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ABOUT

*PLVS VLTRA* endeavours to publish exceptional papers that promote research and scholarship in all areas of Hispanic and Italian Studies at the University of Victoria.

*PLVS VLTRA* is indexed online through the LOCKSS Program based at Stanford University and a physical copy of the journal is archived in Library and Archives Canada in Ottawa.

SUBMISSIONS

A maximum page length of 12 double-spaced pages is preferred by the Journal. Papers may be written in English, Italian, or Spanish. After each issue’s submission deadline, *PLVS VLTRA* will submit the papers to an intensive selection process, including peer-review by undergraduates from both the Hispanic and Italian sections of the Department.

Each paper will be reviewed by at least two undergraduate students. Reviewers will address areas including clarity of writing, presentation, relevance to the theme of Hispanic and Italian Studies, originality, interdisciplinary relevance, and contribution to research in the area.

Should a number of submissions pertain to the same topic, the selection process may become competitive. Papers not selected for publication may be considered for a following issue, as declared by the Editorial Team, and with permission from the author at the time of submission.

PUBLISHING INFORMATION

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NOTES ON PLVS VLTRA

Today, Spain’s coat of arms is flanked by two pillars, which together read PLVS VLTRA. This motto can be directly traced to the year 1516. Holy Roman Emperor Charles V adopted the Pillars of Hercules and the inscription “PLVS VLTRA” as his emblem. However, this motto was not created by Charles himself—it was his Italian physician, Luigi Marliano, who suggested it. PLVS VLTRA, meaning “further beyond” in Latin, was in reference to the Age of Exploration—going beyond the Pillars of Hercules, expanding the empire both westward and eastward. Going “further beyond” is very much an objective of the Hispanic and Italian Studies undergraduate journal, PLVS VLTRA. Both Italian and Hispanic cultures were immensely shaped by those who dared to go beyond the known world. In a similar sense, students here are encouraged to explore new things, make discoveries, and advance the state of knowledge.

Kyle McCreanor
FOREWORD FROM THE CHAIR

During these trying first days of UVIC’s transition to alternative ways of teaching due to the spread of COVID-19, there is a bright light: a dedicated group of students is endeavouring to meet a deadline for the submission of Volume 6 of PLVS VLTRA to printing services. The journal must be printed! All my colleagues and I applaud your unwavering determination: ¡Felicitaciones!

Volume 6 of PLVS VLTRA is a testament to our students’ commitment to scholarship. Since 2015, students in the Department of Hispanic and Italian Studies have been publishing high-quality research papers in an annual blind peer-reviewed journal. The publication process has provided and continues to provide our students with invaluable professional experience.

This year’s publication showcases seven outstanding English and Spanish-language articles on Latin America that envisage research as an international and multidisciplinary endeavour. Ingrid Janse van Rensburg, Kathryn LeBere and Melina Emilia Cortina Castro write on issues relevant to Indigenous Latin America from the aymaras and atacameños in the Chilean desert north to the wixaritari and the Aztecs in Mexico. Joseph Clarke, Wren Sham and Emily Streml deal with periods of conflict and post-conflict in Guatemala, Cuba and Chile. Finally, Pamela K. Stockman tackles the topic of ayahuasca tourism in the Amazon basin.

As last year, hats off once again to the authors and the Editorial Team, led by Isaac Nazaroff and Alexandra King for the publication of Volume 6 of PLVS VLTRA!

Dr. Pablo Restrepo-Gautier
Chair
MESSAGE FROM THE CO-EDITORS-IN-CHIEF

We are delighted to present to you the sixth volume of PLVS VLTRA, a compilation of the history, politics, feminism, geography, and vibrant culture of the Latin American world. It is the proud product of some of the university’s hardest-working and dedicated undergraduates, and we are thrilled to share it with you.

This year brought exciting new challenges for us, as we pushed ourselves to exceed our publishing goals of prior years. From the beginning of term, we increased our outreach to department professors, who went above and beyond in recommending talented students and encouraging them to polish and publish their academic achievements. By February, we had received a total of fifteen submissions, seven of which we went on to publish – two new records! Not only was this an exciting accomplishment for the journal itself, but an even greater milestone for the growth of our Hispanic and Italian Studies family.

Of course, we could not have accomplished this success without the help of many special individuals. We would like to thank: Dr. Pablo Restrepo-Gautier, department chair and advisor for his invaluable academic support; Professors Matthew Koch and Gabriela McBee, for personally encouraging their students to publish; Carolynn Broeke, for her assistance in advertising the journal and with logistical needs; and Oriana Varas, for the beautiful design of the journal cover. A special thanks to the Department of Hispanic and Italian Studies and the Latin American Studies Program for their generous financial contributions, without which the publication of this journal would not have been possible. Finally, to our incredible editors who have contributed countless hours to the completion of this volume - as always, we could not have done it without you.

We hope you enjoy reading this journal as much as we enjoyed preparing it for you.

Isaac Nazarooff
Co-Editor-in-Chief

Alexandra King
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Los wixaritari y su sistema de creencias

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En pequeñas comunidades, esparcidas a través de la Sierra Madre Occidental, viven los wixaritari, también conocidos como huicholes. Los wixaritari son uno de los pocos grupos indígenas en México que aún conservan su sistema de creencias prehispánico casi intacto, tras resistirse a los intentos de evangelización durante y después de la colonia. En este artículo se recopilan los principales elementos que conforman y mantienen el sistema de creencias wixárika; como son sus deidades, los mara’akames, las peregrinaciones a Wirikuta, las prácticas y centros ceremoniales, los simbolismos, así como el rol de las mujeres en la religión y cultura. Por otro lado, también se presentan los temas de la resistencia al sincretismo religioso y la actual lucha contra la minería, la cual representa una amenaza hacia las prácticas religiosas de los wixaritari.

Palabras claves: Huicholes; wixaritari; religion; cosmologia indigena; wirikuta; mara’akane
Introducción

En el occidente de México, entre los estados de Nayarit, Jalisco, Durango y Zacatecas, se encuentra el pueblo wixárika\(^1\); un grupo indígena que vive en comunidades compuestas por rancherías familiares, esparcidas en los terrenos montañosos de la Sierra Madre Occidental (Villegas 6). Aunque en español son más conocidos por el nombre de huicholes, este trabajo se referirá a ellos como wixaritari, en plural, o wixárika, en singular, que así se refieren ellos mismos. Wixárika significa “la gente” en su idioma homónimo, que es de raíz utoazteca (Schaefer y Furst 1; Villegas 7). Según Stacy B. Schaefer y Peter T. Furst, a pesar de tener una población reducida, los wixaritari han preservado desde el periodo colonial su sistema de creencias politeísta prehispánico con muy poco sincretismo religioso con el catolicismo u otra religión cristiana más que otros grupos indígenas mexicanos (1). Su particular sistema de creencias y prácticas sagradas, como los peregrinajes y el consumo del peyote, ha llamado la atención de antropólogos, artistas y otros académicos a conocer más sobre este pueblo y sus costumbres. Este ensayo analizará lo que se ha publicado con respecto a los principales elementos de la religión wixárika: los mara’akame, las deidades principales, las prácticas y ceremonias sagradas, el rol que juega el género en la sociedad y religión, y el tema del sincretismo religioso.

\(^1\) En el idioma wixárika, la letra ‘x’ se pronuncia como una doble erre (rr); por lo que las palabras Wixaritari y Wixárika se dicen “Wirraritari” y “Wirrárika.”
Los mara’akame

Un mara’akame es la persona de su comunidad encargada de organizar y guiar las ceremonias sagradas, prácticas de curación y de protección, y las peregrinaciones hacia Wirikuta, la tierra sagrada de los wixaritari (Myerhoff 96). Los mara’akame cumplen con el rol de chamanes, sanadores o curanderos, sacerdotes, y líderes. Por eso, Barbara G. Myerhoff insiste que referirse a ellos por medio de un solo término no-wixárika es considerado incompleto o inapropiado (94). Además, los mara’akame dirigen las ceremonias porque poseen el conocimiento más completo de la cosmología religiosa y el panteón de deidades dentro de su comunidad (Myerhoff 94). No existe un proceso exacto y único de la selección de un mara’akame, sin embargo, como explica Myerhoff, el rol no es heredado a pesar de que existe la tendencia de encontrar varios mara’akame en una misma familia, en generaciones alternas (96). Además, tanto un hombre como una mujer pueden convertirse en mara’akame aunque, en su mayoría, tienden a ser hombres (Myerhoff 96; Schaefer y Furst 11). Un o una mara’akame es elegido durante su infancia por una deidad que se le aparece en un sueño o una visión (Myerhoff 98). Esos niños tienden a ser huérfanos de padre (97) y, desde pequeños, deben demostrar una reacción positiva hacia el peyote, las artes, el trabajo y la música (Schaefer y Furst 11). Al crecer deciden si quieren convertirse en mara’akame completos, en cuyo caso se preparan durante cinco años para convertirse (Myerhoff 96). Las principales características de un mara’akame incluyen gran inteligencia, fuerza, resistencia, buena memoria, y autocontrol, a la vez que deben desarrollar una sensibilidad social y un conocimiento de medicina y ‘psicología’ para sanaciones (Myerhoff 97).
Deidades

Según varios antropólogos, el número de deidades en el sistema de creencias wixárika es tan grande y variado entre comunidades y mara’akames que ningún wixárika podría saber la lista completa (Hinton 92; Myerhoff 76). Además, el nombre que se le da a una deidad puede variar según la comunidad o la ranchería, o bien, una deidad puede ser conocida por más de un nombre en el mismo lugar (Myerhoff 77). El nombre que se les da está en idioma wixárika, y cada deidad tiene un título de parentesco como tía, tío, hermano, y demás, por lo que hay deidades femeninas y masculinas (Hinton 92; Villegas 7). Sin embargo, estos títulos no sugieren que exista un parentesco real entre ellos o con los wixaritari (Myerhoff 91). Cada comunidad y cada wixárika tiene su deidad favorita, o una a la que consideran más importante. Además, las deidades no son especializadas en el sentido de que cada deidad se dedica a una sola responsabilidad y, así, cada wixárika o comunidad elige con cuál deidad comunicarse, según cuál sea su preferida, o según lo que el mara’akame indique (94).

Varios wixaritari y académicos explican que se puede identificar un grupo de deidades mayores, pero los nombres y descripciones suelen variar. La lista de deidades mayores que se presenta a continuación está basada en la descripción de deidades que ofrece Myerhoff en su libro. La deidad masculina más antigua es Tatewarí, también nombrado Nuestro Abuelo Fuego. Se dice que él fue el primer mara’akame, pues guió a las demás deidades durante el primer peregrinaje y es por eso que, hasta hoy en día, tiene una conexión especial con los mara’akames, a quienes comunica los mensajes y deseos de otras deidades (Myerhoff 77). Otra deidad mayor masculina es Tayaupá, Nuestro Padre Sol, quien es considerada una
deidad poderosa y peligrosa a la vez, por lo que existe cierta reservación hacia él en muchas comunidades (80). Tamatsi Maxa Kwaxi-Kauyumari, Nuestro Hermano Mayor Cola de Venado, es la principal deidad masculina asociada con la caza del venado y es el conjunto de dos figuras: Tamatsi Maxa Kwax y Kauyumari. Esta deidad representa la versión humana del venado y asiste a los mara’akame como “espíritu tutelar” al atender a los enfermos (84, 94). Myerhoff señala que la agrupación de deidades femeninas mayores es conocida como Tateima, Nuestras Madres, e incluye a las diosas del agua, la lluvia, el maíz, y la tierra (89). La deidad Nakawé, Nuestra Abuela Tierra/Crecimiento, también conocida como La Que Llegó Primero, es considerada, en muchas comunidades, como la mayor deidad femenina y la más antigua, pues estuvo presente durante la creación del mundo, antes de que llegaran las demás deidades (89). Otras deidades Madres son Tatei Utuanaka, la principal Madre del Maíz; Tatei Yurienaka, Nuestra Madre Tierra Ablandada por la Lluvia; y otras diosas del agua y de la lluvia, como Tatei Matinieri, representando los manantiales sagrados del desierto (90).

Elementos y practicas ceremoniales

Según Stacy B. Schaefer y Peter T. Furst, los wixaritari no rigen sus vidas o prácticas bajo un dogma religioso estricto. Sus ceremonias pueden ser realizadas de varias maneras que son consideradas correctas, y las tradiciones orales y sagradas sobre ciertos temas tienen variaciones dentro de diferentes comunidades (2). Independientemente de cómo organicen y celebren sus rituales, los wixaritari siempre los toman muy en serio para que sus deidades no se sientan abandonadas (Hinton 91). Las principales
Las ceremonias wixaritari son dedicadas a momentos o estaciones del año relacionados con los cultivos –sobre todo del maíz– así como a los animales y el fuego, entre otros elementos de la naturaleza (Hinton 91; McArdle Stephens 41; Myerhoff 102). De igual forma, varios rituales son llevados a cabo en casos de enfermedades o cuando la cosecha está en riesgo grave de fracasar (Hinton 90). Por otro lado, existen registros que datan del siglo diecinueve en el que algunas personas no-wixaritari, después de convivir con ciertas comunidades, narran que la práctica de festividades era algo recurrente y que incluso cada luna llena se celebraba alguna festividad (McArdle Stephens 41).

Las ceremonias o festividades dedicadas a la cosecha del maíz y la calabaza se realizan principalmente en los ranchos familiares, y pocas veces a nivel de la comunidad. En cambio, las ceremonias hacia el venado, el ganado, y el Tatewarí, el Abuelo Fuego, ocurren más en comunidad (Hinton 91; McArdle Stephens 41; Myerhoff 102). De acuerdo con Hinton, algunas ceremonias de la calabaza tienen la característica especial de permitirle a los niños tener una participación importante en ellas (91). Por otro lado, las ceremonias y rituales centrados alrededor del Abuelo Fuego son practicadas principalmente por adultos y tienen una gran importancia durante los peregrinajes. Para demostrar el agradecimiento hacia él, y para absorber su purificación, los que participan en estos rituales rodean al fuego en un círculo, purifican sus ropas al pasarlas sobre las llamas, y alimentan al fuego con las sobras de comidas y bebidas (Myerhoff 102-103).
**Centros ceremoniales**

Las pequeñas ceremonias y rituales familiares son realizadas en los *xíriki*, que son centros ceremoniales pequeños. Cada rancho tiene uno o más *xíriki*; ahí veneran a sus ancestros y deidades, y guardan objetos religiosos como el peyote (Myerhoff 108). También en los *xíriki* guardan el *urukáte*, que es un conjunto de cristales o piedras coloridas atadas a una flecha que representa a algún ancestro, comúnmente un mara’akame, que ahora funge de guardián familiar (Myerhoff 109; Schaefer y Furst 2). Los centros ceremoniales para la comunidad son llamados *tuki* y suelen ser mucho más grandes que los *xíriki*, ya que están diseñados para albergar a toda la comunidad (Myerhoff 109). Los *tuki* son generalmente protegidos por *Tatewari*, el Abuelo Fuego, por lo que están construidos para albergar un fuego dedicado a ese dios (Myerhoff 109).

**Música en ceremonias**

La música es un elemento presente en gran parte de las ceremonias wixaritari. Los mara’akame entonan varios cantos y recitados, conforme con el tipo de ceremonia, acompañados por un tambor vertical hecho con el tronco de un árbol y cuero de venado (Hinton 93). En algunas ocasiones también se tocan melodías con violines y guitarras que son hechas a mano por los mismos wixaritari. Esto crea un tono propio, pero son un claro ejemplo de la influencia cultural europea (93).
Peregrinaje a Wirikuta

Como se mencionó previamente, la cultura y las tradiciones wixaritari han llamado la atención no sólo de académicos, sino también de artistas y cineastas. En 2014, el cineasta Hernán Vilchez realizó un documental llamado *Huicholes: los últimos guardianes del peyote*, en el que comparte la historia y el contexto cultural y social de los peregrinajes a Wirikuta, la principal tradición wixárika. Cada año, normalmente durante los meses de otoño e invierno, varios grupos wixaritari se embarcan en un peregrinaje hacia Wirikuta, el lugar sagrado más importante en su cosmología y tradición, donde renuevan y fortalecen sus conexiones con sus deidades y ancestros (Vilchez, “*Huicholes: los últimos guardianes del peyote*”). Como expresa Myerhoff, el peregrinaje ocurre durante los meses de sequía porque piden a sus deidades que llueva en los meses posteriores (117). El peregrinaje hacia Wirikuta es considerada la práctica y tradición más importante en la vida de un wixárika, a pesar de que no todos los wixaritari participan en él (Vilchez, “*Huicholes*”). La importancia que Wirikuta tiene para los wixaritari es inmensurable, pues ahí se concentran todos los conocimientos ancestrales y naturales. Ahí habitan los espíritus de sus ancestros y dioses y ahí se originó toda la vida terrenal, después del nacimiento de Tayaupá, el Padre Sol, en el Cerro del Quemado (Vilchez, “*Huicholes*”). Geográficamente, Wirikuta es una zona semidesértica del estado de San Luis Potosí, mejor conocida como Sierra de Catorce para todos los no-wixaritari. Ahí se encuentra el Cerro del Quemado, donde crece el peyote, o hikuri, y donde habita el dios del venado, Kauyumari (Villegas 25).

