

El Paradigma Sur



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EL PARADIGMA SUR



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EDITORS' NOTE

The Western world's 'value-free' sciences, 'discoveries,' and its knowledge systems have attempted to exclude Black, Indigenous, and other People of Colour (BI&POC) from the spheres of hegemonic discourse. Despite attempts to reduce the complexity of immensely diverse communities under the monolith of "Latin America," people of the region have successfully and endlessly fought any attempt to dilute their subjectivities; from oral, poetic, and literary traditions to other forms of artistic and embodied ways, we continue to articulate ourselves in as many ways as the possibility of expression allows.

Despite the recent "decolonial turn" that has swept across the academy, we remind ourselves that the logics and rationalities of white supremacy, heteropatriarchy, and colonial capitalism are not relics of a bygone society. The violence they have perpetuated persists in our minds, hearts, and spirit; which reflects our responsibility to diligently mobilize ourselves upon this awareness.

El Paradigma Sur, which echoes Joaquín Torres García in his clamour for an independent South, aims to join her children in the pursuit of change. Born out of collective struggle and resistance, our journal emphasizes Latin America's modes of living and learning as told by a new wave of regional scholars, centering the narrative in our cosmovision. Ranging from the Indigenous voices of Tupac Amaru II, or the activism of Rigoberta Menchú Tum, Latin American scholars, journalists, and artists have strived to prioritize Latin American subjectivities despite the North's insistent attempts to study and define the region. At *El Paradigma Sur*, we wish to join these movements to heighten Latin America's quest for self-determination. Our first edition discusses the themes, ideas, and perspectives relevant to the region and her children, placing the conversation within the boundaries of what Latin America herself recognizes as her own. While we are challenging existing scholarship and the relations of power and domination imbued in the Western academy – that represents the continual permeation, consumption, and colonization of entire worlds – we emphasize the process of deep transformation as moulded through the intersubjective process of non-hierarchical learning.

To embark on this journey, we need the space and time to connect with our righteous rage, and for our emotions to be felt, expressed, shared, and witnessed. As you read the collection of pieces published herein, we invite you to consider the different forms Latin America's fight for independence has taken over the years and to reckon with how it continues to manifest. From

writing detailing Haiti's journey in becoming a global model for freedom and successful insurrection against colonial powers, to the ongoing struggle and steadfastness of the Palestinian diaspora in Latin America and their ancestral & Indigenous lands, we explore histories of resistance to empire and the subsequent emergence of a plurality of voices that have been woven by the enduring legacies of affective ties. After all, Abya Yala—as suggested by the name the Indigenous Kuna peoples valued it by—is a region in full ripeness and of vital blood, where resistance to all forms of colonialism and imperial exploits merged in the creation of a non-homogenous “Latin American” society that demands to be reinterpreted and redefined.

In our first edition of *El Paradigma Sur* and the many more to come, we invite you to envision a new humanism that does not recreate the European model of agency, but embraces new and transgressive paradigms that allow our spiritual, bodily, and physical health to flourish. Thus, we highlight the voice of Latin American scholars and intellectuals who are joining alongside a rich and ongoing history of academics, journalists, poets, novelists, songwriters, land defenders, and many others who are mobilizing to dignify the region as a sociopolitical and cultural actor. That way, Latin America's portrait will be painted with oils depicting an image all of her children and admirers can recognize as belonging to an ever-lasting legacy that locates the South as our true beacon.

While this marks the first year of our journal's publication, we encourage our readers, authors, creatives, and thinkers to understand revolution and the dismantlement of empire as not originating from a singular locus but instead emanating from an iterative praxis that incrementally strengthens collective power. As such, This journal is one of many restorative practices that reflect the internal, conscious, and material efforts we must undertake toward engaging in meaningful and reciprocal relationships; thereby broadening our understanding of intellectual and scholarly resistance toward rebuilding our communities' ways of being and knowing.

NOTA EDITORIAL

Las ciencias ‘libres de sesgos de valor,’ los ‘descubrimientos,’ y los sistemas de conocimiento del mundo occidental han excluido a las personas racializadas de las esferas de un discurso hegemónico. A pesar de los intentos por reducir la complejidad de comunidades inmensamente diversas bajo el monolito de “Latinoamérica,” las personas de la región han luchado constantemente para evitar la dilución de sus subjetividades; desde tradiciones orales, poéticas, y literarias a otras formas de expresión artística y corporal, continuamos articulándonos en todos los medios que la expresión permite.

Si bien la academia ha experimentado una ola de descolonización en muchas de sus áreas, nosotros recordamos que las lógicas y racionalidades de la supremacía blanca, el heteropatriarcado, y el capitalismo colonial no son reliquias de una sociedad pasada. La violencia que han perpetuado persiste en nuestras mentes, corazones, y espíritus, lo que refleja nuestra responsabilidad de movilizarnos diligentemente contra estos entes opresores.

El Paradigma Sur, que rescata el clamor de Joaquín Torres García por un Sur independiente, propone ayudar a los hijos latinoamericanos en la búsqueda del cambio. Formado desde la resistencia y la lucha colectiva, nuestra propuesta enfatiza los modos de vida y aprendizaje de América Latina descritos por una nueva generación de académicos, centrándose en la narrativa de nuestra cosmovisión. Desde las voces indígenas de Tupac Amaru II, o el activismo de Rigoberta Menchú Tum, intelectuales, periodistas, y artistas latinoamericanos han priorizado las subjetividades de la región a pesar de la insistencia del Norte por estudiar y definirla. En *El Paradigma Sur* deseamos unirnos a estos movimientos para resaltar la búsqueda latinoamericana por la autodeterminación. Nuestra primera edición discute los tópicos, ideas, y perspectivas relevantes a la región y sus hijos, localizando a la conversación dentro de las barreras que América Latina reconoce como propias. Mientras estamos contrarrestando la academia existente y las relaciones de poder inculcadas en la academia occidental—que representa la continúa permeación, consumición, y colonización de mundos enteros—enfaticamos el proceso de transformación profunda construido a través del aprendizaje intersubjetivo y no jerárquico.

Para iniciar este proceso, necesitamos el espacio y tiempo para conectarnos con nuestra ira justa, y que nuestras emociones sean vistas, sentidas, expresadas, y compartidas. A medida que lees las piezas aquí publicadas, te invitamos a que consideres las diferentes formas que ha tomado la lucha por las independencia en América Latina, y que reconozcas cómo continúa

manifestándose día a día. Desde textos que detallan la historia de Haití para volverse un modelo de libertad e insurrección contra poderes coloniales a la continua lucha de la diáspora Palestina en América Latina y en sus tierras ancestrales, exploramos las historias de resistencia al imperio. Después de todo, Abya Yala—como lo sugiere el nombre valorado por las comunidades indígenas Kuna—es una región de madurez y sangre vital, donde la resistencia a todas las formas de colonialismo y explotación imperial se unieron en la creación de una sociedad “Latinoamericana” no homogénea que demanda ser reinterpretada y redefinida.

En nuestra primera edición de *El Paradigma Sur* y en las que están por venir, te invitamos a visionar un nuevo humanismo que no recrea el modelo de agencia europeo, pero que abraza nuevos paradigmas que permiten el florecimiento de nuestra salud espiritual, corporal y física. Así, resaltamos las voces de eruditos e intelectuales que están uniéndose a la rica e incesante historia de académicos, periodistas, poetas, novelistas, compositores, defensores de la tierra, y muchos otros que se está movilizando por dignificar a la región como un actor sociopolítico y cultural. De esta forma, el retrato de América Latina será pintado con acuarelas de su propia creación, personificando una imagen que sus hijos y admiradores pueden reconocer como perteneciente a un legado que localiza al Sur como nuestro verdadero faro.

Mientras esto marca el primer año de la publicación de este proyecto, motivamos a nuestros lectores, autores y pensadores a entender la revolución y el desmantelamiento de imperios no como originarios de un solo lugar, sino como fenómenos emergentes de una praxis reiterativa que incrementa la fortaleza del poder colectivo. Es por esto que esta compilación de textos es una de las múltiples prácticas restaurativas que refleja los esfuerzos materiales, internos, y conscientes que debemos tomar para participar de relaciones significativas y recíprocas, expandiendo nuestro entendimiento de la resistencia intelectual y académica para reconstruir las formas de ser y conocer de nuestras comunidades.

NOTA DA EDIÇÃO

Os paradigmas ocidentais de “ciências isentas de valores” e “descobertas”, e seus sistemas de conhecimento tentam e tentaram excluir das esferas hegemônicas de discussão pessoas negras, indígenas, e de outros grupos minoritários. Apesar de tentativas de reduzir a imensa complexidade de diversas comunidades sob o guarda-chuva de “América Latina”, os povos dessa região tem exaustivamente e com sucesso lutado contra qualquer tentativa de diluir suas subjetividades; de tradições orais, poéticas e literárias a outras formas artísticas e corporais, nós continuamos a nos expressarmos de todas maneiras possíveis.

A despeito do recente “movimento decolonial” que varreu os ambientes acadêmicos, nós lembramos que as lógicas e racionais de supremacia branca, heteropatriarcado e capitalismo colonial não são relíquias de uma sociedade passada. A violência por elas perpetuada vive em nossas mentes, corações e espíritos; logo temos responsabilidade nos mobilizarmos com consciência de tal violência.

El Paradigma Sur, que ecoa o clamor de Joaquín Torres García por um Sul independente, procura juntar-se aos filhos e filhas do Sul no caminho para a mudança. Nascido de luta e resistência coletiva, nossa revista enfatiza os meios de vida e conhecimentos latino-americanos pelo ponto de vista de uma nova onda de acadêmicos regionais, centrando a narrativa em nossa cosmovisão. Desde vozes indígenas como Tupac Amaru II a ativistas como Rigoberta Menchú Tum, acadêmicos, jornalistas, e artistas vem priorizando subjetividades latino-americanas apesar das insistentes tentativas do Norte em definir e estudar a região à sua vontade. Nesta revista, nós desejamos unir esses movimentos para potencializar a missão de autodeterminação latino-americana. Nossa primeira edição discute os temas, ideias e perspectivas relevantes à região e aos seus filhos e filhas, posicionando a conversa dentro dos limites que a América Latina reconhece como próprios. Enquanto estamos desafiando os estudos existentes e as relações de poder e dominação intrínsecas à academia ocidental – que representa a contínua permeabilidade, colonização e consumo de realidades inteiras – nós enfatizamos o profundo processo de transformação moldado pela intersubjetividade do aprendizado não hierárquico.

Para embarcar nessa jornada, nós necessitamos do espaço e tempo para conectar com nosso justo ódio, e para nossas emoções serem sentidas, expressadas, compartilhadas e testemunhadas. Enquanto ler a coleção de trabalhos aqui publicados, nós o convidamos a considerar as mais diferentes formas de luta por independência na América Latina e como elas continuam a manifestar-se ao longo dos anos. Da jornada haitiana para se tornar um modelo

global de liberdade e insurreição colonial, até a contínua luta e resiliência da diáspora palestina na América Latina, exploramos histórias de resistência anti-imperialista e a emergência subsequente de uma pluralidade de vozes que foram entrelaçadas por duradouros laços afetivos. Afinal, Abya Yala — como sugerido pelo nome que os povos Kuna a dam à região — é repleta de sangue vital e maturidade, onde resistência a qualquer forma de colonialismo e exploração imperial se fundem na criação de uma sociedade “latino-americana” heterogênea que exige ser reinterpretada e redefinida.

Tanto nesta primeira edição de *El Paradigma Sur* quanto nas subsequentes, convidamos você a imaginar um novo humanismo que não retoma o modelo de agência europeu, mas abarca novos e transgressivos paradigmas que permitem florescer nossa saúde espiritual, corporal e física. Assim, nós destacamos a voz de estudiosos e intelectuais latino-americanos que estão acompanhados de uma rica e contínua história de acadêmicos, jornalistas, poetas, romancistas, compositores, defensores da terra, e muitos outros que estão mobilizados para engrandecer a região como seu próprio ator sociopolítico e cultural. Desse modo, o retrato latino-americano será pintado com suas próprias tintas, exibindo uma imagem que todos seus filhos, filhas e admiradores podem reconhecer como pertencente a um legado que coloca o Sul como nosso verdadeiro farol.

