

Archives, Affect and Presence in the Pedagogy of Cold War Latin America

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ABSTRACT: In the context of understanding Latin America's Cold War, archives of political resistance contain counter-hegemonic narratives that would otherwise have been silenced and condemned to the past. At a time when scholarship is increasingly turning to cultural historical approaches in this field, archives have also unlocked new opportunities for the pedagogy of global politics more broadly. This article explores political pedagogy, informal learning spaces, and archives in the teaching and learning of Politics and International Relations. Based on a student-led research project titled Thinking Inside the Box, I weave together interviews, conversations and auto-ethnographic and reflective elements to examine how political studies can lend themselves to more transformative and empowering learning experiences. Using Cold War Latin America as a case study, this research shows how Latin American critical and decolonial practices of political resistance and solidarity enrich curricular learning, generate collective knowledge production and exchange, and empower students in their professional and academic development in unique ways.

KEYWORDS: Politics; International Relations; Pedagogy; Archives.



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1 Introduction

In 2023, at the 73rd Political Science Association Conference, a session titled “Political Pedagogy in the Everyday” took place. The panel provided an important opportunity for scholars to reflect on their pedagogical approaches to teaching politics. Guided by the question of how everyday, informal spaces influence and shape political pedagogies, the panel generated a dialogue between diverse projects, ranging from informal learning around graffiti in Colombia, the role of social media in informing young people about global politics, and the use of popular culture in classroom activities¹. In my own presentation, representing myself and Dr. Richard Smith, I reflected on the political pedagogy of a student-led project that took place at the University of Leeds in 2022, titled *Thinking Inside the Box: 1973*². The project brought students together in informal spaces to explore archives and the politics of authoritarianism and resistance in Cold War Latin America.

In this article, I return to *Thinking Inside the Box: 1973* through concepts of political pedagogy, informal or everyday spaces, and the archive as a site of transformative learning. I combine my own experiences as a participant in the project with the reflections of others. I apply a narrative approach to analyse interview data, collected as part of a larger pedagogical research agenda, and ground my discussion in themes relating to the pedagogy of Cold War Latin America. By drawing on the ideas of Paulo Freire (1968), Diana Taylor (2003) and Ana Longoni (2016), this article asks: how can archives, as informal spaces of teaching and learning, contribute to critical pedagogies of Politics and International Relations studies?

To address this question, I begin by bringing Latin America into dialogue with the historiography and pedagogy of history and politics, exploring the ways in which Cold War Latin America, as a subject matter, can challenge assumptions, expand understanding and enhance definitions, interpretations and practices of domestic and international politics. Second, I explore the capacity of Cold War Latin American archives to generate transformative learning experiences through the political voices and experiences they contain. As artefacts of political resistance and struggle, these specific archival materials represent ideas that have historically suffered censorship and silence. In relation to this, the physical presence, affect and people-centredness of collaborative archival work, become interwoven with the everyday and informal spaces in which they take place. Third, I explore the ways in which *Thinking Inside the Box* generates conscientious political action and impact on various actors, both within and outside of the formal spaces and structures of the Academy. This theme lends itself particularly well to contemplating the diversity of communities implicated in research in this field, and challenges hegemonic pedagogical practices of the higher education sector by rethinking the role of students, scholars and society today. Reflecting on and analysing these experiences, a final consideration turns to the potential for *Thinking Inside the Box* to inform wider pedagogies of International Relations.

¹ To read more on the work of contributors, see: Le Bourdon and Pears (2024); Griffin (2023).

² Eventually, part of this presentation was recently published as an academic paper (Grimaldi; Smith, 2024).

2 What does it mean to Think Inside the Box?

As a theoretical framework, Thinking Inside the Box draws predominantly from Paulo Freire's "Pedagogy of the Oppressed" (Freire, 1968) to incorporate critical, decolonial and anti-authoritarian elements into learning spaces. Freire, a Brazilian scholar, educator and critical theorist, first rose to significant national acclaim in the 1960s, when his pedagogical methods were put to large-scale application through a literacy programme in the North-East of the country. Fundamentally, Freire's approach is situated to rethink the purpose and logics of education from the realities of post-colonial Latin America, with all its vast and deeply embedded inequalities and structural violence. For Freire, education in this context needs to serve the purpose of liberating both learners and educators from their internalised colonial preconceptions, or 'oppression', through a process he calls 'conscientisation' (*conscientização*). Conscientisation, which takes place through knowledge co-creation, seeks to transform learners and educators alike into socially conscious actors, by raising their capabilities and agency in intervening in their own and others' conditions of oppression.

Based on these Freirian concepts, in order to create transformative learning, it is important to move away from the colonially-imbued 'banking model' of education, whereby students are presented with so-called truths, or facts, and judged according to how well they can repeat them back. Instead, Thinking Inside the Box invites students and staff to teach and learn together, challenging preconceived ideas and incorporating situated life experiences into the learning experience. According to this approach, and its commitment to social change, learners collectively engage in the transformative process of conscientisation, liberation and empowerment. We think about what lays dormant and ready to provoke us, what is already inside the box, as opposed to what is conventionally perceived as the more critical and creative act of 'thinking outside the box'.

Thinking Inside the Box is guided by specific types of archives, those constructed around or in dialogue with Latin American political resistance and struggle, in particular under authoritarianism during the Cold War. In doing so, Thinking Inside the Box makes important contributions to the increasing fields of scholarship that engage cultural artefacts, as a way of countering hegemonic narratives around international relations and solidarity during Latin America's Cold War. Most recently, examples of such research were brought together through a special issue of *Alternautas*, titled "Solidarity Politics: the reactivation of European-Latin American solidarities" (Grimaldi; Marty, 2024)³. More broadly, cultural historians have also widened their parameters to explore Latin American Cold War solidarities as part of a broader 'Global South,' in particular around the artworks and publications produced by the Cuban Organisation of Solidarity with the People of Africa, Asia and Latin America (OSPAAAL) (Grimaldi; Gukelberger, 2024; Stites Mor, 2022; Parrott, 2022)⁴.

³ See also: Featherstone, Gowland and Karaliotas (2024); Marty (2024); Bradbury, Redden and McIndoe (2024); Barria Bignotti and Rudman (2024); Garbe (2024); Grimaldi and Smith (2024)

⁴ See also: Molden (2024); Christoph (2024); Losier, Camacho Padilla (2024); Stites Mor (2024); Schmiedecke, Zerwes and Generoso (2024); Hearman (2024); Grimaldi and Gukelberger (2024).