La realización del peregrinaje implica un proceso de planeación, preparación, y organización apropiada antes, durante, y en el camino de vuelta (Vilchez,
“Huicholes”). Además, este evento no solo involucra a los que viajan, sino que las familias de los peregrinos que se quedan en las rancherías también participan, manteniendo un fuego vivo, día y noche, mientras dure el viaje de los otros (Myerhoff 117). También existe la “libertad,” dentro de la práctica sagrada del peregrinaje, que permite que cada grupo de peregrinos decida de qué forma recorrerá el camino hacia Wirikuta. La peregrinación puede hacerse a pie o en auto (Myerhoff 124; Schaefer y Furst 2), siempre y cuando se detengan en los lugares sagrados importantes y realicen las ceremonias de purificación y preparación (Vilchez, “Huicholes”). Antes de partir, y durante el viaje, los peregrinos deben detenerse en ciertos xíriki, donde preparan sus alimentos y realizan ofrendas y rituales para las deidades. En un xíriki especial sacrifican a un becerro para alimentar y nutrir a las deidades con su sangre y corazón (Vilchez, “Huicholes”). En el desierto, antes de llegar a Wirikuta, beben y se bañan en los manantiales y arroyos sagrados, cuya agua los llena de la energía de sus antepasados, por lo que también ahí dejan ofrendas (Vilchez, “Huicholes”). Una vez en Wirikuta, suben el Cerro del Quemado para ‘cazar,’ o buscar, el hikuri (peyote) que después consumen en rituales para acceder a los conocimientos y mensajes de los dioses y ancestros (Vilchez, “Huicholes”).

**Venado-maíz-peyote**

El venado, el maíz, y el peyote son los tres elementos principales en la cosmología wixárika, y generalmente son simbolizados como una unidad (Myerhoff 189). Según explica Myerhoff, ninguna ceremonia está completa sin la presencia de estos tres símbolos (221). El venado simboliza el pasado en el que los wixaritari se dedicaban a
la cacería del venado para subsistir, pero que ha quedado atrás después que se introdujo la agricultura y ganadería en sus formas de vida (Myerhoff 222). La adopción de un estilo de vida de agricultura es relativamente reciente en la historia del pueblo wixárika; de acuerdo con Allen R. Franz, ellos ya eran horticultores al momento de contacto con los españoles (64), pero Myerhoff menciona que el cultivo del maíz es mucho más reciente (204). Por lo tanto, el venado representa la añoranza de un pasado de cazador e independencia, así como la importante relación entre los cazadores wixaritari y las criaturas cazadas (Myerhoff 222, 227). El maíz simboliza la realidad presente, pues ahora los wixaritari se dedican al cultivo, pero resulta menos idealizado que el pasado de cazador para muchos wixaritari (225). Por otro lado, el peyote, o hikuri, simboliza un tiempo “ahistórico,” impredecible, así como la belleza. El peyote permite a los wixaritari tener una experiencia impredecible y más allá de lo terrenal (227). Una vez unidos, los tres elementos representan un solo elemento perfectamente completo, ya que consideran que no pueden vivir bien sin ser conscientes de su pasado, trabajar por su presente y apreciar la belleza de manera privada, como permite el peyote (227).

**Rol de las mujeres**

Existe una conexión importante entre la religión wixárika y sus tejidos, los cuales han realizado en telares de cintura desde hace siglos, tanto en lo que simboliza un tejido, como en el acto mismo de tejer (Schaefer y Furst 1, 11). En los textiles y arte que hacen con chaquira y con hilo sobre madera se expresa visualmente la cosmología y las historias del pueblo wixárika. Las mujeres wixaritari están a cargo de hacer la mayoría de los tejidos, bordados,
joyería como collares y aretes, y otros elementos coloridos y detallados que caracterizan la cultura wixárika (Schaefer 1). A pesar de que hay hombres que también saben tejer, esta es una práctica íntimamente relacionada con la vida de las mujeres y niñas, quienes conectan cada paso de la creación de un tejido – desde preparar los hilos, hasta bordar – con etapas de su crecimiento y como parte de su identidad (Schaefer 1, 97). Desde los seis años, las niñas aprenden de las mujeres adultas a preparar los hilos usando fibras de algodón, agrupándose entre varias mujeres para transmitir técnicas, conocimientos y tradiciones orales a las más jóvenes (Schaefer 110). Las niñas, entonces, crecen aprendiendo a tejer, y cuando una muchacha alcanza la pubertad, demuestra sus habilidades con el telar de cintura como un “pasaje” hacia ser una mujer adulta (Schaefer y Furst 11). Cabe remarcar que, según Schaefer, el proceso de convertirse en una verdadera maestra tejedora es similar al proceso de convertirse en un mara’akame, pues el tejer también permite a las mujeres acceder a los conocimientos ancestrales y a las deidades (159).

Por otro lado, Schaefer argumenta que cuando un mara’akame hombre quiere alcanzar el más alto rango en la sociedad wixárika, un kawiteru – el mara’akame cuyo rol es ‘soñar’ las decisiones importantes que su comunidad debe de hacer – requiere de la ayuda de su esposa, quien recibirá el mismo prestigio religioso que él (133). Más aún, las mujeres ancianas que durante su vida completaron roles importantes en las prácticas religiosas – como comunicarse con las deidades, visitar los sitios sagrados, aprender a través del peyote, y más – son admiradas como miembros de gran sabiduría en su comunidad (134). En su trabajo etnográfico, Myerhoff narra su participación en un peregrinaje a Wirikuta, donde menciona que, durante estos viajes, el rol de la mujer se hace presente en la división de
trabajo, ya que las mujeres y niñas Wixaritari son las encargadas de preparar y distribuir los alimentos entre los peregrinos (122).

**Sincretismo religioso**

Varias investigaciones antropológicas sostienen que los wixaritari conservan hoy en día su sistema de creencias politeísta prehispánico casi intacto, a diferencia de la mayoría de los grupos indígenas en México (Hinton 90; Schaefer y Furst 1). Una explicación prominente es que vivían en grupos no muy numerosos esparcidos entre las zonas la Sierra con poco acceso, por lo que no tuvieron un contacto significativo con los españoles hasta inicios del siglo dieciocho (McArdle Stephens 38; Myerhoff 53). Sin embargo, esto no significa que no haya habido sincretismo religioso, pues ha existido una adopción de ciertos elementos católicos o cristianos, con una variación entre comunidades wixaritari (Hinton 90; Schaefer y Furst 1). La adopción de ciertos elementos católicos incluye agregar un par de fechas festivas, como Semana Santa, a su calendario ritual; el concepto de celebrar un bautizo; algunas herramientas o materiales hechos de metal, así como la figura de la cruz; y la inclusión de santos católicos en su lista de divinidades (Hinton 90; Schaefer y Furst 1).

Según Myerhoff, a pesar de que los Wixaritari han aceptado varios de estos elementos religiosos y han hecho que “coexistan” con los elementos propios de su etnia, no existe una integración completa de ellos en su sistema de creencias, ya que han puesto una distinción entre los elementos y prácticas católicos y aquellos que son wixaritari (76). Hinton ofrece un argumento similar al de Myerhoff al expresar que los wixaritari que han integrado santos católicos a su panteón de divinidades consideran a
estos como “contrapartes” de sus propias divinidades, y no las igualan (90).

Durante el siglo dieciocho, cuando los españoles lograron más contacto con las comunidades wixaritarí, varios frailes franciscanos, del ahora estado de Jalisco, atravesaban la Sierra Madre Occidental con el afán de evangelizar a los wixaritari y hacer que asistieran a misa, así como para forzarles a hablar español y a adoptar las normas sociales de la Nueva España (McArdle Stephens xxvi). Estos frailes lograron que varios wixaritari asistieran a la iglesia y a diferentes ceremonias católicas, pero con el acrecentamiento de las luchas independentistas a inicios del siglo diecinueve, abandonaron la zona hasta después de 1820 (McArdle Stephens 35). Sin embargo, durante ninguno de los procesos de evangelización de antes y después de la independencia los wixaritari mostraron mucho interés por la religión católica, y junto con el surgimiento de políticas anticlericales de mediados del siglo diecinueve, los frailes abandonaron sus intentos de evangelizarlos, por lo que la mayoría de los wixaritari nunca se convirtieron totalmente al catolicismo (McArdle Stephens xxvi, 35-36). Por eso mismo, hasta el día de hoy, se pueden apreciar algunos elementos católicos, como las cruces, en los centros religiosos de los wixaritari, y la apreciación de algunos santos, pero estos no llegan a tener un protagonismo comparado con los elementos del sistema de creencias y prácticas religiosas indígena wixaritari.

**La amenaza de la minería**

Los wixaritari han luchado siempre para defender sus tierras – principalmente Wirikuta y sus conexiones espirituales con ellas – de amenazas externas; primero de otras etnias prehispánicas, luego de los españoles, y ahora
del gobierno mexicano y las industrias transnacionales mineras (McArdle Stephens xxi; Vilchez, “Huicholes”). A pesar de que la minería no es una actividad reciente en la Sierra de Catorce, pues fue una actividad introducida hace doscientos años por los españoles, desde hace dos décadas el gobierno mexicano otorgó concesiones a empresas mineras canadienses para minar las tierras que rodean Wirikuta, amenazando, así, este lugar sagrado al producir grandes niveles de contaminación y al invadir más espacio del otorgado legalmente (Vilchez, “Huicholes”). Los wixaritari continúan luchando por la defensa de su tierra, movilizándose en varias ciudades de México, en la sede de las Naciones Unidas y hasta en Canadá, con la ayuda de varios colectivos y ONG (Vilchez, “Huicholes”).

**Conclusión**

Describir una cultura y su sistema de creencias resulta una tarea compleja, ya que es un tema bastante amplio, con muchos elementos y pequeños detalles que uno quisiera poder incluir, pero para lo que se necesita mucho más espacio y tiempo. Aun así, varios antropólogos y artistas, como Vilchez, han logrado experimentar, aprender, y compartir sobre los rasgos más importantes de la cultura y religión wixárika, la cual resulta fascinante para mucha gente en México y el extranjero. Con tantos elementos en su sistema de creencias y en sus prácticas y ceremonias, para muchos puede resultar impresionante que, con una cosmología tan amplia, exista solo un tipo de persona que organice y guíe en las prácticas religiosas y medicinales, los mara’akame. Por otro lado, es necesario reconocer que la conquista española, el largo proceso histórico del colonialismo e intentos de evangelización, y el actual sistema político, económico, y social mexicano no han
ocurrido sin tener un efecto sobre la forma de vida de las comunidades Wixaritari, o su sistema de creencias. Sin embargo, es admirable cómo estos efectos son más visibles en su adopción de una vida más sedentaria, sus herramientas y estilos de agricultura y ganadería, y su más reciente integración a ciertas instituciones y economía mexicana, que en su religión como tal. Será necesario observar cómo el acelerado avance de la modernización de este siglo impactará, o no, el estilo de vida Wixárika, y cómo entienden y practican sus creencias.

**Obras citadas**


Cycling Through Time: 
An Exploration of Aztec Calendars

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Lacking a mechanical means to measure time, the Aztecs—who were passionate studiers of the cosmos—calculated duration by tracking the paths of the sun, moon, stars, constellations, and planets. By counting the days elapsed between the rising and setting of celestial bodies, the Aztecs made many important astronomical discoveries which helped them develop a sophisticated calendrical system. This paper examines the interconnections and complexities of the tonalpohualli, the xiuhpohualli, the Calendar Round, and the related xiuhmolpilli or “New Fire Ceremony.” In doing so, the integral role of calendars in Aztec life is explored, including their use in creating societal meaning and order, reinforcing hierarchies, and demonstrating the hegemonic power of the state.

Keywords: Aztec; tonalpohualli; xiuhpohualli; Calendar Round; xiuhmolpilli; New Fire Ceremony; Mesoamerica
Introduction

The inheritors of a rich tradition of Mesoamerican\(^1\) astronomy, the Aztecs were passionate studiers of the cosmos. Since they had no mechanical means to measure time, the Aztecs calculated duration by tracking the sun, moon, stars, constellations, and planets (Hassig 86).\(^2\) By counting the days elapsed between the rising and setting of celestial bodies, the Aztecs were able to make important astronomical discoveries (Smith 257). These findings allowed for the development of a complex calendrical system “founded upon meticulous astronomical observations and mathematical epistemology” (Kirkhusmo Pharo 1). Through a survey of the tonalpohualli, the xiuhpohualli, the Calendar Round, and the related xiuhmolpilli or “New Fire Ceremony,” it becomes clear that calendars were used to create meaning and order, reinforce hierarchies, and demonstrate the hegemonic power of Tenochtitlan.\(^3\)

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1 Mesoamerica was a historical region in North America that existed before the conquest of the Spanish in the sixteenth century. The region included central Mexico, Belize, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and northern Costa Rica.

2 Using cross-shaped pieces of wood balanced on two corners, the Aztecs created sighting points to examine the solar system in relation to the horizon.

3 Tenochtitlan was the capital city of the Aztec Empire that flourished between 1325 and 1521. It was located on an island in the middle of Lake Texcoco (now Mexico City) and was connected to the mainland through a system of causeways.
The *Tonalpohualli* Calendar

The *tonalpohualli*, meaning “count of days” in Nahuatl, was the 260-day lunar year comprised of two repeating, meshed cycles: a cycle of twenty day signs and a cycle of thirteen numbers each associated with a “Lord of the Day” (table 1) (Hassig 8). Beginning with the first day sign, *Cipactli* (Alligator), the calendar ran until the last day sign, *Xochitl* (Flower), and then cycled back to *Cipactli*. The cycle of thirteen numbers was similar, running from number 1, represented by the god *Xiuhteuctli*, to number 13, represented by the god *Citlalli Icue*. Since the cycles were interwoven, each individual day was identified by both its day sign and its number, resulting in 260 unique combinations (Smith 255). Widely used throughout Mesoamerica, the *tonalpohualli* has been dated back by scholars to the Olmecs around 1500 BCE (Townsend 123).

Table 1: Day Signs and Lords of the Day

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>20 Day Signs</th>
<th>13 Lords of the Day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cipactli (Alligator)</td>
<td>1 Xiuhteuctli (Turquoise-lord)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ehecatl (Wind)</td>
<td>2 Tlalteuctli (Lord-of-the-land)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calli (House)</td>
<td>3 Chalchihuitl-Icue (Her-skirt Is Jade)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuetzpalin (Lizard)</td>
<td>4 Tonatiuh (He-goes-becoming-warm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coatl (Snake)</td>
<td>5 Tlazolteotl (Filth-goddess)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miquiztli (Death)</td>
<td>6 Mictlan-Teuctli (Lord-in-Mictlan)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mazatl (Deer)</td>
<td>7 Centeotl (Ear-of maize-god)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tochtli (Rabbit)</td>
<td>8 Tlaloc (Land-lier)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atl (Water)</td>
<td>9 Quetzalcoatl (Plumed-serpent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Itzcuintli (Dog)</td>
<td>10 Tezcatlipoca (Smoking Mirror)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ozomahtli (Monkey)</td>
<td>11 Chalmecateuctli (Lord-who-is-a-resident-in-Chalman)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malinalli (Grass)</td>
<td>12 Tlahuizcalpan-Teauctli (Lord-at-the-Dawn)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acatl (Reed)</td>
<td>13 Citlalli-Icue (Her-skirt Is Stars)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In addition to day signs and numbers, the *tonalpohualli* was divided into periods of thirteen days called *trecenas*, each *trecena* named after its first Day Sign and dominated by a god (table 2) (Smith 255). The first *trecena*—named 1 *Cipactli* after its first day—ran from 1 *Cipactli* (Alligator) to 13 *Acatl* (Reed). The second *trecena*—named 1 *Ocelotl*—followed afterwards and ran from 1 *Ocelotl* (Jaguar) to 13 *Miquiztli* (Death); this pattern continued until 1 *Tochtli* (Rabbit) when the *trecena* cycle then restarted. Further complicating the calendar, an additional cycle called the Nine Lords of the Night was used to determine the unluckiness and luckiness of days (256). Every individual day during the *tonalpohualli*, therefore, was believed to be shaped by its Lord of the Day, its Lord of the Night, and the god associated with its *trecena* period (Hassig 12).

Table 2: Trecenas and Lords of the Night

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>20 Trecenas</th>
<th>Associated Deity</th>
<th>Nine Lords of the Night</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Cipactli</td>
<td>Ometeotl</td>
<td>1 Xiuhtextli (Turquoise-lord)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Alligator)</td>
<td></td>
<td>2 Itztli (Obsidian) or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Ocelotl</td>
<td>Quetzalcoatl</td>
<td>Tecpatl (Flint)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Jaguar)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Attribute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Mazatl (Deer)</td>
<td>Tepeyollotl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Xochitl (Flower)</td>
<td>Huehuecoyotl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Acatl (Reed)</td>
<td>Chalchiuhtlicue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Piltzinteuctli (Child-lord)</td>
<td>Tonatiuh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Miquiztli (Death)</td>
<td>Chalchiuhtlicue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Quiyahuitl (Rain)</td>
<td>Tlaloc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Malinalli (Grass)</td>
<td>Mayahuel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Coatl (Snake)</td>
<td>Xiuhtecuhtli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Mazatl (Deer)</td>
<td>Chalchiuhtlicue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Xochitl (Flower)</td>
<td>Chalchiuhtlicue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Acatl (Reed)</td>
<td>Chalchiuhtlicue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Piltzinteuctli (Child-lord)</td>
<td>Tonatiuh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Miquiztli (Death)</td>
<td>Chalchiuhtlicue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Quiyahuitl (Rain)</td>
<td>Tlaloc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Malinalli (Grass)</td>
<td>Mayahuel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Coatl (Snake)</td>
<td>Xiuhtecuhtli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Mazatl (Deer)</td>
<td>Chalchiuhtlicue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Xochitl (Flower)</td>
<td>Chalchiuhtlicue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Acatl (Reed)</td>
<td>Chalchiuhtlicue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Piltzinteuctli (Child-lord)</td>
<td>Tonatiuh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Miquiztli (Death)</td>
<td>Chalchiuhtlicue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Quiyahuitl (Rain)</td>
<td>Tlaloc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Malinalli (Grass)</td>
<td>Mayahuel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Coatl (Snake)</td>
<td>Xiuhtecuhtli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Mazatl (Deer)</td>
<td>Chalchiuhtlicue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Xochitl (Flower)</td>
<td>Chalchiuhtlicue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Acatl (Reed)</td>
<td>Chalchiuhtlicue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Piltzinteuctli (Child-lord)</td>
<td>Tonatiuh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Miquiztli (Death)</td>
<td>Chalchiuhtlicue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Quiyahuitl (Rain)</td>
<td>Tlaloc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Malinalli (Grass)</td>
<td>Mayahuel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Coatl (Snake)</td>
<td>Xiuhtecuhtli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Mazatl (Deer)</td>
<td>Chalchiuhtlicue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Xochitl (Flower)</td>
<td>Chalchiuhtlicue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Acatl (Reed)</td>
<td>Chalchiuhtlicue</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Scholars believe that the *tonalpohualli*’s length was derived from nature. If counted from the first missed menstrual cycle of a mother to the birth of her child, the calendar equalled the length of the human gestation period (Milbrath 5). From an astronomical perspective, the calendar approximated the period between Venus as
morning star and evening star and roughly equaled nine lunar cycles (Boone 16). Corresponding to three eclipse years when doubled, one synodic revolution of Mars when tripled, and four revolutions of the moon when quintupled, the *tonalpohualli*’s “happy correspondence with multiple celestial cycles” (17) made the calendar an important astronomical tool.