Enquanto essa nota marca o primeiro ano de publicação da nossa revista, nós encorajamos nossos leitores, autores e pensadores a entenderem revolução e anti-imperialismo não como originário de um locus único, mas emanando de um praxis iterativo que incrementalmente fortalece o poder coletivo. Como tal, essa revista é uma de muitas práticas restauradoras que reflete os esforços internos, conscientes e materiais que precisamos fazer para nos engajarmos em relacionamentos substanciais e recíprocos; deste modo ampliando nosso entendimento da resistência intelectual e acadêmica que pode reconstruir os viveres e saberes de nossas comunidades.

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POETRY

Ayer Soñé Contigo

Ana Iremi Rodríguez Cruz



Ayer te vi en mis sueños. Llevabas el vestido blanco, el de adornos de perlas. Estabas sonriendo. Esa risa tan picara y bonita que traía una brisa de felicidad al que la veía.

Ayer soñé contigo y por un solo instante, un minúsculo momento, pensé que seguías viva. Que seguías bailando con ese vestido blanco mientras las estrellas centellaban. Que te podía llevar al centro a comer helado, la tarde estrechándose tanto que parecía estar dispuesta a darnos todo el tiempo del mundo.

Ayer soñé contigo, y cuando desperté y tu no estabas, no supe qué hacer conmigo mismo. ¿Cuál es el sentido de la vida te pregunto, si ya no estamos juntos? ¿Qué hago ahora que no puedo escuchar tu risa, mientras tu vestido revolotea en la brisa?

Hoy soñé que te encontraba. Te fui a buscar, colgué posters, llamé a toda la gente que alguna vez te conoció, y rogué. Rogué con gente que no te conocía, gente que piensa de ti como una más cuando en realidad eras el mundo entero. Rogué que te encontraran, que te trajeran a casa.

Hoy, soñé con un vestido rojo. Y en ese vestido manchado vi el que me alejo de ti. El que me robó tu luz, el que me quitó el tiempo. Hoy pensé en él y mi corazón dejó de existir, de la misma manera que dejó de existir ayer.

Hoy soñé con tu dolor. Lloré por ti, por otras como tú, por gente que, al igual que yo, desconoce el cruel destino que nos separó. Lloré y mi mundo se desvaneció.

Mañana soñare que regresas. Volveré a llamar. Gritaré tu nombre en cada rincón de la ciudad. Le pediré a un sistema que hace tiempo dejo de funcionar que me regresen a la persona a la que ame más.

Mañana soñare con justicia para nunca encontrarla. Pediré que no hayas sufrido, pediré que regreses sabiendo que nunca se cumplirá.

Mañana no vas a estar aquí. Aunque quiera soñar por un segundo más que sigues viva no lo estarás. Mañana soñare contigo en tu vestido, y cuando despierte una vez más no vas a estar.

Ayer soñé contigo, hoy te fui a buscar, mañana lo haré todo una vez más, esperando que algún día regreses conmigo. ♦

La última cerveza en la Catedral

(Zavala y su autor)

Teniendo en tu palma rebosante arte, ¿cómo pudiste derrocharlo en hacer una pregunta tan inocua? Aún más, vertiste en innumerables páginas, respuestas para una interrogante cerrada. Si desgastaste tu elocuencia en tal sinsentido, fue por sufrir la vanidad o delirio de figurar tu historia con la Historia. Falta de tacto y una anestesiada sensibilidad, abandonaste en tus torcidas escaleras, la tierra que hizo tus lienzos. Mas, ¿qué reproche podría darte justamente? ¿Fue tu literatura más que el vehículo de tu arribismo? Que sin sabores quedarán para el resto reconciliar tus buenas palabras con tu poco silencio.

Dos interpretaciones de Paracas:

¿Óbito fetal?:

Ausencia de pecho,
hormigueo craneal y
corazonadas sordas.

Tus pómulos afiebrados
blanden tu enfermedad,
encienden la palidez fatal
que quema tu nariz.

Cada delirio más espasmódico
que el precursor; tan accidentado
como soñar en un busto aviar
un sofocante pendón umbilical.

¿Cuánto malestar haz de soportar?
Este cuerpo,
Mudo en su represión,
Se somete a la Plateada anestesia
Que heredó.

Escozor vertebral,
Evasión cardíaca
Y una arenosa resignación.

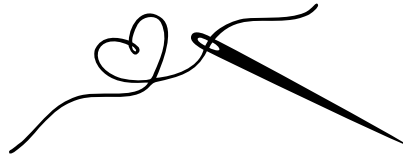


¿Y si cediera tu huidiza respiración?
¿Quedaría tu agonía en la ribera,
O estas vísceras sueltas y tuétano desnudo?
Devorado todo, solo hay ausencia de color.

Vigía milenaria:

(La seda de una playa)

Amanecen en el delicado fragor de sus yemas
largos hilos de estela que tejen tirabuzones
sobre su sereno semblante azul y verde.
Llueve la tarde sus últimos tintes rojos y anaranjados
Sobre el imperecedero fuego del candelabro,
avivando la áurea joya del poniente. ♦



Abuelo and the Tourist

Hannah Permaul Flores

The pressure in the cabin blocked my hearing
So I had no choice but to let
My anxieties serenade me to sleep
I was 15, and alone with myself amongst a crowd of tourists on our flight
Dreams of sandy beaches and all-you-can-eat buffets floated in a haze above everyone except me

We were headed for Cuba
This was my overdue homecoming
I was meeting my Abuelo for the first time
The arrival of Miguel Flores's granddaughter was to be celebrated
There was talk in the small farm town in Jibacoa
When the Canadian Flower touches base with her Cuban roots

But I was still a tourist

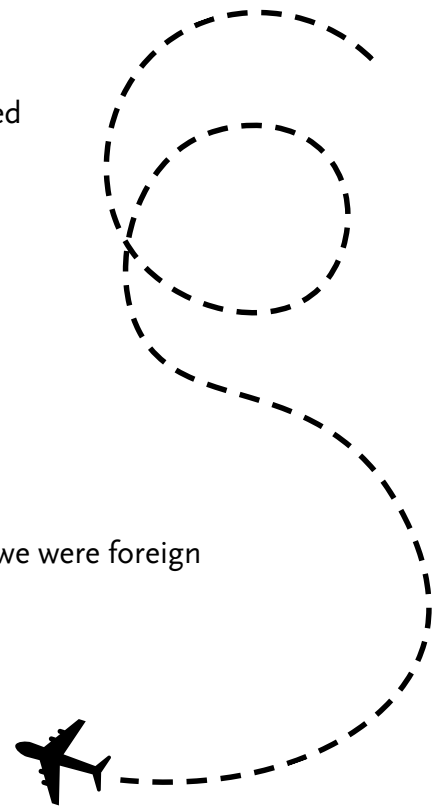
The turbulence in my mind began to stabilize as we landed
When we settled into our hotel, I put pen to paper
Scribbled down everything I wanted to ask Abuelo

My Canadian family made it too easy for everyone to know that we were foreign
An entourage with cameras that hung around their necks
Sporting wide-brimmed hats and tote bags from the hotel

But I was the foreigner who looked familiar

Too close for comfort

Eyes walked up and down my image as I walked the cobblestone streets
Like my curls and caramel skin were speaking for themselves
Like they knew something about me that I didn't



I couldn't tell if I was sweating because the sun was at its peak
Or because it left me exposed
Nervous
I was a fraud
Beads of sweat building a necklace of shame

Another Brown girl jumping borders in search of something that she thinks she deserves
The doubt of my legitimacy as a Cuban became a permanent resident in my stomach

We pulled up to Abuelo's farm in an old classic car
Papa always told me I had Abuelo's eyes
In that moment I could see it for myself
His gaze comforted me even before we embraced for the first time

I held his rough hands in mine
They were sculpted from rolling hills and valleys
Tracing the landscape of a lifetime of plowing fields

He showed me the grounds
Roasted pork fresh from the farm
Steamed rice and beans in lofty banana leaves
The entire village waiting expectantly

To celebrate the homecoming of this girl who was lost in translation

The gallery of ancestors on the modest farmhouse wall was whispering
The photo of my late Abuela caught the sun in my eye
Like they knew something about me that I didn't

We stayed on the porch for a while
The tides that collided from two oceans sat together in a calm breeze
And the smells of savoury, charred traditions
Mingled well with the aroma of the cigar in his hand

But worrying on the plane
Rehearsing questions
Were pointless

He could not speak English

Language is the inheritance that slipped through my fingers
Failure of my Abuelo's hands
My tongue, clumsy in the face of my Papa's joy
Los siento
I am only fluent in repenting for not being enough of anything

I open my mouth
My family tree wilts
I am a failed garden
Where the Spanish soil meets the night sky
But has no chance of becoming the horizon

So all I could do
Before I left
Was to say the only phrase that I felt comfortable with
Te quiero mucho
And he returned the same words

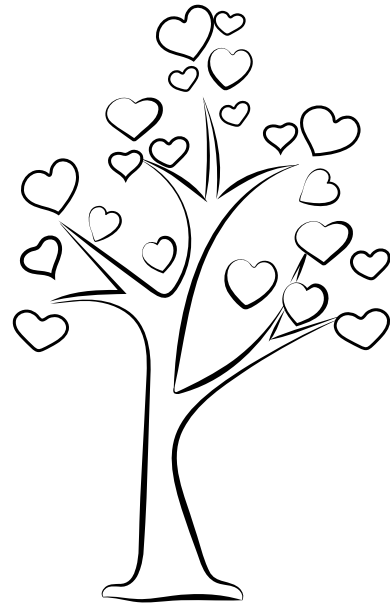
It was getting dark
Time to go back to our hotel
I was still waving and smiling through the car window in the back
All I could do was think about the conversations that we could have had

I wanted to sow seeds, to plant a dialogue that would allow me to sit in the mango trees that he
grew to bare branches of promise
To be closer to Abuelo
Because if I carried Spanish in my pocket
And let Abuelo's voice prosper in my ear
Then I could taste the sweetness of finding myself all over again

But I was unaware of just how permanent the sunset was that fell on such a perfect day
I met my Abuelo for the first and last time

Abuelo passed away less than a year after
But at least we exchanged time and words
Currency that could not be robbed from us

And somewhere between
Our first hello



And our last goodbye
There was love

So much love

Abuelo never saw me as a tourist

I was family

We are family...

At least we both understood that ♦



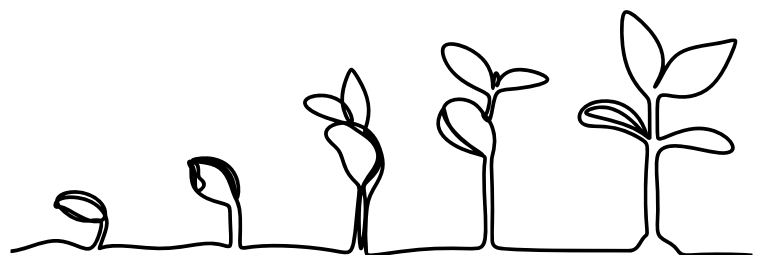
OP-EDS

Between Old Roots and New Aspirations: Palestinian Politics in Latin America

Mohammad Rasoul Kailani

Amidst economic uncertainty and Ottoman conscription in the late 19th century, many Palestinians concluded that they had to cross the Atlantic for prosperity and opportunity. This idea came about when Dom Pedro II of Brazil toured the Levant in the 1870s. An Arabophile, he advertised Brazil as a hospitable country where anyone could come and make a fortune (Garcia de Oliveira and Santana 2019). With this strong reputation established, the New World captivated the imaginations of Levantines, as it had the minds of Europeans for centuries prior. Argentina, too, with its sparsely settled provinces and vast material wealth, proved to be an attractive destination for *Los Turcos*. Though mainly Arab in origin, the locals assumed they were Turkish because of their Ottoman documents. This unfamiliarity with the Near East is evidence of the cultural and social gaps Levantine immigrants had to overcome to succeed in their adoptive homelands.

Lebanese and Syrian immigration was particularly numerous; their strong community networks led them to dominate the market in São Paulo and Buenos Aires early on. To find a space where they could dominate commerce, Palestinians had to disembark at the port and then ride on the backs of mules in search of further lands, as did Rafael Araya Masry's family, who is now the head of the Palestinian Confederation of Latin America and the Caribbean (COPLAC). It should be noted that I interviewed this remarkable man, whose insights shed great light on the community and the issues they face. His family went to Chile, where the Lion's share of Palestinians ended up, but some went to Peru, Ecuador, and more notably, Central America. These Palestinians, primarily Orthodox and from the area around Jerusalem, were of regular status back home. By contrast, the arduous journey, language barrier and discrimination meant the first few years of "*ghorba*" (estrangement) were mired in poverty. Arabs, with their different religion(s), unique names and ambiguous status in the Latin American hierarchy meant Palestinians were not always welcome. At some points, different countries attempted to hinder "oriental" migration in exchange for a whiter demographic.