Many of the archives discussed as part of these publications are the same or closely resemble the archives we use in *Thinking Inside the Box*.

We approach these artefacts of Latin American Cold War political resistance and solidarity in the spirit of Ana Longoni and others, by “thinking, doing, positioning, conceiving, exhibiting and politically historicising the disruptive force and the critical capacity of the artistic-political practices that have taken place in Latin America” (Longoni, 2016). The project also follows Paulo Freire’s understand of learning as it takes place “through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each Other” (Freire, 1968, p. 45), emphasising the centrality of collective interpretation and reflection in the knowledge-creation process. Finally, the project borrows from performance theory to guide its objectives: from knowledge, comes co-creation. In this way, we ‘perform’ the archive by inviting others to explore its contents, and contribute to unlocking its political agency in the present (Carvalho; Grimaldi, 2024). Finally, drawing from Diana Taylor’s theorisation of Latin American archives, the concept of the ‘repertoire’ grounds our understanding of this performative knowledge transmission process:

The repertoire requires presence: people participate in the production and reproduction of knowledge by “being there”, being part of the transmission. As opposed to the supposedly stable objects in the archive, the actions that are the repertoire do not remain the same. The repertoire both keeps and transforms choreographies of meaning (Taylor, 2003, p. 20).

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Combining these ideas, *Thinking Inside the Box* takes a critical pedagogical approach to learning and teaching about Cold War Latin America by interacting with archives through collective presence, exploration and interpretation. Enveloping these experiences, informal, everyday, public or virtual spaces of encounter and exchange generate transformative moments of political awareness, collective action and social impact. In this, the article joins a growing, if fragmented, conversation developing around and advocating the continued relevance of Paulo Freire’s work in present global contexts (Zuin; de Mello, 2024; Walsh, 2021; Kester; Aryoubi, 2020).

A recent iteration of *Thinking Inside the Box*, themed around the year ‘1973’, illustrates how these ideas are put into practice. While the principles of *Thinking Inside the Box* are anti-prescriptive, certain steps are worth mentioning. First, we sent out an invitation to prospective students and academic staff based on modules relating to Latin America, social movements, solidarity, art history and 20th century history. Second, we held an initial meeting to introduce participants to our ideas and the guiding principles of *Thinking Inside the Box*, and our objective to generate transformative learning experiences through archival research. During this meeting, participants were asked to begin sharing ideas: what archives would they like to visit? What themes might we use to guide the project? What kind of activities might we organise to share our work? And, what skills and experience could we collectively contribute? Finally, we carried out the archival visits themselves, where we explored, analysed, and collectively identified specific pieces to take forward in the project.

The subsequent parts of the process emerged much more organically, with informal meetings forming the basis of our organisational work and project design. Meanwhile, what might be called ‘lectures’, ‘seminars’, ‘reading lists’, and skills-based sessions were offered according to what the students identified as central to their ability to carry out the project, as well as the availability of relevant expertise. Importantly, students were encouraged to consider their core studies and other commitments as part of the expectations we set ourselves, ensuring the project remained a source of fulfilment rather than becoming a source of stress and anxiety. As a result, many comfortably dipped in and out of the project according to their availability. Our scheduling and internal deadlines were therefore dependent entirely on the particular combination of participants present. In other words, the project was shaped by our specific collective engagement with the archive, a moment in time that cannot be replicated or prescribed.

The resulting project and related activities focused on the themes of ‘Hope, Struggle and Solidarity’. While the details of the project are discussed in much greater depth elsewhere (Grimaldi; Smith, 2024), how the students arrived at this focus, and how they decided upon their specific objectives, are relevant to contemplating its potential wider application. During informal discussions, students became interested in the aesthetics of political art and music that had emerged through solidarity with Latin Americans during the Cold War more broadly, and around Chile’s 1973 military coup more specifically. Rather than focusing on themes of violence and victimhood, they drew from ideas they encountered in the archives to take a position: they wanted to generate hope and solidarity in the present by reawakening the part of its past that struggled for a better future. To do this, students not only curated a month-long exhibition that was later digitised and made publicly available, but also produced their own research-based essays and carried out a series of art-based workshops with both members of the public and the local Chilean and Latin American diaspora.

By evaluating Thinking Inside the Box as a pedagogical approach based on the case study of ‘1973’, this research contemplates its potential application to further contexts within the field of International Relations. In more mainstream terms, it constitutes a form of both research-led-teaching, and teaching-led-research. As such, the project must be interpreted not only in terms of its contributions to critical pedagogical theory and practice, but also its intellectual contributions to the historiography of Latin America’s Cold War through processes of student-led co-creation.

3 Sources and their Histories

This study combines interview materials and autoethnography. It draws on a dataset based on peer-to-peer interviews, collected as part of a project by a small team of researchers in 2023⁵. Having been part of the Thinking Inside the Box project myself, the interviews were designed and conducted independently, by three first-year students at the University of Leeds, who had not participated. These

⁵ THINKING INSIDE THE BOX. Hope, Struggle & Solidarity. Available at: <https://www.thinkinginsidethebox.co.uk/hope-struggle-solidarity>. Accessed on: 6 mar. 2025.

students and I were brought together through the Laidlaw Scholarship programme, through which we developed a broader project under my supervision. Also under my supervision, each of the students were able to design and deliver on their own individual research projects. Grace Nash, a Sociology student, contributed to the project's approach by incorporating questions around the paradox of decolonising education in a neoliberal higher education system. Lily Else, a Psychology student, designed the project's methodological structure and oversaw peer-to-peer interviews. Focusing on the decolonisation of public spaces and artefacts, Law student Hazel Maris used the project to explore the role of archives in the decolonisation of monuments and national archives in Portugal and Spain. Nash, Else and Maris have since presented their experiences, research findings and interpretations at conferences and in writing⁶.

They built their interview prompts around a specific set of research themes identified through literature reviews, in the context of a broader collective research agenda. They sought to explore themes such as authentic and synoptic assessment, experiential learning, critical and decolonial pedagogies, interview methods, public history, and the marketisation of universities. To prompt a more organic approach to these topics, their conversational prompts addressed how and why participants got involved in the project, what stood out in their experiences, challenges met and skills acquired, the communities they engaged with, their broader experience of being students, and what they see for the future of the project from a contemporary higher education perspective.