Since the calendar predicted lucky and unlucky days through its Nine Lords of the Night cycle, it dictated the daily lives of the Aztecs. Lucky days were chosen to conduct important affairs, such as long journeys made by *pochtéca* merchants (Smith 256). Often used on a more personal and local level, the *tonalpohualli* was believed to influence the lives of individuals. The calendar was called upon to prognosticate the futures of newborns, to determine the best days to make offerings or sacrifices, and to inform the *tlatoani* (ruler)⁴ if he needed advice on the state’s affairs (Boone 18).

**The Xiuhpohualli Calendar**

In addition to the *tonalpohualli*, the Aztecs had a 365-day solar year called the *xiuhpohualli*—“count of years” in Nahuatl—based on the solar cycle (Kirkhusmo Pharo 233). The *xiuhpohualli* was divided into eighteen sets of twenty days called *veintenas* (scores) by the Spanish and *meztli* (moon) by the Aztecs (Milbrath 5)⁵. Each *veintena*

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⁴ The *tlatoani* was the ruler of an *altepetl*—a pre-Hispanic city-state—who would make decisions on behalf of the polity. The succession of the *tlatoani* varied; although most *tlatoque* were male descendants of the ruling royal family, others were elected to the position by a small elite body.

⁵ In Nahuatl, the word for "twenty days" is *cempohualihuitl*. This term is a combination of the words *cempohualli* (twenty)
was further divided into four weeks of five days (Smith 257). Since eighteen sets of twenty days only equaled 360 days, the year was completed with an intercalary five-day festival period called nemontemi (useless days). Not considered its own month, nemontemi was thought to be an unlucky time of inactivity, quiet, and fasting (Boone 17). Although scholars believe that the Aztecs were aware of the solar year actually being over 365 days—handled in the Gregorian calendar by leap years—it is unclear how this information was incorporated into the xiuhpohualli (Smith 257).

In contrast to the tonalpohualli which was mainly used on a local level, the xiuhpohualli was utilized by the polity for practical and religious purposes. Most importantly, the xiuhpohualli kept track of the seasons through eighteen veintena festivals that involved intricate public ceremonies (table 3) (Milbrath 19). Many of the veintena festivals honoured particular deities associated with the time of year each festival took place. Since the Aztecs believed that the gods desired “a certain proportion of life in return” (Burland and Forman 85) for having given them life, veintena ceremonies often required victims to impersonate the deities to whom they were to be sacrificed. Known as ixiptla, these impersonators became “infused with the divinity’s ‘essence’” and played important roles in many of the festivals (Elson and Smith 159). The xiuhpohualli calendar, therefore, was integral to Aztec ritual since it was closely linked with the seasons, the weather, and the peoples’ relationship with their deities.

and ilhuitl (day). Some scholars have suggested that the Mesoamerican base-twenty counting system inspired the twenty-day month.
Table 3: Veintena Festivals and Lords of the Night

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>18 Veintena Festivals + nemontemi</th>
<th>Gregorian Dates</th>
<th>Honoured Deities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Atlcahualo, Cuauhitlehua (Water is Abandoned)</td>
<td>24 Feb.–15 Mar.</td>
<td>Tlaloc, Chalchiuhtlicue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Tlacaxipehualiztli (Flaying of Men)</td>
<td>16 Mar.–4 Apr.</td>
<td>Xipe Totec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Tozoztonli (Little Perforation or Short Vigil)</td>
<td>5 Apr.–24 Apr.</td>
<td>Tlaloco, maize deities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Huei Tozoztli (Great Perforation or Long Vigil)</td>
<td>25 Apr.–14 May</td>
<td>Tezcatlipoca</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Toxcatl (Drought)</td>
<td>15 May–3 June</td>
<td>Tlaloc, Chalchiuhtlicue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Etzalcualitztli (Eating of Bean Porridge)</td>
<td>4 June–23 June</td>
<td>Huixtocihuatl, Xochipilli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Tecuilhuitontli (Small Festival of the Lords)</td>
<td>24 June–13 July</td>
<td>Xilonen, Cihuacoatl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Huei Tecuilhuitl (Great Festival of the Lords)</td>
<td>14 July–2 Aug.</td>
<td>Huitzilopochtli, Tezcatlipoca</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Miccaillhuitontli (Small Festival of the Dead)</td>
<td>3 Aug.–22 Aug.</td>
<td>Xiuhtecuhtli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Huei Miccaillhuitl (Great Festival of the Dead)</td>
<td>23 Aug.–11 Sept.</td>
<td>Teteoinnan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Ochpanitztli (Road Sweeping)</td>
<td>12 Sept.–1 Oct.</td>
<td>Xochiquetzal, rain deities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Huei Pachtli (Great Spanish Moss)</td>
<td>22 Oct.–10 Nov.</td>
<td>All deities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Quecholli (Macaw)</td>
<td>11 Nov.–30 Nov.</td>
<td>Xiuhtecuhtli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Panquetzalitztli (Raising of the Flags)</td>
<td>1 Dec.–20 Dec.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Tititl (Shrunken or Wrinkled Thing)</td>
<td>10 Jan.–29 Jan.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Izcalli (Sprout)</td>
<td>30 Jan.–18 Feb.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five-day nemontemi festival</td>
<td>19 Feb.–23 Feb.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PLVS VLTRA 6.1
The Calendar Round

Through the combination of the *tonalpohualli* and *xiuhpohualli* calendars, the largest cyclical calendar in Mesoamerica was created: the Calendar Round (Kirkhusmo Pharo 232). When the lunar year and solar year were directly compared, it took 18,980 days—approximately fifty-two years—for their dates to align (Milbrath 5). The Calendar Round was represented as a wheel of fifty-two years divided into thirteen year quarters, each represented by a “Year Bearer” associated with a cardinal direction: *Tochtli* (Rabbit) of the south, *Acatl* (Reed) of the east, *Tecpatl* (Flint) of the north, and *Calli* (House) of the west (Smith 257). Beginning on 1 *Tochtli* (Rabbit) and ending with 13 *Calli* (House), the Calendar Round alternated between the four cardinal directions for a total of thirteen cycles of four. The calendar marked the completion of both the *tonalpohualli* and *xiuhpohualli* cycles, ending when the four Year Bearers had each ruled for thirteen years (Kirkhusmo Pharo 234).

The Xiuhmolpilli (New Fire Ceremony)

The conclusion of the Calendar Round was celebrated by the *xiuhmolpilli* (year binding) or “New Fire Ceremony” which described in the *Codex Borbonicus*. The

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6 Seventy-three cycles were needed of the *tonalpohualli* and fifty-two cycles were needed of the *xiuhpohualli* to equal 18,980 days

7 The *Codex Borbonicus* was written by Aztec priests around the time of the Spanish conquest of Mexico. The codex is divided into three sections: the first concerns the *tonalpohualli*, the
xiiuhmolpilli was important to the Aztecs not only because it symbolized the termination of the old calendar, but because it inaugurated the new calendar (Kirkhusmo Pharo 234). In preparation for the ceremony, the tlatoani ordered a specific victim to be found. To qualify, the victims needed to be born of a woman pregnant during the previous Calendar Round and needed to have either “xiuitl” or “molpilli” in their name (244). According to Dominican friar Diego Durán, a four day period of darkness preceded the xiiuhmolpilli; all fires in houses and temples were extinguished (245). In addition, the streets were swept, rubbish was thrown away, and household statues of deities were destroyed or thrown into the water (Hassig 16). Pregnant women and children donned masks of maguey leaves and were locked up; the former feared they would turn into man-devouring beasts and the latter feared they would turn into mice (Carrasco and Sessions 62).

While the people were conducting these preparations, the religious specialists of Tenochtitlan, called the teonenemi (they walk like gods), began their procession to the hill of Huixachtecatl with the victim to be sacrificed. Dressed as deities of creation, the teonenemi checked to see if the constellation Pleiades, which the Aztecs called Tianquiztli (marketplace), had passed its zenith. The passing of Pleiades signalled to the teonenemi that ritual could be continued. In the words of Franciscan friar Bernardino de Sahagún, if the zenith had been passed, the teonenemi “knew that the movement of the heavens had not ceased and that the end of the world was not then” (Kirkhusmo Pharo 250). Using a fire drill—a stick spun in the hands—the teonenemi started a fire upon the chest of the victim. Once a fire had erupted, the victim’s chest was

second details the Calendar Round, and the third explains the xiiuhmolpilli and other rituals.
cut open and their heart was cast into the flames (Hassig 16). When people in town saw the fire, they lacerated their ears in auto-sacrifice, splattering their blood in the direction of the flames (Carrasco and Sessions 64). Throughout the following day, more victims were sacrificed. According to Franciscan missionary Toribio de Benavente Motolinia, the number of victims could be upwards of 400 (Elson and Smith 158).

Once the fire was drilled, it was brought throughout the empire, beginning at Tenochtitlan’s centre and making its way to the city’s periphery (Kirkhusmo Pharo 251). After being blessed with incense at the temple of Huitzilopochtli (Tenochtitlan’s main temple), the fire was brought to the house of the teonenemi, the tribal temple, and the calmecacs—schools for the sons of Aztec nobility. Lastly, the fire was transported by warriors to the houses and temples of the people throughout the empire (251). The xiuhmolpilli did not officially end until 81 days after the fire’s creation, during which war prisoners were sacrificed under the tlatoani’s supervision. For the Aztec people, the ceremony’s completion was signified by the renewal of clothing and household utensils (Hassig 16). In conjunction with the creation of the fire, a stone-carved firewood bundle of fifty-two sticks was entombed to represent the “termination of the old time cycle” (Kirkhusmo Pharo 244).

The Xiuhmolpilli and the Creation Story

One way of understanding the xiuhmolpilli is as a symbolic re-actualisation of the Aztec creation story (Kirkhusmo
In one version of the creation story, the deities are gathered in the ancient Mesoamerican city of Teotihuacan to debate who should sacrifice themselves to create the sun and the moon. According to Book VII of the Florentine Codex, the deities exclaimed, “Come hither, O gods! Who will carry the burden? Who will take it upon himself to be the sun, to bring the dawn?” (254). The deities Tecuciztecatl and Nanauatzin rose to the challenge; once they had done penance, fasted, sacrificed their own blood, and scattered incense, a fire called the teotexcalli was prepared. After four days, Nanauatzin gathered his courage, jumped into the teotexcalli, and became the sun. Tecuciztecatl followed behind to become the moon. Only after the other gods had sacrificed themselves did the Aztecs believe that the sun and moon were sent “on their paths by day and night respectively” (Townsend 121).

Like Tecuciztecatl and Nanauatzin in this version of the creation story, the teonenemi did penance, fasted, sacrificed their own blood, and scattered incense during the four-day liminal xiuhmolpilli period before the fire was created (Kirkhusmo Pharo 260). The darkness of the four-day period was comparable to the darkness of the world in the creation story, believed to have persisted until the teotexcalli was created (259). Parallels can be drawn between the sacrifice of the fire-drilled victim and the sacrifice of Tecuciztecatl and Nanauatzin, as both the victim and the gods were consumed by fire during the ritual. An explicit connection between the xiuhmolpilli and the creation story was the teonenemi’s attire. The religious specialists dressed as gods of creation during their procession to Huixachtectatl (259). By re-actualising the creation story, the xiuhmolpilli symbolically emulated the

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8 Since there was no unified religious system, there were many different versions of the creation story.
sacrifice of Tecuciztecatl and Nanauatzin. Aztec calendars were believed to have emerged when the sun and the moon were created; the xiuhmolpilli, therefore, had the power to reinstate time by ensuring the sun and moon’s continued existence (261).

Since the Aztecs thought that the xiuhmolpilli ensured cosmic order, failure to perform the ritual had catastrophic consequences. The Aztecs believed that there had already been four imperfect periods, called “Suns” (table 4), that had been created and destroyed over a time-span of 2,028 years: 4 Ocelotl (Jaguar), 4 Ehecatl (Wind), 4 Quiahuitl (Rain), and 4 Atl (Water) (Hassig 5).¹ The Suns’ names were indicative of the manner in which they had been terminated. 4 Ocelotl (Jaguar) concluded when the giants who walked the Earth were eaten by a jaguar. At the end of 4 Ehecatl (Wind) people transformed into human-like monkeys and the world was destroyed by hurricanes (Townsend 120). 4 Quiahuitl (Rain) was destroyed by fiery rain and the surviving people were changed into birds. Lastly, 4 Atl (Water) was destroyed by a great flood, the people transforming into fish due to the abundance of water. After 4 Atl (Water), the Aztecs believed the gods created a bonfire for a sacrifice, but all of the great gods refused to be the sacrificial victim (Hassig 5). Nanahuatl (Pustular-one), a lowly and humble god, volunteered himself, his sacrifice transforming him into the sun god Tonatiuh. After the other gods had given their own blood as auto-sacrifice, Tonatiuh rose in the east, marking the beginning of the fifth and current Sun, 4 Olin (Quake/Movement) (5). As implied by its name, the Aztecs believed that 4 Olin (Quake/Movement) was to be destroyed by earthquakes at the end of a Calendar Round

¹ The idea that multiple imperfect periods preceded the current period was widespread in Mesoamerica.
Unsure which Calendar Round would be their last, the Aztecs relied on the *xiuhmolpilli* to ensure the fifth Sun’s continuation.

Table 4: Five Suns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suns</th>
<th>Presiding Deity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Sun</td>
<td>Nahui Ocelotl (4 Jaguar)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Sun</td>
<td>Nahui Ehecatl (4 Wind)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Sun</td>
<td>Nahui Quiahuitl (4 Rain)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fouth Sun</td>
<td>Nahui Atl (4 Water)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifth Sun</td>
<td>Nahui Olin (4 Quake/Movement)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Calendars and State Power

As demonstrated above, the *tonalpohualli*, *xiuhpohualli*, and Calendar Round were integral to the functioning of Aztec society. Belief alone, however, was not enough to maintain such a complicated calendrical system. For the Aztecs, timekeeping was the responsibility of priests and the _Huey Tlatoani_ or “Great Speaker.” To become astronomers, priests and the _Huey Tlatoani_ underwent years of rigorous training, fasting, and privation (Carrasco and Sessions 102). Tasked with observing the stars from his palace roof at sunrise, midnight, and sunset, the _Huey Tlatoani_ needed intimate knowledge of the calendrical

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10 Every 260 days on 4 *Olin*, there was a feast celebrating _Tonatiuh_.

11 The last Aztec “Great Speaker” was Motecuhzoma II who ruled from 1502 to 1520. In addition to being ruler, he was fully trained as a priest.
system so he could make informed decisions about state affairs (102). While knowledge of the calendars was not esoteric—nobles and commoners alike understood their importance and how they functioned—actual teaching of the calendrical system was restricted to the calmecacs, elite schools whose attendees were either sons of nobility or those training to become priests (Hassig 8). By controlling the Aztec understanding of time, the priests and the Huey Tlatoani were invested with temporal authority. The Aztec calendrical system, therefore, reinforced state hierarchies by consolidating power over societal order at the top of the social ladder.

An example of the power of the priests and Huey Tlatoani over the calendrical system was the hypothesised “Calendar Reform.” Some early sources suggest that at one point, the xiuhmolpilli was celebrated on 1 Tochtli (Rabbit), not 2 Acatl (Reed). While the date of the reform is still unknown, scholars have suggested possible dates for the shift: 1194 to 1195, 1246 to 1247, 1350 to 1351, 1454 to 1455, and 1506 to 1507 (Kirkhusmo Pharo 286). Scholars have also theorized about possible reasons for reform. Some argue that the reform helped control the flow of tribute to Tenochtitlan by synchronizing the calendar systems throughout the Aztec state (Hassig 122). Others suggest that the xiuhmolpilli was moved to align with Huitzilopochtli’s birth date. One of the most common theories is that famine and drought in 1 Tochtli (Rabbit)—most likely in 1454 or 1506—encouraged the state to postpone the ceremony for practical purposes (85). Although scholars have not reached a consensus on why the reform took place, the decision to move the

12 It is possible that Motecuhzoma II was the tlatoani who sanctioned the Calendar Reform.
*xiuhmolpilli* demonstrates the power of the state authorities to manipulate the calendar at will.

The distribution of the fire during the *xiuhmolpilli* itself reflected the Aztec state’s religious, political, and social hierarchy (Kirkhusmo Pharo 299). The order of the fire’s distribution was the temple of Huitzilopochtli, the house of the *teonenemi*, the tribal temple, the *calmecacs*, the *telpochcalli* (houses of young men), the wards and neighbourhoods, and lastly, the houses of commoners (Elson and Smith 158). Clearly prioritizing those higher on the social stratum, the fire not only signified the continuation of time, but also the renewal of the social order.

