Special Feature. The Many Faces of Protest:
Rethinking Collective Action in a World of Dissent – *peer-reviewed*
https://doi.org/10.6092/issn.1971-8853/16942

Sociologica. V.17 N.1 (2023)
ISSN 1971-8853
https://sociologica.unibo.it/

Memory Protest and Contested Time: The *Antimonumentos* Route in Mexico City

Alexandra Délano Alonso* [a] Benjamin Nienass [b]

[a] Global Studies, The New School (United States)
[b] Department of Political Science and Law, Montclair State University (United States)

Submitted: May 12, 2023 – Revised version: June 29, 2023
Accepted: July 3, 2023 – Published: July 24, 2023

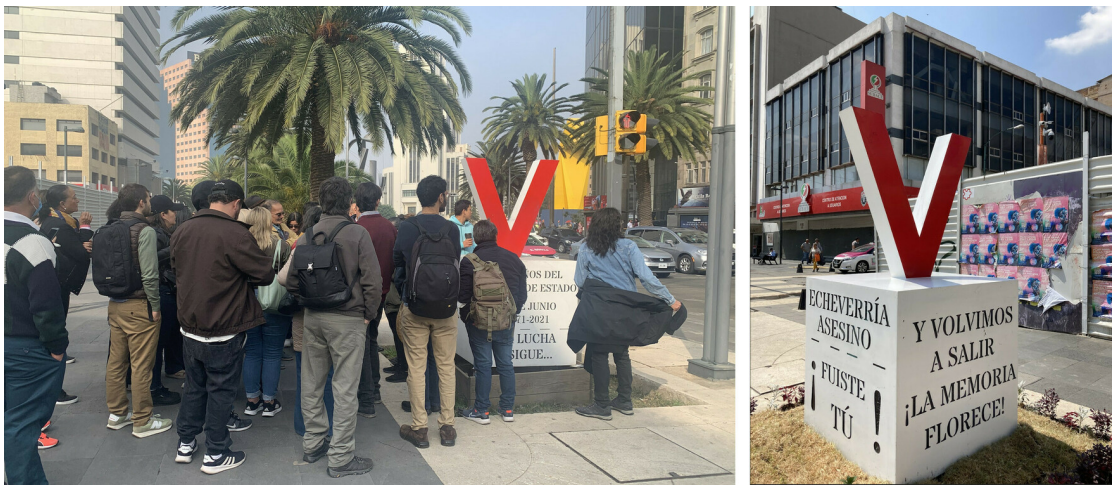
Abstract

This article examines the corridor of *Antimonumentos* (antimonuments) in Mexico City. In a context of more than 110,000 enforced disappearances and hundreds of thousands of deaths since the start of the "war on drug cartels" in 2006, the *Antimonumentos* are one of the ways in which memory activists seek to mark significant events of violence and state neglect, and expressly confront both the government and society by voicing public demands for justice, accountability, and non-repetition. They occupy public spaces anonymously, without permission, and establish a link between past and present instances of state violence, thereby drawing attention to intersecting forms of violence. We examine how these countermonuments exemplify a protest against a specific regime of temporality, and how they also allow us to reflect on the temporality of protests.

Keywords: Memory; countermonuments; protest; memory activism; Mexico.

* delanoa@newschool.edu

The meeting is set for 9:00 am on November 23, 2022, at the corner of Avenida Juárez and Humboldt Street. One of the busiest avenues in downtown Mexico City, leading to the Zócalo plaza and the bustling commerce of shops, markets and street vendors, government offices, museums and cultural sites, this morning Avenida Juárez is already full of buses, cars, pedestrians, and the first sounds of the *organilleros* (organ grinders). A small group of people is gathered at the corner, around a small patch of grass on the sidewalk. On it sits a white cube pedestal with a red V on top. A legend on the side of it reads: "50 years after the State crime / June 10, 1971–2021 / The struggle continues.[1]" This is a reference to the student massacre of 1971, when university students who were protesting on the streets of Mexico City were shot and killed by the so-called *halcones*, a paramilitary group trained by Mexican and US governments. The number of students killed, disappeared and injured that day remains unknown and the attempts to bring President Luis Echeverría Álvarez to justice for this massacre failed as he was exonerated in 2009. The side of the cube facing Avenida Juárez reads: "Echeverría Assassin. It was you." A third side reads: "No pardon, no oblivion!" And finally, alluding to a continuing struggle over five decades, the *Antimonumento* states: "And we came out again / Memory flourishes!".



Figures 1–2: *Antimonumento* 10 de junio, 1971.
Photos by the authors, November 23, 2022 and June 6, 2023.

This site is one of the most recent additions to a series of 11 *Antimonumentos*[2] (also referred to in a more colloquial way as *antis* by those close to these actions) placed by anonymous, self-funded[3] groups of activists and families of victims of different forms of violence along a corridor that goes from the Zócalo central plaza through Avenida Juárez and Paseo de la Reforma Avenue.[4] A rejection of monuments and memorials, the *antis*, as explained by members of the

1. Translations from Spanish by the authors.
2. Members of the collective who have installed them state that they initially thought of calling them "countermonuments," but found the term "antimonuments" more fitting (*Antimonumentos*, 2020, p. 16). We use the Spanish term "antimonumento" and the English term "countermonument" interchangeably in this essay, but acknowledge that the latter term has a specific genealogy (Stevens et al., 2012).
3. The *Antimonumentos* have been financed through donations from a small network of friends and those close to the movements. Recently the collective has offered small replicas of *Antimonumentos* to personal contacts in exchange for a donation (Personal Interview, June 8, 2023).
4. Other *antimonumentos* have been placed in different areas of Mexico City, and in other cities such as Guadala-

collective, "do not intend to mark these events as part of the past for their remembrance or commemoration," but rather to present them "as events that do not cease to happen; at least not until there is truth and justice for each of the grievances" (*Antimonumentos*, 2020, p. 9). They are also conceived by those involved as "a possibility of social transformation" both through urban renewal and "a clear exercise of our right to the city," and through the creation of alternative narratives that challenge the state's "historical truths" and move towards "projects of life, of future, of possible worlds" (*Ibidem*, pp. 13–14).

