-state: *lo abigarrado*.

From *Abigarramiento* to *Ch'ixi*

Part of the value in excavating constitutive moments from under concerns about the nation and the state lies precisely in the theoretical scaffolding that underpins constitutive movements, which Zavaleta developed to evaluate the historically specific dynamics of capitalist development in the Latin American context. The power of Zavaleta, like Gramsci before him, lies in his historical approach that lends itself to renewal and renovation, giving his work a certain baroque character: 'the impossibility of exhausting itself... the propensity of manifesting into something that exceeds its own possibilities' (Rodas Morales, 2018: 26). It is worth sketching out Zavaleta's theoretical approach to capitalism before developing the concept of constitutive moments further, not to establish rigid parameters that must be followed, but general principles to be developed. It is here that we find our first clues about how to grapple with the end of the Latin American pink tide and the thorny question of what comes next.

Arguably one of Zavaleta's major contributions is to draw attention to the diachronous dynamics of capitalist development in Latin America. He simultaneously manages to grapple with, on the one hand, a theoretical focus of capitalist production processes and the generalisation of value, and, on the other hand, the historic form assumed by capitalism in Latin America. Zavaleta introduces the concept of *sociedades abigarradas* to capture situations where the multiple temporalities of manifold 'modes of production', and 'civilisational' and 'societal' formations are not contained to the homogenous time of the state; that is to say, contexts where the state fails to become hegemonic (see Lagos Rojas, 2018: 140). *Abigarrada* or *abigarramiento* roughly translate as motely or heterogeneous and 'connote disjointedness, incongruousness, beyond mere difference' (Freeland, 2016: 272). Whilst in many cases the term *lo abigarrado* has been reduced to superficial soundbites about the diversity of Latin American societies (Mauricio Souza Crespo, 2018: 14), all is not yet lost. It still has plenty of analytical purchase in the Latin American context:

The notion of *abigarramiento* and the methodology it fosters is Zavaleta's proposal of closer attention to the effects of incomplete processes of nationalization or subsumption, as these amount to new lines of social conflict which do not correspond in a simple way to Eurocentric or allegedly "normal" representations of political modernity (Lagos Rojas, 2018: 147).

As we shall see below, *abigarramiento* is not a descriptive category (as many use it today), but a theoretical concept that offers a way to evaluate the historically specific development of the general laws of capitalism in Latin America. It is a concept that emerges from the social reality here but, I would argue, has analytical purchase that extends beyond the continent to other colonised regions of the world.

At the heart of Zavaleta's intellectual project lies the interrogation of 'operation of the law of value, that is, the processes generalising abstract labour and expanding of the capitalist mode of production on a global scale' (Tapia, 2019: 132). Zavaleta explores the ebbs and flows of value creation at different levels of abstraction to better grapple with capitalist development through the particular postcolonial context of Latin America. On the highest level of abstraction, Zavaleta analyses the development of particular 'modes of production' or social forms that emerge through the relationships between humans, their labour and nature. In particular, Zavaleta, like José Carlos Mariátegui (2007) before him, was interested in the co-existence of different sediments of history—of enclave capitalist production, feudal latifundia and Indigenous *ayllus*—something he tackled through the Althusserian formation of the 'articulation of multiple modes of production'.

On a more concrete level, Zavaleta was interested in civilisational and societal forms. On the one hand, civilizational forms are determined by historical time and the transformation of nature. (Tapia, 2016: 19–24) So, for example, agrarian civilizations, which produce and reproduce natural resources beyond the capacity of nature, are determined by natural cycles and the seasons; industrial civilizations are marked by the acceleration of time and the straightening of cycles into linear time advancing into the future; and nomadic civilizations are characterised by cycles moving actors through space (Thomson, 2019: 90). Societal forms, on the other hand, are 'determined by the mode of articulation between the mode of production, type of societal structures, forms of government and types of organisations and cultures' (Tapia, 2016: 21). Some examples of societal forms given by Zavaleta are communitarian societies, which have collective land ownership, communitarian assemblies and rotation of leadership posts; patrimonial societies, characterised by concentrated private property, relations of servitude and naturalised hierarchies; and modern societies that consist of private property, elimination of servitude,

institutionalised politics and the apparent separation of the economic and the political.