In conjunction with renewing social order within the city, the ceremony also reinforced Tenochtitlan’s political authority over other Aztec polities (Kirkhusmo Pharo 301). Evidence suggests that the *xiuhmolpilli* dates back centuries; a stone relief, carved between 650 and 900 CE, was discovered in Xochicalco, Morelos with the image of fire drill and flames. The stone is evidence of the *xiuhmolpilli*’s antiquity—the fire drill is the iconographic symbol of the ritual. However, the historical transmission of the *xiuhmolpilli* from Xochicalco to Tenochtitlan is still largely unclear (Elson and Smith 169). Since two centuries separate the Xochicalco stone and the earliest Aztec writings about the ritual, some scholars argue that the Aztecs adopted the ceremony from the Toltecs, a civilization which flourished from the tenth to twelfth century (169). Lack of evidence, however, has led others to suggest that the *xiuhmolpilli* had been a widespread tradition in postclassic northern Mesoamerica dating back centuries.

If the *xiuhmolpilli* was a ritual found throughout Mesoamerica, why then was Tenochtitlan the only city in the Basin of Mexico to perform the ceremony by 1507?
Scholars believe the Aztecs were the people who gave the ritual its “full trappings of a cosmic imperial celebration” (Elson and Smith 171), such as the elaborate procession of the teonenemi to Huixachtecatl and the sacrifice of the fire-drilled victim. Through this pageantry, the Aztecs transformed one of Mesoamerica’s long-standing traditions into a major political event. By doing this, the Aztecs not only undermined the elites in other polities, but legitimized the power of their capital (171).

In addition to justifying structures of inequality within Tenochtitlan and the Aztec state, the xiuhmolpilli also demonstrated the power of the tlatoani. The fire’s first destination was the temple of Huitzilopochtli, the tlatoani’s major religious structure (Kirkhusmo Pharo 310). Approval had to be given by the tlatoani to continue the fire’s distribution; in the words of Motolinia, the “waiting Indians from many towns carried new fire to their temples. They did this after asking permission from the great chief of Mexico, the pontiff who was, as it were, their pope” (Elson and Smith 158). The tlatoani was responsible for supervising the sacrifice of the war heroes during the eighty-one days after the fire was drilled (Kirkhusmo Pharo 310). Most importantly, however, was what the ritual symbolized; if Pleiades successfully crossed its zenith on the evening of 2 Acatl (Reed), the people were able to assume that the tlatoani’s favourable relationship with the deities had been confirmed (329).

However, the tlatoani’s power was not only shown by the ritual—it was also reinforced by the Aztec’s understanding of time. At the end of the Calendar Round, the four “Year Bearers" were regarded as having completed their “burden of time.” This burden was associated with Aztec leadership, the tlatoani accepting the “burden or responsibility of society and world order” when he became ruler (Kirkhusmo Pharo 311). This idea
is present in Tlacaeelel’s eulogy of his brother, Motecuhzoma I. For Tlacaeelel, Motecuhzoma I “was like one who carries a load on his back for a time. He carries the burden of being lord of Mexico until the end of his days” (311). The calendrical system, therefore, played an important role in maintaining the supremacy of the Aztec ruler. Like he was told at his enthronement ceremony, a *tlatoani* was “no longer [seen] as merely human” (Carrasco and Sessions 135) by the people—he was the temporal embodiment of Tenochtitlan’s hegemonic power.

**Conclusion**

Through the exploration of the structure of and rituals surrounding the *tonalpohualli*, *xiuhpohualli*, Calendar Round, and *xiuhmolpilli*, the complexity of the Aztec’s calendrical system is revealed. Used to prognosticate the future, determine the best days for sacrifices and offerings, organize *veintena* festivals, honour the deities, and inaugurate the continuation of time itself, calendars were integral to the functioning of the Aztec state. By measuring and mastering time, the Aztecs were able to simultaneously glorify the authority of their *tlatoani*, legitimize the power of Tenochtitlan, reinforce social hierarchies, and create and maintain order.
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United Fruit Company: Causality and Aftermath of the 1944 Guatemalan Revolution

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Throughout modern history, the United States has critically been involved in international politics as one of the world’s largest superpowers. The twentieth century was a revolutionizing period for the United States as it attempted to maintain its dominance in the wake of sprouting rivalries with new superpowers. This desire was clearly evident in Guatemala as the United States government and the United Fruit Company, an American corporation with massive economic and political ties, were able to undermine and interfere with Guatemala’s revolutionary politics. The interference was economically and geopolitically driven as Central America evolved into a strategic region for the United States. In the end, to protect the United Fruit Company’s interests and the United States’ paranoia of communist movements in the Western Hemisphere, the CIA and the United States government organized a secret coup to overthrow Guatemala’s reformative government assuring their position in the region for decades to come.

Keywords: Guatemala; United Fruit Company; Árbenz; corruption; exploitation; overthrow; revolt
Throughout the early twentieth century, many of Central America’s nations struggled to distance themselves from a great deal of economic and political influence established by the United States. In attempts to further cement itself as a true world power, the United States capitalized on the vulnerability of Central America as the region struggled to develop and gain stability following the end of the Spanish colonial era. With the aid of corrupt dictators, influential American corporations such as the United Fruit Company\(^1\) entrenched themselves throughout Central American nations such as Guatemala. The region evolved into a key area interest for the United States government, both geopolitically and economically. But the American-oriented regime was jeopardized in October 1944 as Guatemala pushed for democratic independence following the overthrow of President Jorge Ubico. This essay will examine the causality of the October 1944 Revolution and the following ten years of turmoil that occurred as the United States desperately intervened in an attempt to retain its influence within Guatemala.

Although Jorge Ubico’s thirteen years of presidency from 1931-1944 were maintained by corruption and dictatorial rule, the build-up to the Guatemalan Revolution began much earlier (Schlesinger and Kinzer 25). Spanish colonialism left Guatemala burdened with poverty as it did not obtain the same resources that allowed other colonies to flourish. In

\(^1\) A United States owned tropical fruit corporation from 1899-1970. Mainly dealing in bananas, the United Fruit Company was infamous for political and economic exploitation throughout much of Latin America during the nineteenth century.
Shattered Hope, Piero Gleijeses’ describes Guatemala’s colonial position as, “lacking gold, sugar, and spices, Guatemala had been an impoverished and neglected colony throughout the three centuries of Spanish rule” (10). In the late nineteenth century, Guatemala’s future changed following the explosion of the coffee industry. Massive coffee estates were established and railways were built to the Atlantic to export the product. The railways became the first significant form of infrastructure in Guatemalan history, providing the promise of future Guatemalan exportation. As the world demand for coffee skyrocketed, Guatemala utilized its new exporting abilities, successfully establishing itself on a global economic scale. But the coffee industry quickly became lopsided as agrarian reforms were created by President Manuel Estrada Cabrera, a dictator who favoured the elitist owners of the coffee estates while disenfranchising the Indigenous farmer population in the process (Gleijeses 10).

Manuel Estrada Cabrera’s rule as Guatemala’s president from 1898-1920 was the first key period that contributed to the resentment that led to the 1944 Revolution. Estrada Cabrera facilitated the blueprint for major corporations to reap profits off his “agrarian reforms,” which allowed for the dispossession of Indigenous property and legalized forced Indigenous labour (Gleijeses 10). As railway infrastructure increased following the wealth of coffee companies, so did the global demand for bananas, which introduced the United Fruit Company to Guatemala. The United Fruit Company developed a close relationship with Guatemala’s leader, as the corporation capitalized on Estrada Cabrera’s discriminatory system. The relationship developed in a clientelistic fashion, and in 1904, Estrada Cabrera awarded United Fruit and its subsidiary, the International Railways
of Central America (IRCA), a ninety-nine-year concession to finish the construction of Guatemala’s main railway line from Guatemala City to the Atlantic shipping center of Puerto Barrios (Schlesinger and Kinzer 25). Gleijeses thus describes the corruption and discrimination of Estrada Cabrera’s presidency: “While the Indian tilled the land, the foreigner built the railroad” (10). Following the completion of the Puerto Barrios line, the United Fruit Company, through the IRCA, was able to monopolize Guatemalan exports, owning 887 miles of track, almost every mile in the entire country (May and Plaza 10-11). Historians Stephen Schlesinger and Stephen Kinzer describe the United Fruit Company’s early position within Guatemala as, “a state within a state...administering its only important Atlantic harbour and monopolizing its banana export” (12). Corruption within Estrada Cabrera’s government in the early 1900s provided the foundation for the United Fruit Company to become Guatemala’s dominating authority, which further contributed to the causality of the October 1944 Revolution.

In April 1920 Estrada Cabrera was ousted from office and declared “insane” by the National Assembly (Kit 32). Throughout the rest of the decade Guatemala tumultuously transitioned between three leaders, Carlos Herrera, José María Orellana, and Lázaro Chacón before the presidency of Jorge Ubico. Replacing Estrada Cabrera, Herrera was a successful businessman in the sugar industry. Herrera, who centered his election campaign around the promotion of workers unions, was unable to appease the rising discontent between the ruling elites and Guatemala’s peasant workers and growing student population. The new president was appalled by the backwardness of Estrada Cabrera’s 1904 concession with the United Fruit Company and refused to renew it the following year (Kit 50). Coinciding with his counterattack
against the corporation, economic conditions also worsened, which resulted in various rural labour demonstrations that questioned Herrera’s leadership. The unrest led to a major loss in faith for Herrera within the Guatemalan military as he was removed in a relatively non-violent coup and replaced by José María Orellana in 1921 (Kit 59-60). Orellana immediately “persecuted” the Guatemalan Unionist movement and following a compromised ratification of the 1904 concession, re-established business with the United Fruit Company (Dosal 103-106). However, Orellana mysteriously died in 1926 and was replaced by Lázaro Chacón. Following the stock market crash in 1929, the Guatemalan economy faced bankruptcy and unemployment swept across the nation (Gleijeses 11). The devastation resulted in a further dependency on the banana trade and heightened reliance upon the United Fruit Company and furthermore allowed it to swallow, and occupy massive plots of land, suppressing the majority peasant population. Having to combat an entire generation of corruption and feudal law, the Guatemalan government experienced very little progression throughout the 1920s, as the interests of American-owned corporations continued to dictate the country. With unemployment still riddling Guatemala in the early 1930s, the ruling elite, along with the United States Embassy, desired a bold leader to maintain order and suppress a potential communist revolt from the starving Guatemalan working class (Grieb 12). Jorge Ubico was recruited for his “efficient and cruel” reputation, making him an ideal candidate for the presidency. The United States Embassy gave him a “heavy endorsement” and in 1931, following a rigged election, Ubico was appointed president (Gleijeses 11). Rather than increasing taxes, Ubico balanced Guatemala’s national budget by cutting a variety of
government expenditures. The sudden reduction in national debt can largely be attested to Ubico’s racially divided regime, which relied on the mass enforcement of unpaid Indigenous labour (Gleijeses 11). Schlesinger and Kinzer argue Ubico’s 1931 triumph was “only a continuation of the suffocating politics of his predecessors” (29). Ubico’s rise resulted in a period of terror for Guatemala’s working class and its peasant Indigenous population as union strikes and other resistance movements were met with arrests, violence and murder. Ubico adamantly opposed Guatemala’s industrial development, citing fears that factories “spawned a proletarian from which the communists would emerge” (Gleijeses 18). His autocratic regime further promoted racism and division between the Indigenous peasant class and the ruling Ladino\(^2\) class. The racial divide is evident through the following quote: “[t]he aboriginal race was ‘cowardly, sad, fanatical and cruel...It was closer to beast than to man,’ lamented a young (Ladino) Guatemalan intellectual in 1927” (Gleijeses 12). The exploitation of Indigenous labour, combined with the promotion of Ubico’s discriminatory views toward Guatemala’s majority Indigenous population, acted as kindling to a fire that would explode in October 1944.

In addition to his brutal policies towards Guatemala’s Indigenous people, who made up two-thirds of the country’s population, Ubico also expressed admiration for Benito Mussolini and Adolf Hitler’s fascist regimes and believed that militarizing society would help

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\(^2\) A commonly used ethnic term in Guatemala to describe an individual of both Spanish and Indigenous descent. The racialized term is frequently used in Guatemalan society to signify a socio-economic hierarchy between people of mixed and full Indigenous descent.
Guatemala survive through the depression of the 1930s (Gleijeses 15; Schlesinger and Kinzer 25). Ubico implemented military conscription specifically aimed at Indigenous peasants, as he believed military service would enlighten the Indigenous population. Ubico’s ideology is displayed with the graphic quote: “They arrive rude and brutish, but when they leave, they are no longer like donkeys, they have good manners and are better equipped to face life” (Gleijeses 15). Support for Guatemala’s leader began to dwindle as he militarized all aspects of everyday Guatemalan life including the National Radio, Department of Roads, and secondary education (Gleijeses 15). Ubico’s megalomaniac attitude can best be described with another alarming quote: “I have no friends, but only domesticated animals...Be careful! I am a tiger, and you are monkeys” (Gleijeses 18). In addition to his own people, Ubico began to lose the support of the United States, who saw him as a “military careerist” who was “erratic and unreliable” (Schlesinger and Kinzer 25).

Throughout World War Two, Guatemala’s middle-class grew immensely as teachers, shop keepers, students, and skilled workers grew restless of Ubico’s regime. The rapid growth of the middle class stunned and frightened Guatemala’s small ruling elites (Schlesinger and Kinzer 26). Motivated by over four years of global conflict and Franklin D. Roosevelt’s outspoken ideology of “Four Freedoms”: freedom of speech and religion, freedom of want and freedom from fear (Schlesinger and Kinzer 26). Schlesinger and Kinzer describe the importance of Roosevelt’s new democratic ideology, “[i]t stirred a new generation of Guatemalans aware of the inequities in their own society, and made Roosevelt a hero in Guatemala” (Schlesinger and Kinzer 26). Along with Roosevelt’s “Four Freedoms,” Guatemala’s emerging bourgeoisie idolized his “New Deal” which promoted
progression and unionization (Schlesinger and Kinzer 26). Ironically, Guatemalans worshiped Roosevelt’s mandates on freedom but would later be toppled by the United States for attempting to gain their own democratic independence.

The foundation of the October 1944 Revolution had solidified. On 29 June 1944, led by María Chinchilla and a group of schoolteachers, Guatemala witnessed its largest protest in national history. Headed by “middle class idealists,” a mass congregation of protestors from all classes of urban Guatemalan society marched upon Guatemala City’s central square, demanding Ubico’s resignation. Ubico ordered cavalry attacks on the non-violent crowd, resulting in the deaths of Chinchilla and more than two hundred other protestors. Chinchilla instantly became a “national martyr” for Guatemala’s democratic movement. The uprising startled Ubico, as he resigned on 1 July 1944, and appointed Federico Ponce, a predominant army general, to office. (Schlesinger and Kinzer 27).

The assassination of Alejandro Córdova, Guatemala’s most recognized journalist, in early October 1944 guaranteed revolt. In the weeks prior to his murder, Córdova had published a series of anti-government articles criticizing the state of Guatemalan politics. All available information suggests the ordering of Córdova’s assassination stemmed directly from the Guatemalan government (Schlesinger and Kinzer 27). The revolution officially began on 20 October 1944, as military officers Francisco Arana and Jacobo Árbenz snuck back into Guatemala following an exile in El Salvador; they murdered superior officers and supplied revolutionary supporters with weapons. Fearing for his life, Ponce resigned on 22 October and Arana and Árbenz assumed power through a military junta. Arana and Árbenz’s
overthrow of Ponce was efficient in nature, costing less than one hundred lives (Schlesinger and Kinzer 31). The junta announced to hold a free election, promoting democracy and land reform, much to the fear of the United Fruit Company and the United States government.

Correctly predicting the imminent overthrow of Ponce, the opposition sought a stable leader to reverse the direction of Guatemalan politics. Juan José Arévalo was recruited in September 1944, returning from exile in Argentina. Arévalo, a professor, author, and admirer of Simón Bolívar and Abraham Lincoln, sought to achieve a similar structure to Roosevelt’s New Deal throughout Latin America (Schlesinger and Kinzer 30). The military junta supported Arévalo’s bid for the presidency and during the election process, they completely reorganized the government and the constitution by abolishing laws and exiling any employees with ties to Ubico’s former regime. Historian Mario Rosenthal depicts the rapid constitutional transformation that occurred: “In the months between 20 October 1944, and 15 March 1945, fewer days were spent in constructing the new system than years had been spent building the old” (Rosenthal 216). Guatemala’s new constitution was modelled after other democratic nations, as individual rights and the Jeffersonian principle of popular sovereignty were evident throughout the new doctrine. The structure of the new constitution allowed for a division of power, splitting authority between executive, legislative and judicial branches, emphasizing the new leadership’s commitment to political honesty and freedom (Schlesinger and Kinzer 33). The constitution also contained social promises including equal pay, the criminalization of racial discrimination, the banning of private monopolies and most importantly, the legalization to expropriate private properties that conflicted with land reforms (Schlesinger and Kinzer 33-34). Common
workers were also granted new rights including a maximum forty-hour workweek, guaranteed days off, paid maternity leaves, and the permission to unionize. By the time Juan José Arévalo was sworn into office on 15 March 1945, Arana, Árbenz and Toriello had provided Guatemala’s new leader with an opportunity for a fresh start (Schlesinger and Kinzer 34-35). It is important to place these revolutionary changes in the broader context of world history as many superpowers, the United States included, were preoccupied with the tail end of World War Two. The new constitution replaced foreign and corporate powers into the hands of the Guatemalan people, much to the dismay of the United Fruit Company. Driven by Arévalo and the new constitution, Guatemala aimed to change its reputation as a haven for American-backed pillaging.