In this sense, my intention was to revisit a set of transcriptions with questions that they had not yet been asked. At the same time, Maris, Nash and Else's interviews were also designed in a way that would greatly benefit the present review. Their methodological approach incorporated the concepts of "friendship as method" (Tillman-Healy, 2003) and "experiential narrative learning" (Clark; Rossiter, 2008), using the existing relationships between interviewees to facilitate collective reflections. After conducting the interviews, both online and in-person, interviews were transcribed with the assistance of the Microsoft Teams transcribing function, and then manually checked for errors.

The following cannot be reduced to a footnote. I wish to express my immense gratitude to these three brilliant scholars. Not only was it an absolute pleasure to work with them, but I owe a fundamental part of my learning as a researcher, an educator and a person to the insightful and inspiring conversations we had over the course of our six months working together on the project, as well as the interactions we have had since, as colleagues.

The data collected by Maris, Else and Nash comprises 17 interview transcripts: seven pairs and one three-person peer-to-peer interviewees between student participants; seven individual staff interviews, and two individual 'public stakeholder' interviews, all of whom were involved in *Thinking Inside the Box: 1973* in some capacity. The interviewees came from various institutions, including

⁶ At the 2023 Student Success in Taught Education Conference at the University of Leeds, Nash, Else and Maris presented "Freedom of the Archive! Students' evaluations of co-created learning"; their research project summaries can also be found here: <https://www.thinkinginsidethebox.co.uk/publications>. Accessed on: 26 ago. 2024.

King's College London, Queen Mary London, and the Universities of Leeds and Liverpool. Staff and public interviews were not carried out through the peer-to-peer method for the simple reason that they had not worked directly in collaboration with one another, rendering the concept of 'friendship as method' redundant. Instead, they were semi-structured. Having been closely involved in the project since it began, I was also interviewed as part of the staff category, although I exclude this from my analysis.

At certain points, interviews referred to events in which I had also been involved, memories I shared and ideas I contributed to, and were marked by my own preconceptions, assumptions and memories. While these can never be fully disentangled, I disclose my position for the reader wherever necessary. I acknowledge these as autoethnographic elements of the research, which I thread throughout my presentation of the interview materials to provide context and additional perspectives.

It is also the case that, while reading the transcripts, I was able to identify most of the interviewees through minor details known to me through my close engagement with them. To minimise the relevance of my knowing the identity of the interviewees, as well as the opportunity for readers to identify them, I focus my analysis on and include only minimal excerpts directly related to my discussion, and will not grant in my analysis any significance to the interviewee's specific role or position. In any case, the interviews demonstrate that the lines between public, student and staff participants are not clear-cut, in fact, there are examples of both learning and teaching taking place for all those interviewed. Likewise, the two 'public stakeholders' were a student and a postdoctoral researcher/lecturer, disintegrating the relevance of these categories.

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4 Analysing for Political Pedagogy

In this article, I draw on the debates introduced in section 1 of this article, around political pedagogy, informal spaces, and archives. I return to the anonymised interview transcripts discussed in section 3, labelled with letters, with the following questions in mind: how does Thinking Inside the Box: 1973, as a politically-oriented educational agenda, mobilise Latin America's Cold War as a pedagogical tool? And, what role is played by the informality of collaborative learning spaces in the process?

While guided by these two broad research questions, I was mindful to minimise my intervention in the thematic analysis of the materials by limiting my first reading of the transcripts to four broad categories, based on my research questions and corresponding concepts. These were: learning about Cold War Latin American politics, archives as a learning tool, and learning in everyday, informal spaces, and the politics of pedagogy. Before my second reading, these categories had already shifted, broadening to allow for more expansive answers: interpretations of the learning content; archives and people; informality, affect and presence; and the politics of education today. I then identified key quotes and vignettes that spoke to the emergent themes, which I present through a conversation between participants and with myself.

4.1 Interpretations of Content and Subject Matter

Solidarity with Chile was a long time ago [...] what does it mean today? (H).

When the question of why or how they joined the project arose, a vast majority of participants pointed to the subject matter we had indeed proposed: political struggle and resistance against authoritarianism in Latin America, between the 1960s and 1980s. Many likewise framed the project in the context of the 50-year anniversary of the Chilean military coup of 1973, an idea we had discussed during the initial meeting. They largely considered that they had developed specific knowledge around the coup as a result. Some were also attracted to the project because of its coverage of broader topics, such as political resistance, military dictatorships, global solidarity, US foreign policy, or even, in one case, the Chilean diaspora in West Yorkshire, which they hoped to learn more about by joining. Others developed more specific research interests, such as Latin American revolutions from 1989, 1970s Argentina, sport and dictatorship, and global history and empire. Others identified with the project's political dimensions, such as U, who was drawn by the potential to explore the politics of visual communication, or K, who cited the "urgency of the artworks" in communicating political messages as a reason for joining.

In many cases, the learning 'content' of the project was seen as a way of expanding on formal learning that took place in the University. L, for example, found that their accredited modules only "brush[ed] through" Latin America, and joined the project as a way of developing more detailed knowledge about the region. The project also highlighted the centrality of interdisciplinarity. The project attracted people who were only tangentially connected to Latin America and Cold War politics, be it through chance or personal interest. C recalled how, despite not being "an expert in any of these fields, [...] my purview has been informed and influenced by the scholars around me, the ones with whom I exchange ideas and collaborate through wider networks". In this way, the content matter was also viewed as an opportunity to 'fill in the gaps' and broaden disciplinary horizons.

Thinking Inside the Box: 1973 brought together students from a variety of cultural backgrounds and disciplines, including Latin American Studies, Strategic Communications, History, Culture and Languages, International Relations and Development Studies, offering students a truly inter- and trans-disciplinary experience. As H noted, "the undergraduates that got involved in this weren't really Latin Americanists"; some were art history or politics students. The diversity of perspectives produced a range of interpretations of the project's subject matter, many of which were not directly centred on Latin America's Cold War. Indeed, when reflecting on broader topics such as political resistance and authoritarianism, participants proposed that while the archival approach was fundamental, the learning content could just as easily been focused on other regions or moments in history (V, C, N, H, and A).

The political messages, movements, imaginations and desires contained within the archives were central to the project's pedagogical design, but also stood out in the participants' minds as

conducive to learning specific content. Specific actors, political movements, anecdotes or facts about popular culture in Cold War Latin America were scattered across the narratives and memories of those most actively engaged in the project's archival work. Victor Jara, a Chilean singer murdered during the country's 1973 coup d'état, inspired numerous participants through his music, lyrics, life story, and global status as a symbol of revolutionary hope, which shaped both their learning and their contributions to knowledge. Content that came with social context therefore enhanced overall learning.

