Intersectionality Strikes Back: Right-Wing Patterns of En-Gendering and Feminist Contestations in the Americas

Julia Roth

The Latina actress with the paradigmatic name America Ferrera was the first speaker at the Women's March in Washington D.C. in January 2017, paralleling Donald Trump’s inauguration as president. Ferrera did not limit her talk to her own personal experiences when opening her powerful speech with a reference to her own experience as a female immigrant: “As a woman and as a proud first-generation American born to Honduran immigrants, it’s been a heartbreaking time to be both a woman and an immigrant in this country. Our dignity, our character, our rights have all been under attack.” (Ferrera 2017) Ferrera rather took her experience as a point of departure to claim the rights of all marginalized and oppressed groups. By thus constructing a powerful “we” in opposition to Trump’s politics, Ferrera rhetorically denied the new president the authority to represent and define “America”:

“We are gathered here and across the country and around the world today to say, Mr. Trump, we refuse. We reject the demonization of our Muslim brothers and sisters. We condemn the systemic murder and incarceration of our Black brothers and sisters. We will not ask our LGBT families to go backwards. We will not go from being a nation of immigrants to a nation of ignorance. We won’t build walls and we won’t see the worst in each other.” (Ibid.)

Taking a decidedly inclusive stance, Ferrera positioned herself as speaking for and with all the mentioned minorities. Anti-racist, intersectional feminist movements are in full swing in many places and struggle for new spaces in order to make their claims publicly heard. The hashtag #MeToo – which the protesters at these strikes turned into a collective “#WeToo” – documents the global system of sexualized violence against women in all its articulations, which the activists of the ¡Ni Una Menos! movement all over Latin America also contest vehemently. Moreover, and most importantly, the new feminist movements seem to represent one of the most powerful and visible forces of opposition to the worldwide radical right-wing
surge. What the new feminist movements have in common is their strong opposition to the ways in which gender has become a central platform for right-wing mobilization, which can be observed in a number of right-wing patterns of en-gendering.¹

This essay examines the current intersectional feminist movements’ politics, strategies and visions, and how they position themselves in relation to prior movements and their feminist and anti-racist predecessors. In contrast to feminist practices online – which have undoubtedly become crucial spaces for feminist organizing for all above-mentioned groups (and more) – the current protests are uniting actual bodies in the streets. This article will examine the role of bringing bodies together on the streets to form an oppositional collective “we” that claims to pursue an “intersectional” politics. Intersectionality, a heretofore predominantly academic term, builds on approaches from Black feminism and Critical Race Studies as well as feminist activism in order to address the “interlocking axes of oppression,” meaning axes of stratification and inequality which are always also and always already addressed in their simultaneous articulation such as race, class, sex-

uality, and gender. Thus, the article will elaborate on the current expression and future outlooks of intersectional feminist practices as a contestation and a counterbalance to right-wing populist politics.

**Feminist Contestations to the Right-Wing Populist Patterns of En-Gendering**

As I have argued elsewhere (Roth 2020a and 2020b), right-wing populist narratives, discourses, and affective strategies work along (at least five) “Patterns of En-Gendering” (see table 1). These patterns serve different functions and purposes in varying contexts, including (White) re-masculinization and self-aggrandizement, but also performed modernization, opposition to immigration, a “discursive fence” (Costa 2019), and the imagination of a re-establishment of a (binary) order through the transfer of economic and political crises to the gender dimension (see the contributions by Sauer, Dietze, and Strick in this volume). The right-wing patterns of en-gendering further show how right-wing populist programs – in different ways and to different degrees in different locations – usually share agendas that are decidedly anti-immigration, anti-sexual diversity and anti-pluralization of lifestyles, and that promote a re-traditionalization paradigm. Following Sauer, gender is particularly useful for mobilizing a new common sense and a “new hegemonic compromise,” since the reference to gender allows populists to relate the long-standing sexual binary that still marks peoples’ habits despite being “shattered” to equality politics (Sauer 2017: 14, translation JR). As we have argued in the introduction to this volume, gender is central for the workings of the right-wing populist logic and serves the respective actors as an arena and an "affective bridge" (Dietze 2019) to catapult diverse politics into the public sphere.