Preaching modern liberalism with a “socialist bent,” Arévalo believed his government could be a positive influence in the lives of all Guatemalans (Schlesinger and Kinzer 32). Despite his beliefs, he was adamantly opposed to the values of communism; in fact, Arévalo was disturbed by the ideology (Inman 38). Although Arévalo’s philosophy was clearly understood and supported by over eighty-five percent of the Guatemalan population who had voted him into office, his values caused a significant amount of skepticism abroad, especially alarming the United States (Schlesinger and Kinzer 32). Arévalo viewed the agrarian situation as troublesome, he desired reform to provide opportunities to struggling farmers and to limit the influence of foreign corporations, such as the United Fruit Company. During his inaugural speech, Arévalo declared, “[n]ow we are going to begin a period of sympathy for the man who works in the fields, in the shops, on the military bases, in small businesses. We are going to make men equal to men”
(Schlesinger and Kinzer 34). Under his administration, Guatemala experienced growth in education as Indigenous literacy rates jumped from seventy-five to ninety-five percent. Censorship was also banned under the new constitution as the freedom of speech and press was permitted for the first time in Guatemalan history. Nearly 125 years after gaining its independence, Arévalo “confronted” the corrupt, elitist controlled Guatemalan system that had remained almost entirely unchanged (Schlesinger and Kinzer 37-38).

Arévalo’s rise came as tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union were increasing rapidly. The Cold War had begun and the United States struggled with a growing paranoia of communism. Coinciding with United Fruit’s economic interests and its close ties to the American government, the United States viewed Arévalo policies as communist, and began to ponder a series of interventions in attempts to reverse Guatemala’s reform (Immerman 635).

But before the United States could enact serious measures, discontent started to grow within the Guatemalan government, as a rivalry formed between Francisco Arana and Juan José Arévalo. Arana, a powerful conservative military colonel who had a large following from the wealthy Guatemalan population, still obtained the power of vetoing any of Arévalo’s decisions. Arévalo and his left-wing supporters suggested Árbenz run for the presidency in 1950, fearing that Arana might organize a coup. The two military leaders of the October Revolution of 1944 had become fierce rivals (Schlesinger and Kinzer 42-43). Guatemala’s ten-year revolutionary period took another dramatic turn on 18 July 1949, as Arana and Árbenz jostled for support during their campaigns. Following a brief visit to the small town of Amatitlan, Arana’s convoy was ambushed and he was murdered.
during a shootout. Rumoured to have ordered the assassination, Árbenz was left as the only legitimate candidate for the 1950 election despite a series of unsuccessful rebellions over the killing (Schlesinger and Kinzer 45). Árbenz became president in March 1951 following a victory in which he received sixty-five percent of the popular vote (Immerman 633).

Although Guatemala’s foundation for democracy had been set under Arévalo, Árbenz focused his attention on the troubling issue of land reform as it was still a significant problem in 1951. Seventy percent of Guatemala’s arable land was obtained by only 2.2 percent of landholders and moreover, nearly 120 million dollars of agricultural investment belonged to American corporations, mainly the United Fruit Company (Schlesinger and Kinzer 50). Árbenz introduced a powerful agrarian reform, known as Decree 900, in July 1952 which stated that, “all lands taken were to be paid for in twenty-five-year bonds issued by the government bearing a three percent interest rate. The valuation of the land was to be determined from its declared taxable worth as of May 1952” (54). The creation of Decree 900 alarmed large owners of private property, especially the United Fruit Company, as the corporation had greatly undervalued its land throughout the twentieth century to limit taxation (54).

Árbenz’ government enacted Decree 900, as it seized 209,842 acres of United Fruit’s land that had been left uncultivated. By 1953, nearly eighty-five percent of The United Fruit Company’s land remained uncultivated. The Guatemalan government, aware of the situation, extended a 627,572 dollar offer to United Fruit for the seized lands (Schlesinger and Kinzer 75-76). Historian Michelle Getchell describes the consequences of Árbenz’ Decree 900: “The Árbenz regime had implemented a
transformative agrarian program that threatened the power and profits of the United Fruit Company, a multinational corporation with so many arms that it was known in Central America as ‘El Pulpo’—the octopus” (74). Although the United Fruit Company was outraged at the offer, the formal complaint was not filed by the company itself, but rather by the United States State Department, whose top officials, including Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, had close ties with the corporation. Earlier in his career, Dulles has been a senior partner with Sullivan and Cromwell, a law firm that represented J. Henry Schroder Banking Corporation, the key financial adviser for the United Fruit Company’s subsidiary, the IRCA (Schlesinger and Kinzer 106). Concerned by a potential decline in its economic status, the United Fruit Company and a few of its Washington based shareholders, supported a smear campaign against Árbenz and his government. Through “influential lobbyists and talented publicists,” the corporation attempted to convince the United States government and the public that overthrowing Jacobo Árbenz was a necessary action to protect American freedom (Schlesinger and Kinzer 77). Regardless of sympathies for the United Fruit Company, nearly every United States official viewed Decree 900 as a possibility for “furthered extensions of Communist influence” (Gleijeses 228).

Fearing a potential disaster stemming from Decree 900, the United Fruit Company hired right-wing public relations extraordinaire, John Clements, in 1952. The United Fruit Company commissioned Clements to create a report on Guatemala, joining him with infamous publicist Edward Bernays as the driving lobbyists behind growing communist paranoia in Guatemala. Clements anonymously issued a 235-page study that was riddled with exaggerations on Soviet influence in Guatemala and
distributed the report to the United States Congress and another eight-hundred individuals labelled as “decision makers.” The report was so misguided that it was later described by former United Fruit Company employee Thomas McCann as, “such a total distortion it couldn’t even be copyrighted - because no one was willing to admit any share of responsibility for its authorship or publication” (McCann 49). The creation of the study was summarized by an anonymous observer as, “When you retained John Clements as your P.R. man, it was like renting a war machine.” The United Fruit Company awarded Clements 35,000 dollars for his services (Schlesinger and Kinzer 95).

Although United Fruit Company’s campaign was partially successful, the deciding factor for the ultimate American intervention was the continual progress of Guatemala’s political shift to the left and the possibility of the Central American nation becoming a “Soviet beachhead” (Holland 48). The United States government had growing concerns over Guatemala dating back to Ubico’s regime and was plotting a secret operation at the same time as the United Fruit campaign. In 1952, with the aid of the Central Intelligence Agency, President Harry Truman approved Operation Fortune without the knowledge of Dean Acheson, the United States Secretary of State. Headed by CIA director Walter Bedell Smith, Operation Fortune plotted the mass shipment of weapons aboard a United Fruit Company boat destined for Nicaragua. Upon arrival, Nicaraguan dictator Anastasio Somoza was to lead a secret invasion through southern Guatemala (Gleijeses 230). In the years prior, the United States had grown close with Somoza, tolerating his brutal, but devoutly anti-communist regime (Gleijeses 223). Operation Fortune was aborted following its discovery by
Acheson’s State Department, who convinced Truman to withdraw the mission (Schlesinger and Kinzer 102).

Unrest continued in March 1953, as two-hundred raiders seized Salama, a provincial capital close to Guatemala City. The revolt was crushed and the rebels were captured, revealing a 64,000 dollar sponsorship of the attack by the United Fruit Company (Schlesinger and Kinzer 103). John Foster Dulles, along with brother Allen Dulles, Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, further lobbied for a plan similar to Operation Fortune. With Truman’s presidency over, the Dulles brothers worked under Dwight Eisenhower. In the minds of the Dulles and other influential officials, “Árbenz’ policy proved his regime Communist in all but his name” (Schlesinger and Kinzer 105-106). Headed by the Dulles brothers, Operation Success was organized by the United States State Department and the CIA, which sought a puppet liberator for an organized, reattempted invasion of Guatemala. Walter Turnbull, executive of the United Fruit Company in 1953, along with two CIA agents, interviewed Manuel Ydígoras as a possible candidate, who would later state that, “they said I was a popular figure in Guatemala and they wanted to lend assistance to overthrow Árbenz” (Ydígoras and Rosenthal 49-50). The plans to utilize Ydígoras were abandoned, as the CIA turned to Colonel Castillo Armas, a Guatemalan military exile. Armas’ selection was strategic because his lack of political experience, in comparison to Ydígoras, made him a malleable candidate for the United Fruit Company and United States officials (Schlesinger and Kinzer 122).

Prior to the invasion during Operation Success, the CIA also devised a psychological attack on the Guatemalan population. Installing radio campaigns, the CIA further mongered fear across Guatemala, as well as prodding Árbenz’ army to abandon the president to join
the “Castillo Armas Liberation movement” (Schlesinger and Kinzer 167). When the CIA discovered that a massive Czechoslovakian weapons shipment had arrived in Puerto Barrios, the green light was given to Operation Success. Prior to the shipment of arms, the United States enacted a weapons embargo on Guatemala due to Árbenz’ toleration of a small, but rather non-influential Guatemalan Communist Party. Fearing the mounting pressure, Árbenz had ordered the weapons from Czechoslovakia as a “last resort” because Guatemala was unable to obtain the resources from any other nation. The shipment was an act of disparity rather than an allegiance with communism (Blasier 168-169). But in the eyes of the Dulles brothers, the shipment was viewed as an alarming discovery that suggested an imminent communist takeover throughout Central America (Schlesinger and Kinzer 151).

Backed by U.S. weapons aircraft, and 170 CIA trained troops, Castillo Armas trudged north from Honduras into Guatemalan territory on 18 June 1954 (Schlesinger and Kinzer 170-171). Armas’ small army remained rather insignificant but further radio broadcasts and propaganda dropped on Guatemala City by American pilots proved detrimental to the psyche of the nation (Schlesinger and Kinzer 167). In the waning days of his presidency, Árbenz issued a powerful statement:

Our only crime consisted of decreeing our own laws and applying them to all without exception. Our crime is having enacted an agrarian reform which affected the interests of the United Fruit Company. Our crime is wanting to have our own route to the Atlantic, our own electric power and our own docks and ports. Our crime is our patriotic wish to advance, to
progress, to win economic independence
to match our political independence. We
are condemned because we have given
our peasant population land and rights.
(Schlesinger and Kinzer 20)

Árbenz’s dreams of a reformatory Guatemala proved to be
too large. A dismal, deprived military combined with a
damaging psychological campaign to eliminate Árbenz
from office revealed that he was no match for an American
invasion. On 27 June 1954, Árbenz resigned as
Guatemala’s president, allowing for the installment of
Castillo Armas.

United States intervention undoubtedly played the
decisive role in the Guatemalan Revolution. The
surrounding factors of Operation Success and Guatemala’s
1954 coup are still debated. A balanced combination of
American communist fears and the economic importance
of the United Fruit Company were key contributors to
Guatemala’s struggle. A fragile state in the early twentieth
century, Guatemala’s democratic progress was halted in
1954 and would endure years of turmoil and tragedy
throughout the rest of the century. Regardless of
reasoning, the United States squashed Guatemala’s
revolutionary period of 1944-1954 through a secret
military coup, effectively maintaining its dominance in
Guatemala and the rest of the surrounding Central
American region.
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El turismo de ayahuasca y su sostenibilidad en relación a los pueblos indígenas de la Amazonía

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La ayahuasca es una bebida enteogénica que se ha consumido en América Latina durante milenios. Ha sido utilizada por los pueblos indígenas de los Andes y la Amazonía en la medicina de diagnóstico con fines espirituales. En los últimos años, se ha desarrollado el turismo de ayahuasca en América del Sur. Esto ha resultado en la aparición de numerosos albergues de ayahuasca, lo que ha traído algo de dinero a la economía local debido a la gran afluencia de turistas occidentales a la zona. Este artículo investigará cómo el reciente aumento de popularidad del enteógeno ha afectado a los indígenas y al medioambiente. También considerará los impactos a largo plazo y la sostenibilidad del turismo de ayahuasca.

Palabras claves: Ayahuasca; espiritual; turismo; Amazonía; indígena; cultura

La actitud internacional hacia alucinógenos varía mucho y el uso de ayahuasca es ilegal en muchos países occidentales (Labate y Feeney 157). Es legal en Perú y algunos otros países latinoamericanos, pero es ilegal en Canadá. Hoy, la ayahuasca generalmente es consumida por practicantes de religiones brasileñas de...

La ayahuasca es un té preparado a partir de la vid de Banisteriopsis caapi y Psychotria viridis (Labate y Feeney 155). En quechua, aya significa “espíritu, muerto”, y wasca significa “cuerda, soga.” Dimetiltriptamina (DMT) es la sustancia activa que causa alucinaciones auditivas y
visuales que duran cerca de seis horas (Dean 821). Los pueblos indígenas de América del Sur y la cuenca amazónica han usado ayahuasca como medicina espiritual durante aproximadamente dos mil años (Dean 821; Holman 91). Esta se considera una sustancia enteogénica, en lugar de una droga recreativa porque se toma para invocar la inspiración, generalmente de una clase espiritual, en prácticas religiosas o rituales. Tradicionalmente, los chamanes la usaban con fines de diagnóstico en medicina. En su artículo, Sotos describe cómo se consumía la ayahuasca “en ceremonias nocturnas por las que el curandero ayahuasquero consigue conectarse con el mundo espiritual y es en ese estado en el que recibe el poder de sus aliados espirituales para sanar a los pacientes que tiene alrededor” (“Guerra de Chamanes”). Normalmente también hay una evacuación conocida como “la purga,” que es beneficiosa porque elimina las toxinas y los parásitos (Anderson et al. 173).

Muchos occidentales lo buscan a ayahuasca como una panacea para muchas cosas, desde la depresión, ansiedad, y miedos hasta las fobias. Se utiliza para enfrentar problemas psicológicos y puede causar emociones extremas, como la felicidad, el miedo o incluso la iluminación (Anderson et al. 173). Ha habido un uso exitoso pero controversial en el tratamiento del trastorno de estrés postraumático (TEPT), el alcoholismo y la drogadicción. Sin embargo, los efectos medicinales beneficiosos de la ayahuasca disminuyen unas semanas después de la ingestión (Dean 832). Los efectos duraderos se logran mejor no solo en un solo viaje, sino a través de numerosos viajes durante un período de un año o más (Dean 821).

El uso de ayahuasca ha sido cuestionado debido a un aumento del turismo en América del Sur. Desde los finales del siglo XX, ha habido un aumento en el turismo
espiritual “como un fenómeno neocolonial situado en el contexto más amplio de la globalización económica y cultural” (Holman 92, mi traducción). Hubo un aumento de turistas en busca de medicina alternativa y también han surgido muchos albergues espirituales. Esto ha creado cierto resurgimiento en el interés por estas prácticas históricas, y también ha creado empleos e ingresos. Sin embargo, el turismo de ayahuasca podría amenazar la cultura de los pueblos indígenas en la Amazonía.

Muchos pueblos indígenas, como los pueblos de la región de Caquetá en Colombia, están en contra de la mercantilización de la medicina espiritual (Tupper 126). Consideran que esto es una apropiación cultural de una práctica sagrada (Tupper 126). Además, muchos albergues son administrados por occidentales y los fondos no regresan a la comunidad. Esta industria carece de regulación y su comercialización podría tener un alto impacto ecológico. La disminución del acceso a la planta puede hacer que en algún momento no esté disponible para los pueblos indígenas que dependen de ella para su espiritualidad (Fotiou, “The Globalization of Ayahuasca” 167).

Los turistas se ven afectados por el control de calidad, problemas de seguridad y preocupaciones médicas. Los curanderos indígenas en la Amazonía peruana también están preocupados por la salud y la seguridad de los turistas (Tupper 126). Hay una falta de control de calidad porque algunos chamanes pueden hacer afirmaciones falsas y puedan variar mucho en habilidad y conocimiento (Fotiou, “The Globalization of Ayahuasca” 166). Hay problemas de seguridad porque hay charlatanes y estafadores que han asaltado o robado a los participantes de la ceremonia cuando estaban bajo la influencia (Tupper 126). También, hay preocupaciones médicas porque la ayahuasca puede elevar la presión arterial y es peligrosa si
uno está tomando antidepresivos o tiene una afección cardíaca. Después de consumir ayahuasca, algunos turistas han sufrido intoxicaciones, interacciones de drogas o ataques de ansiedad (Verdú, “El misterioso poder de la ayahuasca”).

Los pueblos indígenas se ven afectados económicamente, espiritualmente y culturalmente. Económicamente, los occidentales se llevan trabajos, por ejemplo, el papel de chamán. Si bien esta industria ha enriquecido a algunas personas, estas comunidades aún están marginadas y siguen siendo algunas de las más pobres del mundo. Espiritualmente, el acceso a esta planta medicinal podría verse limitado porque su mayor uso podría disminuir el suministro y las autoridades podrían controlar o inhibir su disponibilidad. Esto significa que los indígenas podrían no tener acceso a su medicina. Culturalmente, ha habido apropiación no solo por los occidentales, sino también por otros pueblos indígenas que no practicaban antes (Fotiou, “The Globalization of Ayahuasca” 166). Han adoptado su uso, se han convertido en chamanes y han abierto albergues para vender a los turistas con el fin de ganar dinero. El turismo también ha hecho que los pueblos indígenas sean vulnerables hacia los turistas. Los peruanos están muy afectados por la usurpación y materialización de su cultura y, a medida que el turismo espiritual en esta región se desarrolle y gane popularidad, los impactos negativos también aumentarán, al igual que el número de personas afectadas (Holman 106).

Debido a este problema, ha habido un alto impacto ecológico en lugares como Perú. El sustento de la planta de B. caapi está amenazado, al igual que la vida de los animales que viven en la selva. En primer lugar, el turismo de ayahuasca está creando una gran demanda de la vid B. caapi, lo cual es preocupante porque la planta tarda años en madurar, por lo que esta práctica podría no ser
sostenible (Fotiou, “The Globalization of Ayahuasca” 167). El desarrollo de un sistema que registre los orígenes de las plantas que se utilizan en las ceremonias es vital para garantizar que haya un suministro sostenible (Fotiou, “The Globalization of Ayahuasca” 168). En segundo lugar, puede haber más demanda del comercio ilegal en el mercado negro debido al aumento del tráfico turístico en estas áreas. Braczkowski et al. descubrieron que hubo un aumento en la venta de partes ilegales de jaguar en áreas donde había más turistas de ayahuasca (3). Esto significa que también hay más caza de animales en peligro de extinción. Si no se toman medidas para proteger a estas plantas y animales vulnerables, pueden extinguirse.