Content learning was also associated with 'Thinking Inside the Box' historiographical dimensions. For M, the value of the work was in its engagement with voices and experiences that had been historically marginalised through state repression: "I think it's really important to have this kind of space to explore this visual, artistic kind of movement that happened because a lot of it was produced incredibly underground." Likewise, J was conscious of how the construction of dominant historical narratives "filter[s]" and "excludes a lot of content". Some participants also understood this as a form of memory work (Assmann 2023, p. 3), with implications for the politics of memory. U defined the project as an opportunity to "break new boundaries" by learning about "the forgotten continent" (U). For W, one of the most important things they learned about politics during the Cold War was how Latin Americans are "still kind of recovering almost and trying to come to terms with their past and their history." One of the project's noted outcomes was "keeping those sorts of memories alive" (J); while B associated their learning about musicians and artists "manifesting against the coup" as a way of "not forgetting" (B). In this way, content was also perceived in relation to its social impact.

Participants often explained that this recovery of silenced or omitted voices and experiences helped them to conceptualise the learning of politics in new ways. The "artistic side of it, and songwriting" components shifted E's perspective, challenging previous experiences of learning about politics: "I was always in this, like, politics, politics, mentality, like logic, like what's going on? Essay writing". Many emphasised the project's ability to expose broader elements of global politics. In their conversation, S and B discussed what they learned about political censorship, cultural production and international solidarity, noting the significance of transnational networks in the production and circulation of political communications: "a lot of the album covers had been created outside of Latin America in Europe, some by exiles, some also by British people who were trying to show this solidarity" (S). In a similar context, K talks about the significance of the "worldwide network of workers and socialists and people trying to look after each other" as part of their learning.

Historical artefacts of political resistance in Cold War Latin America also sparked ideas about the relationship between past and present: "students could see how, for example, other students would react to the oppressive powers of the time, you know, in 1970s and 80s Latin America" (V). The images, messages and struggles contained in the artefacts were described as "echo[ing] into the present" (N); E drew direct lines between the artworks of 1970s Latin America with those of "today in Leeds"; E was inspired to think about the present-day "silencing" of youth opposition, "even in the West"; and

Q says it is more “needed than ever” to think about the connections between resistance to dictatorship and the present-day portrayals of protest in the UK. In one conversation, A described a visual dialogue between the Chilean artworks of the past and some bunting they saw in the student union, which had just recently been created in solidarity with refugees. To explore this dialogue between past and present further, one group of participants produced a documentary, inspired by their views of UK politics today⁷. Another fascinating intervention from V contemplates how the artefacts themselves are used in different ways by different groups today. The embassies that got involved in the project, they argued, saw the archives as “a kind of soft power” (V).

Conversations and interviews unanimously communicated optimism about the outcomes of the project, as well as positivity about its “unique potential” and its ability to enhance “the teaching of Latin American history.” D argues that the project is not just for the benefit of students and local communities, but also for research and research cultures more broadly. For W, it prompted a reflection on historiography itself, in particular the narrative they had received about the Cold War during secondary school education: “you kinda just learn like the Bay of Pigs and kind of the Cuban Revolution. You don’t go further.” Likewise, U says “[W]e did a lot of America actually. The anglophone, right. So yeah, we [did] zero history from Latin America as well, [it] just wasn’t talked about.” A Latin American participant offered another critical perspective, based on the fact they had not previously learned about the intricacies of Chile in 1973, despite being from a neighbouring country (B).

In many ways, the specific ‘content’ of the project did not necessarily matter. While learning specifically about political resistance during Latin America’s Cold War did appear as both a reason and significant outcome for participants, so did learning about multiple other subjects and perspectives. What mattered was that this content could consolidate or challenge existing knowledge and conceptions. It also mattered that this content was narrated through individuals, historical events, ideas and cultural reference points that participants could identify with; content that they would not usually have access to through formal study. Finally, the process of subject-specific learning was also defined in relation to its social impact, particularly through the way past and present relate to one another. Participants were therefore mindful of the politics of memory and knowledge in relation to the subject matter, demonstrating critical approaches to learning and knowledge-production around the content itself.

4.2 Archives and People

You kind of hear these mythical things about archives, but probably don’t know what they are, or where they would be, or how you might find them (T).

⁷ THINKING INSIDE THE BOX. **Documentary: Thinking Inside the Box.** In: YouTube. 2023. 17min34seg. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NqIpskNkz3w&t=12s&ab_channel=ThinkingInsideTheBox. Accessed on: 06 mar. 2025.

In 2016, Thinking Inside the Box emerged as a project to explore a specific archival collection: the Senate House Library Latin American Political Pamphlets and Poster Collection⁸. When the project first invited student collaboration in 2021, it was presented as an opportunity to learn about Latin American political resistance and struggle against dictatorship between the 1970s and 1980s. Likewise, in its 2022 iteration, the project revolved around 1973, with the memory of the Chilean military coup of 1973 as a point of departure. From its inception, therefore, Thinking Inside the Box established politics, alongside Latin American history and global solidarity, as a central part of its content. Even when the project expanded to include other archives, political struggle continued to dominate. Although these themes were shaped by the research expertise of the scholars who participated, it is in essence the archives that carry this political charge through their very existence (see Longoni, 2016). As once participant noted, the materials we explored were ephemeral:

They weren't meant to be kept. They were made to just sort of shout into the void and express anger and discontent about the situation back then. But they were just paper, right? Whereas the state has, you know, archives and boxes and hallways full of all these official records. But these were just posters. And yet they've remained. And that's the beauty of the project (U).

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For some, the archival component was what attracted them to the project. Archives were the reason for joining because they “piqued interest” (K) and induced “adrenaline” (R), even for those who noted they had no prior experience (N, V). Archives were also at the centre of “eye-opening transformational experiences” (K) during the project, and were remembered for ‘speaking to’ participants (E, Y). Many alluded, in some way or another, to the archives’ “incredible power to make history” and “give back some tangibility to those sometimes abstract dynamics” (V); they made “history feel very real” (G).

Like archives, people were also described as sources of knowledge, particularly the Latin American exiles and wider diaspora who had been involved in solidarity work in the past, acting as interlocutors or transmitters between the archives and their present-day meanings. While the importance of people, community and collaboration is discussed further in the next section, it is worth reflecting on how people shaped the learning experience. Referring to a videocall between political activist, Kadima, and project participants, V calls the Chilean artist “the missing point between us and the material.” Through this conversation, those involved in the project from Leeds learned about artistic and cultural practices of political resistance under the military regime in Chile straight from the source (A). In their recollection of the dialogue with Kadima, L highlights their curiosity about the circulation of political messages in instances of censorship or illiteracy: “[...] talking to Kadima. Like you said, that was that was massive. Talking about, I mean, things I hadn't even thought about”.