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Table 1

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<tr>
<th>Communicative Pattern</th>
<th>(En-)Gendering</th>
<th>Antagonistic Populist Logic</th>
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<td>Emotional Appeal Simplicity of Argument Facts vs. (Gender) Ideology</td>
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<td>“Normal” people vs. politically correct gender police</td>
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Moreover, by rendering the gender orders of Others problematic, the “proper,” Occidental superiority and “sexual exceptionalism” is confirmed (Dietze 2016). Imaginations of the “untamed masculinity” of “other” men are instrumentalized to outsource emancipatory issues within the nation’s own borders and to justify the expulsion of the perceived aggressor. The borders and/or limits of citizenship and belonging are also negotiated through this division, and the simulated progressiveness serves to dissimulate the group’s own emancipation deficits, to maintain the traditional binary and heterosexual/-normative gender order and to co-opt women and gays for anti-immigration propaganda. Through their sense of community and superiority and by externalizing the threat to both “gender ideology” and “external rapists,” right-wing populists deflect attention from the effects of globalization and social inequalities. Women supporting right-wing populists
seemingly suffer from a sort of “emancipation fatigue” (see Dietze’s contribution to this volume), disappointed by the pressure to “have it all,” expressed by neoliberal versions and appropriations of feminist claims. These only seem to work for a few wealthy women academics who can afford to outsource their care work to poorer women instead of negotiating and profoundly challenging the persistently gendered division of labor.

If, as explained before, right-wing populists pursue a politics of “exclusive intersectionality” (Mokre/Siim 2013) or “intersectionality from above” (Sauer 2013) by denying the equality and rights of Others, they are provoking intersectional answers, since all minorities and emancipatory programs are attacked. When the first Women’s March brought millions of protesters together in February 2017, Amanda Hess claimed in an article for the *New York Times*, titled “How A Fractious Women’s Movement Came to Lead the Left,” that “Feminism brought the opposition together,” since “[i]n parts of the popular imagination, it wasn’t just a loss for Clinton or the Democratic Party. It was a repudiation of feminism itself” (Hess 2017). After a long phase of feminisms based on identity politics and pop feminisms that “preached individual solutions to systemic problems,” we currently observe a new emphasis on coalition building and solidarity, particularly enforced by feminists-of-color who emphasized the sad fact that 52 percent of White women had voted for Trump (Hess 2017). And it was feminism, or rather women’s rights, that managed to unite all those opposed to the newly elected Trump administration (Hess 2017). The related intersectional feminisms are still mostly initiated and led by women of color and are based on a long legacy of fighting “interlocking axes of
oppression,” starting with the resistance of enslaved women and feminists of color such as Sojourner Truth. These protests seemingly provide the most visible, active, and effective platform for resistance to the right-wing trend in many places in the Americas, as the following most prominent exemplary cases show.

The Women’s Marches

Initially an online forum, the Women’s March was aimed at uniting resistant bodies together in the streets from the start. The idea for a women’s march on Washington spread by viral Facebook posts put up after the 2016 election by Bob Bland, one of the current co-chairwomen, and Teresa Shook, a retired lawyer in Hawaii, who soon joined forces. Before any logistic arrangements had been made, tens of thousands of women committed on social media to travel to Washington. Some of the women who made the initial preparations realized that it would be a disaster if the march seemed to be entirely by and for White women. They thus brought African American Tamika Mallory and Chicana Latina Carmen Pérez, both affiliated with the NGO Gathering for Justice, on board. They, in turn, brought in Palestinian American Linda Sarsour. The original idea to name the demonstration “Million Women’s March” was abandoned after harsh critique, since it copied the title of the “Million Women’s March” of 1997 in Philadelphia, which had focused on bringing together Women of Color. As director of operations and national organizer Vanessa Wruble recounts (WMO: 37), the team decided to call the protest the “Women’s March on Washington” instead, as an homage to the 1963 march for the civil and freedom rights of African Americans, which united civil rights, labor, and religious organizations and during which Martin Luther King held his famous “I had a Dream” speech. The organizing team put the first Women’s March together in just ten weeks, with the aim of mobilizing as many people as possible to oppose the politics represented by Donald Trump under a common banner. Like most social movements, the March did not emerge from a concrete political program. However, by uniting the struggles against different axes of oppression, the Women’s March protesters brought the politics of intersectionality back onto the streets and to its activist roots. The protest effected a long-overdue transfer from the academic ivory towers back to political practice.