Las posibles soluciones de lo que pudiera funcionar serían la concientización, la regulación y la preservación. Una mayor conciencia de cómo el turismo de ayahuasca les afecta a las personas locales y su economía puede ayudar a garantizar que el dinero regrese a la comunidad (Fotiou, “The Globalization of Ayahuasca” 169). Organizaciones, como el Centro Internacional de Educación, Investigación y Servicio Etnobotánico (ICEERS) recomiendan que el turista debe operar bajo una buena relación, respeto y reciprocidad con las comunidades indígenas (ICEERS 2). Puede hacerlo investigando a los chamanes y los centros espirituales para asegurarse de que trabajan de manera ética y respetuosa con los indígenas. Algunas consideraciones podrían ser que el albergue este registrado oficialmente, que su estado sea sin fines de lucro o que tenga un nivel de entrenamiento de emergencia acceptable. Hay sitios web, como Ayaadvisor.org o Retreat.guru donde los turistas pueden encontrar información sobre chamanes y albergues espirituales (Sotos, “Guerra de Chamanes”). Más regulación también ayudará a mantener las ganancias en la comunidad. Grupos de preservación cultural como la
Asociación de Onanyabo Médicos Ancestrales Shipibo, Conibo (Konibo), Xetebo (ASOMASHK) o la Unión de Médicos Indígenas Yageceros de la Amazonía Colombiana (UMIYAC) tienen como objetivo preservar la cultura tradicional de los grupos indígenas en la Amazonía (Shipibo Conibo Center).

La posible oposición al uso o la legalización de la ayahuasca son la deforestación y el desarrollo de la Amazonía, y la occidentalización de los pueblos indígenas también. La mayor parte del empleo para los hombres indígenas en el Perú está en proyectos de desarrollo que son perjudiciales para el medioambiente porque están destruyendo el Amazonas (Fotiou, “The Globalization of Ayahuasca” 169; Tupper 131). Esto afecta el uso de ayahuasca porque a medida que se destruye el Amazonas, las plantas requeridas en la preparación enteogénica se volverán más escasas y estarán en peligro. Qué es más, estos hombres son desplazados de sus comunidades por períodos que pueden durar meses (Fotiou, “The Globalization of Ayahuasca” 169) con el fin de participar en actividades de empleo como la agricultura, la tala o la industria petrolera (Tupper 131). Cuando la selva amazónica se pierde debido a la tala u otras actividades extractivistas, se pierden especies. Las plantas, los animales y los indígenas que viven en estas áreas están amenazados. Cuando esto sucede, los pueblos indígenas se vuelven más expuestos a las ideologías occidentales, lo que puede resultar en la pérdida de significado de sus tradiciones y prácticas sagradas (Holman 94-95).

En conclusión, la aparición del turismo de ayahuasca en América del Sur ha tenido impactos tanto positivos como negativos. Por un lado, ha traído ingresos a las comunidades marginadas, ha despertado el interés en las prácticas espirituales antiguas y puede proporcionar muchos beneficios para la salud que la medicina
occidental no puede ofrecer. Por otro lado, es perjudicial porque es una industria no regulada, y su uso puede tener un alto impacto ecológico y hay reclamos de apropiación y explotación cultural. El turismo de ayahuasca tiene el potencial de convertirse en una industria rentable que puede retribuir a la comunidad, pero para hacerlo debe haber concientización, regulación y preservación de los pueblos indígenas al comprometerse con un fuerte enfoque en las relaciones, el respeto y la reciprocidad.

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Many historical narratives of the Cuban Revolution highlight the role of women, centralizing their efforts on the frontlines. However, revisionist and feminist reevaluations of the Cuban war story provide new analyses surrounding the role of women in the revolution. Such reevaluations challenge historical claims that the interest to liberate women from the private sphere was woven into the “revolutionary culture,” given that definitions of said culture have come from predominantly male perspectives. While it is true that women did gain access to the public sphere, constructions of gender remained in large part just as rigid as they were prior to the revolution. 

Keywords: Cuban Revolution; Fidel Castro; women; gender roles; revolutionary

Historical narratives surrounding the Cuban Revolution often highlight the central role of women in the revolution, but the development of historical and feminist disciplines has allowed for a reevaluation of the Cuban war story, and for new analyses to arise surrounding the role of women in the revolution.
Women who were involved in the Cuban Revolution faced many challenges, and often through the deployment of tactical femininity, made significant contributions. Leaders of the revolution, namely Fidel Castro and Ernesto “Che” Guevara, claimed to be operating in the interest of liberating women from the private sphere to which they had been restricted. But in the fighting of the revolution and in the subsequent years this sentiment has proved to be superficial. While revolutionary leaders and organizations were highly effective in educating women and assisting them in entering the public sphere, their actions had little effect on the rigid, hegemonic constructions of womanhood that existed in Cuba prior to the revolution.

Shifts in the discipline of history since the 1960s have opened spaces for a more critical consideration of gender and culture in the revolution (Reiss 123). Since then, taking a more critical lens to the role of women in the Cuban Revolution has become increasingly common. This approach is beneficial to the discourses surrounding women’s involvement because it allows scholars to examine how and why narratives of the Cuban war story were constructed. Through this lens several critiques of historical narratives have emerged. For example, discussions surrounding the definition of “revolutionary culture” were conducted almost exclusively from a male perspective. The masculinization of the state’s cultural sphere during the first decade of the revolution, in contrast with other sectors in the public sphere where women were increasingly being included, is incongruent with the dominant rhetoric of equality (122). Another significant critique of the scholarship on the role of women in the revolution is that empirical data has been relied on too heavily. The emphasis placed on numbers and statistics is fallible because of incomplete data collection. The
counting of women creates a specific social grouping based on sexed identity, and statistical analysis cannot measure the changes, or lack of changes, in the social construction of gender roles that accompanied the revolution (118). While some case studies comparing subsequent representations of the mobilization of Cuban youths during the early revolutionary period suggest that subjective constructions of gender were altered significantly through the revolution, those arguments remain unconvincing because they only minimally acknowledge the persistence of gender norms within the public sphere (125). When studying the woman’s role in the Cuban Revolution it is worth noting that feminism in the 1950s was a significantly different concept than it is today. Feminism in the 1950s in Cuba encompassed many competing political agendas; including those of elite women who primarily sought female enfranchisement and working class women who sought the amelioration of labour conditions, in industries that were predominantly female. A significant trend in feminist theory at this time linked criticisms of gender inequalities to critiques of capitalism and American imperialism (Chase 443). It is also important to consider that gender roles in mid-twentieth century Cuba were extremely hegemonic. The analyses and discourses dominant today surrounding constructions of gender did not exist during the revolution.

When taking the required intersectional approach to studying the role of women in the Cuban Revolution, it is important to consider the factors of race and class. Ideally, age could also be a consideration, but there is little scholarship surrounding the question, “how did age influence women’s involvement in the revolution?” The influential factors of race and class can also be difficult to study, as early on the government declared all problems in
these areas solved. The influence of race, for example, on women’s involvement in the revolution has not been well documented, as after the Castro government declared racial equality, it “[became] subversive to speak or write about [race]” (Bayard de Volo 89). Under the premise that racism and racial discrimination no longer existed in Cuba, open discussions of race were suppressed, leaving much of the research in the field to be done in contemporary studies, and through inference. For example, recent studies have suggested that Afro-Cubans might not have been supportive of the anti-Batista movement, as in one sample of women rebels, eighty-five percent of the women were white (Bayard de Volo 90). Following the revolution, because class differences were no longer supposed to exist, class is also difficult to study. However, the potential influence of class is evident. For example, while all women were limited by rigid constructions of gender, these limitations are understood to have been even more rigid for rural poor and lower-class women. It is suggested that some upper-class women enjoyed a greater range of movement beyond the home, and were burdened with fewer gendered expectations. Political scientist Lorraine Bayard de Volo hypothesizes that middle and upper-class women experienced a greater sense of freedom from gender standards because they had the economic means to liberate themselves from both domestic duties and child rearing activities. Middle and upper-class families often hired poor women to perform domestic tasks, which in this case, freed the upper class women to participate in rebel activities, while leaving the lower-class women in the home (Bayard de Volo 94). Ultimately, because the influences of class, race, and age merited minimal discussion in Cuban society in the years following the revolution, they remain poorly documented. Taking an intersectional approach to studies of the revolution is
important, though, because it provides a more complete depiction of women’s role in the Cuban Revolution.¹

Historically, women in Cuba have been limited by strict gender roles; they have been expected to restrict their interests to domesticity and to remain subordinate to the men in their lives (Water 199). However, following the revolutionary government’s seizure of the presidency in 1959, one of Fidel Castro’s main platforms was to bring political and economic benefit to disadvantaged citizens of Cuba, including women. While women traditionally had higher literacy rates and elementary school attendance than men, the number of women who received a post-secondary education was less than half of that of men (Bayard de Volo, 90). Under the country's previous leader, Fulgencio Batista, women only made up seventeen percent of the Cuban labour force. When they did work they were in low status and low paying positions, while still being paid much less than their male counterparts. Only one-quarter of working women were employed as domestic servants, and one-sixth were working as professional teachers. Women were under the rule of their husbands, and almost completely confined to the roles of mothers and homemakers (Lamrani, 110).² Despite the fact that women in Cuba had obtained the right to vote in 1934, they remained isolated from political life, as it was a male dominated arena; this isolation led many women to realize that enfranchisement in this political system was not

¹ Absent from this analysis of women’s role in the Cuban revolution is any engagement with the roles of sex workers and nuns in the Cuban revolution.
² For women teaching was considered a respectable job to have, as it was in line with traditional conceptions of femininity in Cuba; the result was that many women worked as teachers.
sufficient to secure their liberation (Murray 62). Separate sphere ideology was extremely prevalent in pre-revolutionary Cuba; women ideally belonged to the private sphere, of the house and not in the public spheres of the workforce or politics (Bayard de Volo 89). There was heavy pressure on women to marry, as a woman without a man was considered “incomplete and in a state of prolonged childhood and dependency” (Bayard de Volo 89). Following the triumph of the revolution Castro and his government publicly made the empowerment of women one of its highest priorities; Castro stated that, “for society to advance, it’s also necessary that all possibilities be opened to women to develop their full potential,” but in the decades following the revolution that statement was not well reflected in changes to gender roles (Water 204).

There is a strong female revolutionary tradition in Latin America, and it was not lost on the women of Cuba. Many women wanted to support and defend the revolution, and they worked and volunteered wherever was needed (Jaquette 345). A study conducted by the University of Havana, in 1994, concluded that women rebels faced three significant challenges when getting involved in the revolution: their families frequently did not support them, rebel men rejected them, and they were frequently assigned low status work. Although some families were supportive of their daughters activism, many resisted their daughters’ participation in the revolution out of fear for their safety and honour, as well as because they believed that women did not belong in the public sphere of politics. Many women felt the weight of their family’s disapproval heavily when entering the revolution (Bayard de Volo 93).

Although the Cuban war story emphasizes its inclusion of women, there is ample evidence that men, both rebels and pro-Batista forces, rejected or discriminated against them. This rejection took place,
primarily, by redirecting women from activism, and continually undermining their authority. Furthermore, prior to the revolution, the strict division of labour marginalized Cuban women’s involvement in political activism by positioning marriage and activism as contradictory, which was a significant barrier given the pressure on women to marry (Bayard de Volo 93). Once in the revolution many rebel women were engaged in traditionally feminine work, such as sewing, but some upper-middle class women were given the opportunity to rise higher in the ranks, through fundraising and bookkeeping tasks. These tasks were seen to have more authority than low skill feminine tasks, or fighting on the ground, and gave the women some control over the finances of the revolution (120). The rhetoric surrounding women’s confinement to traditionally feminine roles was supported by private sphere ideology, and the belief that women were innocent and in need of protection. Furthermore, completion of more dangerous tasks was the best way to gain status and authority within the rebel troops, so that men would have wanted to keep women from having the opportunity to successfully complete these tasks and gain a higher status (94). While women’s engagement in the hyper-masculine domain of warfare potentially challenged gender inequalities, the emphasis placed on women’s deployment of femininity (to the exclusion of other contributions and experiences) in the rebel underground, upheld traditional gender relations (115).³

³ It is important to note that these critiques are not of the women who were involved with these tasks; all the work the women did was beneficial to revolutionary efforts and should not be discounted. Writing from a Caucasian feminist perspective, I am not trying to discount the remarkable work these women were
Despite all the barriers, women did play a significant part in the success of the Cuban Revolution. Their desire to participate led to many women getting involved in revolutionary efforts through buying and selling bonds, engaging in boycotts, relaying messages, monitoring police movements, distributing propaganda, and providing shelter, transportation or medical assistance (Chase 440). This desire to participate also led to the creation of an exclusively female platoon in 1958, the “Mariana Grajales,” who were to fight alongside men in the revolution, and demonstrate that women soldiers were just as talented, strong, and fierce as even the most famous male soldiers (Waters 203). At first, Castro faced opposition from male revolutionary soldiers regarding his decision to form the platoon, but women argued that they had been involved in more dangerous situations than many male soldiers, so he established it in spite of the opposition (Stout 307). The female platoon was created initially to protect the revolutionary headquarters when Castro and his soldiers were away, but within the Mariana Grajales battalion women more frequently served as personal staff to upper ranking officers, and occupied positions like nurses, seamstresses, and cooks, rather than being involved in combat. While it is estimated that by 1958, one-twentieth of the rebel army’s three thousand troops were women, the roles the women were expected to play reflected pre-existing female gender roles. When women were fighting alongside the men they were often mistrusted. Some women, as Che Guevara stated in 1968, doing. Feminism is, and needs to be all inclusive and intersectional, and I agree that the tasks were important. I posit that they were not disrupting traditional gender roles, and that women were operating well within gendered expectations and their traditional spheres of influence.
“caused a certain resentment among the men, since Cubans were not accustomed to taking orders from a woman” (Murray 63). Despite women’s desire to be more actively involved in the revolution, the roles they were given, even theoretically combative ones, upheld traditional gender roles rather than challenging them.

Along with collective efforts made by women, individual women played significant roles in the revolution. Two popular examples of Cuban revolutionary women are Celia Sanchez and Vilma Espin, although their policies were frequently not distinctly feminist. Celia Sanchez was Castro’s “inseparable companion and confidante” and helped organize the 26 July Movement and fought in the Sierra Maestra. Following the revolutionaries victory, she became Fidel’s second in command, as his administrative secretary and secretary to the Council of Ministers (Jaquette 346). While Sanchez’s secretarial positions are congruent with traditionally accepted jobs for women, it remains impressive that she obtained such influential positions. Another popular example of a female leader in the Cuban Revolution is Vilma Espin, who was involved in the emancipation of Cuban women for over fifty years. Like Sanchez, Espin played a distinct role in the 26 July Movement; she was one of the first women to participate in the guerilla movement. After the defeat of Batista, Espin dedicated her life to achieving gender equality in Cuba; she was a fundamental member of the Federación de Mujeres Cubanas (FMC), the chairperson of the National Commission for Prevention Social Attention, and led the Commission on Children, Youth, and Women’s Equality in the Cuban Parliament: initiatives dedicated to the liberation of Cuban women (Lamrani 111).

The concept of tactical femininity is useful when analyzing women’s role in the fighting of the Cuban
revolution. In this case gender was deployed as a tactic of war. For example, women rebels were given tasks because they would arouse less suspicion, or when the sacredness of pregnancy was enacted to protect, or draw attention away from rebel endeavours. A clear example of tactical femininity was women’s feigning pregnancy in order to divert suspicion, which was quite successful because “no one would touch the belly of a pregnant woman” (Lamrani 124). Women were frequently successful in using this tactic; for example, in 1956, only days after escaping a detention center, Celia Sánchez evaded authorities by cutting her hair, and dressing as a pregnant campesina during her travel to Santiago. Another example of successfully feigning pregnancy to avoid capture was when Angela González del Valle was riding in a car with several rebel men and carrying weapons in a fake pregnant belly. When authorities pulled the car over Angela instructed the driver, “tell them that you are taking me to the hospital, that I’m in labour and doing poorly. When they see this belly they’ll believe us,” and indeed the soldiers allowed them through the roadblock without being searched (Lamrani 111). Faking pregnancy proved an effective tactic, as Lorraine Bayard de Volo found no reports of authorities checking bellies. By playing into concepts of idealized femininity, and deploying traditional and sacred feminine practices, like pregnancy, women were able to participate in high stakes missions (Lamrani 125).

Tactical femininity is regularly emphasized in the Cuban war story, potentially because the virtues that underpin it are fundamentally in line with traditional Cuban constructions of gender and women’s virtue. Excluded from the war story, however, are narratives that challenge these constructions. For example, cases of sexual assault against rebel women are readily excluded
from popular narratives about the revolution. Bayard de Volo posits that these narratives have been deliberately excluded from the Cuban War Story because they did not match with the post-1958 versions of femininity, and feminine “purity.” While it is difficult to assess the prevalence of sexual assault, it has become accepted that sexual violence was used as a threat against women, to torture and punish them, and to instill fear. During the fighting of the Cuban Revolution the femininity of a woman whom authorities understood as an enemy was viewed differently, and she was subjected to different gendered standards than a woman who was viewed as “politically innocent.” Her femininity was commonly read as tainted and aggressive, which led to constructions as sexually volatile. Following this logic, she would be devoid of feminine honour, and men would no longer feel the need to protect her, so she became rapeable. Once suspected as rebels, violence against women more frequently took sexualized forms. Many women did not come forward, but those who did rarely had their stories widely shared in post 1958 Cuba, likely because of the stark contrast with the representations of the role and treatment of women in the Cuban war story.⁴

Following the fighting of the revolution, the Cuban state was left to fulfill its promises to augment the position of women in Cuban society. One organization that played a significant role in this task was the Federación de Mujeres Cubanas, or Federation of Cuban Women (FMC) (Lamrani 130). The FMC was created to bring women into the revolution, and the ideals were those of the revolution:

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⁴ The silence surrounding sexual assault against revolutionary women in the Cuban War Story is significant, and the issue, as well as reasons for its exclusion, merits further exploration.
to expand the healthcare system, build on the education system, conserve resources, build a national defense, and help get women into the workforce (Abbassi and Lutjens 214). Its stated purpose was to “prepare women educationally, politically, and socially to participate in the revolution” (Murray 64). The FMC was officially founded in 1960, but thousands of the women who were involved in the organization had already been active in their communities for over a year. The FMC took a feminine rather than feminist approach to obtaining women’s equality, which at once offered great promise and inevitable limitations (Reiss 116). They worked to recruit and train women with basic educations as teachers and to motivate parents to enroll their children in schools, as well as building schools and hospitals. The FMC began with the goal of motivating women to get involved outside of their homes, and help realize their potential, self-worth, and rights; they wanted women to get involved in the economic, political, cultural, and social life of Cuban society (Waters 97). Throughout the years following the revolution the FMC continued to organize women in pursuit of their goals of equality, and it is estimated that by 1989 the FMC had 3.4 million members. (Abbassi and Lutjens 214).