Latin American social formations are *abigarrada* formations precisely because they are marked by the articulation of multiple modes of production, which in turn is also the articulation of a multitude of civilisation and societal forms. The apparent incommensurability produced by these kaleidoscopic entanglements is what Zavaleta labelled *lo abigarrado*, which denotes more than radical difference. It is not a descriptor, but an analytical category that seeks to grasp the diachronic ideological, political and economic dynamics of capitalist development here. James Dunkerley (2013) suggests conceptualising *lo abigarrado* through Ernest Bloch's (1977) 'non-simultaneity of the simultaneous'. Bloch (1977: 22) illuminates the build-up of different historical strata in a social formation and the possibility of political subjects that appear not to "fit" in society thanks to them being of 'an earlier type'. Dunkerley's re-reading of Zavaleta through Bloch brings the temporal dimension of *lo abigarrado* to the fore, drawing our attention to the coequality and contradiction between the different social forms, civilisations forms and modes of production present in Bolivia.

When discussing modern-day Bolivia, Rivera Cusicanqui (2018: 75–77) contends that we can think about the present as formed from the sediments of past historical periods—pre-conquest, colonial, liberal and national-popular—that are all constantly articulated and re-articulated in the present. Rivera Cusicanqui attempts to capture the multitemporal character of *abigarramiento* through the notion of *ch'ixi*:

a color that is the product of juxtaposition, in small points or spots, of opposed or contrasting colors: black and white, red and green, and so on... [it captures] the Aymara idea of something that is and is not at the same time. It is the logic of the included third. A *ch'ixi* color grey is white but is not white at the same time; it is both white and its opposite, black (Rivera Cusicanqui, 2012: 105).

Ch'ixi draws attention to the patchwork of incommensurable pieces that form *sociedades abigarradas*. Together, the pieces give the appearance of a unified social formation, but if one looks closer, they do not, and indeed cannot, sit together, precisely because they have different historical roots. Rivera Cusicanqui uses the example of *chairo de ch'uñu* (a soup made from freeze-dried potatoes) as an example of the temporal patchwork of the present. Black freeze-dried potatoes, *ch'uños*, are a pre-colonial invention, a preservation technique with thousands of years of history.

Chairo de ch'uño, Rivera Cusicanqui (2018: 77) argues, has been re-created many times since conquest through the addition of foreign accompaniments such as *chicharrón* (deep-fried pork). In popular markets across the country, one can find different sediments of history all served up together on the same plate. To an untrained eye, these dishes appear like contemporary national or regional delicacies (a monotone grey), but if one looks closer, one can find artefacts of different historical periods (different shades along the black-white spectrum).

The temporal markers delineating different historical sediments from one another are no less than past constitutive moments. Pre-conquest and colonial periods are separated by the violence of the arrival of the Spanish in the region following Columbus' fateful voyage of 1492. For the Bolivian case (which forms the basis of the bulk of Zavaleta and Rivera Cusicanqui's work), the colonial and liberal periods are separated by the Federal War.⁹ And the liberal period gave way to the national-popular era following the 1952 revolution. However, there are also historical moments that extend beyond the nation-state and affect not just a particular country (such as Bolivia), but the region as whole: colonisation and neoliberalism, for example. If we are to grapple with the *abigarrado* or *ch'ixi* character of modernity in Latin America, I contend, constitutive moments offer pointers that help us identify the markers of different historical strata that form its patchwork.

Rivera Cusicanqui extends Zavaleta's *lo abigarrado* and forges a political project of decolonisation through *Ch'ixinakax utxiwa*. *Ch'ixinakax utxiwa* represents an attempt to build a decoloniality through *abigarramiento*, rather than a politics of national unity *beyond lo abigarrado*. *Ch'ixinakax utxiwa* means that

there are emphatically *ch'ixi* entities, which are powerful because they are indeterminate, because they are not white nor black, they are both things at the same time. The serpent is from above and, at the same time, from below; it is male and female; it belongs neither to heaven nor to the earth but inhabits both spaces, as rain or as an underground river, as lightning or as a vein from the mine (Rivera Cusicanqui, 2018: 79–80).

Ch'ixinakax utxiwa emphasises the indeterminacy of colonised places and peoples and seeks a politics of emancipation using the incommensurable social

⁹ Rivera is not explicit in delineating what, for her, constitutes a constitutive moment, and points to the 1870s (a decade marked by the upheaval of space in the Andes through the Melgarejo reforms and the beginnings of Pacific War) as a watershed moment. Here, however, I follow the historical categorisation laid out by Zavaleta (2008) in *Lo nacional popular de Bolivia*.