⁸ ANDERSON, Christine; CAZZASA, Julio. Thinking Inside the Boxes: The Latin American Political Pamphlets Collection at Senate House Library [Online], Feb. 2, 2016. Available at: <https://latinamericandiaries.blogs.sas.ac.uk/2016/02/02/thinking-inside-the-boxes-the-ilas-latin-american-political-pamphlets-collection>. Accessed on: 06 mar. 2025.

In their majority, participants associated the archives with people and human interactions. More specifically, the people involved were conceptualised as active sources of knowledge that gave new life and meaning to artefacts of the past. Reading multiple references to the importance of memories, lived experience, embodied knowledge, testimony and oral history blurred the lines between archives and people. Participants spoke of a “dialogue between different generations” (M); the “realness” of their interactions with the local Chilean exile diaspora as well as people living in Chile (L).

Participants also commented on how the scholarly field of Latin American Studies itself, and the networks it is made up of, were what made the project possible. By working trans-institutionally, these scholars bridged the formal and informal spheres through their contributions to Thinking Inside the Box. As D notes, the archives themselves would not exist without scholar-activists of the past, whose connections with both the Academy and solidarity networks were fundamental to their creation. M remembers their interactions with scholars as a highlight of their experience, while G associated their learning with networks of “teachers that were focused on Latin America”. As U proudly recalled, one of their teachers introduced them to the project through their relationship with “a big Latin American scholar”.

People, networks and communities were central to generating learning and new knowledge about politics, but also shaped its distinctive approach through performative, interpretational, and co-creational interactions. Participants often expressed a shift in their understanding of teamwork and collaboration, noting the project’s inclusivity and anti-hierarchical approach as an important part of their learning; “it makes you remember more” (P). In the following extract, L paints a vivid image of collaboration around the archive as a central part of their learning experience:

To get boxes out. You have no idea what’s in that box, and you’re going through, and then suddenly you’ve got a notepad and a pen next to you, and you’re making ideas because suddenly you’re thinking about months in the future and what you wanna do with this specific thing. You’re in a room full of people who, you can see they’re all thinking, having ideas and scribbling away themselves. And it’s just that really, for me, like, that learning, that collaborative learning. Everyone in a room. Creating ideas. That for me is what university is about (L).

Archives were exciting, intriguing, and central to the collaborative learning experience. At the same time, the concept of ‘archives’ went beyond the physical boxes they occupied, as they were also closely associated with people. This included the artists, activists, and academics who had formed part of their construction, but more importantly, those who could provide a living connection between the contents of the archives and the participants.

4.3 Informality, Affect and Presence

Ohh. I really enjoyed this one thing. I'm not sure if you were there or where. I think all of us we met at one place, and we all were, like, making posters. We were at a bar [...] and we were having like these really nice discussions. And all of us, we were just trying to make posters [...] We were making the logo for [the project]. Yeah, and you were trying to figure out, like, what should we add and what should we do? So that was really nice. It was really nice to talk and look at so many things. And in like such a casual setting (P).

Although two of the archives we explored through *Thinking Inside the Box: 1973* were hosted by university institutions, carrying out the archival work itself generated everyday and informal learning spaces. Defined broadly, these spaces included non-academic physical spaces and educational experiences taking place outside the infrastructure of university accredited learning. While the concept of informality or 'the everyday' was rarely engaged explicitly, participants associate some of their fondest and most significant moments with the informal spaces in which they took place. These included planning sessions at cafés, taking the train to and from the archive, hosting a film screening, running public-facing workshops, and the creation of virtual and digital spaces for informal interaction. Materiality, physical presence, collaboration and affect were often discussed in relation to these interactions, which included fellow participants, local audiences, researchers and scholars, as well as Latin American communities. The project's highlights therefore corresponded to the distinctive features of informal spaces and learning, reflections upon which often sparked comparisons to 'normal' university learning.

Informality was often narrated in the sense captured by K, as "that kind of stuff where it's quite friendly and kind of natural" (K). Even when learning took place in university spaces – such as classrooms and Teams meetings –, they were interpreted as 'informal' on the grounds that the participants had jointly decided when and where it took place, who would attend, and what would be discussed. Referring to what were essentially extra-curricular lectures in which content was delivered didactically, L said:

So, there were actually, they weren't lectures, there were more, they were teaching opportunities. So [there was] that was one led by [a participant], which gave a brief history of 1970s in Latin America, specifically Chile. And then there was also a conversation with [a participant]. Again, quite a brief overview. But it was something we really needed, cause the great thing about this project is you went into it and you were learning whilst creating something which was really awesome, and I really liked that and so, I mean, those were moments of great learning as well.

Online and digital spaces were also associated with informal or everyday forms of learning and collaborating. Social media was regularly cited as key to disseminating the project and inviting wider participation (J, T). It also contributed to a richer learning experience through its accessibility and inclusivity. When P was unable to attend the archives in person, they remembered the importance of digital materials in allowing them to participate, despite having missed the in-person archival

experience. What P is describing is not individual access to digitised materials, but a time when participants gathered to look through and discuss digital materials collaboratively, and in physical presence of one another. This materiality and physical presence were often thought about as unique to the project, as experiences rarely afforded in formal university spaces. M describes the importance of the “tactile experience”, while Q compares the archives to physical books, which are becoming increasingly underappreciated with the rise of digitised publications. When discussing the benefits of the project’s material dimensions, L was reminded of their respective university learning experience:

In a degree like I’m doing, pretty much everything you’re reading is online, it’s digital. You don’t get to put your hands in it. You don’t get to, you don’t get that whole tactile sensation, which is a part of learning that actually excites me, and which makes me feel like there’s so much more to academia than you know, just like this, because that to me is an interesting, rather than just the digital.

H recalls the chance presential meetings that led to theirs and others’ involvement in the project, which they attribute to its voluntary and extracurricular nature, as opposed to formal learning. When talking about their role as a documentary filmmaker on the project, U’s memories are filled with imagery of everyday spaces:

On that point, I just physically go around places. That’s just kind of fun. Just I’d have to get the train. I’d have to get on the bus. I’d like be filming on the bus to get transition shots, you know? Yeah, I’d be cycling around, like filming.