While the FMC was operating its educational projects with the goal of giving women the skills to enter the labour force, its areas of training mirrored the existing distribution of women in the workforce. Women received training in fields that were already traditionally dominated

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5 In the feminine versus feminist debate, feminine connotes that while still trying to ameliorate conditions for women, it does so within hegemonic constructions of gender. Feminist, however, pushes back on these constructions in order to achieve the desired equality.
by women, such as teaching, dress making, cooking, and healthcare. This specialization by sex that the FMC reinforced further assumptions that such tasks were “natural to women.” Sex based division of labour was well established in pre-revolutionary Cuban society, but the FMC’s training of women for jobs traditionally associated with female gender roles, instead of ones associated with male gender roles, further entrenched that division (Murray 66). According to law Cuban women and men were to receive equal pay for equal work, however, a discriminatory difference was evident in terms of the management and upper level positions to which women lacked access. Women occupied largely technical jobs and were infrequently given opportunities to advance. Various factors related to this issue included low wage incentives, high commitment levels, and prejudices that existed regarding women’s leadership capabilities and limitations in assuming responsibility when their lives were already overburdened with continuing education, work, and familial responsibilities. Women were seen as overburdened with domestic responsibilities, which clashed with their abilities to participate as social actors (Díaz Gonzales 141-146). The prevalence of traditional gender roles in the private sphere, as well as the inaccessibility of high level leadership positions hindered women’s empowerment greatly. The FMC was an undeniably positive factor for women in the Cuban revolution, and assisted greatly in the liberation of women from the private sphere; however, the organization failed truly to push back against traditional assumptions about the place of women in society

Following Castro’s seizure of power, one of the most obvious ways that women were involved in the revolution was through the literacy campaign, known as the “Year of Education.” In 1953 it was shown that twenty-
three percent of the Cuban population was illiterate, and much of the illiteracy was concentrated in the countryside. Between the government's approach, strong female leaders, organizations like the FMC, and individual people's desire to help their nation, huge progress was made in decreasing illiteracy rates, and promoting women’s equality (Herman 97). 1961, “The Year of Education,” as it was declared by Castro, was a huge success. The project was executed in three sections and relied upon the entire Cuban population. From January to April professional teachers worked to train literate volunteers and distributed the teaching materials that they had created. In April, literate youth were called upon to help the project. Approximately 100,000 youth, between the ages of eight and twenty-five stepped forward and became known as “brigadistas.” Forty percent of the brigadistas were between the ages eight and fourteen, forty-seven percent ranged from fifteen to nineteen, and only thirteen percent were older than nineteen; overall, fifty-two percent of the brigadistas were female. From April until September brigadistas and volunteer teachers lived and worked in communities, beginning in rural areas, then moving towards urban centers. In September, Castro called upon literate factory workers to aid in the elimination of the final pockets of illiteracy. On 22 December, Cuba was declared free of illiteracy. Out of the original 980,000 illiterate people, 707,000 were taught to both read and write; decreasing the illiteracy rate to only three percent of Cubans. The Year of Education was a wildly successful campaign, and women

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6 In urban centers, it is estimated that the illiteracy rate was around eleven percent, but in the countryside, it was much higher, around forty percent.
7 The volunteers primarily came from urban middle class families, as they had the highest literacy rates.
made up fifty-five percent of the newly literate (Herman 97).

In the decades following the Cuban Revolution were many endeavours to educate Cuban women. Another highly successful education program was run by the FMC: the Ana Betancourt School for Young Peasant Women. The Ana Betancourt school ran from 1961 until 1963 in Havana, and it is estimated that twenty thousand girls were educated. The program ran for six-month periods, and taught girls to read and write, cut and sew, and the foundations of nutrition and hygiene. Outside of the Ana Betancourt School career retraining options were provided for both men and women. Retraining was offered for jobs ranging from taxi drivers, bank clerks, and farmers, thus encouraging people, especially women, to move forward in their lives and take pride in their jobs. Outside of urban centers, women were also being educated throughout the rest of the country; classes provided instruction on how to read and write, in sewing, in emergency medical treatment and first aid (Waters 204). As Vilma Espin stated “[a] socialist society cannot allow double standards,” which was clear in the campaign to educate and train as many women as possible (Abbassi and Lutjens 217). The programs put in place by the FMC, in the early years of the revolution, allowed for women to pursue training in many different fields, effectively unsettling stereotypes that women belonged in the home. Thousands of women have become integrated into public life, and more continue to do so every year. While, in the years following the revolution, women became increasingly prominent in the workforce, sex-based division of labour remained clear. Despite rhetoric that gender divisions of labour no longer existed, women were frequently restricted to jobs associated with traditionally female tasks, and were excluded from management
positions. There was progress in this area however, as the FMC began to offer experimental courses in schools that teach children about constructed gender differences, their origins, and why, in order to increase the happiness of men and women, these constructions need to change (Diaz Gonzales 146).

In the words of Fidel Castro, “women were making a revolution within the revolution,” and as women continue fighting for their complete integration into society, the revolution continues (Waters 205). However, despite narratives that focus on the significant roles that women played in the fighting of the Cuban Revolution, the roles they were most frequently given aligned directly with traditional understandings of womanhood and femininity. Thus, constructions of gender following the fighting remained relatively undisturbed. Women in Cuba contributed much to the revolution, both in collective and individual efforts, all the while facing significant barriers. In their historical context early reforms in revolutionary Cuba were quite progressive; however, the opportunities that women were offered often followed gendered expectations of pre-revolutionary Cuba, and left constructions of gender largely uninterrupted.

Works Cited


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Until 11 September 1973, Chile was a strong democracy facing increasingly turbulent conditions which culminated with the overthrow of Salvador Allende’s left-wing Unidad Popular government by right-wing military dictator Augusto Pinochet. The factors leading to the coup d’état are controversial, including a widely held belief that it was engineered by the US President Richard Nixon, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, and the Central Intelligence Agency. This paper traces the domestic and international political, economic, and military conditions that led to the coup. It finds little evidence of direct US involvement in the coup and that Chilean civil-military relations and economic pressure from multinational corporations were greater factors than US government involvement. The third major factor was a series of strikes and other civil unrest in response to widespread economic hardship in Chile.

Keywords: Chile; Allende; Pinochet; United States; CIA; Kissinger; Nixon
The right-wing dictatorship of General Augusto Pinochet is one of the bloodiest periods in Chilean history. Coming to power in the Latin American state following a coup d'etat on 11 September 1973, it appeared to the world to have the signature of a covert intervention by the United States' Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) (Qureshi 145). This was later confirmed by the media leakage of an intelligence briefing revealing a budget to support activities which led to the toppling of Salvador Allende, the democratically elected Socialist leader whom the Chilean military had overthrown (Falcoff 199-202).

Three major issues contributed to Allende's downfall, each of which had domestic and international dimensions. The economic situation in Chile is the first issue. Chile slipped into economic crisis during the final two years of Allende's leadership. The second issue was popular resistance to Allende's Unidad Popular (UP) coalition government. The third, which deserves more attention than it has received in past literature regarding the coup, is the relationship between the civilian government and the Chilean military. This paper seeks to determine the degree to which the domestic and foreign elements contributed to Pinochet's rise to power. While the Nixon administration played a strong role in supporting anti-Allende forces in the years leading up to the 1973 coup, it was domestic economic, political, and military activities which led to Allende's fall from power.

Scholarly debates over whom to assign responsibility for the coup have been animated for decades. Mark Falcoff, a scholar for the conservative think tank American Enterprise Institute, absolves the CIA of responsibility with near totality, and places the blame squarely on Allende, for reckless Marxist policies of heavy government spending while cutting off foreign investment.
Edward Boorstein, a scholar who held government positions in both Fidel Castro's Cuba and Allende's Chile (1), writes Allende off as a victim of circumstance and coming under the crosshairs of American imperialism (ix-x). Several other scholars locate themselves somewhere between these two absolutist views. For example, historian Jonathan Haslam names the CIA as "the architect of the coup" but otherwise points to weaknesses in Chilean civil society which permitted the coup to occur (230). Historian Kristian Gustafson downplays the role of Washington in driving the coup (16-17). Finally, historian Lubna Z. Qureshi bypasses placing blame, and instead questions, "[w]hy did the foreign policy team of Nixon and [then Presidential Assistant to National Security Advisor Henry] Kissinger regard the Marxist [Allende] as a threat?" (xii) This range of conclusions demonstrates the controversial nature of the Allende administration.

Falcoff writes of Chile's democratic history: "Chile was the oldest and firmest democracy in Latin America, complete with a multiparty system and the fullest range of civic and political rights" (1). He echoes a common view of Chile prior to Pinochet's rise. This sentiment was shared by the Nixon administration, as shown in a pre-election document which states, "Chile is not a 'Banana Republic,' but a country with deeply ingrained democratic traditions" ("Foreign Relations of the United States" 126). However, an analysis of government-military relations reveals evidence that runs contrary to collective memory. Historian Albert L. Michaels provides a thorough study of the topic, covering the first three quarters of the twentieth century. He rejects the academic consensus that the Chilean military was non-political during this period. He points to two military coups (1), the 1924 overthrow of President Arturo Alessandri, and the 1932 overthrow of
Juan Esteban Montero (Boorstein 42-43). Boorstein, who also disputes this belief about the Chilean military, points to two more coups in 1925 where factions within the military overthrew the respective previous factions, plus a second coup in 1932 which re-established democracy until 1973 (42-43). Additionally, Michaels points to indirect interventions in the 1950s via memoranda, and periodic interventions to the public order including riot control and strike-breaking (1).

What Michaels excels at is investigating the composition and motivations of the military in terms of class. The Chilean military officers were largely lower middle class (4) and thus the military became a "protector" of middle-class interests. Michaels theorizes that the relative lack of military activity mid-century was the result of the entrenchment of middle-class institutions following the final coup. He writes, "the military's political participation remained 'permanent and latent' and its 'non-intervention' after 1933 only defined the 'effectiveness' with which it had achieved its political goals" (2). However, the civil-military relationship eroded over time as successive cuts to the military were made after 1930. Thirty-five years later, the portion of government expenditures allotted to the military was a quarter of what it had been (3-4).

Unrest in the military reached a peak in 1969, when the high-ranking General Roberto Viaux staged an insurrection at the Tacna barracks in Santiago. During the incident, which became known as "the Tacnazo," his troops demanded an end to the government's neglect of the military. The government response appeared to give in to Viaux's demands, though there was little substance to the concessions. Viaux was forced into retirement, and General René Schneider became the commander in chief (Michaels 8-9). The military developed both left-wing and
right-wing factions (8), with the latter gaining connections with the fascist paramilitary group *Patria y Libertad* (17). When the 1970 election came, Schneider announced the military would stand by the constitution regardless of the winner, but the retired Viaux refuted it. Nevertheless, according to Michaels, "Schneider's statement was probably helpful to the left as it encouraged those voters who might hesitate to vote for Allende because of the fear of a military coup" (9).

Falcoff gives a detailed analysis of the Chilean political landscape leading up to Allende's election, including the composition of the UP coalition. The UP consisted of six parties situated on various points on the political spectrum from centre to far left, including both Marxist and non-Marxist parties (26). The Socialists, having been established in Chile in the 1930s, were unaffiliated with the USSR (30), unlike the Communists, who had deep Soviet roots. However, Falcoff qualifies both parties as "truly Chilean" (27). Allende had been a long-time member of the Socialist party (31). The third party, the Radicals, were originally a liberal party representing middle-class interests, but after some factional conflict, had swung to the left by the time of the 1970 election (33-35). The *Movimiento Acción de Popular Unitario* (MAPU) splintered off from the Christian Democrats following their rule under the previous president, Eduardo Frei. MAPU wished to see corporate ownership spread across labour and management. The other two parties (*Acción Popular Independiente*, API and *Partido Social Demócrata*, PSD) were minor parties within the coalition (37-38).

The opposition parties were also significant. The first is the *Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria* (MIR), a party to the left of the UP, classically Marxist in that they saw violence as the only means by which to
establish a socialist state. They were known for their "Robin Hood" bank heists and their paramilitary training grounds (Falcoff 39). To the UP's right, there were the Christian Democrats, a liberal party concerned with ensuring basic civil rights. This was the party of then-President Eduardo Frei. The Chilean Constitution barred presidents from serving consecutive terms, so Frei could not run (Gustafson 106). The largest party in the new Congress, the Christian Democrats backed Allende's inauguration, expecting Allende to put forward constitutional amendments protecting the independence of the media, political parties, and the military. (Falcoff 41).

With Frei's term ending, Chile was to hold a presidential election on 4 September 1970. The Nixon administration feared an Allende/UP win. An intelligence briefing from 30 July 1970 notes that Allende "would almost certainly take harsh measures against US business interests in Chile and challenge US policies in the hemisphere. The hostility of Allende... is too deeply rooted to be easily changed." (“Foreign Relations of the United States” 121) However, early in the election the White House was confident that independent conservative candidate and former president Jorge Allesandri would win (Qureshi 48-49). When Allende's popularity became clear, there was a last-minute "spoiling campaign" to prevent his win, though it was timid and proved to be ineffective. The White House gave more attention to Allende only after his election, at which point they moved to prevent his inauguration, in two plans known as Track I and Track II (Gustafson 99-105).

The UP's win, at 36.6 percent versus Alessandri's 35.3 percent (Qureshi 50), was not a majority. This meant the Chilean Congress was required to vote on which party would most effectively form a government (Falcoff 41). The hope of Track I was to convince the Congress to vote
on Alessandri, who was expected to decline. This in turn would cause the Presidency to default temporarily to the President of the Congress. A new election would be held, in which Frei could run again. Nicknamed the "Rube Goldberg' Plan", Track I was a non-starter, as Frei refused to play along (Gustafson 106). Track II was more aggressive. Its goal was to support a domestic military coup. However, General Schneider was a strict Constitutionalist who opposed any military intervention. This view was not shared by other Chilean military leaders. The plan was to replace Schneider with Viaux, as Viaux still had a lot of supporters in the military (Gustafson 119-121). Schneider was to be spirited out of the country; twice the United States unsuccessfully tried to aid in his flight, and on a third attempt, he was accidentally shot and killed. Furthermore, the expected coup did not materialize following Schneider’s death. Following Schneider’s death, public opinion swung toward Allende, who was sworn in on 3 November 1970. Schneider was replaced with General Carlos Prats, another firm Constitutionalist (Gustafson, 129-130).

Though written as a defence of US covert actions, Falcoff's book, *Modern Chile, 1970-1989: A Critical History*, gives a comprehensive analysis of the Chilean economy both before and during Allende's term. Allende's first year was prosperous, buoyed by a foreign exchange reserve surplus inherited from Frei. The surplus was due to high American demand for Chilean copper for use in the Vietnam War. A Six Year Plan was created, and by 1971 the GDP grew at a rate of 7.7 percent. Unemployment and inflation rates fell. Wages grew by 35 percent. Infant mortality plunged after one of Allende's campaign promises, a daily free litre of milk for each baby, was fulfilled. This economic boom was not limited to the working class. Middle-class families benefited too.
Spending was at an all-time high, boosting the economy even further. This success was reflected back to the party in the April 1971 municipal elections, where UP made huge gains (57-60).

The economic tide turned the next year, due to several factors: GDP plateaued, the foreign exchange reserve dried up, inflation spiraled out of control, and price fixing caused a black-market boom. Allende's nationalization of the copper mining industry prompted a capital flight from foreign investors who were deterred by the UP’s “anti-business” policies (Falcoff 61-63). Furthermore, Chile lacked the funds to keep up with its foreign debt. In November 1971, Allende declared a "moratorium" on payments, most of which were owed to the United States or American investors (Davis 72). This effort was not enough to stabilize the economy, and by 1972 it reached a new low. This would have severe political consequences for Allende, including large strikes, mass resistance, and multiple attempted coups. These prompted him to turn to the military for support later that year. Allende’s economic policies can illuminate these events.

Perhaps the hardest hit by Allende's policies was the copper industry. Copper had been a highly successful export industry for Chile since the nineteenth century. Though the industry had been domestically run, easily-accessible reserves dried up in the 1870s. Then, in the first decade of the twentieth century, foreign companies came to extract copper from more difficult reserves as mining technology improved. By 1930, two American companies, Anaconda and Kennecott, were dominant in the industry (Davis 161-164), which remained the case until 1970, when Allende began the process of nationalization. Payments were to be limited to a fifteen percent profit of the value of the properties, which was set by the Chilean
government. The government's assessments were highly favourable to itself (Davis 181-183), using a law which required the Chilean government to be compensated for "excess profits." The US government deemed this law to be “punitive” (“Foreign Relations of the United States” 694-695). Kennecott and Anaconda sued the Chilean government in American courts, which soured the relationship between Chile and the mining companies from that point on (Falcoff 185). Nathaniel Davis, the US Ambassador to Chile after 1971, later wrote that "Kennecott tried to block the sale of Chilean copper all over the world” (79). Falcoff notes that while copper prices went down worldwide around the same time due to external forces, Chilean revenues fell disproportionately to the price change. He attributes this to global forces, particularly the end of the Vietnam War (187), though Davis' assessment of Kennecott’s impact is likely more accurate.