The intersectionality theoretician Kimberlé Crenshaw considers the different issues united under the Women’s March banner and represented by the Pussy Hats as “the embodiment of the intersectional sensibilities that a lot of us have been working on for a very long time” (Crenshaw cf. in Hess 2017). The Women’s March co-chairwoman Bob Bland recounts that she did not know the concept when they started, but that now she often uses it to emphasize the growing diversity of the March. In this way, the concept became a useful tool for the March on Washington
to unite the feminist mainstream, its popular arm, and its dissenting factions in only two months (Hess 2017). Visually, the strategic solidarity of the protesters was expressed by the pink “Pussy Hats” that many of them wore. The ocean of pink headgear adorned numerous media articles and even made it to the cover of *Time* magazine’s February 6 issue.

But the times they are a-changing: in 2019, two years after the first march, numerous voices, including *New York Times* columnist Michelle Goldberg (NYT 2019), accused the organizers of the March of having failed at assuming power once they were put at the top of a mass movement and of having alienated many supporters. The 2019 Women’s March was split over accusations of anti-Semitism against organizer Linda Sarsour and several others, resulting in two distinct marches in New York City. Goldberg considers the division of the March as the result of the uncoordinated organization, which is typical of social media, where content and political differences are often subsumed under simple slogans based on protesting “against” something, rather than finding common ground with the other participants. Cassady Fendlay, the former director of communications for the Women’s March, draws a more positive conclusion after the first two years of the movement. Fendlay joined the 2017 March, and became the director of communications for the Women’s March until 2018. She coordinated the process leading to the “Agenda,” which was published in 2019, and she asserts: “If we are going to work together and keep on sharing strategies, we’re going to work this out” (Fendlay 2018).
As Hess confirms, the 2017 Women's March was one of the largest mass protests in American history, uniting a broad range of groups alarmed by Trump's election under one roof. Given the initially spontaneous character of the March and the diversity of people participating in it, the question soon arose of how sustainable the movement could be. For Crenshaw, the “million-dollar question” was whether these feminisms could survive under the anti-Trump umbrella (Crenshaw cf. in Hess 2017). Fendlay admits that the international dialogue of the Women's March activists was at first limited to other Women's March chapters abroad and less concerned with dialogue with movements such as NiUnaMenos in Latin America that were already in full swing when the Women's March started.

#NiUnaMenos

Starting as a protest against femicides and violence against women in 2015, NiUnaMenos/NiUnaMás in Latin America has also grown into one of the largest protests and the most visible feminist movements. The movements’ slogan “Ni una mujer menos, ni una muerte más” (not one woman less, not one more dead/death) also relates back to feminist predecessors, although from the more recent past: the phrase “Ni Una Muerta Más” (not one dead woman more) was coined in 1995 by the activist and author Susana Chávez to refer to the fight against the femicides in Mexico (#NiUnaMenos: 36). In 2011, Chávez herself was killed. By identifying rhetorically with “all (injured/killed) women,” the slogans further embrace a politics of solidarity and of joining forces beyond identity politics, which we also see in the context of the Women’s March. The assassination of Chiara Paez in 2016 was the starting point of the protests, which intensified after the murder of Lucía Pérez in 2017 and the suspicious disappearance of activist Santiago Maldonado. The symbol of this protest are the green pañuelos (bandanas and/or headscarves, handkerchiefs) that the protesters wear on their heads, around their necks, or tied to their backpacks. In Latin America, the pañuelos have a long tradition as a means of female/feminist protest, ever since mothers and grandmothers protested their children’s “disappearance” under the military dictatorship on the Plaza de Mayo in Argentina wearing white bandanas. Like the pink “Pussy Hats” of the Women’s Marches, the green pañuelos that have become the symbol of the NiUnaMenos protests unite the different bodies gathering together in protest visually and semiotically as a unified “political” body of resistance.