In this piece we discuss how the *antimonumentos* challenge the temporality of the state's focus on closure by bringing together past events, present demands and future possibilities through the placing of these colorful, prominent sculptures on Mexico City's streets. The *antis* serve as continuous reminders of violence and impunity, but also create public spaces that bring people together in relation to the events they mark, and others that have occurred — before and after. In this sense, they create a "particular form of protest" (*Antimonumentos*, 2020, p. 14) that is not limited to a single event or demand, and that is renewed in the everyday through their disruptive presence in public space. The countermonuments are ephemeral, and yet they generate strong ripple effects in their appeals to continued participation and appropriation. As such, they are a direct response to traditional monumentality, which is materially "permanent" and static; long-lasting and dead at the same time.

1 The *Antimonumentos* Memory Route

The group meeting this morning at the corner of Humboldt and Juárez is gathered to walk part of the *Antimonumentos* Memory Route alongside activists that place and maintain these spaces, as well as families of victims of some of the events marked at each site.[5] The activity was organized in the context of an invitation by the Mexican government to representatives of The Latin America and Caribbean Sites of Memory Network (RESLAC) to discuss a proposal for a new Public Memory Law.

The law has been criticized by some memory activists who are guiding us through the *Ruta por la Memoria* today. A press release issued by the *Huellas de la Memoria* collective, titled "There is No Memory without Justice," argues that a memory law cannot exist in a context of impunity where state authorities, including the army, paramilitary groups and the government have participated in these acts of violence, starting with the massacres of 1968 and 1971 and continuing to date:

> As opposed to what is being put forward, we consider that the process should be inverted: first, search for the truth of what happened, bring justice, and punish those responsible. And then, when this nightmare has ended, the foundations of a great Memory Law can be established, working from a large national consensus among families, victims and experts. NOT before that. (November 22, 2022)

Leading the route of *Antimonumentos* today is Jorge Verastegui González, a lawyer, activist, brother of Antonio Verástegui González and uncle of Antonio de Jesús Verástegui Escobedo,

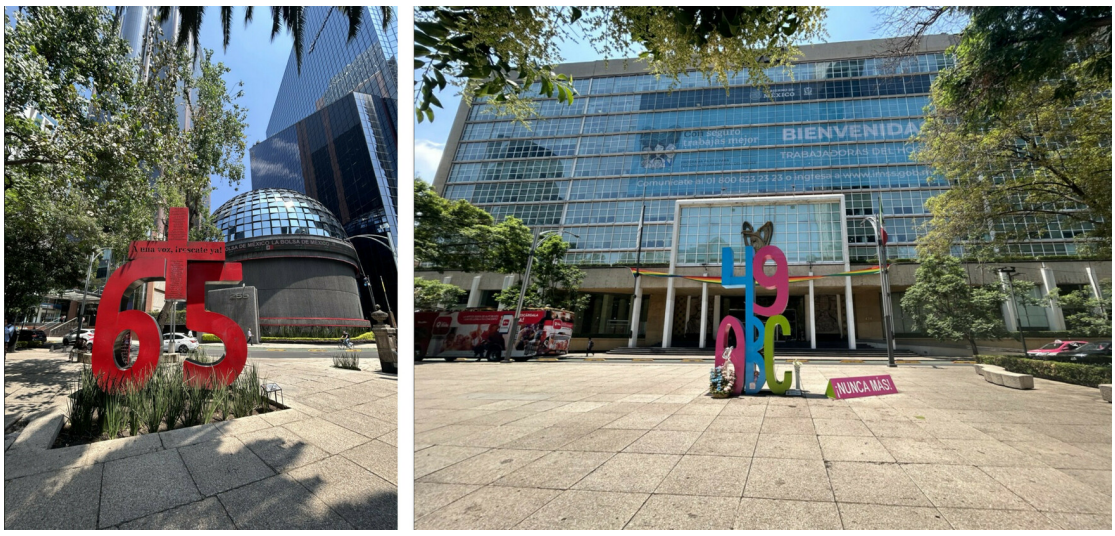
jara, as well as in other countries, including Argentina and Guatemala (see *Antimonumentos*, 2020, pp. 129–145).

5. The anonymous network describes itself as "women, men, young and not so young, alike and different... never the same... a network that grows between the initial idea, the placing, and the life that each space takes... we multiply" (*Antimonumentos*, 2020, p. 25).

both of whom disappeared in Parras, Coahuila, on January 24, 2009. Looking for a pause in the sounds of bus engines and cars honking, he welcomes everyone and introduces representatives of Comité 68 who will speak about the June 10, 1971 countermonument. The loudspeaker hasn't arrived yet, so we are all huddled close together, some of us covering our ear that is closest to the street, trying to listen.