substance at hand. In a sense, then, *ch'ixi* represents a form of 'baroque ethos' suggested by Bolívar Echeverría (2011). Echeverría developed a unique framework for studying the history of modernity through four 'ethes': the realist ethos (which corresponded to a large extent with Max Weber's Protestant work ethic); the romantic ethos; the classical ethos; and the baroque ethos (see also Gandler, 2015). This final ethos, for Echeverría (2011: 184), underscored the ways in which people can live within capitalism without internalising the logic of capital. Rivera Cusicanqui (2018: 83) captures the potentiality contained in the baroque ethos through *taypi*, an intermediary weaving [*tejida*] that operates *within* rather than *through* the resolution of the contradiction of capitalism.¹⁰ *Taypis* are 'zones of friction' that contain the possibility of historical change (for better or worse). Thus, *ch'ixi* and *abigarramiento* suggest a radical difference that cannot be resolved. This incommensurability implies the impossibility of hybridity and allows, for example, Rivera Cusicanqui (2012: 98–101) to underscore the colonial character of neoliberal claims to multiculturalism, whereby Indigenous practices and peoples were subsumed under liberal ideals and thus relegated to the past and placed outside of politics.

The Politics of *Ch'ixi*

The task, then, is two-fold. It is, on the one hand, to look for signs of current as well as future constitutive moments and take advantage of the multiple crises of the second decade of the twenty-first century to build new intersubjectivities capable of transforming what nations, states and markets look like. Whilst constitutive moments are structural phenomena and cannot be willed into existence by agency alone, that is not to say that political actors and movements cannot be more or less prepared to push for radical change when the opportunity arises. The multitemporal character of modernity suggested by *ch'ixi* or *abigarramiento* suggests that this will less be a complete rupture with the past, more a reorientation of historical sediments, a change in emphasis and the social function they perform. Part and parcel of this will, on the other hand, be to explicitly build a politics *through ch'ixi* and *lo abigarrado* and search for alternatives *in* and *through* rather than *beyond* the contradictions of capitalism.

¹⁰ Here we could argue that Rivera is decolonising dialectics along the lines suggested by George Ciccariello-Maher (2017).

One of the outstanding tasks need for this project, I would argue, is the identification of the different historical strata present across different parts of Latin America. In order to construct a politics of change capable of identifying points of friction and using them to gain traction, we need to better understand the different historical sediment and how they are articulated across different social formations. More importantly still, we need to understand the ways in which different constitutive moments produced collective subjectivities and intersubjectivities, for it is the re-composition of these intersubjectivities that is needed if we are to build an alternative future. One of the fundamental parts of this task is identifying common strands that stretch across time and space and have the potential to become the threads that tie new intersubjectivities together. Most of the dominant historiographies are histories from above contained by the borders of nation-states. We need to look for histories from below articulated on different spatial scales, both across territorial boundaries and within local communities.

The shared experience of colonialism, US imperialism and neoliberalism have all, in the past, provoked Latin America wide upswells and solidarity. The Latin America pink tide is a great example of a continent-wide political movement that, for a glimpsing moment, appeared to have the potential to ‘do something different’ (Harvey, 2012: xvii). This potential, however, never materialised, much to the frustration of many. The early twenty-first century was a period when global commodity prices were sky-high, the United States was overstretched in imperial wars in the Middle East and China did not yet have its foot firmly planted in the region. This was a moment of historic opportunity, when regional cooperation along different logics—projects such as the *Alianza Bolivariana para los Pueblos de Nuestra América-Tratado de Comercio de los Pueblos* (Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America-Trade Treaty of Peoples, ALBA-TCP)—showed such promise (see Aponte García and Amérzquita Puntiel, 2015). Nevertheless, pink tide governments were still limited by the contradictions of their development models and the historic forms of their social formations, meaning that despite favourable geopolitical and geoeconomics conditions, a revolutionary upheaval was only ever seemingly possible in Bolivia and, one could argue, Venezuela (Gaudichaud, Webber and Modonesi, 2019: 97). The scope for pursuing a politics of change was more or less constrained across the region, something that was particularly true of two of the region’s biggest countries, Argentina and Brazil (Mendes Loureiro, 2018).

As a result, the inclusion of subaltern groups within the liberal capitalist state remained limited in many places (despite notable improvements enshrined into law through new constitutions in Bolivia, Ecuador and Venezuela), with Indigenous

peoples and the urban poor (two overlapping groups) often unable to voice their concerns. The ‘commodity consensus’ between Latin American governments at the turn of the century expanded extractive frontiers and processes of dispossession across the region, sparking round upon round of territorial conflicts (Gudynas, 2011, 2018; Riofrancos, 2020). Moreover, even during the brief period when many working-class people enjoyed rising incomes and there was falling inequality across the region, pink tide governments proved unable to stem the wave of violence that swept the region during the prior neoliberal period.¹¹