The Women’s Strikes that began in 2017 in Latin America could build on the organizational structures and networks of the NiUnaMenos protest. Every town participated in the international strike. Simultaneously, as María Cecilia Canevari, gender studies researcher and NiUnaMenos organizer at the Universidad de Santiago de Estero in Argentina, claims, “there is a clear consciousness that we are
Figure 5: NiUnaMenos (Green Handkerchiefs)

joining a global movement“ (Canevari 2019, translation JR). The strikes of March 8 were also significant for the consolidation and internationalization of the movement, and Canevari emphasizes the economic and structural dimension of the inequalities that this movement addresses and fights, since the Women's strike “led to a turn of the international Women's Workers' Day that was considered a day of celebration and now it has become clear that it is a commemoration of the struggles of women workers, the ones that died. But it has also made visible the unpaid feminine work that sustains the economy.” (Canevari 2019, translation JR)

Like the Women's March organizers, the NiUnaMenos protesters soon formulated more concrete political aims in the form of Manifestos, of which #NiUnaMenos published 24 on their website between June 3, 2015, and March 24, 2019. These manifestos include claims such as Trabajadoras somos todas (We are all workers) (Manifiesto #18, May 1, 2018), Las guerrillas son nuestras compañeras (the guerilleras are our colleagues/comrades) (Manifiesto #24, March 21, 2019), El grito en común: ¡Vivas nos
queremos! (the collective cry: We want them alive!) (Manifiesto #3, May 21, 2016), Ni Una Menos Por Aborto Inseguro (Not one less due to insecure abortion) (Manifiesto #13, September 25, 2017), or #DesendeudadanasQueremos (We want to be without debt) (Manifiesto #11, June 2, 2017) (all from: Resumen Latinoamericano 2019). All the claims made in the manifestos point to an intersectional politics of solidarity and multi-level struggle as well as a holistic and strongly systemic understanding of inequalities and violence as embedded in capitalist economic and colonial power structures and a collective feminist body.

While in the US context, the narrative of the recent feminist movements focused predominantly on uniting different minorities, NiUnaMenos puts a stronger emphasis on the importance of the economic dimension and expresses an open critique of capitalism and violence against women. In Brazil, the movements that emerged following the assassination of Afro-Brazilian, openly gay politician Marielle Franco and the election of right extremist Jair Bolsonaro in 2018 combine both perspectives and furthermore emphasize a strong anti-colonial critique.

**Marielle Presente in Brazil**

After openly gay, Afro-Brazilian politician Marielle Franco and her driver Anderson Gomes were shot with 13 bullets on the night of March 14, 2018 in Rio de Janeiro, broad protests under the motto “Marielle Presente!” (Marielle [is] present) immediately emerged. The protests were led by Afro-descendant Brazilian women and queers and soon took place all over Brazil, and also internationally. Many considered Marielle Franco's assassination as political, and Marielle's portrait started to adorn walls, streets, and sidewalks in many places in form of posters, graffiti, and stencils. During the 2019 carnival in Rio, the Estação Primeira de Mangueira, one of the most successful samba schools in Brazil, featuring prominently in the live screening of the carnival, dedicated their performance to Marielle Franco. By claiming “Marielle's presence” and her political legacy alive as well as demanding her murder to be investigated; by putting her portrait on walls in public spaces as graffiti and on posters, the protesters resist a politics that marginalizes murders motivated by racist, sexist, as well as homo- and transphobic motives.3 “We have begun to destroy the myth of equality,” politician, activist, and former advisor of Marielle Franco, Mônica Francisco, emphasized in a talk in March 2019 in Berlin, since, due to their history, Afro-descendant Brazilians “are resistant, rebellious bodies” (Francisco 2019). Francisco thus described Marielle Franco as someone who broke “with everything normative,” since she represented everything formerly marginalized, and thus was seen as a “threat to order” by conservative and radical

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right forces (Francisco 2019, translation JR). Francisco sees Marielle’s murder as symbolic, because she stood for “all who had no voice in parliament.” From these new – and still very few – positions of visibility, afro-descendants now oppose the “colonialist, extractivist state that discards our bodies” (Francisco 2019, translation JR).