Comité 68, short for the 1968 Committee for Democratic Liberties, is an activist group that came together in the aftermath of the 1968 student massacre. For over 50 years, Comité 68 has brought forward and maintained a call for truth, memory and justice in the case of the 1968 and 1971 student massacres. They have also actively linked this history of state violence with the current context of more than 110,000 enforced disappearances and 300,000 deaths as a result of the Mexican government's declaration of a "war against drug cartels" in 2006, and its continuation to date. The Comité has conducted yearly protests to commemorate the two massacres; they have pursued the legal cases against the perpetrators; they maintain an archive of victims of state violence; and they have placed countermonuments to mark these events. They also intervened in the state's highly contested and criticized *Memorial to the Victims of Violence* since 2013 by adding to it the names of victims from events since the 1950s to the present and renaming it *Memorial to the Victims of State Violence* (see Délano Alonso & Nienass, 2021).

Standing by the *Antimonumento* 1971, the representatives of the Comité 68 begin by acknowledging that the route actually begins at El Zócalo, where the countermonument that marks the 50th anniversary of 1968 stands. As with all the sites on the route, the *Antimonumento* 1968 was installed on October 2, 2018, by a small group, without government permission, and designed with materials that ensured it could be placed on the ground in a matter of hours, but heavy and large enough that it could not be easily removed by the authorities. The materials were hidden inside a carton head costume representing President Gustavo Díaz Ordaz, considered responsible for the student massacre. With a similar aesthetic to the 1971 *Antimonumento*, this one consists of a white rectangular prism as a pedestal and over it the logo of Comité 68, a white bird over a black and red circle. On one side it reads: "1968. October 2 is not forgotten. It was the military. It was the State." And on the other: "Our struggle will never give in. / We will win! / 50 years of impunity." Around the base of the *Antimonumento* are marks that were made on the fresh cement: 43+, ABC, and 65+. The numbers and letters allude to the victims of other violent events and countermonuments that are also part of the *Memory Route* (see *Antimonumentos*, 2020). The plus sign signals a connection not just to the other *antimonumentos*, but to past, present and future victims of state violence.



Figures 3–4: *Antimonumento* Pasta de Conchos 65+ and *Antimonumento* Guardería ABC. Photos by the authors, June 6, 2023.

Comité 68's central message to those of us walking the route this morning is: "We are not opposed to memory, we are opposed to memory without justice." This message directly addresses the state's attempts to create memorials or a memory law while there are ongoing forms of violence where the military and the police, often colluding with organized crime and state authorities at different levels, continue to kill and disappear people: "The State cannot be in charge of memory." Comité 68 explains that the goal of the *Antimonumentos* is to maintain a constant reminder of what happened in 1968 and 1971, for people passing by to ask what happened, and to draw a connection with current forms of violence.

Upon the installation of the *Antimonumento* 1968, Alberto Híjar, a well-known activist, read a manifesto stating that it represents a *memoria viva* (*live memory*), to both commemorate the student movement and to continue the struggle for democratic liberties. Challenging the idea of an official monument, the manifesto rejects an "embalmed memory" of "heroes cast in bronze" and instead calls for a "historical memory that overcomes the sterile yearning and makes space for signs and symbols that make evident the relationship between the past and present of the struggle and the future hoped for" (Muñoz Ramírez, 2018). Híjar ended his remarks by claiming that the demands made by students in 1968 are still current and that the *Antimonumento* is calling for accountability, reiterating that the struggle will not end until there is truth and justice, including the opening of military archives. In this sense, the Comité, like several other memory activists in Mexico, is challenging a specific regime of temporality that seeks closure through memory and instead draws connections and linkages across past, present and future.

The event concluded with a bonfire where the head of Díaz Ordaz that hid the *Antimonumento* was burned. A group of people took turns guarding the countermonument overnight to ensure it wasn't removed.

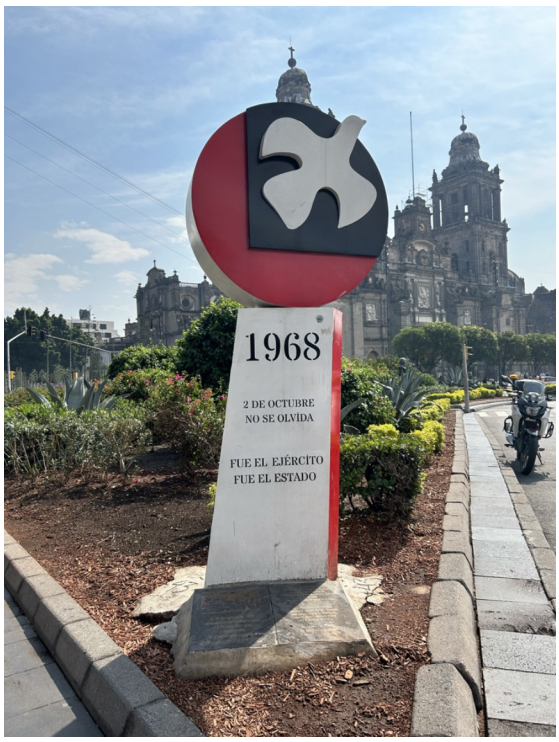


Figure 5: *Antimonumento* 1968. Photo by the authors, June 6, 2023

2 Memory as a Site of Mobilization

Wüstenberg (2017, p. 18) distinguishes memory *work* from memory *protest* by explicitly highlighting the contentious nature of the latter. This contentiousness can be an effect of the tactics employed by activists or of the fact that the presence of alternative narratives poses a serious challenge to dominant (and official) public memories. Memory protests are thus not exclusively about bringing marginalized voices or interpretations of the past into the public arena, they often also actively reject existing hegemonic narratives, for example through acts like defacing or recontextualizing existing monuments. As Rigney (2023, p. 21) has shown, state-sanctioned memorials and monuments "offer particularly potent sites for negotiating the emergence of the new," not least because their "erection and maintenance makes hierarchies of values concrete and tangible." This "decommissioning" (*Ibidem*) is at play when activists in Mexico use symbolic spaces in the city to actively defy a particular interpretation of the violence with regard to who counts as a victim and where to assign responsibility or where to direct specific demands. Paradoxically, given their often central location, state-sanctioned monuments provide extra visibility to the presented alternatives by serving as an invitation to reject official interpretations of history or value judgements cast in stone.