In spite of all the obstacles, there was one factor that opened doors for the Palestinians. Native to a land that was a crossroads between continents, Palestinians were experts at trade. In the countries they immigrated to, there was no mercantile class as economic control was split between wealthy landowners and common labourers. What started as long hours peddling goods transformed into self-owned businesses, and then evolved into large companies that dominated national sectors. Financial success led to an uptick in influence and education, and in countries with large Palestinian diasporas, they came to prominence in media, politics and even sports. In Honduras, nearly half of the country's key companies are owned by Palestinian families (Guitérrez Rivera 2014). In Chile, Palestinians are prominent in every sector imaginable. In El Salvador, Palestinians have been a pulse for the country's political and economic life; current President Nayib Bukele is the descendant of Palestinian immigrants. Their exceptional involvement in wider society and smooth adoption of Spanish/Portuguese as a first language makes Palestinians in Latin America a remarkable case of successful integration.

Yet integration does not equate to assimilation. In fact, There are a number of practices undertaken by Palestinians in Latin America that separate them from White and Mestizo society. Unlike the Lebanese diaspora, a large chunk of Palestinians choose to marry amongst themselves. In Central America particularly, groups of Orthodox clans from cities such as Bethlehem continue to intermarry in spite of having left over a century ago. Similarly, Palestinians have their own social clubs where they ferment their steadfast social ties, with Santiago's *Club Palestino* being the most famous of all. A top of the line country club, it is primarily known for their football side which is a consistent top five team. Cultural practices, like eating traditional foods and forming Dabke troupes also show the Palestinian determination to maintain their unique heritage.

Naturally, some of this cultural testimony translates into support for the Palestinian cause. In the wake of the current Israeli atrocities in Gaza, multiple Latin American countries severed or downgraded their ties to Israel. Two of these, Honduras and Chile, have large Palestinian communities (the vice president of the former is of Palestinian descent). While Palestinian communities in these countries are influential, it is not solely their influence that resulted in these stances. These two countries are governed by leftists who have adopted Palestine as a *cause celebre* due to its anti-imperialist nature. On the other hand, there are countries with large Palestinian populations, such as Guatemala, that have been actively pro-Israeli throughout the current events. What is most peculiar in regards to Palestinian politics in Latin America is that it is quite varied in spite of the relative homogeneity of the community. They are overwhelmingly Orthodox Christians from a handful of towns in Central Palestine and occupy a similar social standing. Even when family ties exist, there is still diversity of thought. *In essence, Palestinian political perspectives in Latin America are divided between recognition of their old roots and their newfound status in the upper echelons of society.*

The most poignant example of this phenomenon is the 2004 election in El Salvador. Two candidates, the left wing Schafik Handal and right wing Antonio Saca, were extremely similar and distinct at the same time. They grew up in the same neighborhood into two related families, but different aspects of the Palestinian experience shaped their politics. Handal saw a parallel between the Salvadoran popular class' struggle against US backed dictatorship and exploitation and the tragedy of his motherland. As a result, he maintained deep ties with the Palestinian Liberation Organization, a political and military group recognized as the global representatives of their people. Saca, as a result of his family's climb from poverty to abundance, was a firm believer in the power of capitalism. In particular, he believed merit, rather than circumstance, determined one's space on the socio-economic ladder, an idea commonly perpetrated in the United States. But mere ideology was not the only common point he held with the United States. The Bush administration openly supported his campaign, and in return for this favour, Saca maintained a foreign policy hostile to leftist, pro-Palestinian states and even committed troops to the U.S. occupation of Iraq. Thus, it comes as no surprise that Saca rarely mentioned Palestine (Dellios 2004). In the midst of the current crisis, the contrast between these two political priorities has been ever more glaring. While Palestinian communities in some Latin American states have come out in full support of the cause, not everyone has been on board. Salvadoran President Nayib Bukele is probably the most famous Palestinian descendant in the Americas, yet has never condemned the occupation. In fact, he officially visited Israel as mayor of San Salvador. Thus, it appears that diaspora approaches to the Palestinian cause are more diverse in Latin America than in other diaspora locations.

This leaves important questions to be asked. How do Latin Palestinians organize politically? Do they prioritize ethnic based cooperation or class based cooperation? Will they acknowledge the political situation in their ancestral land, or keep recognition of their heritage cultural? The situation varies wildly based on country and ideological belief, but using four case studies, general conclusions can be drawn to explain why some Latino Palestinians are more active than others. These are Chile, Brazil, El Salvador, and Honduras. **The reasoning for these specific choices are as follows:**

- Chile has the largest Palestinian community outside of the Arab World, and the sheer number of Palestinian descendants there means there is quite a wide range of thought. Obviously, many large demonstrations and pro-Palestine movements have emerged out of Chile, but the community's approach to the cause has shifted depending on domestic political considerations.
- Brazil's Palestinian community is comparatively small. Most estimates put their number at below 100,000. Nevertheless, they have been at the forefront of Palestinian advocacy in Latin America. It was this community that founded COPLAC and convinced President Lula Da Silva to recognize the Palestinian State in 2010. The community's

influence on the Lula government, which held tremendous influence over other regional countries, then led to multiple Latin American countries doing the same. It can be argued that they are the most passionate Palestinian community in the entire region. As Rafael Araya Masry told me, *“even the right wing Palestinians there vote for Lula because of Palestine, that is how much they care!”*

- El Salvador and Honduras are two countries where Palestinians have undue influence in commerce, politics, philanthropy, and media. The demographics, class status and history of the Palestinian communities in these countries are almost identical. Their miniscule number, contrasted with their gargantuan influence, has attracted the ire of many non-Palestinians in these countries. While a more common occurrence in the early 20th century, commentators and everyday citizens may blame ‘Turcos’ for the country's problems. Sometimes, this rhetoric resembles the way anti-Semites talk of Jewish People in Europe and North America. At one point, there were even laws banning Palestinian immigration and restricting their economic activities. This prejudice has often meant that Palestinians in Honduras and El Salvador attempt to conceal aspects of their ethnic identity. Thus, even when wanting to acknowledge “Palestinidad”, there is more of a focus on material cultural practices and customs than the liberation struggle. Paradoxically, the clout the Palestinian community holds places it in a complicated position. Of the cases analyzed in this paper, this community is the least vocal (Guitérrez Rivera 2014; Foroohar 2011).

By comparing and contrasting all the cases, **some general observations can be noted:**

- The Cold War and ensuing class-based conflicts were of great hindrance to the Palestinian communities’ public backing of the national cause. The Palestine Liberation Organization was associated with leftist militancy and opposition to the United States and allies. The Palestinian diaspora could not risk their status, especially in countries that were authoritarian dictatorships. As Latin America begins to move on from Cold War trauma, one can be more public about their allegiance to the cause. However, this process varies from place to place. The recent and extreme violence that occurred during said conflicts in Central America is much more prevalent in public memory, meaning this constraint affects Palestinians in Central America more than South America.

- Prevalence of media showing Israeli atrocities against Palestinians has been and is a mobilizing factor for Palestinians in the diaspora. Accounts from Brazil and Chile show that hesitancy to get involved with the cause in the 1960s and ‘70s was crushed by images of the Sabra and Shatila Massacre of 1982 (Garcia de Oliveira and Santana 2019; Baeza 2014). Maronite militias backed by the Israeli military slaughtered thousands of innocents in a Palestinian camp in Beirut. Before, it may have been difficult for diaspora Palestinians to grasp the scale of the occupier’s crimes. After all, most left before the

Nakba, and words can only say so much. With images of maimed corpses and pools of blood on international TV, the *moghtaribin* (Arabs in diaspora) could not stand these crimes, much less against their own kin. This galvanized the push for Palestine in Latin America. For Masry, the turning point was when all sectors of the Palestinian community in Santiago gathered to protest outside the Orthodox Church. Now, Masry says, with the brutal scenes in Gaza just a tap and a swipe away, Palestinians abroad are even more motivated to support the cause and pressure their government to do the same. (Personal communication, November 29, 2023).

- 'Bigger' does not necessarily mean 'better.' Garcia de Oliveira and Bisharat attribute the success of Palestinian-Brazilians in winning recognition by cooperating with like minded groups, namely leftists. The community is not strong and influential enough to promote Palestine on its own, so it has made durable ideological alliances that ensures a large chunk of the voting public stands by the cause. Masry agrees with this sentiment, and adds that this strategy has been successful in Argentina, where the Palestinian community is microscopic. By contrast, he complains that because of their tremendous size, Palestinian-Chileans consistently cooperate amongst themselves but do not do much outreach, a strategy he views as detrimental in the long term.

- Though not always the case, there have been noted differences between Palestinians who came with the original wave and more recent immigrants. Some of the latter group came as refugees, and others followed because of the pressure of living under military occupation. In Brazil, the newer group comprises a larger percentage, which could have an impact on their consistent activities (Boehm 2023). In Central America, the newer group leads most Palestinian political initiatives, in spite of the older group forming the vast majority of the community.

A History of Palestinian Politics in Latin America: Fresh Off The Mule

As new immigrants, Palestinian politics initially revolved around the dramatic situation in their homeland and their standing as a community in the new country. These were inextricably tied. Many Palestinians who moved abroad did so during a critical juncture in the history of their country, the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of the British mandate. Even when Palestinians traveled far and wide in search of new opportunities, many kept property back home and intended on returning to their relatives, either occasionally or permanently. This back and forth situation was common before the First World War. But such travel was done with Ottoman passports, and the "Eternal State" no longer existed. The countries that they had settled in had not naturalized them. In the interest of eugenic thought, they were looking for Europeans, and had later passed laws restricting or banning Palestinians from immigrating. The one passport

left to acquire was that of the new British mandate, one they were entitled to as Palestinians.

In spite of this, they were almost always refused this protection. Only 1% of approved applications for citizenship of the mandate were submitted by non-Jews. In 1937, a member of the Palestine Royal Commission estimated that out of 9,000 applications submitted by Palestinians in Latin America, less than 100 were accepted. The situation had become so severe that the Palestinian Nationalist movement had formed a committee specifically to fight these discriminatory policies that blocked Palestinians from returning to their lands, yet allowed European Jews with no ancestral connections to Palestine to immigrate without restrictions. (Bawalsa 2017 a)

Although lost in the annals of history until research done by Nadim Bawalsa, this case is noteworthy as it represents an organized campaign to secure the Palestinian Right of Return before the Nakba of 1948. It also represented the fermenting of a Palestinian conscience in a diaspora who left before the British had drawn Palestine's borders. The Arabic language newspapers active in Chile during this time, chief among them *Al Watan* (The Homeland), offer a window to observe the way identities shifted over time.

At the beginning, the Palestinians, Lebanese and Syrians in Chile were all referred to as "Arabs" or "Syrians".¹ While still encouraging notions of Arab unity, the newspapers began referring to these nationalities separately, since the issues that affected them became more particular. Lebanese and Syrian immigrants had no problems requesting French documents from the consulates. The issue was very much a Palestinian one, so the need to defend Palestinian citizenship became the need to defend Palestinian identity as a whole. A letter published in *Al Watan* in 1925 strongly opposed the British referring to the Palestinians as "former Ottoman residents" in an attempt to justify their withholding of citizenship. Phillip Badran, author of the letter, highlighted the significance of this policy by writing

"The Palestinian therefore is deprived of British protection of his nationalism and of his nation as well...[Palestinians] are forbidden from returning to their birthplace and to the life of the country of his fathers and grandfathers."

He then emphasizes,

"To prevent this danger, every Palestinian migrant must refuse under any circumstance to have that expression placed in his [passport]. Instead, he must insist that he is a Palestinian, son of Palestine, with Palestinian forefathers and that he is not an Ottoman... Palestinians have the right to return to their nation as nationals and not as Ottoman foreigners." (Bawalsa 2017 b)

¹In this case, Syria does not refer to the modern state, but to the historic region of the Levant. As borders were new, most Lebanese, Palestinians and Syrians had not developed an entirely separate national conscience.

