

1. The New Social Studies Research in Latin America: An Introduction

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Abstract

This chapter provides context for understanding the history of educational reform, curriculum, and research in social studies education in Latin America. Educational systems in Latin American have a unity because of the enormous historical, political, pedagogical, and cultural similarities across countries, but those commonalities have been produced from plurality and difference in the course of each national history. While acknowledging the plurality of the educational systems and their impact on the social studies research in each nation this chapter highlights common aspects to present a general view of social studies education across the region.

Educational reform and social studies

Viewed from a satellite, the social studies education in Latin America looks homogeneous across the region, but observed with the microscope it has many particularities. In formal terms, the neo-institutional research assertion about a global process of unifying cultures and school systems is in part truth, but it is also a truth that schooling is obliged to recognize the educational and historical differences among nations (Ducoing, 2020). It is the idea of one world against the conviction of coexistences of multiples worlds. No matter the lens or the stance we prefer, social studies education in the region is a unity composed of diversity.¹ Homogeneity and heterogeneity are part of the same thing. In other words, we can talk about the Latin American educational system as a unity because it has enormous historical, political, pedagogical, and cultural similarities across countries, but those commonalities have been produced from plurality and difference in the course of each national history. If this happens within the educational system and inside the school, it also happens within the social studies curriculum.

The homogeneity of Latin American educational systems are the product of long-term history. First, there is the common colonial past. Second, simultaneity of nation-state foundation in the early 19th Century, followed by late industrialization, and the urgency for creating national education systems. Third, the acceleration of demographic growth in the second half of the 20th Century joined with the planning politics of the developing states, which demanded the massification of educational systems. Colonialism, permanent political convulsions, Enlightenment translated into the educational field as the republican French school system, inequality of industrial capitalism, and rapid population growth are common conditions of the history of education in the region. But perhaps, the most relevant historical event that determined our research subject, social studies in compulsory education, was the violent irruption of neoliberalism in the last decade of the past century and the educational reforms applied from Tijuana to Ushuaia.

The educational systems in the region are not a mere product of these historical lines. They are also the result of national pasts that are characterized by different approaches to management, perceptions of teachers' work, and, of course, the social studies curriculum. The surfiet of paths are too many to explore in this chapter, but here are three examples, as samples. The Uruguayan

Juan Pedro Varela's educational reform in 1876 was a republican, liberal, and secular proposal that remains to this day and we can identify it in the canonical and disciplinary perspective of social studies (Plá, 2019; Plá in this volume). Secondly, the centralist tradition of the Mexican educational system and the national identity cemented during the political project called National Unity in the 20th mid-century, produced a monocultural and monolingual teaching of history and geography that did not change in 2002, when the Constitution established the pluricultural essence for the country. Finally, the current pluricultural and multinational reform in Bolivia cannot be understood without the ignominious and sustained history of educational, cultural, economic, political, and epistemological exclusion of the Indigenous during colonial and independent times. Hence, as illustrated in this book, political education in Brazil is different from citizenship education in Chile; the research in critical geography in Venezuela is grounded in Chavez's era and differs from the grammar of schooling in Argentina; and recent history taught in Chile and Colombia does not appear in Mexican curriculum or research.

We are aware of the plurality of the educational systems and their impact on social studies research in each nation and the chapters in this volume reflect this. However, in this chapter we have chosen to highlight common aspects in an effort to present an overview of social studies in the region. For that, we cannot avoid mentioning some basic characteristics of neoliberal reforms that emerged in the 1990s. Also, it is necessary to clarify that when we talk of social studies education, we are referring to compulsory education of primary and secondary school students (6 to 15 years old).