We have claimed previously that when activists in Mexico create alternative commemorative sites or challenge existing ones, they are not only engaged in a contestation over who gets to narrate the past or how a specific past should be narrated — a politics of memory — but also in struggles over what counts as past, present and future in the first place — a politics of time (Délano Alonso & Nienass, 2021; 2022). This becomes particularly salient in a context in which administrations use commemorative sites or discourses to divert responsibility

by symbolically marking the end of eras, akin to what Bevernage (2015) has called "temporal Manichaeism."

In this context, memory protests have been used as a way to situate oneself in a larger trajectory. At the nexus of memory studies and social movements studies, this trajectory has often been interpreted as relevant for the (self-)image of the activists or protesters, or as relevant for questions of organization. In social movement studies, such continuity of struggle established through collective memory has been viewed as contributing to social capital or as bestowing legitimation (Berger et al., 2021), and numerous studies have demonstrated "how memories of various pasts affect how movements mobilize, shaping for example recruiting processes, identity building or strategic decisions" (Daphi & Zamponi, 2019, p. 402). Pearce (2015) and others have called this aspect of the nexus "memory *in* movements," given its focus on how a specific memory informs the goals, strategies and self-image of activists, movements and protesters in the present.

But the continuity in question is not simply about the mobilization of activists, it is also drawing a connection and establishing a continuity of the perpetrator or the injustice being addressed. In the Mexican case, this means to frame the injustice as *ongoing* against all symbolic efforts of closure by the state. It also means to implicate the state in a broader historical legacy of violence and impunity. Commemorative efforts that establish these connections are not simply treating the past as instructive — i.e. by a logic of analogy — but rather paint the present injustice and the present activism and protests as episodes of the same political processes and struggles, with direct implications of placing specific responsibilities with the state.

In Mexico, the consequences of the "guerra contra el narco" have led to unprecedented levels of mass protests and demonstrations at the national level, particularly since 2011 when the *Movimiento por la Paz con Justicia y Dignidad* led a caravan across Mexico and the US to bring together victims of different forms of violence. The *Movimiento* made specific demands for legislation to recognize and protect the rights of crime victims (a law was passed in 2013), a national registry of victims and a compensation fund (which became part of the Executive Commission for Attention to Victims, established in 2014), and a memorial for the victims of violence (established in 2012, but widely rejected by the *Movimiento*).

Previous activism around questions of memory and memorialization had mostly been suppressed by the state, in part due to the lack of a framework of transitional justice in Mexico's transition to democracy (De Vecchi Gerli, 2018). The struggle for memory has since taken form in different ways. Through interventions in public spaces, memory activists, including families of victims, have created different spaces for communal mourning, from memorials to countermonuments and art projects. They have renamed or intervened in monuments, plazas, walls, streets, roundabouts, universities and museums, making these spaces and calls for justice, truth, reparations and memory widely visible to the public, and resisting the idea of memorials as devices for closure. While some memory activists push for creating more permanent memorial spaces that seek to address the very conditions that led to the violence, others consider that establishing memorials as such will be used by the state to justify closure while impunity reigns, the violences continue and the number of deaths and disappearances increase every day.

The *antimonumentos* are one of the ways in which activists seek to mark significant events and expressly confront the government and the whole of society by making public demands of accountability (Ovalle & Tovar, 2019). They occupy public spaces anonymously, without permission, they establish a linkage between past and present events of state violence, they aim to show that what is being remembered or marked in these spaces is not a single event, that it is ongoing, and that there are intersecting forms of violence. As Alejandro Velez puts it, "the

antis are an open, quotidian wound, a transgression and a demand against the State."[6] Their bright colors and bold aesthetic on the streets along two of the main avenues in Mexico City aim to create an uncomfortable and unavoidable presence, a rupture, and a continuous form of protest. Their potency and power is precisely in the fact that they are "uncomplacent, self-organized, mutant, precarious and indomitable."[7]

3 Plus Another, and Another "+"

From Avenida Juárez we walk towards the *Antimonumento* 43+, the first of these interventions, established in April 2015, a few months after 43 students from the Raúl Isidro Burgos rural normal school in Ayotzinapa, Guerrero, disappeared and 5 were killed, in a confrontation with state police and military. The number 43 has become one of the most recognized markers of the violence in Mexico. After numerous investigations and cover-ups by the government, the case remains open; the truth of what happened and why, remains elusive.