The need and will to enforce Palestinians' indigenous connection to the land and their opposition to foreign domination transcended all the lands and seas that laid between countries like Chile and the country of origin. The need to bring attention to the Palestinian identity in particular came as a reaction to marginalization that affected Palestinians in particular, a pattern that became accentuated with the Nakba, Naksa and subsequent occupation. However, there were certain situations that required all Levantine Arabs in a given region to act as a collective. Once again, we gain insight from Arab newspapers in the region. In 1927, Chile's parliament voted to block the immigration of "Syrians" and restrict the economic activities of those already in Chile. Al Watan had published a plea to organize against this decision and change public opinion.

By Syrian, I mean of course that the Lebanese is Syrian, and that Palestinian is Syrian, and that we are all Turcos in the eyes of Chilean nationals... The Chilean people have decided to kick us out because of the belief that we are leeches on the body of their nation... We must straighten our ways before they straighten them for us." (Bawalsa 2017 b)

After this was published, the leading Arab social club in Chile issued directives for Arabs in Chile on how to behave, so they would be accepted like "Germans and Anglo Saxons." (Bawalsa 2017 b). Similar phenomena arose in Honduras and El Salvador (Foroohar 2011). There, Palestinians had also risen from small-time peddlers to economic powerhouses within 30 years, and such a phenomenon generated concern amongst the primarily Mestizo common people and the mainly White elite. To conclude, the first wave of Palestinian politics in Latin America revolved around Palestinian identity, whether this was to do with foreign policy or domestic issues. In a sense, Palestinians worked to maintain ties to their country of birth and affirm their position in their new countries in the event they could not return. Participation in other topics was limited, as Palestinians were not citizens and pushed out of the system.

A History of Palestinian Politics in Latin America: New Society, New Challenges

The first generation of Palestinian diaspora to have been primarily born in Latin America would have been born during the interwar period, at the time where Latin American governments had made efforts to restrict Palestinian newcomers. Aside from immigration bans, efforts were made to diminish the Palestinian identity of those who had already immigrated. "Palestinians were made to engage in a rapid process of assimilation", says Masry. "My grandfather would only speak Spanish to his children, Arabic was only for his friends." Masry describes a process of being allowed to succeed, but trading in aspects of your cultural identity in order to be a welcome member of Chilean society.

I asked if this was a process that all newcomers to Chile were subject to, to which he replied that this process was "distinct" for Palestinians. In Southern Chile, where Masry's

grandfather moved, it was German immigration that was encouraged. The 20th century mentality that circulated in elite Chilean circles wanted immigrants to bring “European work culture” as opposed to “swindling merchants.” These eugenic-ridden assumptions meant that the children of Palestinians were under far more pressure to lean into mainstream Latin culture as opposed to the sons of Europeans, and the natural result of that was an increasing disconnect with Palestinian culture and politics. (Personal communication, November 29 2023.)

No matter how many facets of Palestinian identity were diminished in this time period, what remained was a Palestinian work ethic and expertise in commerce, so these children of Palestinians now comprised the *creme de la creme* of their new societies, and their economic power gave them a more equal relationship with the old *Criollo* elite than their fathers had. Nonetheless, no matter how much “project integration” was pursued, Palestinian descendants would always be a little different. Masry describes that in countries like Argentina and Chile with heavy European immigration, Arabs would always be looked at as “foreign bodies, as foreign objects.” So, there was the fact of standing out with unique names, features and religion, but also the fact that Palestinian families would cooperate economically long after settling in Latin America; they would never fly under the radar.²

With their integration into Latin America, the Palestinian identity became multifaceted. In countries divided along class lines, Palestinian membership of the bourgeoisie became a defining factor in political decision making and self identification. This is especially important in the context of the Cold War. The Soviets (and later Cuba) backed Communist movements that sought to emancipate the large but downtrodden popular class, while the United States created and supported dictatorial, neoliberal regimes subservient to the interest of Washington rather than their own people. This sort of situation flared up into violence, especially in countries as unequal as El Salvador and Chile, where Palestinians lived. Another post World War II development was the state of Israel, founded upon the killing of thousands of Palestinians and the expulsion of hundreds of thousands more. Born out of the frustration of apartheid and exile were the Palestinian guerilla movements, who naturally associated with the global left. Both movements were opponents of Imperialism and both had palpable rage at ongoing dispossession of land.

Latin Palestinians were now put in a difficult position. The social hierarchy they benefited from as business owners was protected by American hegemony, often with the direct help of Israel. Yet it was Israel, backed by America, that instituted an illegal occupation and refugee situation in their country of origin. What resulted was a dilemma: “do we stick to our roots, or do we look out for our current status?” The answer to this question depended on their country of residence, their social status, ideology and so on.

² Most were Orthodox Christian, a minority being Muslim or Eastern Catholic. Regardless, religion would set any of the three groups apart.

Chile

In Chile, political involvement from Palestinians kicked off in the '30s and '40s, when it was clear they would be there permanently. Traditional political parties were not welcoming to the *nouveau riches*, who gravitated to parties in the third position (Baeza 2014). Take Rafael "Turco" Tarud, Minister of Economy and Mining under the presidency of Carlos Ibañez, who ran on a platform of land reform and unionisation. Yet Palestinians became more deeply entrenched with the local bourgeoisie, and the Allende presidency only pushed them further in this direction. The textile factories of prominent Palestinian families were nationalized, and the old elite quietly let this happen, glad that this competing source of capital was knocked out of the market (Baeza 2014).

Neglected by civilian institutions, many Palestinians sought help from the military. The establishment-level economic situation of Palestinians forced them into supporting establishment-level ideology, represented by General Pinochet. When President Allende was violently overthrown by the Armed Forces on September 11 1973, most Palestinian families did not oppose the move. On the contrary, many supported this action, with some Palestinians hosting military generals. That being said, the increased social status of Palestinians meant increased education, and Palestinian intellectuals like Tarud and Mamdouh Massis were exiled (Baeza 2014).

In such a precarious position and oppressive environment, the Palestinian cause was sidelined amongst diaspora in Chile. A militant cause supported by leftists was not a good look in a country where "subversives" were routinely tortured and murdered. Another factor to consider is the manner in which Palestinians arrived in the New World. It was economic hardship and the Ottomans that Palestinians were escaping, not Israel. Without any personal experience with the occupation, the Palestinians in Chile and elsewhere would feel more distant to the cause. Add in the desire not to stand out, and you get a situation where every PLO representative sent to gather support for the movement went back empty handed (Baeza 2014). The turning point was 1982, when Israel invaded Lebanon. There, right wing militias massacred thousands of Palestinian refugees in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camp, while Israeli soldiers aided and abetted. Mass media meant that Palestinians in Latin America saw images of the atrocities, The sheer horror and anger induced by this act of genocide was what finally galvanized Palestinians in Latin America to the cause. With images of the slaughter at one's fingertips, one could not escape the reality, especially when the victims looked like relatives of those reading.

In spite of all the internal division within Chile's Palestinian community, they rallied around the flag of their homeland. A rally marched from the Orthodox Church to the Government Palace, and this marked the renaissance of Palestinian identity, political and cultural, in Chile

(Personal communication, November 29 2023). I asked Mr. Masry if this was a risky move in a land dominated by Pinochet's iron fist. He replied saying in spite of its association with guerilla movements, Pinochet did not restrict Palestinian solidarity. "Of course, he did not openly declare his sympathy for Palestine, but he did not make it difficult to support the cause. In fact, he had sent a message to Fatah, offering to open a representative office (of the PLO) in Chile, but they rejected out of respect for the figure of Allende."

Pinochet's dictatorship was the lovechild of military oppression and neoliberal economics, the latter of which required big business; big business was the speciality of Palestinians. Given this, it is no wonder that Pinochet and his regime permitted all sorts of expression of solidarity with Palestine. It affirmed their ties with the Palestinian entrepreneurs they were already allied with, and partially co-opted more left leaning Palestinians opposed to his far-right regime. But where Palestinian solidarity served as the unifying factor for Palestinian Chileans, solidarity was heavily stratified along political lines in Central America, a region where state administered violence was even more brutal and frequent.

Central America: El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua

Historically, and especially during the Cold War, attempts by the *campesinos*³ to achieve land equity and political parity were met with brutal violence. Death squads would eviscerate anyone they deemed a threat to the military regime. All of this was done to protect a situation where a tiny aristocracy hoarded most of the land and wealth, land and wealth exploited by American companies. In Nicaragua, this culminated in a socialist revolution, and in El Salvador, the government adopted repressive measures to prevent this, which only worsened the situation. Honduras managed to avoid the instability that plagued the region, but served as the nucleus for the funding and training of death squads in neighboring countries. Here was a perfect example of the Palestinian-Latino dilemma: preserve the well earned societal position, or engage in resistance, as Palestinians are known to do?

In El Salvador, many obeyed the call. The movement that guided the revolution there was the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front, and the main figure in that movement was Schafik Handal, the son of Palestinians from Bethlehem. He was involved in activism against the successive oppressive governments in his country from a young age. His Palestinian identity seems to have informed his commitment to justice. Along with bearing witness to the persecution of common people in his own country, his relatives back home were subject to Israeli occupation in 1967. He maintained contact with the PLO throughout his struggle, repeatedly emphasizing his Palestinian heritage in the process (Horton 2006). This included multiple visits to the organization in Beirut. Nicaragua's Palestinian community is not as large as in El Salvador or Honduras, but is worth mentioning because Palestinians were very involved in the Sandinista

³Rural peasants, typically of Indigenous descent, who formed the bulk of the populace.

movement which took power from the bloodthirsty Somoza dynasty in 1979. Moises Hassan, born to a Palestinian father from Gaza, was one of five members of the first revolutionary junta that ran the country. Suad Marcos Frech, the famous Nicaraguan poet who joined the Sandinistas and became an officer, later then followed the PLO to Beirut (Baeza 2014).

The pattern here is that prominent Palestinian leftists in Central America had deep ties to Palestinian liberation movements. This was especially evident on the diplomatic scene. At a time where the Palestinian cause still did not have widespread support in Latin American states, the Nicaraguan representative to the United Nations said this in 1982:

"It is difficult to believe that a people that suffered so much from the Nazi policy of extermination in the middle of the twentieth century would use the same fascist, genocidal arguments and methods against other peoples." (Schabas 2009)

Over time, sentimental connections evolved to become strategic ones. Fighting in a continent firmly under the control of D.C., the guerilla movements looked far and wide for material support, which the PLO provided by smuggling arms and training fighters.

Aside from the global guerilla connection, Palestinian identity informed Palestinian involvement in the movements of the '80s in two key ways. Most obvious is the parallel between the oppression of Palestinians and Campesinos. The death squads that terrorized the region were funded and trained by the United States and Israel, meaning a Palestinian in El Salvador or Nicaragua may have seen the struggles in Central America and the Middle East as one. Another reason more related to Central America itself was the fact that *Turcos* were always outsiders, persecuted at times and looked down upon by the elite that ran the region. These revolutions allowed for an opportunity to shake up the system, and for Palestinians in Central America to achieve a just system for themselves and their Mestizo and Indigenous compatriots.

Nevertheless, for some Palestinians, the connection formed with the elite via their industrialism was stronger than their connections to the common man via solidarity. In Nicaragua, some Palestinian industrialists were charged with having ties to Somoza's regime and had lands confiscated (Baeza 2014). In Honduras, the combination of large Palestinian assets and a government firmly in American hands meant that leading members of the Palestinian community took a conservative stance. Miguel Facussé, who was a Palestinian descendant and Honduras' richest man, helped found the Association of the Progress for Honduras, which aimed to foment the ties between businessmen and military officials to fight "subversion" (O Maolain 1987). The pro-West security apparatus in Honduras not only coordinated funding and training for counter-guerilla in El Salvador and Nicaragua, but also "disappeared" political opposition at home. This situation prevented the political awakening that occurred for Palestinian youth

elsewhere in Latin America.