If the history of education in Latin America is relatively similar, the last decade of 20th Century was the most homogenous period (Arata & Southwell, 2014). After years of state violence ravaging the continent, the fall of the Berlin Wall, the economic crisis of the 1980s, commonly called "the lost decade," and the precarious return of democracy, collectively prepared the conditions for neoliberal educational reforms in Mexico, Brazil, Colombia, Argentina, and Uruguay among others. Even Chile changed its educational law, despite the fact since Pinochet's dictatorship it was ground zero in the neoliberal revolution (Báez, 2020). The neoliberal dogma of privatization, deregulation, and defunding of social budgets, was applied fiercely. As part of the dogma, education suffered several profound transformations. Most countries passed new educational laws (López, 2007), expanded compulsory education to secondary school (12-15 years old), introduced new assessment systems for teachers, promoted decentralized management of the educational system, and renewed national curriculums (Tedesco, 2002; Braslavsky, 1995). But also, while holding hands with the World Bank and the UNESCO initially and then with the ODCE, a new pedagogical discourse was created. Equity, quality, inclusion, and learning became common signifiers. Human Rights appeared as the cornerstone of the new philosophy of education. Spanish constructivism was the theory of learning that defined what learning meant and how teachers should teach to achieve curriculum objectives. The old civic education began a moral metamorphosis towards ethical and citizenship education; the educational environment turned to compulsory content across all curricula; ICTs were presented as irreplaceable for learning; assessment became part of everyday educational controls, and intercultural and gender education sowed their roots for a flourishing 21st Century. This new pedagogical language, not always practiced inside the classroom, was spoken by a new master: the experts in management, assessment, and curriculum (Dussel, 2006; Plá, 2014a, 2018). Obviously, social studies could not come out of the reform unscathed.

Social studies as a school subject, understood as a group of school subjects about the past and present social reality (Ross, 2014), does not exist in Latin American curriculum in the same way as in North America.² What is predominant in the region is a scientific subject curriculum. While social studies (or social sciences) are curricular areas in Costa Rica and Colombia, other countries in the region teach history, geography, and civic education as separate subjects. This general view has various features depending on the educational level. In the child-centered curriculum of primary school, social studies are commonly gathered in the social sciences areas. In lower secondary school (12-15 years old), the subject tends to be fragmented into disciplinary courses. In high school (15-18 years), geography and civic education lose their presence, and history remains stable along with other social sciences such as economy or sociology. However, as the Chilean curriculum shows, civic education is currently relevant in high school too. But, regardless of the discipline or the school subject, application of the logic of academic disciplines to a curricular theme or subject is the hegemonic approach to the organization of curriculum. This is a consequence of the French republican school model that was used to organize education systems in the region and the permeance of the disciplinary code, or a set of practices, values, and knowing that gives meaning to a subject inside the school (Cuesta, 1997, 1998; González in this volume; Turra-Díaz and Salcedo-Parada, in this volume; Ducoing, 2020). Teacher education follows this logic, perpetuating the disciplinary school code. Notwithstanding, the disciplinary school subjects are collected into the area of social science, with history at the pinnacle, and moral education described as civics or citizenship education.

Choosing the name “social science education” over “social studies education” has implications for teaching techniques, teaching education, and the selection of the knowledge that is to be taught in the classroom. At the same time, these differences vary across educational levels. This debate has covered a wide spectrum of theoretical positions, but during the era of neoliberal reform it has become particularly harsh. Chile, Colombia, Uruguay, and Argentina have chosen curricular designs based on broad knowledge areas such as social science (as opposed to disciplinary areas like history or geography (Plá, 2014a). Mexico traveled in the opposite direction privileging the separate disciplines since 1972, when a progressive educational reform created a secondary curriculum based on social and natural sciences. Whatever the preferred curriculum organizer the underlying conception of social studies in Latin America does not change: it is school knowledge about the past and present of Latin American societies that follows a disciplinary way of thinking. Of course, this is only a presumption because in the classroom and the syllabus the disciplinary code made up of nationalism and elitism is still alive, but as Gonzalez describes in this volume, this has been somewhat modified in recent decades. The result, as Plá writes in Chapter 12, is an imbricated history where one stage overlaps another but does not necessarily erase the former. Currently, social studies has been cooked with moral education and national pasts, constructivism, and disciplinary thinking. In some countries, the aim of social studies is the formation of a citizen capable of thinking as a historian or a geographer. Here, thinking as an expert is a psychological translation of critical thinking. However, the 21st Century brought a new ingredient: decolonialism.