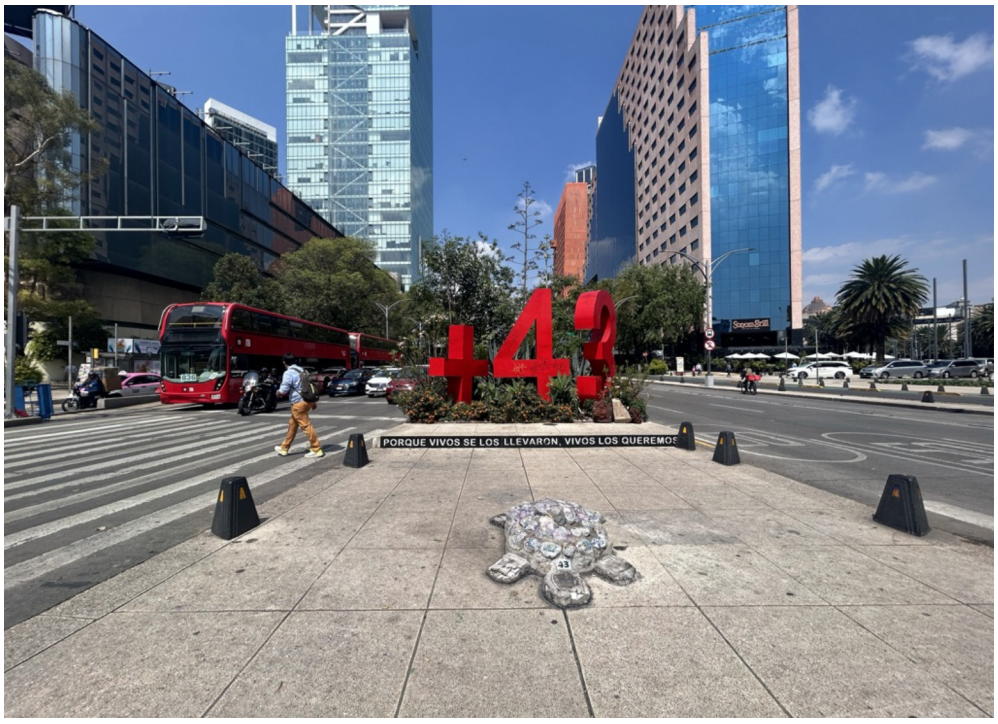


Figure 6: *Antimonumento* Ayotzinapa 43+. Photo by the authors, June 6, 2023.

A large red 43+ stands on the median strip of Paseo de la Reforma, the longest, most famous avenue in Mexico City. Under the number is the demand and the rallying cry that marked the mass protests ignited by the disappearance of the 43 students and that has since been central to the mobilization against enforced disappearances in Mexico: "Vivos se los llevaron, vivos los queremos" (alive they took them, alive we want them back), a call started by the mothers of the disappeared in Argentina in the 1970s. The unmissable 43+ not only makes reference to

6. Remarks at "Encuentro: Memoria y Memoriales en México," El Colegio de México, January 14–15, 2020.

7. Anne Huffschmid, remarks at "Encuentro: Memoria y Memoriales en México," El Colegio de México, January 14–15, 2020.

the Ayotzinapa case; the added plus sign serves as a constant reminder of a larger context of enforced disappearances in Mexico, and their interconnections, historically and in the present. Even if not planned at the time, the plus sign has also served as a connection with the other *antimonumentos* that were established afterwards — a recognition of previous events, and an anticipation of other victims to come, if the conditions of violence and impunity remain.

Right in the heart of the city, the space feels very much alive. A sign of the permanence of the *Antimonumento* and its appropriation by the local population, the 43+ is now surrounded by a small garden where family members of the disappeared students have planted corn. A sculpture of a turtle was later installed next to it, referencing the meaning of Ayotzinapa in nahuatl: "the place of turtles."

Further up Reforma, a group of workers on a scaffolding was erasing a purple 43+ graffiti on the center of the column of the Angel de la Independencia monument. The contrast between these ephemeral forms of protest and memory and the *antimonumentos* is clear; even if some of the *antis* are conceived as temporary markers of a protest that will end once justice, truth and reparations are achieved, there is a longer time horizon, as they have been purposely built in a way that makes them difficult and politically costly to remove, at least in Mexico City.[8] They establish a clear presence in the city not only by marking each single event, but as a route that connects them.

One of the memory activists involved in these installations shared how surprised he was that the government did not remove the 43+ *Antimonumento* immediately after it was placed:

> Even though we designed it as a structure made to last in terms of materials and engineering, we expected the government would remove it, and that act would have been symbolic for us. But day after day, they left the 43+ there, and that gave us an impetus for the next one, and the next one. Now it has become harder for the government to remove them given their visibility, and the organizing around them, especially the Glorietas (Roundabouts) which are bigger, widely publicized interventions (Personal interview, June 8, 2023).

4 Intersections and Continuous Protest

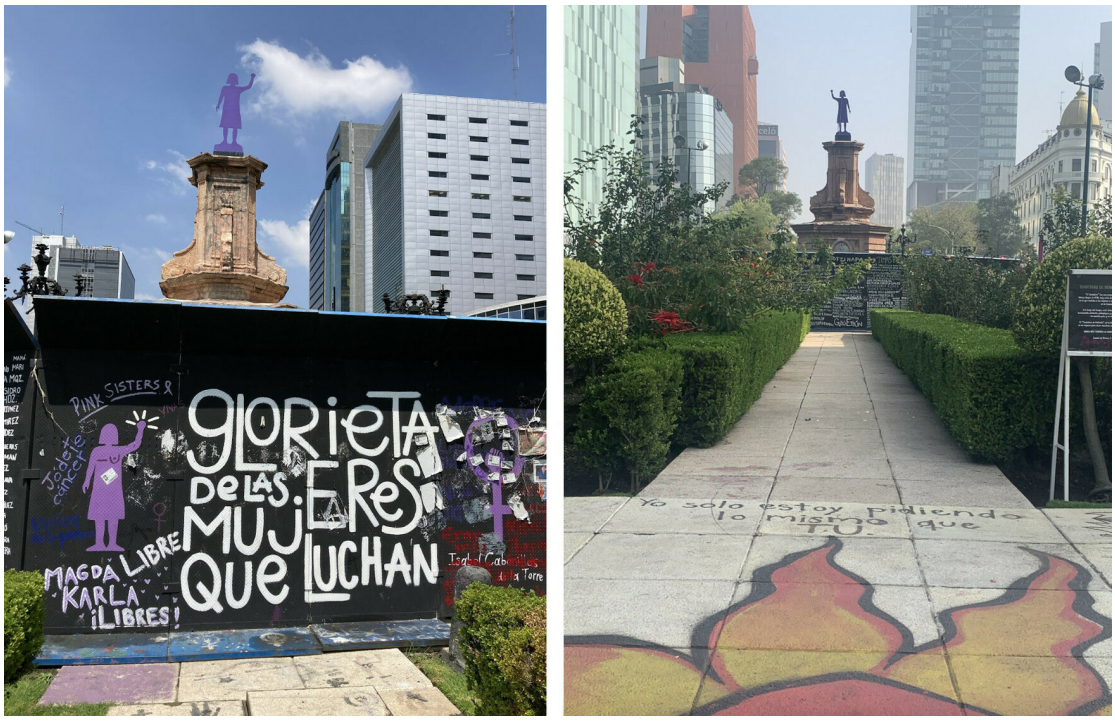
As some of the *antimonumentos* gain more visibility and are used as sites for gatherings, vigils and protests, the government has increasingly expressed its concern about these markings. During our walk, one of the activists shared that the city has asked them to remove and relocate them: "The city government says they are not opposed to the *antimonumentos* per se, just to their location. We tell them we are not moving."