Brazil

In the Brazilian Northeast, there was no such conflict between the material considerations of the community and support for the Palestinian cause. Palestinians had succeeded there, but unlike Palestinians in other Latin countries, were not large or influential enough to form a key component of the elite. The military regime in Brazil had repeatedly tried to expropriate land in that part of the country, which affected Palestinian and non-Palestinians alike (Garcia de Oliveira and Santana 2019). Early on, they had formed connections with the Worker's Party and a certain Luiz Inacio Da Silva, at this time a union organizer and gubernatorial candidate (Abu Ktaish 2023). The movements against land expropriation specifically and the dictatorship generally were in full swing by the time of the Sabra and Shatila massacre in 1982. Like in Chile, this crime was the watershed moment for Palestinian activism in Brazil. Palestinians in the Northeast had been involved in the struggle for land rights since the 1940's; now, this aura of social justice cultivated by Palestinians in the Northeast had been transferred to the cause of the "old country". In 1984, the Palestinian community in Brazil founded COPLAC. In spite of their lesser size and influence, they began the united Palestinian movement in Latin America.

The Palestinian Tide: Success of Latin-Palestinian Activism in the 21st Century

COPLAC was a Brazilian creation and had the backing of the many Arab Chilean groups that had sprung up over the years. Its creation was pivotal, because Palestinians throughout the Americas could coordinate and collectively lobby their government for recognition. The rise of COPLAC coincided with the end of the dictatorships and the beginning of the Pink Tide. The Palestinians, in the words of Rasem Bisharat, "were considered a living example of imperialist aggression against humanity" (Abu Ktaish 2023). Support was always strong amongst farther left governments. Unsurprisingly, Cuba was the first Latin American country to recognize Palestine, and the late Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez frequently incorporated the Palestinian cause in his rhetoric. In this era, the Palestinian cause was no longer associated with militancy. The Pink Tide brought moderate left governments to power in Argentina and Brazil, and they too began supporting the Palestinian cause.

Lula, the same boy from Recife who once led protests, was now the most important man in South America. The connections COPLAC forged with him and his party over decades now came in full force. Palestine was planning a bid for United Nations recognition, and Brazil's move to recognize Palestinian statehood in 2010 was the perfect boost Palestine needed. 15 other Latin and Caribbean countries recognized Palestine within those 12 months, with a few more of them to follow in the coming years. Today, one can argue that these governments have been more vocal

about Palestine than many Arab states. Namely, Colombia, Chile, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil and Honduras have all downgraded or severed relations with Israel amidst the current genocide. Honduras is traditionally pro Israel, but has shifted with their more progressive government, whose vice president, Salvador Nasrallah, was born to Palestinian parents. Like in 2010, Lula is at the leading the Latin American charge against Zionism, calling Israel's actions in Gaza "genocide" (Verdélío 2023). Latinos of all backgrounds have come out to support the cause, but it was the efforts of Palestinian descendants over the last century that established the cause as a mainstream issue.

These efforts are impressive and serve as an example for all Palestinians in the diaspora. Mr Masry remarked that he was quite impressed with the efforts of the Palestinian communities; 'I'll give you the two most active communities, Brazil and Argentina, although the Argentine community is quite small. Our path was to engage with all the political forces in Argentina, student federations, human rights organizations, civil society groups and so on.' So effective was the Palestinian outreach in Argentina that Adolfo Pérez Esquivel, famous dissident and the country's first Nobel Prize winner, participated in a rally. Argentinian and Brazilian Palestinians built bridges with other segments of society in order to get their message across, but this is not always the case for Palestinian communities. "The error that is committed in our communities", Masry added, "is that the Palestinians demonstrate for Palestine without necessarily including the social and political forces of the countries in which they reside" (Personal communication, November 29 2023). The main community Masry is referring to is his own. Some days after this interview, a Palestinian diplomat remarked off the record that for the colossal community in Chile, "they treat it (the Palestinian cause) as their own thing!"

There was also the question of the involvement of Palestinian individuals. The large majority of Palestinian descendants are dedicated to the cause; the last three months have left no room for dispute. Still, there remain factors that restrain shows of solidarity. Many Palestinians in Latin countries travel between countries for work, or stay in Latin America before immigrating to the United States. Another Palestinian diplomat remarked that for some Palestinians in places like Colombia and Guatemala, there is a great fear of losing visas and opportunities (Personal communication, November 29 2023). Guatemala, which is strongly influenced by the Evangelical Church, has consistently supported Israel. This makes it difficult for a business owner to be public about their affinity for Palestine, lest they face an intense boycott. Even so, a boycott would be the least of a Palestinian-Guatemalan's worries. The deep ties Guatemala and Israel have are militaristic in nature. This peaked during that country's Civil War, where the state was responsible for 93% of war crimes (Truth Commission: Guatemala). Israel supplied arms, intelligence and even taught intelligence officers how to torture (Taubman, 1983), (Sales, 2017). Efraín Ríos Montt, who assumed power in a coup in 1982, attributed his success to the Israelis. (Beit Hallahmi 1988). It was he who led the most intense stage of the Maya Genocide, where over 160,000 Indigenous

people were massacred by the Guatemalan Military and 1.5 million more were displaced (Alburez-Gutierrez, 2021). Though the Civil War ended, Guatemala still lacks institutional oversight and is marred by political violence. Indeed, Israel and Guatemala maintain the close working relationship that characterized the 1980's. It is for this reason that pro-Palestine activism is struggling to take root in that country.

The date of arrival also has an impact. For newer immigrants, resistance against the occupation is a core part of their identity. That is why when one looks at interviews with Palestinian diaspora members in Latin America who are advocates of the cause, they tend to be recent arrivals. As a matter of fact, the Brazilian community was reinforced by a more frequent ratio of new arrivals in this regard (Boehm 2023). Masry describes a phenomenon of certain Palestinian businessmen in Chile avoiding public expressions of solidarity, as well as community newspapers talking about “insignificant things” rather than the elephant in the room (Personal communication, November 29 2023).

There are also senior Latino-Palestinian politicians who have acted detrimentally towards the cause. Antonio Saca, for instance, supported the imperialist establishment to the extent that he sent troops during the American occupation of Iraq. Nayib Bukele, another son of Bethlehem, avoids condemning the occupation at a time when many non-Palestinian Latinos are. When I inquired about this to Mr Masry, he emphatically interjected by saying that “blood doesn't mean anything! I support Palestine because of my ideology and my values. The concept of “blood” is inherently racist!”

One can argue about the moral value of “blood”, but there is no doubt that the Palestinians of the New World feel a profound sense of attachment to the Holy Land. Though they do not live amongst its scenic hills and olive trees, stories of the homeland, shared culinary practices, music, religion, and the national cause are factors that keep Palestinian descendants from Mexico to Chile attached to the land of their ancestors. External factors have served as obstacles to Palestinian activism throughout the last century, yet Palestinians of all ages, ideologies and levels of integration have engaged with Palestine at crucial times. Palestinians throughout Latin America are perceived as “unique”; this is the only thing they all have in common. As long as this is the case, the Latin-Palestinian community will organize effectively and support their cause firmly, in spite of notable exceptions.♦

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The Role of Emotions in the Peruvian Protests of 2022 and 2023

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Introduction

Peruvians have witnessed a period of political instability as the country has had 7 presidents in the past 6 years. With the ousting of President Pedro Castillo in December 2022, thousands of Peruvians have mobilized on the streets. This essay asks, what is the role of emotions in the current Peruvian protests? This research question is significant and I selected the case of Peru because for the most part, protests following the end of Alberto Fujimori's dictatorship have not had the magnitude of other countries across the region such as Ecuador, Bolivia and Colombia. As well, examining the role of emotions could potentially provide insight into individuals' motivations for forming part of social movements. In this essay, I will employ the theoretical frameworks of the role of emotions in collective action, race and the eco territorial turn.

I will argue that in accounts of the current protests in Peru, we can see that in interviews, statements made by protestors and social media, demonstrators represent themselves and their actions as strongly stemming from negative and positive emotions. While there is literature on the role of emotions on collective action in countries across Latin America, the research on the role of emotions in Peruvian protests has been limited. This paper will contribute to the literature by examining this under researched area. Given that the protests started in December 2022 and are still unfolding, the academic research on them has been fairly limited as well. Overall, I hope that by examining the role of feelings in the Peruvian protests, one can apply this knowledge to gain further insight into social movements in other Andean countries.

This essay will proceed as follows. First, I will explain my methodology and positionality. Second, I will provide a historical context of protests in Peru up to the present. Third, I will examine the literature on the role of emotions in social movements, as well as dynamics of race and the eco-territorial turn. Fourth, I will examine the role of feelings in interviews given by protestors. Fifth, I will analyze emotions in statements by demonstrators. Lastly, I will explore feelings in social media content.

Methodology and Positionality

I conducted a literature review on the debates concerning the role of emotions and race in collective action in Latin America. Additionally, I examined academic papers on the eco-territorial turn. I also watched interviews of protestors during the “Toma de Lima”, a protest in January 2023 where Peruvians from across the country congregated in Lima. I then analyzed statements made by protestors in a talk hosted in April by Brown University named “Quechua & Aymara Voices Facing the Crisis of the Peruvian State”. Lastly, I examined social media content in the form of videos of protestors.

I am a Chinese-Peruvian woman who has been living in Canada since 2012. Being born and raised as middle class in Peru, I lived a privileged life. As a member of the diaspora, I do not have first-hand knowledge of the protests and have mainly relied on both news sources and social media content. Visibly being of Chinese descent, I often felt like a foreigner in my own country. Having said that, class and race separate me from the demonstrators that I will examine in this paper, many of whom have historically faced systemic racism and classism.

Historical Context

In order to understand the grievances of the demonstrators, we must examine the consolidation of neoliberal policies under the regime of Alberto Fujimori. Between 1990 and 2000, Fujimori implemented an aggressive neoliberal reform program (Silva 2009, 230). Soon after assuming power, Fujimori announced the “Fujishock” Program which liberalized trade and prices, privatized industry, removed subsidies for social programs, and dismantled the agrarian reform enacted under Juan Velasco Alvarado’s regime of the early 1970s, among other measures (Silva 2009, 237). While neoliberalism increased Peru’s economic production, it had detrimental effects on the majority of the population. National poverty levels climbed from 42% in 1990, to 53% in 1994, and increased once again to 54% in 1997 (Figueroa 1998, 187). Neoliberalism heavily impacted rural communities as poverty in those areas increased from 54% to 68% during this time (Silva 2009, 241). Given the massive discontent with these policies across the country, one would expect protests to have sprung up.

However, collective action during the majority Fujimori's dictatorship was negligible. Most of the literature in Peru partially attributes this to the rise of Sendero Luminoso, an insurrectionary guerrilla movement (Silva 2009, 243). After having openly declared a war on the state in 1980, Sendero Luminoso terrorized the population in the highlands while infiltrating Indigenous organizations to kill their leaders and eliminate potential competition, curtailing the development of anti-neoliberal movements. (Silva 2009, 230 and 244). This was exacerbated by the state's counterinsurgency campaign which placed large areas of the highlands under military control (Yashar 2005, 25). However, mass mobilizations erupted in the later stages of Fujimori's following the resurgence of democratic freedoms in the midst of his corruption scandals (Silva 2009, 246). On October 11, 2000, thousands of peasants and farmers demanded Fujimori's resignation and protested his neoliberal policies, precipitating Fujimori's resignation and escape to Japan (Silva 2009, 246). The end of Fujimori's dictatorship opened spaces for political participation in the form of collective action in the years to come.

From that point onwards, there have been demonstrations across the country relating to issues such as corruption, inequality and extractivism, the last one being the most salient. Peru's economic model has relied on extractive practices, particularly mining, which has caused conflict with local communities (Li 2015, 7). The year 2004 saw the proliferation of protests across the Andean region and the Amazon as there were 97 open cases of conflict which required the intervention of the Ministry of Energy and Mines (Li 2015, 9). In 2011, at least 2,000 campesinos in Cajamarca – one of the poorest regions in Peru – mobilized to protest pollution and the lack of prior consultation following the announcement of a mining project that would drain 4 major lakes (Céspedes 2011). Ultimately, the Peruvian government and Newmont Corporation – the private company who owned the mine – suspended the project months later (Newmont 2016). Overall, collective action up until December 2022 mainly revolved around conflicts over extractivism.