The most representative case of the debate between the disciplinary or scientific tradition and the unified knowledge areas, e.g., social sciences, is Uruguay. According to German Rama, during the 1990s Uruguay implemented, along with many other countries, an educational reform based on neoliberal principles. The new curriculum for secondary education asserted the end of old, nationalist, and academic syllabus focused on facts and knowledge transmission; rote learning would be expelled from the school and replaced by an emphasis on comprehensive

knowledge and meaningful learning. “Rama’s reform,” as it was known on the street, remolded the curriculum, produced new teaching materials, and created new institutions and teacher education programs. Rama’s proposal was rejected for several reasons. First, teachers argued that an interdisciplinary approach to curriculum jeopardizes learning the method of each discipline, which is necessary to achieve interdisciplinarity thinking (Plá, 2014a). Second, the new institutions for teacher education in social or natural sciences jeopardized the historical school for teachers, the Instituto de Profesores Artigas (Artigas Teachers Institute), and the long tradition of disciplinary identity among secondary teachers in Uruguay. The third significant reason for the rejection of Rama’s reform was a general reaction against neoliberal reform, but in particular a backlash against the personal style of the Rama administration that was convinced that the only way to reform the educational system was producing a violent crisis. The struggle was rugged, and teachers’ opposition to the proposed reforms won out in the end. The long-term result was that by 2006, with a left party in the government, the Rama reform was disparaged and in its place, the high school curriculum returned to its canonic tradition. The Uruguayan story shows how in the history of social studies, as in all of education, academic reasoning is only one part of the equation (Plá, in this volume).

Beyond the particularities of Uruguay, the disciplinary code of social studies has changed over recent decades (Gonzalez, in this volume; 2018) regardless of the areas or subject curriculum. The most important changes were:

- the overwhelming presence of constructivism and cognitive psychology in the modes of approaching to teaching and learning;
- the development of cognitive competencies and skills-based disciplinary methods, such as geographic space or historical time;
- the dislocation of narrative and a global approach to social reality and its substitution for an analytic and fragmented evaluation;
- procedural instruction instead of data and knowledge as contents of teaching; and
- the displacement of teaching from the center of the lesson to its periphery, based on the idea of the teacher as a guide of the student's own construction of learning.

These educational reforms provoked a wholesale changeover of the social studies curriculum and the disciplinary code in history and geography. Civic education took on the latter of these changes, with almost all social science content eliminated from the curriculum (e.g., issues of inequality, structural violence, and anti-democratic practices). What remained was a moral and electoral definition of citizenship and, in some Catholic countries as Mexico and Peru, with a sacred hearth of moral and value formation. In all these changes, the magic wand that swiped over all was Spanish constructivism knited together with neoliberal education reforms.

However, the 21st Century brought fresh air of left progressivism to the region, but the neoliberal social studies curriculum did not disappear, as Plá shows in the final chapter of this book. Rather, the neoliberal curriculum stole some of the left concepts and employed them uncritically in the primary and secondary syllabus, in Peru. There, transversal approaches to environmental education, gender equality, and interculturality were declared (ME, 2016; 9). However, when one analyzes these approaches in the various programs of study, they do not appear and therefore lose their apparent transformative character. There is no mention of colonialism, patriarchy, and capitalism. They are not taught, as can be seen in the competencies described for social studies (ME, 2016; 43-60). In turn, the teaching of history works with different aspects of Indigenous

cultures, such as artistic manifestations and the study of the pre-Columbian Andean region, but at no time does the problem of conquest and colonization arise. The history of interculturality as a vindication of Indigenous identities and rights does not exist in content to be learned. The same happens with gender perspectives and to a lesser degree environmental education. The result is what decolonial theory calls functional interculturality, that is, an interculturality that does not modify the symbolic conditions of domination based on race within a society, such as Peru, but uses the concept to present it as a functional part of contemporary capitalism (Walsh, 2010). This definition is extensible to the gender perspective and environmental education.

The novel neoliberal curricula linked the procedural approach to an undefined perspective of gender and interculturality; created complex, rigid and hierarchical teacher and student assessment systems; and abandoned political education to focused on citizen and moral engagement. Human rights remained as well the learning-centered curriculum. Also, except for Costa Rica and Colombia and with the unique decolonial pedagogy in Bolivia, the scientific school subject has maintained its dominant position.