The physical presence of members of the public was also highlighted in a number of different contexts. When prompted to think about the broader impacts of their work through the project, G noted the presential and performative qualities that appeared through events they organised:

And so just the fact that people actually went there and the fact that the embassy wanted to be involved was really cool. But that is the impact for like people actually wanted to show up. Ohh same thing for the exhibition in how we had the Chilean ambassador show up.

Physical presence and physical spaces were also regularly cited as a form of antidote to effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent changes to university teaching (U; D). Participants connected their experiences with “real life, real interaction” (B), as opposed to the sense of “brush[ing] through” their learning (L) and a perceived lack of communication in formal online learning spaces (F). Students in particular spoke about the hold COVID still seemed to have over their learning, as online (as well as digital) elements continue to dominate. E spoke about social despondency, which they associated with the legacy of COVID-era teaching:

I don’t even need to turn my camera on. Most people don’t have their cameras on. And also, you don’t see people outside of, I guess the computer [...] you can just turn your mic off and pretend you’re not there.

Through their interpretation, M sparked a compelling conversation about the different ‘sides of the brain’ that presential learning can awaken. In response, E reflected on how the project’s presential qualities “pushed me out of my comfort zone”, in contrast to that of the structures reinforced through the post-COVID era: “Like essay writing. I have to be logical. I have to follow a structure. So I don’t fail” (E).

Another theme that permeated peoples’ narratives was affect, which was often spoken about in relation to the performative elements of the project, such as archival work, concerts, exhibitions and workshops, as well as people, as conduits of Cold War Latin America. Various interviews touched on a specific event, organised by students and sponsored by Queen Mary University and the Argentine Embassy in London. The event coincided with the anniversary of the Argentine military coup, involving a panel discussion and screening of the recently released film “1985”, which centres on the trials that took place following the fall of the country’s dictatorial regime. The film screening was often mentioned in conjunction with the broader impacts that *Thinking Inside the Box: 1973* had on wider communities (D; V), particularly Argentine refugees and second or third generation exiles (F; U).

Affect also fed into narratives in relation to informal learning spaces and material artefacts. Reflecting on their longer educational trajectory, L acknowledged that “the things I’ve learned are the things that excited me, or that moved me, or that had some sort of emotion or some sort of connection or communication attached to it.” E described an intense and somewhat spiritual personal experience of collective presence:

I just found it so nice when we were just drawing on the table, and then you would look over at someone else’s drawing [...] Yeah, you would ask [about] the message. [...] Without even knowing their name, and they just go into it, they get into it so deeply and like what their souls speaks. And then you’re like wow. Um, but yeah, I think I think module teaching could really benefit from a little bit more community and. Eye contact and stuff.

Participants also identified a variety of relationships that were impacted through the project’s commitment to non-hierarchical, people-centred collaboration, which were also presented as something contrary to formal university spaces. J felt that barriers were broken down between students and staff members, and that this “fostered [a] sort of different way of learning that was more approachable” and “humanising”. As an international exchange student, F felt the project provided unique opportunities to socialise with British students and strengthen their confidence in spoken English, which prompted U to consider how the project provided a social network they could engage with around their busy schedule, something difficult to achieve within formal student cohorts. Relationships with local communities were created, strengthened, and enhanced through the project, an achievement F associates with the visual materials and their ability to speak across ages, cultures and other minority groups. One of K’s memorable moments was participating in public-facing workshops which brought their research “to a wider kind of community”, as was L’s, who preferred the workshops to exhibitions due to the quality of engagement they generated: “even though we had lots

of people coming in and looking at everything [at the exhibition], it was the workshops where we sat there talking with people”.

For a variety of reasons, various participants remembered a specific encounter that took place between members of the project, who were sat together in Leeds, and Kadima, the aforementioned artist in Santiago de Chile. L called it one of their “peak moments of the experience”. The conversation with Kadima was informal, and centred around his life experiences as an activist since the dictatorship. They also discussed his role as the founder and curator of a vast archive of political posters and other printed and digital materials. At the time of the project, this archive was under threat of closure and potential dissolution, part of a ‘regeneration’ project in the city of Santiago de Chile that eventually forced the collection – and Kadima – from their home. In this context, participants were hopeful that their engagement would bring attention to the collection and provide further justification for its preservation (V, H, A), a success won in 2024 through funding from the Endangered Archives project at UCLA.

Reflecting on a visit from a Chilean exile based in Scotland⁹, A remembered learning to work together with the former refugee to facilitate a spontaneous music and singing performance for a gathering of Chileans and local students, in a public meeting space. Similarly, L recalls with pride being approached by a local school, who asked whether they could organise an art-based competition for the pupils, based on *Thinking Inside the Box*: 1973. These everyday, human interactions between people were seen not only as moments of learning, but also opportunities to pursue common goals with local communities (M; R).

Several participants were eager to say that this type of learning, associated with informal spaces and human exchanges, should form part of university experiences. The conversations showed that the concept of ‘informal learning’ was not as clear-cut as the difference between institutional and non-institutional physical spaces or learning styles. Rather, what mattered for informality were the relationships between participants, the relative autonomy they had over the process, and emotional and physical presence. The next and final subsection discusses how these memorable and transformative moments of the project, which led to critical reflections on teaching and learning, also contributed to more complex debates and contemplations about the contemporary politics of education itself.

⁹ ARREDONDO, Carlos. Carlos Arredondo – Profile [Website]. Available at: <https://www.carlosarredondo.com/profile.htm>. Accessed on: 06. mar. 2025.

4.4 Transformative Political Learning

We should all realise how big these weapons were, you know?
(Q).

Participants often narrated the project's approach in opposition to 'regular' university education, how it contributed to experience-based knowledge about the politics of teaching. Participants also recognised the academic, professional and personal skills they acquired through their involvement, and attached to them a sense of empowerment. In considering the project in relation to formal teaching and learning, a recurrent theme was assessment, which sparked interesting thoughts around both the pedagogy of politics studies and the politics of pedagogy in informal and formal spaces.

The interviews revealed a variety of ways in which people, affect and everyday spaces combined to produce specific skills outcomes as part of their learning about politics. A, for example, associates their interactions with Latin American exiles of 1970s with interview skills. Others thought in professional terms, such as how the project might be portrayed on a CV (K), or how informal networking might lead to future opportunities (G). Participants also reflected on the skills required to combine research, political institutions, cultural production and social impact (R, N), such as website building, risk assessments, collaboration, project management, curation and other "soft skills" needed to navigate the administrative departments of universities and other formal institutions (L).