In December 2022, protests erupted across Peru following the ousting of President Pedro Castillo by Congress. Vice President Dina Boluarte soon assumed power to become the first female Peruvian president. The demonstrators – many of whom did not recognize Boluarte as their legitimate leader – are calling for the president to resign, immediate new elections, a new Congress and the creation of a Constituent Assembly while some call for the release of Castillo from detention (Lynch 2023). Boluarte has responded with police and military repression, resulting in at least 45 civilian deaths, which have been concentrated in the Andean provinces of Puno, Apurímac and Ayacucho (Defensoría del Pueblo 2023, 30). The Defensoría del Pueblo estimated 1,261 collective actions of protest in January, with 86.7% related to the political crisis (2023). Some political analysts have attributed the popular rage to the exploitation of workers, the pillaging of natural resources and abuse through systemic racism and other forms of violence (Lynch 2023). Given these grievances, up until January 2023 the protests have been concentrated in communities outside of Lima, particularly along the Andean corridor and the Amazon, where

the majority of the population is Indigenous (Lynch 2023). In January 2023, thousands of protestors from across Peru marched towards Lima in what came to be known as “La Toma de Lima” with the hopes of voicing their grievances. However, they encountered increased repression.

Theoretical Framework

Many scholars have studied the role of feelings in protests. Dr. Elizabeth Wood examines the role of emotions in collective action amongst campesinos during the civil war in El Salvador. Wood argues that traditional explanations of mobilization such as openings for political opportunity, social networks and class struggle do not fully explain insurgency in El Salvador (2003, 16). While campesinos feared state repression, approximately one third supported the insurgency (Wood 2003, 12 – 13). Wood attributes this to campesinos’ negative emotions such as resentment and outrage at injustices alongside positive emotions such as pride and pleasure of agency (Wood 2003, 18). Dr. James Jasper groups emotions into (1) reflex emotions, which are quick responses to events such as anger, disgust, surprise and joy, (2) moods, defined as de-energizing and energizing feelings that persist across multiple contexts, (3) affective commitments, which are positive or negative feelings for objects or others, such as hate and love, and (4) moral commitments, defined as feelings of approval and disapproval closely tied to morality, such as pride, indignation, compassion, and shame (Jasper 2018, 4). On the whole, the literature on the role of emotions in social movements has been expanding in the last years. Scholars have also written about the role of race on collective action. In an act of defiance of the myth of racial democracy, Afro-Brazilians recognized that different races did exist, reclaimed their Black identity and politicized it to advocate for social justice (Paschel 2018, 255). In Colombia, the movement was more prominent in rural areas and it was grounded on a sense of a shared cultural identity as opposed to shared discrimination (Paschel 2018, 237). These communities often made claims to difference and autonomy from the state while demanding rights to the land (Paschel 2018, 237). In the 2015 *Marcha de Mujeres Negras por nuestros Territorios y por la Vida*, rural Afro-Colombian women from El Cauca marched to Bogota demanding an end to illegal mining, respect of their collective rights over their territory and the end of assassinations of Black leaders by paramilitaries (Laó-Montes 2016, 8). The march also came to be known as *La Marcha de los Turbantes*, as women showed pride in their Afro-Colombian identity by wearing turbans (Laó-Montes 2016, 9).

In the past years, several social movements have reconceptualized social and environmental conflicts as the protection of life and territory. Argentinian scholar Maristella Svampa has named this moment the eco-territorial turn (Svampa 2019, 54). Also known as a movement of movements, the eco-territorial turn includes a myriad of actors such as feminists, Indigenous and Afro-Latino communities and environmental groups (Coryat 2019, 161). In

Ecuador, YAS unidos formed in 2013 to protest the government's plan to drill oil in the Yasuní National Park (Coryat 2019, 166). While a large part of YASunidos were mestizo youth from urban centres, many of them believed in territorial rights and the rights of Nature, as outlined in the 2008 Constitution (Coryat 2019, 168). Similarly, various Indigenous groups mobilized in 2011 in Bolivia after Evo Morales announced the TIPNIS highway, which would traverse the TIPNIS National Park and Indigenous territory (Achtenberg and Currents 2011). Following these protests, Morales eventually reversed his decision (Achtenberg and Currents 2011).

Discussion of Findings

In accounts of the current protests in Peru, it can be seen that in interviews, demonstrators represent themselves and their actions as strongly stemming from negative and positive emotions. An independent news channel called La Prensa Alternativa conducted interviews with protestors in La Plaza San Martín on January 28, 2023 during La Toma de Lima. A woman who is visibly Indigenous says she is from Puno, shows her injured foot to the camera and says that she has been hit by tear gas (2023). When asked why she has come to Lima to protest, the woman replies angrily and shouts, "We want Dina to quit immediately! Else, I will enter [el] Palacio [de Gobierno] to tell her to step down immediately!" (2023). This woman is visibly enraged, paralleling what authors have found in their examinations of rage and protests in other contexts. In Puerto Rico, the group Jornada: Se Acabaron Las Promesas called for protests in 2018 for the public to "set fire to their coraje" (LeBrón 2021, 811). A protestor stated, "This is a call for us to ignite the coraje that we Puerto Ricans feel. There is a lot of coraje . . . We need to govern ourselves rather than be governed" (LeBrón 2021, 812). In La Toma de Lima, another woman exhibited pride as she stated, "I am proud of being from Puno. I am proud of being serrana and I will never forget . . . I will give my life. I will do it with pride" (2023). This is similar to the sentiments of pride that some campesinos felt during the Salvadoran Civil War. For example, Wood interviewed an elderly man who stated, "To live through this war was something very hard, but also a source of great pride: to have stood up to it all" (Wood 2003, 205). The Peruvian woman finds pride and reclaims her identity as a "serrana" which is often a derogatory term in Peru whereas the campesino does not reference his ethnic identity. I believe that this is due to the large number of protestors in the Peruvian case that have identified themselves as Indigenous whereas in El Salvador, the interviewees identified themselves as campesinos. However, additional research is needed to explain these differences.

In statements, protestors also represent themselves and their actions as strongly stemming from negative and positive emotions. In a panel on the current protests hosted by Brown University, Gavina Córdova Casihuamán stated in a solemn tone that she was "irritated and indignant because Indigenous people are being denied as beings with agency" (2023).

Irritation and indignation are both clear through Gavina's statements and the tone of her voice. This parallels Wood's findings where 200 participants exhibited negative feelings such as indignation when recalling "la miseria" that consumed their lives (2003, 200). In the panel hosted by Brown University, many of the panelists used affective words that fostered a sense of community amongst demonstrators. For instance, human rights activist Vitka Padilla Huamán referred to fellow demonstrators as "compañeros" while Lourdio Flores an environmental activist stated that his "hermanos campesinos" were hurt by the pollution of their lands (2023). In El Salvador, a leader of the insurgency stated, "I feel happy to be able to meet like this with other compañeros" (Wood 2003, 204). The use of affective language serves to increase the sense of collective identity in a group which could in turn heighten members' sense of belonging (Jasper 2018, 104). This is clear when Lourdio recounted that in a protest the crowd cheered as they sang "El pueblo unido, jamás será vencido" (2023). Here, we can see how affective language increased the group's sense of belonging while fostering joy.

Demonstrators also represent themselves and their actions as strongly stemming from negative and positive emotions in social media posts. A video on Instagram shows a woman dressed in Indigenous clothing speaking with other protestors who are not within the frame. The woman screams at the top of her lungs, "Our youth has died!!!" (2023). The woman is clearly distressed and seems desperate. Jasper states that a "nothing left to lose" is often present in protest (2018, 96). There are two paths to this mood: in one, a loved one has perished while in the other one, it feels that things could not worsen (Jasper 2018, 96). The woman exhibits this "nothing left to lose" mood as she lets out a gut-wrenching cry denouncing the deaths of the youth in her community. In this same video, the woman states "We have to defend our children, for the future of our children" (2023). The woman exhibits the positive emotion of hope as she invites fellow demonstrators to continue fighting to create a better future for their children. When individuals are in a hopeful mood, the potential benefits of their actions increase while their costs often decrease (Jasper 2018, 93). It appears that hope motivated the woman to mobilize, even when there is a high risk of facing state repression. It is important to note that the same woman exhibits multiple emotions at the same time, showing that positive and negative emotions do interact with each other.

The demonstrators were visibly of an Indigenous background and many of them made references to elements of the eco-territorial turn. In the video of La Toma de Lima, a woman from Puno states angrily, "Why won't the government implement interculturalism and the auto determination of our pueblos indígenas y originarios based on Convention 169?" (2023). Convention 169 of the International Labour Organization (ILO) also known as the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples, was passed in 1989 and signed by 22 countries including Peru (ILO). Convention 169 seeks to promote respect for Indigenous cultures alongside their ways of life and traditions (ILO, 1989). In all of the cases examined in this paper, the Peruvian protestors were of visibly

Indigenous descent, and many identified themselves as such. It appears that some of the demonstrators have politicized their Indigenous identities and demanded rights, in a similar move to Afro-Latinos as discussed earlier. The Peruvian woman is wearing her traditional Andean clothing while some protestors in the background wave The Wiphala, a flag that represents the native people of the Andes (2023). Similarly, Afro-Colombian women proudly displayed their turbans during La Marcha de los Turbantes (Laó-Montes 2016, 9). Raphael Hoetmer argues that a key for a strong Indigenous movement in Peru is for Peruvian campesinos to recognize themselves as Indigenous as opposed to peasants (2006). There appears to be a connection between emotions and the politicization of Indigenous identities in the Peruvian protest. A possible explanation is that emotions helped Indigenous Peruvians identify themselves as such, allowing them to reinterpret their realities while motivating them to advocate for their rights. However, additional empirical research needs to be conducted to confirm this hypothesis. Similarly, protestors referenced elements of the eco-territorial turn. The same Indigenous woman stated, “These natural resources are ours. We are the guardians of our resources and territory . . . The neoliberal government does not respect our rights and enacts genocide” (2023). As such, protestors have referenced elements of the eco-territorial turn like the defense of the territory and natural resources. Considering that many Indigenous peoples live in rural areas, I believe that emotions could have also influenced protestors to defend their territories. However, additional empirical research needs to be conducted before arriving at conclusions.

Conclusion

To conclude, in accounts of the current protests in Peru, it can be seen that in interviews, statements made by protestors and social media, demonstrators represent themselves and their actions as strongly stemming from negative and positive emotions. I showed this by extensively examining pre-existing content on the demonstrations. I also drew potential connections between emotions and Indigenous identities and the eco-territorial turn, both of which need further research. A limitation of my research is that I did not conduct my own interviews. Additional empirical research can be done to further clarify the role of emotions in collective action. Having said that, I hope that my paper was able to add nuance to the debates surrounding the role of emotions in social movements. ♦

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Indigenous Land Rights under Bolsonaro

Leonardo Góngora

Introduction

Unprecedented environmental destruction has created a humanitarian crisis in the Amazon rainforest that disproportionately affected the 420 indigenous groups living there, which represent 98% of all indigenous groups in the country (Gonzalez 2023, 3). Brazilian law, by recognizing their territories and implementing environmental policies, worked to protect indigenous communities from the threats posed by criminal land grabbers and large extractive corporations wishing to exploit the land. These priorities shifted under President Jair Bolsonaro as his administration undermined protection of indigenous territories. I argue in this paper that increased encroachment in indigenous communities was the direct result of the Brazilian government's negligence or outright withdrawal from their responsibilities toward indigenous nations. Bolsonaro weakened regulation by dismantling government mechanisms designed to protect indigenous territory, altering institutions by aligning them with his views, and consciously not enforcing the law and Constitutional rights of these peoples. By sabotaging state power, potentialized by a global pandemic, this administration bolstered violations of the right to self-determination, meanwhile, even more egregious, directly contributed to genocidal practices against Amazonian indigenous communities. To explore the implications of property law and government action on indigenous sovereignty, I will examine Bolsonaro's rhetoric against indigenous autonomy, the contradictions within Brazil's legal framework that allowed Bolsonaro to suppress indigenous sovereignty, Bolsonaro's dismantling of state protections for the Amazon and how these actions empowered land grabbers to violently displace indigenous people, and finally the government's amicable response to invasions.

Colonial Rhetoric

From the beginning of Bolsonaro's political career, he spoke negatively about indigenous peoples. His speeches were plagued with disgusting stereotypes that portrayed indigenous peoples as "smelly and uneducated", which continued during his campaign and presidency (Neto and Moreira 2023, 57). Bolsonaro promoted a narrative that indigenous peoples needed to be



“civilized”, voicing a traditional conservative rhetoric regarding the “modernization” of Brazil, masking his blatant racism and dehumanization of indigenous peoples, he referred to them as barbaric and in need of “de-indianization”, with the language of “progress” and “integration” (Neto and Moreira 2023, 50). Such discourse is not new in the Brazilian political scenario, bearing many similarities to the colonial ideology of assimilation and the denial of indigenous autonomy.