But, if the neoliberal curriculum remains healthy in some countries, in others it is in its last breaths or is at least threatened. In Bolivia, for example, capitalism and colonialism, two faces of neoliberalism, are attacked explicitly in social studies curriculum and in all the educational reforms following the promulgation of the law “Avelino Siñani-Elizardo Pérez” in 2010. The law is clear: education “is decolonizing, liberating, revolutionary, anti-imperialist, de-patriarchalizing and transforms economic and social structures; oriented to the cultural reaffirmation of Indigenous nations and people, native peasants, intercultural and Afro-Bolivian communities in the construction of the Plurinational State and Good Living (Ministry of Education of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, 2010, p. 4). Social studies goes deeper into the promotion of Indigenous knowledge and a new counternarrative of national history (Plá, 2016). But Bolivia is not the only country trying to reform its social studies. Venezuela reformed the curriculum from a Chavism perspective, with an explicit struggle against imperialism. More moderately, mixing decolonial theories with social sciences, Argentina offers a social studies curriculum from the South.

These two main views of social studies in the Latin American curriculum represent the poles, but between them, there are different and imbricated modes of teaching social knowledge. The same is true for the relatively new field of social studies research.

Social Studies Research

Writing and thinking about social studies in Latin America is an old practice. From the birth of the republics, but especially since the second half of the 19th Century when the foundations of the educational systems were laid, school books, political dissertations, and pedagogic models were created throughout the region. Civic and moral education and teaching national history and geography were discussed by historians and intellectuals, such as Sarmiento in Argentina or Justo Sierra in Mexico. The 20th Century was also a prolific, with the revolutionary impulse in Mexico, populism growing in Argentina and Brazil, and the economic growth in Chile, national identity became an educational issue. This period was characterized by teachers’ production of textbooks and teaching materials. This production was part of national and transmedia political programs that invented new national traditions and identities. Commonly, those identities were monocultural, monolingual, and blind to local plurality. Despite the relevance of social studies in

educational politics, systematic research in social studies only began to appear in the final years of the century.

There are three historical lines that can be tracked here. First, the emergence of the expert as a new actor in the educational field (Plá, 2014a; 2018). This line goes back to the early second half of the 20th Century when social science became more relevant as a tool for data-based political decisions. In this time, a significant number of researchers studied for their doctorates in the United States and Europe, returning home to found research departments and create graduate programs. The new space at universities for the study of education drew on both the French academic tradition and American pragmatic perspectives, moving educational research and philosophy of education from Germany to the periphery. This process produced the first educational research centers and, secondly, groups investigating specific didactics, such as the teaching mathematics and language, then sciences, and finally, in the dawn of the 21st Century, social studies. Recently, the first Latin American Ph.D. in history education was founded at the Technological University of Pereira, Colombia. This line of development led to the rise of the education expert and resulted in a reduced role for teachers creating teaching materials for use in their classrooms.

The second line development in research on social studies in Latin America was the closure of Teachers' Training Schools (Escuelas Normales) and the creation of Teacher Training Colleges within universities. This process gave the expert a new space. Finally, the third historical line came from Spain and the explosion of the social studies research field, when scholars such as Mario Carretero (2007; 2009; Carretero, Pozo & Asensio, 1997; Carretero, Rosa, González & Berti, 2006; Carretero & Castorina, 2010) and Joan Pagès (1994; 2002; Pagès & Fernández, 2010; Benejam, Pagès, Comes, Quinquer, 2004) expanded their influence from North to South. The former working in the area constructivist psychology with policymakers, the latter teaching about instruction, working in small universities, and with teachers, always working in and from the bottom. Educational experts as new actors, new teachers training programs, and Spanish educational research influence were nodal for the development of social studies as a branch of research in Latin America.