Figure 6: Marielle Presente, column in Rio de Janeiro (Photo: Matti Steinitz); Figure 7: Mon- ica Francisco (left) in Berlin (Photo: Julia Roth, 2019)

In August 2017, Ludimilla Teixeira, a black anarchist born in Bahia, one of the poorest communities of Salvador, created the Facebook page “Women United Against Bolsonaro.” So far, almost 4 million women have joined the page. A movement under the slogan and hashtag: #EleNão – #NotHim emerged out of this group, which soon spurred hundreds of thousands of protesters onto the streets of Brazil and around the world, becoming the largest protest organized by women in Brazil’s history (see Bruh 2018). On Twitter, #EleNão had more than 193,000 mentions between September 16 and 18, 2018, according to researchers at FGV university. Additionally, there were 152,000 tweets with the hashtag #EleNunca (#NeverHim). The list of women posting against the far-right candidate includes prominent actresses, journalists, and TV presenters. “#EleNão is not just about politics. It is about morals,” actress Deborah Secco tweeted to her 3,4 million followers (BBC 2019). Lately, indigenous women have also started protests against the brutal, racist politics of the Bolsonaro regime (BBC 2019).4

A video was posted on the Facebook page of the São Paulo-based activist group Bancada Ativista (Activist Fraction), which is dedicated to elect activists to legisla-

tive power. The video starts with “Marielle Franco presente! Anderson, presente!” chants by protesters on March 15, 2018, in São Paulo. Posters show slogans such as Preta LGBTQ Marielle Presente (Black LGBTQ Marielle Present), Vidas negras e faveladas importam (Black and Favela Lives Matter) carried by a young Black girl, or Somos Todos Marielle (We are all Marielle). An interviewee (Bianca) states “Marielle está presente en cada uma de nós” (Marielle is present in every one of us). Repeating their names and publicly showing their photos on posters, the Black Lives Matter movement and the Say Her Name movement in the US initiated a similar politics of rendering the systemically marginalized deaths of African Americans visible and the structures and actors enabling and committing these murders accountable. And so did and do the Argentinian mothers and grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo. In 1955, Momie Till insisted on publicly showing her son’s dead body in order to oppose the racist rape-lynching complex of which he had become a victim, an action which led to protesters carrying posters with Emmet Till’s photograph during Civil Rights marches.

The predominantly afro-descendant female and queer protesters, who are joined by allies of all positions, also unite their precarious bodies in the streets and claim Marielle Franco’s presence in everything she represented – a Black lesbian woman from the favela who had reached a high position in politics and fought for social justice. By simultaneously claiming to be Marielle Franco (“we are all Marielle”), the protesters form a collective body of resistance to the violent racist, sexist, misogynist, and homophobic political climate they face, thus practicing a politics of embodied intersectionality from below – politically, symbolically, and discursively.

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All of the recent feminist protest started out as spontaneous and momentous events based on very diverse politics. With the International Women’s Strike starting on March 8, 2016, the different movements have become more organized and more concrete and focused politically, raising hope for a more institutionalized and longer-lasting way of contestation. Moreover, the Strikes tie gender and racial claims back to the underlying economic and colonial structures of inequality.

On October 19, 2016, in Argentina, members of the movement NiUnaMenos and other feminist organizations, like the Spanish Internacional Feminista, called for an hour-long strike and various protests, after seven femicides had been committed in one week. The first International Women’s Strike, also known as Paro Internacional de Mujeres, was on March 8, 2017, and took place in more than 50 countries around the world. Protests such as the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women on November 25, 2017, and the massive response to the call of the Women’s March 2018 in the United States can be considered as precedents.
During the third ITUC World Women’s Conference/Women’s Organizing Assembly in October 2017, 200 female trade unionists from around the world gathered in Costa Rica; and trade union representatives from Argentina and Brazil asked the unions to take part in the second International Women’s Strike call on March 8, 2017. As of 2019, the Strike has become a global movement coordinated across 50 countries.

The feminist movements involved called for a strike of workers, students, care workers, and consumers under slogans like #NosParamos, #WeStrike, and “What they call love is unpaid work.” They demanded a society free from violence against women, free from aggression against and murder of women for the simple fact of being women, a society without precarious work, the gender pay gap, and sexual harassment at the workplace. Moreover, the Strikes addressed poverty, racial violence, persecution of immigrants, and cutbacks in social and health programs.