Regarding the Amazon region of the country, Bolsonaro always supported its “development” through a capitalist lens, consisting of expansion, exploitation and expropriation. He avidly advocated for mineral exploration and agriculture in indigenous territories and demonized the state-led land demarcation for indigenous communities by relating it to the corruption of previous governments, led by the left-wing leader and Bolsonaro’s political rival Lula da Silva, a narrative that appealed a lot to his supporters (Neto and Moreira 2023, 49). He furthered this discourse by blaming the underdevelopment of the Amazon region on indigenous land demarcations, claiming they were unfairly large while being owned by ethnic groups that only constitute 0.5% of the population (Neto and Moreira 2023, 58). As if these were not enough, Bolsonaro also constantly signaled his wish to change or not enforce environmental laws and regulations, while reducing gun control for potential settlers and farmers, policies that appealed to his right-wing base, partially made up of capitalist developers in the mining, agriculture and logging industries (Neto and Moreira 2023, 57).

Such rhetoric was not merely an electoral strategy or senseless bravado for his supporters, but true intentions that were effectively implemented, or at least attempted, during his administration. The outdated ideas presented by him towards indigenous peoples, ways of life, and rights, had real impacts in policies which lead to numerous social issues. However, rhetoric alone cannot employ the many abuses seen in Bolsonaro’s four-year presidency; this required the extensive distortion of the national legal apparatus and federal institutions.

Legal Framework

The Brazilian Constitution is quite explicit regarding indigenous rights. Article 231 of the Brazilian constitution guarantees the right to self-determination and autonomy of indigenous communities alongside the recognition of their traditional lands (Neto and Moreira 2023, 49). Article 232 identifies indigenous peoples as “parties that can initiate legal action in defense of their rights and interests” (Neto and Moreira 2023, 54). The emphasis here is independence and self governance, therefore fostering a relationship that is more accurately described as nation to nation rather than the forced incorporation of these communities. The institutions derived from this legislation have achieved mixed results.

One such institution is The National Indigenous People Foundation, shortened to FUNAI. Part of the Ministry of Justice, this institution serves to protect the interests of indigenous peoples across Brazil, providing legal recognition and protection to claims over land. Currently, hundreds of indigenous communities await the approval of land claims, in the form of official titles (Neto and Moreira 2023, 48). These titles are essential for the survival of these communities because without such recognition, the state holds no responsibility to protect them from invasion, expropriation, and expulsion; therefore they are fundamental in allowing indigenous peoples to freely practice their culture, control their resources, and realize their way of life (Gonzalez 2023, 22). Evidently, indigenous culture cannot exist without land, as “threats of dispossession reinforced indigenous identity as associated with land” (Nichols 2020, 109). Unfortunately, FUNAI remains the only legal avenue for guaranteeing the self-determination of indigenous peoples.

Through this use of property of land, the power dynamic between the state and indigenous peoples unveils itself. As Nichols puts it, “understanding property as a mode of social organization is the first step in grasping its possibilities as a tool of domination” (Nichols 2020, 130). Closely examining the relationship between property law and indigenous peoples shows its paradoxical nature: land recognition genuinely benefits indigenous peoples while also serving to subjugate them. This is the case of Brazilian indigenous law, being more aptly described as “monitored autonomy” given indigenous communities are dependent on the state to demarcate and recognize their land claims, only having sovereignty and self-governance once allowed by the federal government. However, the negation of recognizing land claims is also domination. The right to social services only applies if indigenous peoples prove their status, only then receiving benefits, a complete contradiction of the right for self-determination (Neto and Moreira 2023, 55). The lack of legal recognition also facilitates settler invasion and environmental destruction through exploitation of natural resources, thereby becoming an indirect tool for subjugation.

In truth, indigenous policy reflects the legacy of a colonial dynamic, where state oversight over indigenous affairs are methods to control and assimilate indigenous peoples. Because of this close tutelage, despite the progressive legislation, FUNAI was in turn used by the Bolsonaro administration to promote their regressive policies toward indigenous peoples. Since it is the only form of recognition, denying their land allowed for new, more egregious abuses by land grabbers, miners, and farmers.



State Instrumentation

Bolsonaro used the state apparatus to forward his conservative, colonial agenda, massively underfunding and dismantling state institutions who protect indigenous interests and rights and passing new, hostile legislation. Given the basic dependence of indigenous peoples in Brazil to, mainly federal, institutions, the right-wing government readily ran those institutions to the ground, or created hurdles for their proper functioning.

Imperative to undermining indigenous land claims was the defunding of FUNAI. As previously stated, one of the Foundation's primary tasks is to oversee the demarcation of indigenous territories. The Bolsonaro administration sabotaged FUNAI in order to limit its ability to secure such claims in various ways: instead of creating proposals to demarcate new indigenous territories, Bolsonaro prioritized reviewing previous claims to then decrease the size of protected areas (Risso, de Carvalho, and Mason-Deese 2022, 186); a presidential decree was issued that effectively abolished FUNAI's regional committees, which provided a structure for dialogue between indigenous leaders, FUNAI employees, and other public officials and were essential for creating new policies and evaluating their application (Bispo 2022); thousands of employees were fired, replacing them with loyal political appointees, made up of retired police and military officers who lacked experience, understanding and dialogue with indigenous peoples (Human Rights Watch 2022).

The new institutional leadership introduced bureaucratic hurdles by routinely denying permission for employees to visit lands in process of demarcation and requiring employees to give 15 days notice before visiting indigenous territories—effectively eliminating their ability to answer to emergencies (Human Rights Watch 2022). The FUNAI employees that remained after the layoffs reported that demarcations were actively discouraged. Bolsonaro's "reforms" directly contradicted FUNAI's mission, nullifying its effectiveness to ensure the land claims presented by indigenous groups.

Bolsonaro 's government also targeted the Brazilian Institute of the Environment and Renewable Natural Resources (IBAMA), who oversees environmental affairs, including the protection of indigenous land (Vitale, Rodriguez de Assis Machado, and Hanna Rached 2023, 276). Under the administration, many constraints were placed on IBAMA, changing its prerogatives, norms surrounding the exportation of wood were relaxed, and regulations regarding proof of legality were suspended (Risso, de Carvalho, and Mason-Deese 2022, 185). The government also halted sanctions for environmental wrongdoing, reducing environmental standards and enforcement, making it easier to profit off wood, minerals and other resources illegally obtained in indigenous territories (Vitale et al. 2023, 276). Effectively, Bolsonaro's administration ceased to punish illegal encroachment into indigenous territory.

Bolsonaro not only continuously remodeled institutions to be subservient to his agenda, but formed new mechanisms to actively threaten indigenous territorial claims. Under his government, the Amazon Council was created (supposedly to defend the Amazon), but once again the positions of power were given to military officials, not indigenous leaders or environmentalists (Gonzalez 2023, 25). These officials lacked the competence to regulate environmental policies, further harming regulation, and directly answered to Bolsonaro, enhancing his grasp over environmental affairs (Gonzalez 2023, 25).

Additionally, Bolsonaro counteracted indigenous land claims through new legislation. Some laws had a direct impact on Amazonian communities, such as a bill weakening the constraints on environmental licensing, allowing mining in previously protected territories, and another that allows for the revocation of indigenous land titles given after the 1988 Constitution (Gonzalez 2023, 32). Other seemingly unrelated ones also negatively impacted the indigenous communities, exemplified by the relaxation of gun laws that encouraged the armament of settlers on indigenous land (Gonzalez 2023, 32). Bolsonaro's actions were not only negligent but also directly hostile towards indigenous rights, manipulating the public machinery in detriment of indigenous people and the environment, making true his racist and colonial rhetoric.

Exploitation and Extermination

Bolsonaro's regressive reforms paved the way for settler expansion into the Amazon, causing a bloody conflict with the indigenous communities living there. Squatters or "acquisitive outlaws" (Peñalver and Katyal 2007, 1105) violated indigenous rights by invading their territory to steal it, many times aligned with corporate interests (McBee and McCarthy 2020).

The number of changes enacted by the administration resulted in unprecedented levels of settler-led destruction and violence aimed at displacing indigenous peoples from their homes. The severe underfunding of various state agencies who protected indigenous communities and the environment led to the increase in forest fires as settlers expanded. Intentional anthropogenic fires are a common tool to destroy the rainforest, thereby producing open land ripe for farms and mining operations. A large portion of these criminal actions happened inside indigenous territories, directly harming or impeding the livelihoods of these communities (Gonzales 2023, 21). Overall deforestation rose by 60% in Bolsonaro's 4 year presidency with more than 40 thousand forest fires during his first year alone, a clear result of the lenient approach of the government towards environmental crimes and crimes against indigenous communities (Phillips 2023).

The economic incentive for such destruction was the growth of the agriculture and mining industries. Clearing new pasture for cattle ranching is the primary cause for the unprecedented

levels of deforestation under Bolsonaro, and these ranchers indirectly supply Brazil's biggest beef corporations, thereby creating a profitable and clandestine supply network left unchecked due to a lack of government oversight (Wasley 2023). The way involved corporations are able to maintain their legitimacy while evading regulations is by hiring settlers to do the dirty work, the squatters. The surging short term profits these corporations are able to report given the expanding operations encourages stealing land from indigenous peoples.

The previously discussed deregulations and institutional sabotage by Bolsonaro's government contributed to the economic gains of these corporations in a few ways. Allowing the use of environmentally harmful chemicals, agrottoxins, made the expanding farms (mainly soy monocultures) have even lower costs at the expense of the forest and the indigenous communities (Risso, de Carvalho, and Mason-Deese 2022, 186). Regarding mining operations, the industrial use of nearby water sources and of poisonous chemicals such as mercury led to the destruction of rivers and lakes, a basic necessity for indigenous communities' way of life (Phillips 2023). Water contamination destroyed local fishing practices and contributed to the spread of disease among indigenous peoples (Gonzalez 2023, 30). The lack of enforcement of environmental policies in demarcated territories directly allowed the destruction of the land, water, plants and animals within indigenous territories in the name of economic expansion.

Furthermore, the negligence of Bolsonaro's government facilitated the use of violent means by capitalist agents to displace indigenous peoples. Conflicts based on territorial rights, "rose in 2020 by 174% compared to the 35 cases reported in 2019" and "overall, there were 263 cases of invasions, illegal exploitation of resources and damage to property on 201 Indigenous territories in 19 different states in 2020." (Gonzalez 2023, 28). The Yanomami people, for example, faced an invasion of 20,000 illegal miners, having entire villages subjugated by hired guns who tried to scare and displace locals (Milhorance 2021). Contention for territory often resulted in violence against indigenous leaders and activists, which was justified by the dehumanization of indigenous peoples, stemming from the pervasive colonial thinking encouraged by Bolsonaro (Urt 2016, 880). Consequently, many indigenous leaders from the Yanomami, Guarani and other communities all across Brazil were victims of targeted assassinations (Urt 2016, 866) (Milhorance 2021). British journalist Dom Phillips—whose investigations into illegal mining greatly contributed to this essay—was the victim of a double-target assassination, alongside ex-FUNAI agent Bruno Pereira (Laughland and Kaz 2022). Reflecting a broader systemic trend, Brazilian authorities have not adequately investigated their deaths and none of the alleged culprits have been charged. Indigenous activists denounce the impunity of these crimes as only 4% of the 300 reported murders from 2009 to 2020 were tried in court (Gonzalez 2023, 31). Violence against indigenous communities and their allies was rampant during the Bolsonaro regime, exacerbated by the high levels of impunity and overall failure of the justice system.

As these cases of direct and indirect violence were not enough, the violation of land rights posed a greater health risk for indigenous peoples during the Covid-19 Pandemic. By March 2021, there were more than one thousand deaths and 50 thousand infected indigenous people in the country (Carstens, 536). Unsurprisingly, indigenous peoples faced discrimination within the healthcare system, since they required special measures during the pandemic, which the Bolsonaro administration responded appallingly by denying communities healthcare relief, refusing to buy vaccines and vetoing relief packages (Carstens 2022, 539). Additionally, the high levels of pollution from forest fires, and the chemical contamination of water sources unfortunately coincided with Covid-19, exacerbating the ongoing health hazards. For land grabbers, Covid-19 was a golden opportunity since quarantines decreased state oversight leading to many of these cases to go unpunished during the pandemic (Gonzalez 2023, 27). Despite the situation of indigenous health rights not being the discussed topic, it can be considered a method in the process of displacement. The disproportionate effects of climate change and the pandemic on indigenous communities point out the relation between protecting land rights and the collective right to health (Carstens 2022, 562).