The chapters of this book present a look at contemporary social studies research in Latin America, especially in history education, but they do not pretend to be an comprehensive state of the field, but rather examples of three dimensions characterizing the field: themes of research, theory, and methodologies. Before describing the research contributions in this collection, it is important to discuss some broader characteristics of the field. In Latin America, except for Colombia (Aguilera, 2017) and Costa Rica (Ramírez-Achoy, 2020), there is no research in social studies education *per se*. Disciplinary research in history, geography, and citizenship education are the common frameworks. Also, it is necessary to point out that social studies research is another example of the dramatic inequality that reigns in the region among countries and within each country. As other works show (Plá & Pagés, 2014), Brazil is the largest producer of scholarly works in the area followed by Chile, Argentina and Colombia with Mexico behind them. But within each country, the research is spread in the periphery and not primarily produced in the central universities. For example, in Mexico, there are masters degree programs in the North (University of Sonora) or the West (Michoacan University of Saint Nicholas of Hidalgo) but not in Mexico City or Guadalajara. In Chile, the Catholic University of Valparaíso, the University of Valparaíso, and recently the University of Bío-Bío have produced research studies, but not at the National University. In Argentina, the National University of La Plata or the

National University of Comahue are referents on the field, but not the University of Buenos Aires. In Perú, Costa Rica, and Uruguay, there are isolated researchers, but no institutional programs. In other countries, without institutional programs or postgraduate capabilities, research in social studies is almost nonexistent. Finally, research production varies across each discipline with citizenship education and history education by far the leading areas of research. This is in part why this book focuses on research in history education and we look forward for publishing another book focused on citizen education.

Social studies research lacks theory, at least of its own theory. The urgency to solve educational problems in the classroom, has sidelined a focus on theory. In history education, scholars such as Jörn Rüsen, Micheal de Ceteau, Paul Ricoeur, Hayden White, Peter Seixas, Peter Lee, Joan Pages, Antonio Viñao, Antoni Santisteban, Raimundo Cuesta and Mario Carretero appear several times. Recently, decolonial theory and social justice education have begun to influence researchers. These authors have helped to define concepts as historical thinking, historical consciousness, narrative, second-order concepts, disciplinary code, school subject, and more. Those who do not appear are typically broader theorists of curriculum, education, politics, justice, or society, that can be found in other fields of educational research. Pierre Bourdieu, Francois Dubet, Michael Foucault, Judith Butler, Walter Mignolo, Anibal Quijano, Catherine Walsh or Paulo Freire, to mention only a few. Ana Zavala's (2012a; in this volume) work is one of the few that reflect the influence of these more foundational theorists. An example of the growing concern about and interest in theorizing social studies research is the the book *Ensino de História e suas práticas de pesquisa* published in Brazil by Juliana Alves de Andrade and Nilton Mullet Pereira (2020). This illustrates how social studies in Latin America has taken its own peculiar road, independent of other educational fields and, as a result, is faced with two theoretical knots: (a) relationship between disciplines and school knowledge; and (b) treatment of recent history and research on issues of political and social justice.

Summarizing the debate of the first knot into poles, we can assert two perspectives on social studies research: scientific knowledge versus the public use of social knowledge. The scientific knowledge perspective argues that the social studies in the school must be similar to academic disciplines. If what happens inside the school eschews scientific knowledge, the school is undermining the teaching and learning process. The more disciplinary the focus of education, the arugment goes, the better the education is. The Anglo-American perspective of historical thinking is close to this research line (Méndez Lozano & Tirado Segura, 2018; Castellanos-Páez, & Navarro-Roldán, 2020). The second perspective is threefold. First, history education as the discourse of public history inside the school (Plá, 2012; Rodríguez-Ávila, 2017). The second focuses on historical and political culture, as we can read in Cerri's chapter in this volume. This position does not deny academic history, but starts from a broader perspective, following Rüsen's theory (Cipriani-Barom & Cerri, 2012; Cerri). This perspective unites social studies teaching and learning inside and outside the school (Cerri, 2011, González-Calderón & Gárate-Guerrero, 2017). Third, the school subject is a particular knowledge with its on unique past and aims. We can see this in Gonzalez's as well as Turra-Díaz and Salcedo-Parada chapters and other works (Gonzalez, 2018). The disciplinary code concept coined by Raimundo Cuesta, understood as a social and historical tradition composed of ideas, values, suppositions, and routines that legitimate the educational function given to history and social studies, which regulate teaching practices (Cuesta, 1998), is frequently cited. Historical thinking and the disciplinary code represent of the two more common theoretical tools in the fields.