This struggle for public space as sites of memory and resistance is particularly present at the *Glorieta de las mujeres que luchan* (Roundabout of Women in the Struggle) and at the recently claimed *Glorieta de las y los desaparecidos* (Roundabout of the Disappeared). These countermonuments are no longer just occupying a small space on the sidewalk; they are taking over a larger public space to repurpose it as a site for gathering and organizing.

Formerly the monument to Christopher Columbus, the *Glorieta de las mujeres que luchan* became the site of a dispute about monuments that represent colonialism and imperialism (Rozental, forthcoming). Feminist collectives intervened in the monument in 2021, proclaim-

8. On June 5, 2023, the government of the city of Guadalajara removed an *antimonumento* commemorating the "Halconazo tapatío" of June 5, 2020 just hours after it was installed.

ing it as a "seized and reclaimed space, as a site of memory and resistance." The activists covered the panels set up by the government to protect the monument with names of groups and women who are fighting for justice across different struggles — from those searching for the disappeared to indigenous women defending their land. They installed a statue with the figure of a woman on the pedestal of the monument where Columbus previously stood. The names on the panels were erased, presumably by the local authorities, the following day. The activists repainted the names and over the past two years have expanded their intervention in the space, rejecting the city government's proposal to install other monuments, or to move elsewhere.



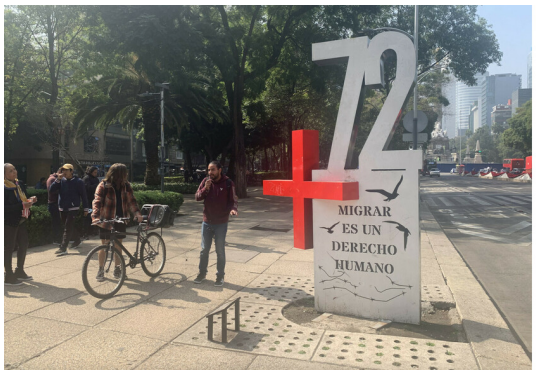
Figures 7–8: Glorieta de las mujeres que luchan.
Photos by the authors, November 23, 2022 and June 6, 2023.

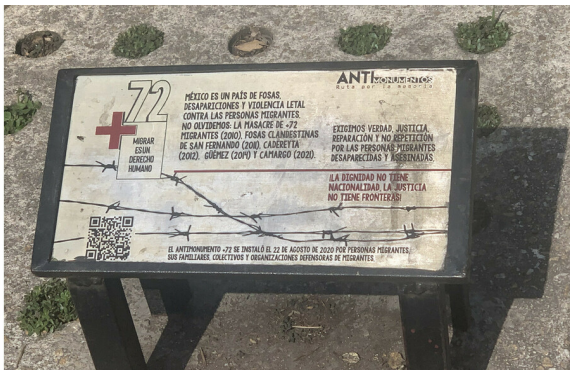
The woman leading the group through the Glorieta that day decisively stated: "This space has already been seized by us; we are not leaving, this is a permanent takeover." Different groups of women take turns to be at the roundabout daily to make sure things are in place, and replace anything that is broken or tampered with: "We have to defend it constantly."

A similar struggle occurs at the Roundabout of the Disappeared. Another iconic space in Mexico City, the *Glorieta de las y los desaparecidos* intervened in what was formerly the *Glorieta de la Palma*. Up until 2022, a beautiful palm tree had stood tall for more than 100 years in the center of the roundabout, but it was infected by a fungus and had to be removed. In the transition to planting a new *ahuehuete* tree there in 2022, activists and families of the disappeared took over the space to claim it as the Roundabout of the Disappeared and hung photographs of their loved ones on strings around it. The city removed them many times, and every time, the families placed them again. As Verástegui stated that day: "...we'll see who gets tired first. They will come in and out of office and we will remain here; we will continue searching for the disappeared and seeking justice."

Figure 9: Glorieta de las y los desaparecidos. Photo by the authors, June 6, 2023.