The contradictions thrown up by pink tide governments may yet, however, offer the material for future political movements with scope beyond the nation and state. The political economy of crises in the region offers not only lessons from the past but the materials needed for future political projects pushing for radical change—this is what ‘harnessing the storm’ refers to. Although I can only offer precursory examples, let me give you a couple of examples of what I mean. The failure of both the pink tide to supplant neoliberalism and neoliberalism to offer a solution to the crisis that enveloped Latin America following the 2008 financial crash means that anti-neoliberal sentiment has the potential to create a new regional *disponibilidad* and open a future constitutive moment. In Ecuador, for example, opposition to Lasso’s neoliberal political programme helped build a broad-based coalition of social sectors and produce a set of political alternatives in the form of the “Agenda de Lucha Nacional” (Agenda of National Struggle) (Dávalos, 2022). Here, argues Pablo Dávalos (2022), the ‘strategic line’ of opposing neoliberalism was able to speak to the everyday realities of millions of people, giving the Agenda greater legitimacy and aligning the interests and demands of the feminist, youth and Indigenous movements. In other words, the frictions caused by neoliberalism provided the material to build cross-sector political movements with demands that exceeded the negation of neoliberalism. Furthermore, that this movement in Ecuador fed into anti-neoliberal movements in Chile and Colombia points to its scope beyond national borders. This, I would argue, is the beginnings of a politics of *ch’ixi*, although given the fraught relationship between the Indigenous movement and formal politics in Ecuador, what happens to this movement after prolonged interaction with the state remains to be seen.

¹¹ For a snapshot of how endemic violence is in the region, see United Nations (2020) and World Population Review (2019).

During the pink tide, notion of *vivir bien* (which roughly translates as ‘living well’) and plurinationalism were central to attempts to build alternatives to neoliberalism within the state (Schavelzon, 2015). Whilst *vivir bien* has become co-opted by developmental discourses justifying extractivism (particularly in the Bolivian and Ecuadorian cases), there is evidence that plurinationalism still has the potential to build collective subjectivities beyond the nation-state. Following the Chilean Constituent Assembly—which under the guiding hand of Loncón produced a draft text that centred 2019 movement demands of dignity and expanded social rights (Díaz Martínez, 2022)—plurinationalism is back on the political agenda. Plurinationalism still has the potential to build bridges between different historically marginalised groups and to assert alternative notions of territoriality needed to push back against the most egregious aspects of natural resource extraction. Article five of the draft constitutional text states that Chile being a plurinational state means that Indigenous communities:

have the right to autonomy and self-government, to their own culture, to identity and worldview, heritage and language, recognition of their lands, territories, the protection of the maritime territory, of nature in its material and immaterial dimension and to the special ties they maintain with them, to cooperation and integration, to the recognition of their own or traditional institutions, jurisdictions and authorities and will participate fully, if they so wish, in the political, economic, social and cultural life of the State (Convención Constitucional, 2022: 2)

This would appear to provide the legal basis for pursuing future projects grounded in *ch'ixi* and the possibility of articulating a politics of *ch'ixi* within the state. However, as Juan Carlos Gómez Leyton (2022) demonstrates, this is fraught with difficulty and becoming a plurinational state will only transcend existing social and political forms if it directly confronts the liberal foundations of the state itself. Plurinationalism may offer a horizon over which regional *disponibilidad* operates, but it needs to be accompanied by other radical transformations if it is to congeal into a vector over which a potential constitutive moment operates.

Common experiences of violence also display potential fissures that could open into a constitutive moment on a regional scale, with gender violence provoking a tumultuous response from a growing wave of feminist social movements across the region. Signs that these movements have already formed intersubjectivities across the boundaries of nation and state are visible in international strikes of women, lesbians and trans people that have been called annually since March 2017. Such is the power of Latin American feminist movements in the period following the pink tide that Verónica Gago, Marta Malo and Lucí Cavallero speak of a ‘new internationalism’:

The feminist tide (not sequential in waves, which respond to a chronology and temporality restricted to Europe) has stirred the geographies and the ways of doing feminisms, of naming the rebellion here and there, and of modifying the criteria that say which are the contempt practices that matter and count as such. In this sense, it has turned everything upside down, including the ways of historicizing and making genealogies, with a radical anti-colonial stamp (Gago, Malo and Cavallero, 2020: 10).