No less important are recent history and social and cognitive justice research. The former is a response to state violence as well as guerrilla and drugs war (Jelin & Lorenz, 2004). Argentina in the 1990s had a significant production of research in this area (e.g., Dussel, Finocchio, Gojman, 2006; Finocchio 2009; Funes & Jara, 2017). This research had a political aim, namely promoting the right of Argentinians to know their own history following the criminal dictatorship that ruled the country between 1976 and 1983. Theoretically, recent memory is interwoven with history and memory as its core concepts, trying to include personal and social experiences as legitimate knowledge in the classroom. Something similar happened with the research in Chile (Rubio, 2012, González-Calderón, 2012), as we can read in Gonzalez-Calderón and Rubio's chapters in this volume, where they study how young students think about Pinochet's dictatorship. This issue is relevant for the present political environment in the region, more so if we look at what Jair Bolsonaro is doing to reevaluate the military regimen in Brazil. In Colombia, recent history includes drug wars as setting (Rodríguez-Ávila & Sánchez, 2012). This research is part of the political movement for peace in the country. Finally, teaching social studies for social and cognitive justice inquires into issues of gender, interculturality, capitalism, and epistemological violence as the content of teaching in the classroom (Seffner, 2013; Mullet Pereira & Seffner, 2018) or in the national curriculum (Plá, 2016) and education practice inside and outside of school (Plá & Rodríguez-Ávila, 2017, Bazán & Zuppa, 2017). Finally, curricular justice (Connell, 2010) and pedagogy for social justice are central categories from a decolonial perspective, rather than intersectionality as is common in North America.

Regardless of how social studies research tries to apply the result of research findings and dismiss the importance of theory, we can see some common factors in the field. First, the cognitive and assessment approach to disciplinary knowledge are the heirs of neoliberal educational reform that is hegemonic and follows Anglo-American research. But Latin American social studies also take and re-interpret categories like school subject, school cultures, disciplinary code, historical culture, and historical consciousness. In addition, new studies in social and cognitive justice use curricular and epistemological justice (Plá, 2017), the latter coming from decolonial theories and scholars such as Boaventura Sousa Santos (2007).

The themes selected for research in Latin American social studies are almost always linked to national contexts. As we have seen, recent history in Argentina, Chile, and Colombia draws the attention in research and national curriculum, but other topics have their own research and curricular streams. Regardless of the national varieties, the most common topics of research are:

- teacher education in universities (Pacievitch & Cerri, 2014; Pacievitch & Rocha Oliveira, 2020; Rodríguez-Ávila, 2012, Valdés-Vera & Turra-Díaz, 2017; Cuesta, 2019; Valle Taimán, 2021);
- learning of history and social studies with historical thinking or citizen engagement as core concepts (Schmidt, 2017; Valle Taimán, 2018, Cerqueira, 2020),
- politics, memory and recent history (Rubio, 2013, 2016; Rodríguez-Ávila, 2017),
- gender and interculturality both in curriculum planning and inside the classroom (Meinerz, 2017; Plá, 2019; Seffner, 2021, Fontenele & Cavalcante, 2021);
- teaching materials, syllabus, and especially textbooks (Torres Barreto, 2013, Gregorini, 2016; Abellán Fernández, 2018),

- history of social studies and history as a school subject where the disciplinary code heads the research (Mendoza Ramírez, 2009; González, 2018); and
- the curriculum in the national context and from international and comparative lens (Plá, 2014a, 2016; Marolla-Gajardo and Saavedra Solís, 2021, Marolla, 2019, Jara, 2020).

Research methodology in the field leans heavily in the direction of naturalistic or what are typically known as “qualitative” studies. There are three main subjects of research in the area. First, is research on practice, which uses theoretical and inquiry tools that derive, in part, from action research (Zavala, 2012b, 2009). Second, is the use of ethnographic tools such as interviews and participant or non-participant observation, which includes research on classroom interactions, the meaning of social content for students, and revealing social representation about a historical or social issues (Plá, 2014b, 2015; Bastos Rocha & Cintra, 2021). Seffner, Gonzalez, and Gonzalez-Calderón and Rubio's chapters in this volume are examples of this type of research methodology. Studies of memory, public history, and political culture also employ ethnographic methods. Decolonial perspectives focussed on Indigenous knowledge and coloniality are still in their infancy (Ramallo, 2014; 2017). Third, curricular analysis and comparative education prefer documentary sources and discourse analysis. In these cases, grounded theory has been increasing used in recent years. Other studies explore theoretical methodology using post-Marxist and poststructuralist principles (Plá, 2014a). In contrast, post-positivistic or “quantitative” studies in the area are few in number. Nevertheless, a group of researchers lead by Cerri have a long history of conducting large-scale studies inside Brazil and the Southern Common Market (Mercosur) countries (Argentina, Uruguay, and Paraguay), and they have more recently included Mexico and Chile. In this book we include an example of quantitative studies using political and historical cultures as analytic categories.