The government's strong reaction against the takeover of the Roundabout of the Disappeared is clearly an attempt to prevent a permanent installation such as the Women's Roundabout. More than any other countermonument, the Women's Roundabout has become a space that is used actively to organize and hold events, a starting point for marches, a garden, and a place for art. Other *antimonumentos*, such as the 72+ that commemorates the 2010 massacre of 72 migrants in San Fernando, Tamaulipas, have also become spaces to organize and commemorate more than the single event that they mark. A plate recently placed next to the 72+ *Antimonumento* names a number of other massacres of migrants that have occurred since 2010 and provides a QR code with more information about the legal cases. Most recently, on April 27, 2023, a vigil was organized by the *Antimonumento* 72+ to commemorate the 40 victims of a fire inside a detention center in Ciudad Juárez, establishing a continuity in forms of violence that have led to migrant deaths and disappearances.





Figures 10–11: *Antimonumento* San Fernando, Tamaulipas 72+, 1971.
Photo by the authors, November 23, 2022.

As we walk around the panels that the government placed around the pedestal where the Columbus statue previously stood, the guide points out the names of the mothers who are searching for the disappeared in various parts of the country, the mothers who are continuing to fight for justice for the 49 children who died in the ABC day care center, and many others fighting in different but intersecting struggles: "There's not enough space for all the names,"

she says. "And they all have been saying the same thing: 'If there is no justice, we cannot skip over the steps towards memory.' We are an uncomfortable memory."

While memory protests have at times been perceived as a symptom of the failure of more utopian or transformative projects, the Mexican activists described here show an engagement with various "regimes of temporality" at once (Gabowitsch, 2023). Similar to what Gutman and Wüstenberg (2022, p. 1072) say about memory activism more generally, they "use practices of remembrance because they view memory as a unique platform for change due to the transformative character of memory work." If we want to understand these *dynamic* aspects, we need to first understand that memory protests are just as informed by desired or anticipated futures as they are by specific visions of the past (Jaster, 2020). By "engineering a change in the collective narrative and, indirectly, of social relations in the present," memory activists aim to bring about a change of "mnemonic regimes" as a means to engender larger structural transformation (Rigney, 2022, p. 10). In the Mexican case this gains a particular force because the violence that is being commemorated is ongoing, making these alternative sites of memory urgent sites of constant mobilization.

5 Protest and Time

If the examples presented here are thus best described as a *protest against a specific regime of temporality*, these interventions also allow us to reflect on the *temporality of protests*. Often, observers tend to emphasize the ephemeral nature of protests as "events," notwithstanding the potentially long-time spans spent on planning and mobilizing that can often precede them, nor the larger trajectories that protesters may have in mind, as shown above, which defy limited views of protests as spontaneous political action.

Wolin (2005, p. 3) once described different political temporalities, distinguishing, for example, the lengthy processes that constitute law- or policy-making from the "frenetic, disruptive" eventfulness of protests — what Wolin calls "agitated" time. Countermonumental practices like those used by Mexican activists are a part of this agitated political register. In the context of Chile, Badilla Rajevic (2019, p. 733) has shown the strategies of creating fleeting sites of memory with "their emphasis [on] the rupture of the ordinary." Similar to other potentially ephemeral political art, the placing of a countermonument is often transitory.

However, countermonuments can also display a more subtle politics of time, as they generate — paradoxically through their transitory nature — conservation efforts beyond the event of the original placement. They often ensure their own afterlife and a continuous gathering space. The event of the protest is carried on, invites a response from the state, but is also open to being repurposed by other activists, and, like most public monuments, to being remediated and recirculated through various "cultural forms and processes" (Rigney, 2022, p. 15), exactly *against* the closure proposed by the state. Similar to the examples given by Badilla Rajevic (2019, p. 748), "the fleeting temporality of these urban performances may manage to remain through repetitions and reactivation that regularly fuel the inspiration and movement of those who participate."

Countermonumental strategies have the urgency of Wolin's agitated temporality, but they also ensure their own continuation through a particular temporal and spatial politics. If Robert Musil (2006 [1936], p. 64) once declared that "there is nothing... as invisible as monuments," and if the monumental strategy of the Mexican government is one of oblivion (Hernández, 2021), we could say that the countermonument, on the other hand, cannot be ignored but

demands further action. It is in this sense that Wolin (2005, p. 11) asserts that agitation, despite its association with fleeting acts, "takes time," quite literally, as it reaches into the future.

Moreover, the analytic frameworks with which we make sense of these memory protests as either isolated events or as embedded in larger social processes are deeply "anchored in specific temporal registers" themselves (Schwedler, 2016). We are not implying that one needs to necessarily endorse the historical registers of the agents of protests themselves (which have been problematized in the Mexican case; see Allier Montaño et al., 2022), but that temporal framing is part and parcel of the politics of protesting; and of the politics of interpreting and contextualizing protests.

References

Antimonumentos: Memoria, Verdad y Justicia. (2020). 1st ed. Heinrich Böll Stiftung: Mexico City.

Allier Montaño, E., Ovalle, C.V., & Granada-Cardona, J.S. (2022). An Outline for a History of Political Violence in Mexico, 1960–2018. In S. Mandolessi & K. Olalde Rico (Eds.), *Disappearances in Mexico: From the "Dirty War" to the "War on Drugs"*. London: Routledge.

Badilla Rajevic, M. (2019). Ephemeral and Ludic Strategies of Remembering in the Streets: A Springboard for Public Memory in Chile. *Sociological Forum*, *34*(3), 729–751. https://doi.org/10.1111/socf.12522

Berger, S., Scalmer, S., & Wicke, C. (Eds.). (2021). *Remembering Social Movements: Activism and Memory*. London: Routledge.