The call for a strike, published in The Guardian on February 6, 2017, by prominent activists and intellectuals underscores the scope of the Women’s Strikes. Among the authors were Linda Martín Alcoff, Cinzia Arruzza, Tithi Bhattacharya, Nancy Fraser, Barbara Ransby, Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, Rasmea Yousef Odeh, and Angela Davis (Alcoff et al. 2018a), who explicitly mention the impact of other movements (particularly the Argentinian one) with regard to intersectional politics, addressing structural problems, and coalition building (see Alcoff et al. 2018a). According to US American activists, the focus on the structural dimensions of oppression and the urgency of the entanglements with global capitalism as well as the division of labor had already been a central task in parts of the Latin American feminist movements.

By promoting, defending, and, most of all, embodying diversity, the present feminist movements make visible and open up the possibility for alternative forms of the social and political in light of neoliberal precarization of labor and right-wing populist “responses.” As they call attention to violence against female and other non-normative and non-White bodies as a structural phenomenon related to colonial and patriarchal legacies ingrained in capitalism, the Women’s Strikes in particular scandalize the structural devaluation of care work and reproduction as well as socio-political power relations of discrimination, exclusion, and deportation. The strikes provide a transnational instrument open to a multitude of actors, not only to women, but also for precarious and migrant workers (see Lorey 2019a). Again, like in the preceding protest, the participants’ physical assembling on the streets embodied a stand against the historic and continuous control, precariousness and disposability of female and differently gendered and racialized as well as poor and colonized bodies.
Collective Bodies of Resistance as Political Tools – and some Theoretical Reflections

The currently emerging feminist struggles are embedded in the radicalization of reactionary White heteronormative masculinity in many places and contexts, which currently seeks to oppose the pluralization of societies and life forms, as expressed in the mentioned right-wing populist patterns of en-gendering. In her book *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly* (2015), Judith Butler describes the current moment as “a biopolitical situation” in which diverse populations are increasingly affected by so-called “precarization.” As she argues, this precarization becomes operative through the overall pulverization of the active remnants of social democracy. Simultaneously, ideologies of individual responsibility are promoted, according to which subjects are obliged to constantly maximize their market value in an entrepreneurial way and see this as the ultimate goal (15). In turn, pursuing the question of what function public assembly can serve in this context, what “opposing form of ethics” it embodies and expresses, she concludes that, amidst “an increasingly individualized sense of anxiety and failure,” public assembly “embodies the insight that this social condition is both shared and unjust.” For Butler, then, “assembly enacts a provisional and plural form of coexistence that constitutes a distinct ethical and social alternative to ‘responsibilization.’” (15-16)

Isabell Lorey (2019a) argues that illiberalism, understood as the negation of liberal-democratic achievements, as the maintenance of the liberal form of democracy with its logics of representation and exclusion, appears to have no alternative. She asserts that struggles for recognition – such as feminist struggles – are then considered as a “lively” part and parcel of liberal democracies and they are “tamed.” Liberal democracies thus lock themselves in in the name of the protection of freedom for the few and move closer toward the politics they had deemed “illiberal.” The current feminist movements, however, do not act within the confines of “liberal democracies.” Instead, they question the very conditions of possibility of such notions, since, as Lorey argues, notions of “liberal democracy” are embedded in the “liberal-illiberal” paradigm that defines liberal and neoliberal discourses. Thus, they do not only attack presidents that stand for right-wing sexist politics, but also the structures that enabled them. The Latin American movements in particular also remind us of the long legacy of the coloniality of gender (Lugones 2008).

These movements evoke a new sense of intersectionality which re-connects the concept to the radical activist roots it emerged from after it had long been restricted to academic and theoretical debates. According to Butler, the “bodies in alliance” (2015: 28) making their protest and claims visible in the streets of Washington, Buenos Aires, Rio de Janeiro, Berlin, New York, Warsaw and in many other locations, point to the social modality of bodies and “link gender and sexual minorities with precarious populations more generally” (28). By performing a political unity
based on manifold positions and experiences – as expressed by the emblematic Pink Pussy Hats of the Women’s Marches, the green bandanas of the NiUnaMenos movement, or the graffiti of and identification with Marielle Franco in Brazil – the
protesters also make visible and audible the “conditions of interdependency” (45; 50) of all human interaction and sociability, as well as a politics of intersectionality restored into practice.