About this book

This book has, among its main objectives, communicating abroad the research on social studies, history and citizenship education that Latin America produces. To achieve this goal, we have invited researchers who have already produced important research. These researchers represent a large part of the continent, as well as a range of topics. In a book like this it is impossible to provide a comprehensive overview of all the relevant research in social studies, history and citizenship education from the region, so we collected what we believe to be exemplars of research in the field that will also provide readers with an interesting and accurate overview of the field of study.

Following this introductory chapter, the next two chapters focus on recent history and memory. Sandra Patricia Rodríguez Ávila examines the trajectories of teaching history and social studies in adverse political contexts of Colombia. This chapter address three main themes (1) what has happened in the last thirty years with history; (2) analyzes of the Colombian context and its effects on the education sector, particularly censorship and omissions that history and social science teachers must make in contexts where armed confrontation among paramilitaries, guerrillas and military forces made schools and teachers military targets; and (3) analyzing the impact of quality policies (e..g., skills, mass evaluation, and state defunding) on the dimensions and dynamics of the social science area and of history in particular.

In Chapter 3, Fabian González Calderón and Graciela Rubio Soto analyze the challenges related to teaching and learning recent history in Chile. Using discourse analysis of group interviews this

study focus on identifying historical explanations of Chilean students that allow them to understand the present and recognize intersection points among those narratives and the reference frameworks established by a dominant national curriculum.

Studies of history and memory in the Chilean context are also presented in the next two chapters, but with a focus on teacher education and Indigenous worldviews. In Chapter 4, Omar Turra-Díaz and Juan Salcedo-Parada trace the incorporation of intercultural perspectives and approaches in the preparation of history and social studies teachers, based on an analysis of diverse curricular documents that shape the pedagogical practices of Chilean state universities. Next, Carolina Huenchullán Arrué uses a decolonial perspective in her analysis of the reconstruction of traces, fragments and historicity of the collective memory of the Mapuche nation, based on the educational experience developed by the *Kom Pu Lof Ñi Kimeltuwe School* and a *Lafkenche* community in the *Lafkenche* region in Araucanía (southern Chile). From a historiographic point of view, the chapter focuses on how and in what context the struggle to retrieve the educational space of this school arises, initially intended to transmit values and knowledge associated only with the foundations of the West and its link with the knowledge/power relationship based on the discourses and institutional practices that have structured the social life of the school and the community. This effort is linked to the current dynamics and re-emergence of the Mapuche movement as well as to the historiographic and political perspective of contemporary Mapuche thinkers and authorities who rethink, deconstruct and deny the gaze that entails the colonial domination and the production of knowledge of the social sciences.

Despite curriculum reforms in the early 2000s, which included increased pluricultural content, the school curriculum in Mexico has generally omitted or minimized content about or references to African or Afrodescendant populations' past contributions to national development. The history and present characteristics of these contemporary communities are scarcely known by society in general, and these omissions have resulted in the reproduction of stereotypes and prejudices towards black and Afrodescendant people and communities, which continue to have a negative impact on the daily life of black and Afrodescendant people. In Chapter 6, Gabriela Iturralde Nieto examines the role that recent historic and anthropological studies have played in the visibility of these populations, and in some of the recent achievements garnered by Afro-Mexican organizations and communities.

Fernando Seffner illustrates how the issues of gender and sexuality have come together in history teaching and its impact. He argues that gender and sexuality are structural elements of the Brazilian social order in the current context, diverging from a traditional understanding that these are less important elements, in relation to class and race. The chapter reviews the main elements of the Brazilian historical path from the 1988 Federal Constitution to the present day, with special attention to the theoretical considerations of gender, sexuality and education and advances in the field of history teaching. Seffner then narrates and analyzes scenes from the school culture, collected from research projects, illustrating the ways in which situations involving gender and sexuality markers appear and are addressed in history classes.