The destruction of their home environment and the active spread of disease caused the systematic extermination of indigenous communities. The thousands of deaths are the culmination of state choices, either negligent or actively harmful, underlined by an economic incentive to expand activities into the Amazon. Essentially, the use of state-sponsored genocidal practices in order to force a capitalist project of development onto indigenous peoples.

Legitimacy

The final nail in the coffin had to legitimize these governmental actions. The Bolsonaro regime proposed a series of bills granting amnesty to land grabbers, through bills 2633/20 and 510/21 (Machado, Vitale, and Rached 2023, 282). Proposed during a period of limited dialogue between indigenous leaders and the government as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, the



amnesty was masked under the pretext of helping small farmers regularize their demands (McBee and McCarthy 2020). Instead this law encouraged and gave legitimacy to wealthy land grabbers who used squatters to increase their properties. Amnesty was a conscious effort, as it was the last necessary step for successful theft – legal entrenchment. Dispossession is a historical process that is ongoing and reinforces itself, allowing for the conditions of settler colonialism, a structure maintained by a series of processes that require dispossession (Nichols 2020, 91).

Encroachment has always been formalized in colonial systems, from the 19th century United States to contemporary Brazil, eventually gaining legal entitlement to the land, a clear attack on the sovereignty of indigenous communities (Peñalver and Katyal 2007, 1113). Evidently, states have the capacity to legitimize land claims due to property law, while extralegal activity has the potential to change the law. As such, lawbreaking in colonial projects, although sometimes being used to counteract injustices, is used to foment injustice. No matter the century, colonial attitudes persist and justify themselves through law. Bolsonaro's legal efforts supported settlers, showcasing how the law continues to suppress indigenous autonomy and governance. In fact it can be adjusted to further displace more indigenous peoples.

Thanks to courageous fighting from indigenous communities, NGOs and activists, and environmentalists, no amnesty bills were ratified by Congress. And with the electoral defeat of Bolsonaro against the progressive Lula da Silva in 2022, the government has ceased engaging in detrimental actions to indigenous peoples. Nonetheless, the colonial dynamic remains. Legal battles for the simple recognition and self-determination continue to this day, and institutions still bear the scars from the Bolsonaro administration. Perhaps even more detrimental is the recently elected Congress, the most conservative in the modern democratic history of Brazil, making any pro-indigenous legislation unlikely to pass. Regardless, a fundamental change in state-indigenous relations is pressing, implementing an equal nation perspective to truly make indigenous people full citizens of Brazil. Otherwise, the genocidal practices promoted by Bolsonaro toward indigenous communities could return as quickly as they were implemented. ♦

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Dishevelled Hair and Laissez-Faire: An Analysis of Argentina's Javier Milei

Mekhi Quarshie



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Introduction

“I am the lion and I come to tear down the model of the political caste!” (Niebieskikwiat, 2021). The above words were spoken by the politician Javier Milei, a former soccer player, rock star, and founder of the new right-wing Argentine Freedom Advances (La Libertad Avanza) political party (Kestler, 2022, p. 299). Milei is an important figure to study, not only because his recent victory in Argentina’s 2023 runoff election catapulted him into the presidency (The Guardian, 2023), but also because he holds power at a pivotal time in Argentinian history.

As of today, 40% of Argentina’s population lives below the poverty line, with children comprising 70% of that group (Reale, 2023). The state has a national debt of 382 billion USD, and the effects of this disastrous economic environment is rubbing off on the population (Reale, 2023). The current economic state of Argentina piques the interest of many scholars, considering that during the late 19th and early 20th century, Argentina’s GDP growth eclipsed that of Australia, the United States, Canada, and a majority of other European countries (Conde, 2013 p. 18-19).

The abysmal economic conditions of Argentina are perfect for a charismatic populist to swoop into the political scene, and Milei has done just that. This essay will prove that Milei is a textbook populist politician through an analysis of his proposed policies, his proximity to the political sphere, his anti-establishment rhetoric, and his common sense solution to dollarize the economy.

What is Populism?

While there is no direct point of agreement amongst scholars as to a definitive definition of populism, an attempt from scholars Cas Mudde and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser gets rather close. The two writers define populism as an “appeal to ‘the people’ and a denunciation of ‘the elite’” (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017, p. 6). Yet, populism can vary in terms of who the people and the elite are, and how they are being denounced (Abts & Rubbens, 2007, p. 408). Being a “thin centred ideology” that is incredibly malleable to different contexts, each populist hammers their own ideological stamp on the envelope of populism (Abts & Rubbens, 2007, p. 408). It is important to note, then, that while populism is not sacrosanct to Milei’s ideology – libertarianism is – he belligerently uses populist tactics in an attempt to win the presidency and promote his libertarian ideals.

Milei’s Libertarian Policies

As a steadfast libertarian, Milei’s populist politics are built upon his anti-paternalistic ideologies. As stated above, the paramount trait for populists is to ascribe a people and an elite, and then widen the chasm between the two (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017, p. 6). Milei’s brand of populism is an extension of his libertarian ideals, wherein he characterises the former governing party of Argentina as “the elites,” the Argentinian citizens as “the people,” and the dissolution of freedoms as the chasm between the two that he seeks to mend (A24.com, 2021, Niebieskikwiat, 2021, Reuters, 2023).

Many of Milei’s policies are structured around the goal of re-establishing freedom amongst the working class people. For example, when it comes to drug use, the politician believes that citizens should be able to partake in drugs as they please and be responsible for the outcome of such indulgence (Figueiredo, 2021 & Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017, p. 299). This same anti-paternalistic view comes forth in his proposed policies that seek to keep marriage separated from the state (Molina, 2023). Milei, much to the surprise of those who label him as a conservative individual, supports gay marriage, stating that “marriage is a contract between private parties, and therefore people can marry whomever they want” (Molina, 2023).

As evidenced above, Milei’s libertarianism renders it easy for him to advocate for the freedom of the masses, and vilify the ruling paternalistic political class. This creates a social cleavage that is essential for all populists politicians and establishes an us vs them framework. In an interview with the Latin American newspaper O Globo, Milei stated that “liberalism arose to liberate the oppressed from tyrannical monarchs” (Figueiredo, 2021). Thus, the politician seeks to rally the Argentinian people around a common goal, in this case, his proposed policies show that this common goal is the social and economic freedom of the working class (Figueiredo, 2021).

Insider or outsider?

Mudde and Kaltwasser subdivide populists into three categories: outsiders, insider-outsiders, and insiders, all of whom seek to use their relative proximity to the political sphere to their advantage. Out of the three, Milei would classify as an insider populist, the small percentage of successful populist politicians that come from the political elite and masquerade as if they were a member of the disenfranchised (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2007, p.76). While Milei was an outsider populist before his win in the general election of 2021, his time as a member of the Argentinian legislature and his recent presidential win point to the fact that, currently, he has obtained insider status (Kestler, 2022, p. 299). What is impressive, however, is how Milei both admonishes the established political class with anti-party sentiments, and widens the chasm between politicians and regular people while keeping himself and his own party obscured from any harm.

Firstly, Milei's inflammatory rhetoric aligns him closely with populist norms. A prime example of such can be seen in a speech he delivered after winning third place in the 2021 Argentinian primary, where he berated his enemies who did not believe he would be able to achieve such a feat (Perfil.com, 202). "The caste is afraid, they pulled us from both sides. They are screwed...we achieved a historic feat, remember when they said that we did not gather votes," Milei stated (Perfil.com, 202).

By denouncing his political opponents as a monolithic "caste," Milei seeks to group out his political opponents and vilify them. Hence, because La Libertad Avanza is a right-leaning party, Milei can admonish the left, tap into party politics, and leave his own party unscathed (Belloni, 2023, pg. 6). Additionally, La Libertad Avanza is a nascent party, entering the political scene in 2020 (Belloni, 2023, pg. 6). This allows Milei to act as a crusader, a new option amongst old corrupted ones, further solidifying his outsider status (Kestler, 2022, p. 299).

Anti-establishment Rhetoric

Like a true populist, Milei regularly espouses anti-establishment rhetoric and proposes La Libertad Avanza to have new solutions to old problems. In *The Populist Zeitgeist*, Mudde asserts that populists purport to reform the current political system of their state rather than overhaul it entirely (Mudde, 2004, p. 546). Milei does this by regularly admonishing the leading political figures in Buenos Aires, establishing himself as an anti-establishment leader and therefore carving a way for his new party to enter into the pre-existing political structure of Argentina (Mudde, 2004, p. 546).

For example, in a voracious bout of anti-party and anti-establishment rhetoric, Milei stated in a media interview that the Argentinian state was the “supreme aggressor” on individual liberties, and that the former president of Argentina, Alberto Fernandez, was a “tyrant” (Murillo & Zarazaga, 2020, p. 125; Niebieskikwiat, 2021). Furthermore, Milei has also attacked another left-leaning politician, the 8-year Buenos Aires Mayor Rodríguez Larreta (Infobae.com-a, 2021). The mayor had earned a name for himself being at the forefront of Argentine politics, and is the definition of an established political individual, but in a meeting with militants in Palermo, Milei called Larreta a “shitty lefty,” and declared that he could “crush [him] even in a wheelchair” (Infobae.com-a, 2021).

There is a lot to unpack from these comments from Milei. First, the arguments that he puts forward are riddled with swear words, and explosive rhetoric. By using such vernacular language, Milei attempts to distance himself from the posh discursive formalities of the elite political class. Furthermore, it is evident that Milei adamantly tries to portray established left-leaning politicians as the plight of all evils that Argentina is facing (Mudde, 2004, p. 546). According to Milei, the country’s many issues can only be fixed by himself, and his solution comes in the form of a mundane, one-step cure for all of Argentina’s maladies: the dollarization of the Argentinian economy.

Common Sense Solution

The last populist trope that Milei adheres to is his tendency to present a common-sense solution to a complicated political issue (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017, p. 64). Milei’s common-sense solution is his bold idea to dollarize the Argentinian economy (Burgos & Raisbeck, 2023, p. 1). Dollarization is the act of citizens holding a large amount of assets in a foreign currency instead of their local currency (Carranza & Canuto, 2023, p. 3). In its most ideal state, the dollarization of the Argentine economy using the US dollar could potentially assuage the hyperinflation that Argentina is experiencing by eradicating the ability of the central bank to tamper with the exchange rate, and therefore tethering the Argentinian exchange rate to the US exchange rate (Carranza & Canuto, 2023, p. 5). However, when looking into the practicality of such a solution, one comes up with more questions than answers.

Milei’s implementation of such a change is more difficult than it sounds, as it would require the central bank to buy back its liabilities in pesos to convert to US dollars (Carranza & Canuto, 2023, p. 3-8). Thus, Milei would need a 33 billion dollar loan to not devalue, a number that is borderline impossible considering the state is already in enormous amounts of debt (Carranza & Canuto, 2023, p. 3-8). Dollarization is also antithetical to the advice of economic analysts, and would only provide a short-term solution for Argentina – if it even works in the first place (Carranza & Canuto, 2023, p. 7).

The perils of dollarizing the economy are a stark example of how a populist leader's "common sense idea" can be a disaster if it makes it to the implementation phase. Additionally, by disregarding the advice of economists and experts that suggest dollarization is a bad idea, Milei aligns himself with another common trait among populists: anti-intellectualism (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2007, p. 64). By resorting to anti-intellectualism in a time of crisis as well as providing a common-sense solution to such crises, Milei further conforms to populist ideals.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Milei's proposed policies, insider status, anti-party rhetoric and dollarization ideas all coalesce around the populist framework. While the content and style of Milei's politics are clearly populist, it does not necessarily follow that his leadership style will be. A clear example is evidenced in the Trump presidency, where a number of his populist proposals never came true in his administration. Thus, only time will tell if Milei will lead with populist tactics or not. It will be interesting to see whether Milei simply co-opted populist traits to win the election, or if these ideas will become a key part of his tenure as Argentina's next president. ♦

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