There were also challenges and opportunities for feedback and re-evaluation. A points to the challenges of securing an exhibition space in the university union building, in particular the administrative 'red tape' and barriers they faced; M echoed the sentiment, calling this part of the project "one of the biggest challenges". At the same time, participants learned how to incorporate policies of equality, diversity and inclusion into their research and public engagement. A also refers to the complexities of working with exiles, many of which were older people who required additional support to visit the university and participate in events; likewise, W identified accessibility issues that were addressed through the creation of QR codes and audio descriptions at a parallel exhibition.

Students in particular saw these experiences as constitutive of personal development and empowerment. As pointed out by C, "the scope of TITB expands the spaces in which students can take ownership". They gained confidence with their skills and learned more about themselves. K felt "encouraged a little bit more to kind of view myself as an academic", while E considers the project to have "transformed" their ideas about future lines of employment. When thinking about how the project and its outcomes, including skills and personal development, participants contemplated what Thinking Inside the Box might look in the formalised spaces of the university and often arrived at the question of assessment. As L realised during their interview: "I'm gunna remember this actually. You know, when I probably won't remember essays I wrote" (L).

Along these lines, a particularly insightful exchange took place between L and K. In it, L described university assessment as providing "a narrow way of feeding back" which failed to generate

a “real feeling of success or of joy”. By comparison, they associated Thinking Inside the Box with being “more respected” for their interpretations, discoveries and contributions as a scholars. When K raised concerns about “quantify[ing] the experience”, L added that “it should be the progress and the ideas and the commitment as well”.

Echoing a sentiment I have heard countless times over the years, E argued that formal assessment de-incentivised learning: “So I have like, I think 10 or 12 weeks, and the essay was on one of those weeks. So it's like kind of pointless to show up for the rest of the module.” For M, this also raised tensions in terms of individual students who might stand to benefit from a more critical pedagogical approach. They question the hegemony of text-oriented assessment types that favour some learner types over others, favouring the inclusion of verbal communication that they believe makes “engagement with the topic just lights up” (M).

As well as challenging assumptions and mainstream narratives about politics under military rule in Cold War Latin America, conversations about Thinking Inside the Box: 1973 contributed to the formulation of normative ideas about pedagogy. The interviews offered critical interpretations of what education ‘should’ or ‘should not’ be, based on their experiences of the project, and the tensions that emerge when imagining the project’s sustainability in the current climate of higher education.

Certain conversations identified what they saw as the incongruities between Thinking Inside the Box and learning that has been formalised by university structures. C described the project as an “outlier disruptor,” which has the potential to challenge the gatekeeping of pedagogical design, as well as the concept of assessment. Reflecting on their interactions with the university and student union’s administrative, A argued that existing structures pose a barrier to generating decolonial learning experiences within university spaces. T offered a rounded summary of the ideas that appeared across many other interviews, including the individualising nature of formal assessment and the relationship between the university as an employer and educators as workers: simply put, the university is “not set up to teach well” (T). D agrees, and expresses frustration at how an “outdated” university system prevents the development of projects like Thinking Inside the Box.

In equal measure, participants both rejected and supported the idea of something like Thinking Inside the Box being incorporated into formal structures. K focused their ideas around the importance of maintaining the archive and interactions with external scholars and practitioners (K). F deemed it crucial to replicate the collaborative, communication-based teamwork, audience engagement and community impact, as well as the development of skills with real-world implications. G pointed to the practical benefits of formalising these experiences in terms of scheduling, which would presumably make participation more accessible and facilitate its administration. In response, R proposed that this could also improve collaborations between institutions.

Regardless of their visions, participants were moved to affirm their support for the approach and experience of Thinking Inside the Box; they believed it should form part of university learning – for all involved –, and at the same time, that there were things about the formal student experience that needed to change. The question of whether or not Thinking Inside the Box might be formalised

is not one I have been able to answer yet myself, however, certain parts of the framework could certainly be included as part of formal accreditation. In any case, participants understood and were critical of the politics of learning, and saw first-hand the struggle to create transformational learning experiences within university structures. They saw *Thinking Inside the Box: 1973* as empowering and respectful, and as valuing commitment and diverse learner types in a way that formal assessment cannot.

5 Implications for the Pedagogy of International Relations

At a most basic level, *Thinking Inside the Box: 1973* offered researchers, educators, students, and anyone else who took part the opportunity, to learn about Latin America's Cold War. More broadly, the project involved teaching and learning around politics, history, international relations and inter-cultural exchange, making it flexible in terms of content. However, the project's focus on cultural, visual and printed artefacts allowed for nuanced engagement from the perspective of transnational solidarity as a dimension of broader international relations, demonstrating the ability to develop specialist knowledge without extensive prescription. In this sense, *Thinking Inside the Box* might be considered applicable to any subject matter that can be approached through archival collections, including printed and/or audio-visual materials, that contain counter-hegemonic narratives. This includes international communications, posters, flyers, pamphlets, photos, films, music, performance and other cultural artefacts, but also, importantly, people. This applies to a range of sub-fields in Politics and/or International Relations, particularly in complementing traditional interpretations of the field which limit concepts to top-down politics, state-state dialogue, diplomatic or military relations, and other bilateral and multilateral agreements.

As well as its flexibility in terms of the variety of subjects that could benefit from the *Thinking Inside the Box* approach, the project's ability to make use of informal spaces and digital archives also make it highly transferrable in a practical sense. At the same time, there is no prescriptive or definitive step-by-step guide to reiterating *Thinking Inside the Box*. What is absolutely key is the desire to generate liberatory experiences that meaningfully contribute to social justice in the sphere of International Relations; a commitment to bridging the academic-activist border. Likewise, the process requires trust. Openness and reflexivity are not easy to maintain and require leaving one's comfort zone, by letting go of the ingrained research-teaching paradigms and procedures to allow for an organic journey to take over.

How these principles translate into praxis can be identified through the process we followed. In every interaction, I was mindful to avoid slipping into the role of the didactic 'teacher'. I made my contributions where I felt I had most relevant expertise to what the students wanted to know or do, not based on my own perception of relevance. As academic staff, it is important to wait for student participants to come up with their own ideas before proposing your own objectives; to offer suggestions and advice, whilst maintaining transparency around the limitations of your experience and

knowledge; and to allow students to take on the management and major decision making in the process, offering mentorship instead of instruction. As experienced researchers, we will inevitably have connections with relevant colleagues and industry professionals, who can be invited to support the project. At the same time, it is important to allow the students to mobilise their own networks as members of the local community.