In Chapter 8, Luis Fernando Cerri presents findings from the international project *Residente*, which explores the relations among young people, history and politics in Latin America. A research team with participants from 7 countries of the subcontinent administered a questionnaire to more than 6000 students at the end of basic education, resulting in a database of information about young peoples' views of teaching and learning history, historical awareness and culture,

political position, and culture. This chapter uses the political compass as the primary data analysis tool. The responses regarding an appreciation of history as a discipline are disaggregated and compared and data on political position the history of young people from Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Mexico, Peru and Colombia are presented comparatively.

History education remains the theme in Chapters 9 and 10. María Paula González argues that from the end of the 19th Century and throughout most of the 20th Century, school history in Argentina had a civilizing and nationalistic effect. However, in the last thirty years, there have been many changes that raise questions about the future of history as a school discipline. How has history been configured and transformed as a school discipline? To answer question, González examines at two specific aspects of today's history teaching at the secondary level: activities and materiality. The aim is to show not only what endures, but also what has changed and what is still in the process of mutation and invention. For this reason, history is analyzed as a discipline within the "school culture" and through the concepts of representations, practices and appropriations typical of cultural history. Through an analysis of classroom sources, but also of normative and pedagogical sources, the dominant, emerging, latent, residual and perennial elements come to light. Overall, the chapter shows a slow but determined process of building a new disciplinary code for the discipline. Chapter 10, "In the history we teach every day: *Historics*, historiography and philosophy of history," Ana Zavala explores the intertextual relationships between historians' and teachers' discourses then applies theoretical and analytical tools to a school history lesson to identify the reasons and motives for what is taught. Finally, the chapter briefly examines how historiographical discourse is approached by a teacher in a particular lesson.

While history education is the dominant theme of this collection, in Chapter 11 José Armando Santiago Rivera provides us with a critical reading of the southern geographical reality that presents a challenge to school geography. Santiago Rivera argues that the geography of the southern hemisphere requires explanations that highlight the ways in which neoliberal policies have affected the region. Understanding this situation requires promoting critical and constructive reading as a task of school geography and highlights the need to facilitate other readings that lead to humanizing the southern geographic reality, with a pedagogical action that explains the neoliberal intervention in the region and builds knowledge capable of generating critical awareness in citizens.

In the final chapter, Sebastián Plá presents a comparative overview of social studies in Latin America curricula, which has undergone significant changes in the past 30 years. From the moment the region began to experience neoliberal education reforms the scope of knowledge to be transmitted changed and the narratives themselves became increasingly technical, expansive, and prescriptive. But the 21st Century also witnessed a radical shift toward leftist politics and produced new social studies counter-narratives against neoliberal education reforms. Although the results have been mixed, all curricula share four characteristics, they convey models of identification; build meta-narratives; serve to give rise to citizens; and use history as the primary social studies subject. These similarities, however, do not discount the enormous curricula differences across countries in the region. The chapter begins with a historical synthesis of the educational reforms in Latin America, then describes the four main types of curricula in which social studies are organized: canonical, neoliberal, critical functional, and counter-narrative.

While not a comprehensive presentation of all the relevant issues and concerns regarding social studies education in the region, our hope is that these chapters provide readers with an understanding of and insights into the critical currents of research in the field.

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¹ For an examination of unity and diversity in North American social studies education in see Vinson and Ross (2001).

² In North America, social studies has been described as “the study of all human enterprise over time and space” (Stanley & Nelson, 1994). National Council for the Social Studies, the primary professional organization for social studies educators in North America, defines social studies as “...the integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence. Within the school program, social studies provides coordinated, systematic study drawing upon such disciplines as anthropology, archaeology, economics, geography, history, law, philosophy, political science, psychology, religion, and sociology, as well as appropriate content from the humanities, mathematics, and natural sciences. The primary purpose of social studies is to help young people make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world” (NCSS, 1994). For more on the various and conflicting perspectives on the nature and purposes of social studies education in North America see: Nelson (2001) and Ross, Mathison and Vinson (2014).