By building a strategic imagined (counter-)community, as formulated by America Ferrera in her speech at the 2017 Women’s March in Washington, current intersectional transnational and transversal feminists raise hope for an effective counter-discourse to the current rise and revival of White supremacist and racist, sexist, and homo- and transphobic right-wing populism internationally. The feminist movements practice what I (following Mirza 2013) have coined as “embodied intersectionality” (Roth 2020a and 2020b) to confront and stop the right-wing trend by making their presences a “claim” (Butler 2015). Moreover, the current movements seek to problematize and overcome (some) feminism’s/s’ complicity with neoliberal logics, which are sometimes also co-opted by populist forces (see Dietze’s contribution to this volume). The long legacy of anti-racist feminist struggles, in the Americas in particular, offers the current movements a rich repertoire of experiences and resistance strategies to counter the right-wing populist and extremist trend. By their very presence and claims, they call into question the “repressive dogma that has cast so many genders and sexual lives into the shadows, without recognition and deprived of any sense of futurity” (Butler 2019: n.p.). They are therefore hated and feared by their right-wing and conservative opponents, as are their body politics and related notions of reproductive rights. Thus, despite these movements’ impressive outreach, it may be too early to speak of the success of the new feminisms. It is questionable how successful the movements can be in the face of the current climate of alternative truths and realities, in which strategies like the complete defamation of constructed “enemies” or of self-victimization and “reverse anti-colonialism” create new paradigms, for which the language and tools still need to be invented. Sadly, the current trend points more towards a further polarization of our societies.

In the current movements, the dialogue between diverse histories and notions of the political brings about what Verónica Gago calls the “precipitate subject” (sujeto imprevisto; Gago 2018: 22) of feminism. Through the “corporal embeddedness” (arraigo corporal) this subject evokes the (for many: colonial) wound as a condition for dislocating the political scene (Gago 2018: 22-23). The creation of the communal body of feminist resistance enables people to think and imagine a new poetics and new figures of connectivity and dialogue between “Norths and Souths” (conectividad entre nortes y sures, Draper: 65). Butler also speaks about

5 Brah and Phoenix 2004, Hearn 2011, Zapata Galindo 2011 and Viveros Vigoya 2012 remind us that Black feminists and anti-slavery movements had already claimed the recognition of their racist discrimination by the 18th and 19th centuries and “probably before then” (Hearn 2011: 90).
the importance of “embodied” forms of resistance. Feminists of Color and post-decolonial feminists like Alanna Lockward – who curated the series BE.BoP — Black Europe Body politics” foregrounding performative form of decolonial aesthetics (Lockward 2013) – or Grada Kilomba – “the body as political tool” (Kilomba 2019) – have long emphasized a notion of the body similar to Butler’s, particularly emphasizing its potential for using the “knowledges of the body” to attack the “colonial anti-capitalist unconscious” and politically “become one body” (Rolnik in Bardet: 110, translation JR). Persons racialized as Black in the context of colonization and enslavement have historically been denied the same status of a body as Whites, and have been reduced to the status of “pure flesh,” as Hortense Spillers has shown. If right-wing populism tries to re-relate and subsume (“autochthonous”) women’s bodies to the nation and exclude, control, and govern non-White etc. bodies, as becomes visible in the prominence of the struggle over reproductive rights in the right-wing complex (see Fixmer Oraíz 2019), the intersectional feminist movements claim their bodies and their right over their bodies and subsume and are/embody the body/bodies of resistance. The feminist movements remind us of the long history of oppression of colonized women, silencing and restricting the female to the domestic, as well as by imagining the female body as territory (Federici). According to Butler (2015), the very presence of these bodies in public proclaims the fact that they are not disposable, “they are exercising a plural and performative right to appear, one that asserts and instates the body in the middle of the political field” (11). Acting in concert, then, “can be an embodied form of calling into question the inchoate and powerful dimensions of reigning notions of the political” (9).

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