Finally, this article has contemplated some of the key ways in which the fundamental dimensions of informality and presence are created. Travelling to and from the archive together, ensuring explorations and interpretations of the materials are in-person, meeting somewhere to walk to the classroom or informal meetings space together, or using local cafes, bars, restaurants and outdoor spaces, are all good examples of how informality can be created both on and off campus. Importantly, digital archives can also be used as an alternative to physical ones, for example by printing a selection of materials and put them in real boxes to imitate the experience of ‘opening boxes’ together. This particular moment has remained in the minds of the interviewed participants, who describe a way of learning about politics that has social impact and contributes to memory, that has the potential to build community through in-person experiences, and that would render the ‘formal’ experiences of university more accessible and memorable. At the time of writing, the unanswered question remains as to whether and if so how, within the available structures, it is possible to formalise Thinking Inside the Box without surrendering its underpinning principles.

6 Conclusion

To bring this article to a close, I defer to the compelling insight of a Brazilian participant, X, whose pedagogical reflection of the project reaffirmed the core principles of Thinking Inside the Box. Discussing the importance of the project, they noted its commitment to transformative and liberatory learning experiences for students and for local communities:

Here we are pushing the students to have [the] liberty, freedom and autonomy to explore Latin American histories in a new way. [...] In Latin American Universities, we work a lot with social projects, with communities. You know, for us it's because we are very close to them. As with minorities, groups like Afro-descendants, indigenous communities [...] The very active involvement of these students and the mixing together of them all... the research itself and the new ways it involves other kinds of audiences, like people who have nothing to do with it, but I think in a very creative way. It's so, so good to learn like this, and not only sit inside reading and writing. [...] Knowledge can touch you in a more emotional way. You know, I think, especially because [students] are young and would rather have all the information from the Internet. It's about the learning together also. [...] There is an international crisis surrounding the role of universities [in local societies] and in the middle is projects like this, that involve the students [and] external partnerships, I think it's the solution for the crisis that we are going through in, you know, higher education across the entire world.

Reading this passage for the first time, I was immediately reminded of another interview I had read some days earlier. It came at the very end of a conversation between E and M, as it was approaching its natural end, when E was compelled to express their impression of the interview experience itself. They described a specific “really good” prompt, which “really made me reflect”. Amidst the wholesome final lines of the transcription, I read:

I'm doing this for myself, and people are doing it for themselves, but ultimately we're doing it for each other and for society (E).

To my knowledge as a close participant in the project, X's participation and engagement with the project did not bring them into regular direct conversation with E. The few moments they shared took place across two of the poster-making workshops they both attended in person, during which they communicated through visual material artefacts of political struggle in Cold War Latin America, collaborated in the creation of new knowledge across communities, and were prompted to engage the political, social dimensions of their learning into conscious collective action. Importantly, and as a testament to the importance of experiential learning, this reflection was prompted precisely through the peer-to-peer interview approach, demonstrating the importance of following up with group or paired reflections.

With this, we come full circle to Paulo Freire's “Pedagogy of the Oppressed” (Freire, 1968), the inspiration for Thinking Inside the Box. The academic and research staff who have sustained and nourished this project over the years are connected through a commitment to rendering educational experiences into transformational moments of conscientisation for all involved. Through the co-creation of new knowledge, the project's collective, critical and performative approach to the archive, creating distinctive experiences characterised by the centrality of people, physical presence and affect, and community action. Shared ideas of social justice brought this latest iteration of Thinking Inside the Box into open dialogue with local communities, collaborating with Latin Americans in constructing memory and bringing political struggles of the past into conversation with the present.

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Arquivos, Afeto e Presença na Pedagogia no contexto da Guerra Fria na América Latina

ABSTRACT: Dentro do contexto da Guerra Fria na América Latina, os arquivos da resistência política contêm narrativas contra-hegemônicas que, em outros momentos, foram silenciadas e condenadas ao esquecimento. Em um momento em que a produção acadêmica nesse campo se abre para abordagens histórico-culturais, os arquivos também abriram novas oportunidades para a pedagogia da política global de forma mais ampla. Este artigo explora a pedagogia política, os espaços informais de aprendizagem e os arquivos no ensino e na aprendizagem de Política e Relações Internacionais. Partindo do projeto *Thinking Inside the Box* (Pensando Dentro da Caixa), liderado por estudantes, coloco em diálogo entrevistas, conversas, elementos autoetnográficos e reflexivos para examinar como os estudos políticos podem propiciar experiências de aprendizagem mais transformadoras e emancipadoras. Utilizando a América Latina na Guerra Fria como estudo de caso, esta pesquisa mostra como práticas críticas e decoloniais latino-americanas de resistência política e solidariedade enriquecem o aprendizado curricular, geram produção e troca coletiva de conhecimento, e empoderam os estudantes em seu desenvolvimento profissional e acadêmico de maneiras únicas.

KEYWORDS: Política; Relações Internacionais; Pedagogia; Arquivos.

Archivos, Afecto y Presença en la Pedagogía de América Latina durante la Guerra Fría

RESUMEN: En el contexto de los estudios sobre la Guerra Fría en América Latina, los archivos de resistencia política contienen narrativas contrahegemónicas que, de otro modo, habrían sido silenciadas y condenadas al olvido. En un momento en que la investigación académica se orienta cada vez más hacia enfoques histórico-culturales en este campo, los archivos también han abierto nuevas oportunidades para la pedagogía de la política global en un sentido más amplio. Este artículo explora la pedagogía política, los espacios informales de aprendizaje y los archivos en la enseñanza y el aprendizaje de la Ciencia Política y las Relaciones Internacionales. Basado en el proyecto de investigación *Thinking Inside the Box* (Pensar Dentro de la Caja), dirigido por estudiantes, entrelazo entrevistas, conversaciones y elementos autoetnográficos y reflexivos para examinar cómo los estudios políticos pueden dar lugar a experiencias de aprendizaje más transformadoras y que empoderan a los estudiantes. Utilizando la América Latina en la Guerra Fría como estudio de caso, esta investigación muestra cómo las prácticas críticas y decoloniales latinoamericanas de resistencia política y solidaridad enriquecen el aprendizaje curricular, generan producción y intercambio colectivo de conocimiento, y promueven la autonomía de los estudiantes en su desarrollo profesional y académico de maneras únicas.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Política; Relaciones Internacionales; Pedagogía; Archivos.