Bevernage, B. (2015). The Past is Evil/Evil is Past: On Retrospective Politics, Philosophy of History, and Temporal Manichaeism. *History and Theory*, *54*(3), 333–352. https://doi.org/10.1111/hith.10763

Daphi, P., & Zamponi, L. (2019). Exploring the Movement-Memory Nexus: Insights and Ways Forward. *Mobilization*, *24*(4), 399–417. https://doi.org/10.17813/1086-671X-24-4-399

Délano Alonso, A., & Nienass, B. (2021). Countermonuments, Resistance, and the Politics of Time: Memory Activism in Mexico. *Latin American Research Review*, *56*(2), 353–370. https://doi.org/10.25222/larr.534

Délano Alonso, A., & Nienass, B. (2022). The Struggle for Memory and Justice in Mexico. *Current History*, *121*(832), 43–49. https://doi.org/10.1525/curh.2022.121.832.43

De Vecchi Gerli, M. (2018). *¡Vivxs lxs Queremos! The Battles for Memory around the Disappeared in Mexico*. [Doctoral dissertation, University College London].

Gabowitsch, M. (2023). Regimes of Temporality. In Y. Gutman & J. Wüstenberg (Eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Memory Activism* (pp. 48–51). London: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003127550-9

Gutman, Y., & Wüstenberg, J. (2022). Challenging the Meaning of the Past from Below: A Typology for Comparative Research on Memory Activists. *Memory Studies*, *15*(5), 1070–1086. https://doi.org/10.1177/17506980211044696

Jaster, D. (2020). Protest and the Experience of Time: Action as Synchronizing Temporalities. *Time & Society*,*29*(3), 750–771. https://doi.org/10.1177/0961463X19867571

Hernández, E. (2021). Dimensiones y paradojas de los antimonumentos en la Ciudad de México. *Arquine*, May 7.

Muñoz Ramírez, G. (2018). Antimonumento 68, primera escultura que interpela al ejército en el zócalo de la Ciudad de México, a contracorriente de la memoria embalsamada. *Desinformémonos*, October 6.

Musil, R. (2006 \1936). Monuments. In *Posthumous Papers of a Living Author*, translated by P. Wortsman. New York: Archipelago Books.

Ovalle, L.P., & Tovar, A.D. (2019). *Memoria Prematura. Una Década de "Guerra" En México y La Conmemoración De Sus Víctimas*. México: Fundación Heinrich Boll.

Pearce, S.C. (2015). Who Owns a Movement's Memory? The Case of Poland's Solidarity. In A. Reading & T. Katriel (Eds.), *Cultural Memories of Nonviolent Struggles* (pp. 166–187). London: Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137032720_9

Rigney, A. (2022). Toxic Monuments and Mnemonic Regime Change. *Studies on National Movements*, *9*(1), 7–41. https://doi.org/10.21825/snm.85270

Rigney, A. (2023). Decommissioning Monuments, Mobilizing Materialities. In Y. Gutman & J. Wüstenberg (Eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Memory Activism* (pp. 21–27). London: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003127550-5

Rozental, S. (Forthcoming). La némesis de Colón. Replicar la estatua de Amajac en Reforma. In A. Délano Alonso et al. (Eds.), *Las luchas por la memoria contra las violencias en México*. El Colegio de México.

Schwedler, J. (2016). Taking Time Seriously: Temporality and the Arab Uprisings. *Project on Middle East Political Science*. https://pomeps.org/taking-time-seriously-temporality-and-the-arab-uprisings

Stevens, Q., Franck, K.A., & Fazakerley, R. (2012). Counter-Monuments: The Anti-Monumental and the Dialogic. *Journal of Architecture*, *17*(6), 951–972. https://doi.org/10.1080/13602365.2012.746035

Wolin, S. (2005). Agitated Times. *Parallax*, *11*(4), 2–11. https://doi.org/10.1080/13534640500331633

Wüstenberg, J. (2017). *Civil Society and Memory in Postwar Germany*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781316822746

Alexandra Délano Alonso – Global Studies, The New School (United States)
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5066-0902
delanoa@newschool.edu; https://www.newschool.edu/lang/faculty/alexandra-delano/
Alexandra Délano Alonso is Associate Professor of Global Studies at The New School (USA) and holder of the Eugene M. Lang Professorship for Excellence in Teaching and Mentoring. Her research on Mexico-US migration and diaspora policies includes the books *Mexico and its Diaspora in the United States: Policies of Emigration since 1848* (2011, Cambridge University Press), *From Here and There: Diaspora Policies, Integration and Social Rights beyond Borders* (2018, Oxford University Press). In co-authorship with Benjamin Nienass they have published various articles on the politics of memory as well as the special issue *Borders and the Politics of Mourning* (2016, *Social Research. An International Quarterly*). Délano Alonso is also the author of the poetry collection *Brotes* (2021, Interstitial Press) and co-director of the short film *Fragmentos* (2021). Her forthcoming publications include the co-edited volume *Las luchas por la memoria contra las violencias en México (El Colegio de México)*, and *New Narratives on the Peopling of America: Immigration, Race and Dispossession*.

Benjamin Nienass – Department of Political Science and Law, Montclair State University (United States)
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6708-3320
https://www.montclair.edu/profilepages/view_profile.php?username=nienassb
Benjamin Nienass is Associate Professor at the Department of Political Science and Law at Montclair State University (USA). His research on the politics of memory in Germany, the United States, and Mexico has appeared in *The Review of Politics*, *Politics and Society*, the *German Studies Review*, the *Latin American Research Review*, *Current History*, *Globalizations*, and many other journals. He is also the co-editor of *Silence, Screen, and Spectacle: Rethinking Social Memory in the Age of Information* (2014, Berghahn), *Las luchas por la memoria contra las violencias en México* (forthcoming, El Colegio de México), and of several special journal issues, most recently "Myths of Innocence in German Public Memory" (2021) in *German Politics and Society*.