Here we can see that, along one of the major social fissures in the region, a general *disponibilidad* towards change is forming. Contesting the ways in which relations and practices are gendered across Latin America has brought the feminist wave here to a crest. The legislation of abortion in Argentina and Mexico in 2020 and 2021 respectively following years of concerted campaigning is a sign of the strength of this wave in a still largely catholic region (Centenera and Rivas Molina, 2020; Morán Breña and Barragán, 2021). More impressive still, the experiences of the international feminist strike have helped construct emergent feminist intersubjectivities across the region, building communities based on the logics of care, solidarity, reciprocity and respect, confronting the capitalist logics of alienation and commodification in practice as well as theory. The full potential of this is still unknown, but it does point to the prospect (as yet uncertain) of a feminist horizon emerging from a constitutive moment that span nations and states in Latin America, and the importance of searching for possible points of conflict and connection that could help new collective subjectivities and intersubjectivities congeal.

A politics built through *ch'ixi* is to search for points of friction contained in contradictions—between Indigenous and *q'ara* (the Aymara word for European coloniser), rural and urban, concentration and dispersal, use value and exchange value. For Rivera Cusicanqui, (2012: 106), building a politics upon *ch'ixinakax utxiwa* entails a 'reappropriation of bilingualism as a decolonizing practice' for the creation of the collective "we" and expressing 'the parallel coexistence of multiple cultural differences that do not extinguish but instead antagonize and complement each other'. This, she argues, has the potential to construct an alternative modern project based on 'Indian hegemony to be realized in spaces that were created by the cultural invader: the market, the state, the union' (Rivera Cusicanqui, 2012: 107).

However, whilst we can find the seeds of alternative worlds in Indigenous worldviews and communities, we must also look inside the contradictions of capitalism itself. One of the (many) major contributions of David Harvey is underscoring the ways different contradictions in capitalism are formed, how they

can move and how they can cascade into other contradictions. Within capitalism, Harvey distinguishes between foundational contradictions that are ‘constant features of capital in any place and time and space’ (2015: 89), contradictions that capital ‘simply could not function without’ (2015: 14); and moving contradictions that are ‘unstable and constantly changing’ (2015: 89). For Harvey (2015: 88–89), an alternative to capitalism is conceived through the foundational contradictions—namely (1) use value and exchange value, (2) the social value of labour and its representation as money, (3) private property and the capitalist state, (4) private appropriation and common wealth, (5) capital and labour, (6) capital as a process or a thing and (7) production and realisation—which stake out the political terrain. Superseding capitalism means orientating society towards use value over exchange value and managing fixity and motion, as well as production, so all basic needs are met. How to arrive at this future society, is unclear, however, although clues in the historical trajectory of capitalism can be found in the moving contradictions of capitalism, which I would argue shape constitutive moments and collective subjectivities at the core of my arguments here. Moving contradictions assume different form across time and space, and so understanding the evolution of moving contradictions can point to possible futurities both within and beyond capitalism (Harvey, 2015: 89–90).

What a politics of *ch'ixi* encourages us to do is to look at these contradictions productively. It provides a view of history driven not by the teleological thrust of sublation (the resolution of and advance from dialectics) suggested by Hegel but by spirals where the past and the future constantly turn back upon the present (Rivera Cusicanqui, 2012: 96). The point is not to resolve contradictions on a high level of abstraction, but to look at concrete practices that work productively using the frictions caused by these contradictions to fundamentally transform them—a task which is, sadly, far beyond the scope of this article. This is the basis of the ‘principal of hope’ as it points to the need to find routes forward to a better world and evidence of past victories in the present, eliciting a radical humanism. Interestingly, this humanism is shared by thinkers across the spectrum of the international Lefts, from decolonial thinkers and activists such as Rivera Cusicanqui and Raquel Gutiérrez Aguilar (2008, 2017) to Open Marxist Ana Dinerstein (2015), critical Marxist George Ciccariello-Maher (2017) and David Harvey (2015).

Conclusion

My goal in the course of writing this article has been to add my hat to the ring and suggest that a productive way to realise this radical humanist ethos is through looking for political pointers and orientation through the lenses of constitutive moments and *abigarramiento/ch'ixi*. I argue that one of the principal tasks at hand is to search for emergent ideas and concepts around which movements can congeal and which have the potential to be accepted by broad-based coalitions and to create new communities. I believe that there are clues in the historical sediment left by previous periods that point to productive areas of social struggle that have the potential to build progressive movements beyond the nation-state, particularly the feminist movement, plurinationalism and anti-extractive movements. Harnessing the storm unleashed by the 2008 crisis and the contradictions of the pink tide will mean leaning into the contradictions that led to the regional crisis from 2013 onwards and to search for points of friction within these contradictions that have the potential to forge alternative intersubjectivities and a different type of progressive politics. Although these are tasks that can only be achieved through historical processes of struggle, hunting for guiding threads in the annals of history is critical if these processes of struggle are to be successful.

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