The UP also pursued land reform during Allende's term. Though there were attempts at land reforms by the previous two presidents, they were modest and did not reach the magnitudes promised (Falcoff 93-100). Allende went much further, leading the Junta Militar de Gobierno to note that near the start of Pinochet's régime the government owned nearly two thirds of all irrigated land in the country. Land was redistributed in response to worker-landlord disputes. In most cases, the land was divided up among the workers, though often land was simply expropriated by the government, sometimes without compensation to the landlords. Though Allende used every legal means possible to achieve such vast land reform, it is disputed whether he turned to extralegal means as well (Falcoff 102-103).

Finally, Allende addressed the military grievances which came to the fore after the Tacnazo revolt. However,
placating the military while creating a socialist state created challenges. Michaels notes:

Allende could win military support by raising the military budget. But the danger lay in the government's provoking of class conflicts, as the middle-class officers might be faced with serious peer group and family pressure to put an end to a regime that threatened the status and privileges of the classes with which officer corps identified. (11)

Military wage increases were disproportionate to the rest of Chileans. Allende extended benefits to officers to facilitate property ownership, travel and higher education, and upgraded the country’s military technology. The military budget increased six-fold by Allende's fall. Further, high-ranking officers were given jobs within the Allende administration. More symbolically, he regularly gave officers praise and recognition for their services, frequently doling out medals himself (Michaels 11-13). Meanwhile, the US Government saw the Chilean military as a potential ally against Allende and the USSR. As early as November 1970, the CIA considered strengthening ties by continuing to send technology, including F-5 fighter planes, to the military, in spite of growing restrictions on other funding to the Chilean government (“Foreign Relations of the United States” 467-468). This relationship would continue throughout Allende's term (Michaels 16).

The economic problems caused many people to turn against Allende. The first signs of resistance appeared in December 1971, when a procession of women paraded through Santiago, banging pots and pans, in an event known as the “March of the Empty Pots.” They were supported by the opposition parties, and possibly Patria y
Libertad, though when leftists harassed the marchers, the event turned into a riot that continued the next day. A state of emergency was declared, and the army stepped in to enforce a curfew on 2 December, with a regiment led by General Augusto Pinochet (Davis 47).

Meanwhile, in the United States, the Washington Post had gotten wind of the CIA's attempt at preventing Allende's presidency. A reporter, Jack Anderson, identified the International Telephone and Telegraph Company (ITT), which ran the communication lines in Chile, as an intermediary working with the CIA to disrupt Allende's election. He implicated the CIA chief William Broe and Ambassador Edward Korry, who was posted in Santiago. The news broke in March 1972, causing a public outcry. A Senate investigation was started, which became nicknamed the Church Committee, after its lead, Senator Frank Church (Gustafson 179-180). In fact, ITT, fearing nationalization of their property, had approached the CIA about funding an intervention early in the election, but the US Government declined to pursue the issue (“Foreign Relations of the United States” 880-881).

By 1972, the economy spiralled. Allende fired his economic minister, Pedro Vuskovic (Davis 79), though it wasn't nearly enough to stabilize the economy, prompting widespread anger. In mid-August, the cost of living rose, causing further upset. On 17 August a grocery store owner died after his protest was interrupted by police in the far southern city of Punta Areas. His death caused a nationwide merchants' strike, which led to violence in the capital. The government responded by declaring a state of emergency. The violence continued intermittently well into the spring (Davis 108-109). Further strikes broke out, and by late September, the US Government had begun funding strikers (“Foreign Relations of the United States” 823-824).
On 9 October, a national strike of truck-drivers began that lasted the rest of the month (Davis 109-111). During that time the strike grew to include several more sectors of the economy (Michaels 19). On the 31st, the entire cabinet resigned (Davis 111), and its replacement, for the first time since 1932, included the military. Three positions were given to top military officers. The Vice Presidency and Ministry of the Interior went to General Prats. Michaels argues this was the moment that condemned Allende: “[t]he military's entrance into politics angered the extreme left who believed that the soldiers were trying to slow down social change, and the right who accused the military men of betraying their professional obligations by supporting the government” (19-20). A number of military men joined the Ministry of Economy in January of the following year (Michaels 20). Furthermore, the government passed a law permitting the military to search households for weapons, the Ley de Control de Armas, which the right-wing military factions would take advantage of a year later (Michaels 20-21).

Chile held congressional elections on 4 March 1973, which temporarily calmed tensions. The right-wing Partido Nacional hoped to achieve a two-thirds majority in order to impeach Allende. The election was mostly non-violent, especially after Prats warned each party to "control their militants" (Davis 137-139). The opposition parties banded together to form a coalition, hoping to avoid vote splitting. They received fifty-five percent of the vote, far short of what was needed to achieve their two-thirds majority. In fact, the UP made gains of eight seats across both houses (Davis 140). Ambassador Davis' analysis of the election suggests that the election was mostly free and fair (Davis 142-144).

The opposition lost hope for an economic recovery. Resistance to the Allende government started
again. Michaels points to rioting and violence beginning by May, but by then factions within the military were also protesting. General Prats was slowly losing control of the Chilean Armed Forces. By June, non-commissioned officers were striking. Retired generals accused Allende of acting unconstitutionally. Then, on 24 June 1973, a faction of the army with ties to Patria y Libertad staged a coup in front of the Moneda, the National Palace (Michaels 20-21). This event became known as the “Tancazo” (Davis 171). Prats successfully quelled the soldiers (Michaels 21), but it was clear that the conflict had entered a new, unstable phase.

Unrest only grew afterward. Several incidents of sabotage and terrorism broke out in July, leading to a second military cabinet. More strikes broke out, including the truckers again on 26 July. At this point, disaffected military officers began cooperating with opposition parties to plan a coup d'état. Taking advantage of the Ley de Control de Armas, the military seized weapons from organizations and unions who supported Allende. They also purged leftist officers (Michaels 22).

By early September, the only real barrier to a coup was General Prats, one of the last remaining top-ranking Constitutionalists, and as the Commander in Chief, the most powerful. In mid-August 1973, the wives of military officers staged a protest outside Prats' home. Six were married to top generals. The event ended with violence. Prats resigned on 22 August, blaming himself for the schism within the military. In a fatal move, Prats recommended Allende appoint General Pinochet as his successor, having seen no evidence that Pinochet might oppose the government (Michaels 23-24). Neither had the US Government—the CIA believed Pinochet to be a staunch Constitutionalist as late as 13 August, as they expressed no interest in pushing the military at the time.
Nathaniel Davis provides a detailed account of the last few weeks of Allende's presidency, based on documents revealed following the coup. After a final cabinet shuffle on 28 August (200-201), the military held meetings all day, which was revealed later to be when they planned how Chile would be run after the coup (203). The trucker's strike continued into September. Allende devalued the escudo forty percent on 3 September (206-207). By the 5th, 125,000 grocery store owners across Chile joined the strike (211). On the 6th, Allende reported that "there was enough flour in stock for only three or four days" (214). The next day, right-wing individuals committed an act of sabotage on Chile's communication system, cutting off Santiago from the southern part of the country (216). The day before the coup, strikes were so widespread that nearly everything was closed. At the Defence Ministry building, a large crowd of women demanded the military take over the government (222-223).

News of the coup reached President Nixon around 12:30 p.m. on 11 September, the day of the coup. That morning at 6:30 a.m., according to Henry Kissinger, "the Chilean Armed Forces and the National Police launched joint operations against the Government of President Allende of Chile... President Allende arrived at the Presidential Palace at 0730... all telecommunications between Santiago and the outside world have been interrupted" ("Foreign Relations of the United States" 896). President Salvador Allende died in the Palace that morning, though it is unknown whether it was by suicide or whether he was killed (Davis 277-278).
While there is no doubt that the US government provided support and funding to opposition elements, there is no evidence of a CIA orchestration of the coup. Until the last minute, US officials believed Pinochet would not override the constitution. The coup itself was planned, plotted, and carried out entirely by Chilean military officers. The economic and social conditions in Chile created an untenable situation, making a coup d'état probable. The key areas in which the US Government was involved were in funding strikers and providing equipment to the Chilean military, though in the second case, there was no change in the level of support provided before Allende's rise to power (“Foreign Relations of the United States” 470-485). US funding of opposition actors was crucial for keeping pressure on both the civilian government and the military leaders, but at best it accelerated the processes leading to the coup.

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En el desierto de Atacama: El valor natural y espiritual del agua en conflicto con su valor comercial

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El Desierto de Atacama en el norte de Chile es una región ecológicamente sensible donde los pueblos agricultores aymaras y atacameños han vivido en un equilibrio ecológico desde los tiempos ancestrales. El descubrimiento de grandes cantidades de agua subterránea convirtió el desierto en una extensa zona minera donde la explotación de este recurso sigue. Dicha explotación va en contra del concepto de Buen Vivir, una perspectiva indígena latinoamericana que reconoce tanto el valor material del agua como su valor espiritual. El presente ensayo busca explorar los diferentes valores que las entidades gubernamentales, las mineras y los pueblos indígenas atribuyen a este recurso.

Palabras claves: Atacama; Chile; Buen Vivir; valor; agua; minería; indígena; naturaleza

Introducción

El desierto de Atacama en el norte de Chile es una región ecológicamente sensible donde siempre ha existido una escasez de aguas superficiales. Este recurso no solo es el sustento de todas las formas de vida en la tierra, sino además un recurso extractivo para
diferentes usos industriales. Esta zona es conocida por sus yacimientos ricos en recursos minerales como cobre, oro, plata, hierro y litio. Pero el descubrimiento de cantidades grandes de agua subterránea en los años sesenta convirtió este sensible paisaje desértico en una extensa zona minera. Los pueblos aymaras y atacameños que han poblado la región durante siglos antes de la colonización han sufrido un impacto negativo debido a las actividades comerciales que llevan décadas destruyendo el delicado equilibrio entre las aguas superficiales y subterráneas en la zona.

En Chile, la privatización del agua, así como la separación de los derechos de acceso al agua y de los títulos de propiedad de la tierra, han permitido que la explotación de este recurso continúe hasta la actualidad (Babidge, “Contested Value”; Madaleno). Esto va en contra del concepto de Buen Vivir, el cual es una perspectiva indígena latinoamericana que valora igualmente todas las partes de la naturaleza (Gudynas 441), y reconoce tanto el valor material como el valor espiritual del agua, originando conflictos continuos entre los pueblos indígenas, el gobierno y las empresas mineras de la región (Babidge, “Sustaining Ignorance”; Madaleno). En este ensayo, se explorarán las diferencias del valor que le atribuyen las mineras, el gobierno y los pueblos indígenas a este recurso.

**La comercialización del agua**

El desierto de Atacama es un altiplano, ubicado al oeste de los Andes en el norte de Chile, y posiblemente “el lugar más seco en la Tierra” (Salar de Atacama, Chile). A pesar de que la región recibe muy poca precipitación, el agua es vital para el sustento de su ecosistema único. Dentro de este territorio árido, las salinas del Salar de Atacama y del
Salar de Punta Negra están situadas en el territorio del pueblo atacameño (Babidge, “Sustaining Ignorance” 83), y son ejemplos de cuencas “cerradas de forma hidrológica, es decir, subterráneas” (Babidge, “Contested Value” 90). En este ecosistema, el agua superficial es muy escasa. Se presenta en forma de nieve en las cimas de las cordilleras, de donde el agua fluye bajo la tierra, acumulándose en acuíferos, pasturas saladas y estanques de agua dulce (Babidge, “Sustaining Ignorance” 83). A finales de los años sesenta, el descubrimiento de grandes cantidades de agua subterránea en la cuenca del Salar de Atacama hizo posibles actividades mineras a gran escala. La industria minera utiliza grandes cantidades de agua en el proceso generado en la extracción asimismo para reducción del polvo y para el uso cotidiano de los miles de personas que trabajan en esos sitios (Babidge, “Contested Value” 88). La gente atacameña, por otro lado, dirige agua desde fuentes en los cerros de la cordillera hacia sistemas de irrigación para crear áreas agrícolas y pastorales (Babidge, “Sustaining Ignorance” 84).

El territorio ancestral de los aymaras en Tarapacá es otra región en el desierto de Atacama donde los pueblos indígenas han vivido en un equilibrio ecológico estable practicando la agricultura. Las prácticas ancestrales lidiaban bien con la sequía, utilizando terrazas inclinadas, canales de irrigación, suelos mejorados por ellos mismos y “la creación de microclimas en las alturas de los Andes” (Madaleno 195). A pesar de lo anterior, a partir de la colonización española el objetivo principal ha sido maximizar la industria minera en lugar de la agricultura de subsistencia (195). No obstante, las leyes de propiedad de la tierra y el Código de Agua, implementados por el régimen de Pinochet, tuvieron el mayor impacto en los ecosistemas áridos, como en el desierto de Atacama (204).
En el proceso de realizar cambios hacia modelos neoliberales, el gobierno impuso el concepto de propiedad privada, “ignorando las prácticas comunales tradicionales...[de las] tierras ancestrales aymaras” (204). Por ello, la creación de títulos individuales de propiedad era un concepto desconocido para las comunidades indígenas. Así que su capacidad de zanjar a tiempo disputas nuevas y extrañas, resultó en “una especie informal de tenencia de tierra” que favorecía al Estado (Madaleno 204).

Además, el Código de Agua “separó el agua de la propiedad de la tierra” (204) y eso generó “un mercado libre para el agua y un nuevo modelo neoliberal para la economía del país” (Babidge, “Contested Value” 88). A través de este código, individuos y empresas recibieron derechos para extraer agua a perpetuidad (Babidge, “Sustaining Ignorance” 83). Aunque muchos de los granjeros aymaras eran propietarios de sus tierras, las empresas mineras recibieron concesiones que les concedieron un acceso libre a las aguas superficiales y subterráneas en las tierras incluidas dentro de dichas concesiones (Madaleno 201). Las nuevas leyes no solo alteraron lealtades comunales ancestrales, sino también la forma en que la gente interactuaba con el ecosistema y los ciclos de agua (204).

**La cosmovisión indígena de Buen Vivir**

En contraste con el concepto del desarrollo neoliberal, en el que el individuo tiene libertad democrática y derechos basados en el mercado, el concepto indígena de Buen Vivir propone que el bienestar y la buena vida solo se pueden lograr dentro de una comunidad, lo que, en un sentido extendido, incluye la naturaleza (Gudynas 441). El
sociólogo aymara, Simón Yampara, explica que poseer una propiedad y el consumismo son componentes claves de las sociedades capitalistas (444). En contraparte, la cosmovisión indígena busca un “equilibrio armonioso entre los componentes materiales y espirituales” de toda comunidad, lo que incluye a la vez componentes sociales y ecológicos (444).

Debido a que existen diferentes maneras de atribuir valor, “como el estético, cultural…ambiental [y] espiritual” (445), los seres humanos no son los únicos que poseen este atributo. Asimismo, entidades no humanas de la naturaleza, como plantas, animales, tierra, agua y ecosistemas también lo tienen (445). De este modo, “el concepto de ciudadanía se extiende hasta incluir esos otros actores dentro del marco ambiental” (445). Dentro de aquella idea, los atacameños consideran “al agua un ser” (Babidge, “Contested Value” 92). Para reconocer a este ser, la gente participa en rituales comunales en los lugares donde el agua aparece en la superficie en forma de manantiales, alimentados de acuíferos profundos. Uno de estos rituales consiste en la limpieza anual de los canales de irrigación en los alrededores del Salar de Atacama. Mientras hombres y mujeres trabajan juntos, hacen pequeñas ofrendas de hoja de coca y licor a la Pachamama (93). Cuando ellos llegan a la fuente más alta, el manantial de agua del pueblo, los representantes de la comunidad llevan a cabo una ceremonia de cierre, al dedicar canciones a los diversos manantiales y cimas de las montañas (93).

Otro ritual atacameño es el pago. Para esto se hace un hoyo en la tierra, representando una boca, dentro del cual ponen una ofrenda a la Pachamama (93). De este modo, honran los cerros y los manantiales, pidiéndole a la Pachamama que ella les recuerde a los pobladores, que estos han trabajado duro, para que “provea lluvia abundante y agua de las fuentes, y protección de la vida...
humana” (93). En la cosmovisión atacameña es “moralmente necesario” que la gente haga el trabajo y los rituales comunalmente (93). Ya que la naturaleza es un “sujeto,” los seres humanos no son los únicos que tienen valor (Gudynas 445), y el agua, siendo la que tiene el poder de otorgar o negar la vida, es respetada y valorada.

**Impactos negativos provocados por la explotación del agua**

Las actividades extractivas tienen un valor comercial para el gobierno y para las mineras. Con ello, el potencial económico de los recursos naturales, incluyendo el del agua, supera el valor de un ecosistema sano y su importancia agrícola y pastoral para las comunidades indígenas. De hecho, en la zona se han registrado diferentes impactos negativos, a causa de la explotación de este recurso. En la cuenca del río Loa, granjeros aymaras solían irrigar unas 1500 hectáreas de alfalfa, lo que “alimentaba…2000 animales, específicamente llamas y ovejas” (Madaleno 203). Además, cultivaban maíz, trigo y papas, entre otros, usando técnicas agrícolas ancestrales muy efectivas. Hoy en día, la región ha quedado “severamente despoblada” debido a las actividades mineras que han dañado el flujo del agua subterránea y superficial (203). En las cuencas cerradas de los Andes, la nieve se derrite en las cimas de la montaña y alimenta las fuentes registradas de los pueblos atacameños. El agua de estas fuentes se usa para la irrigación de zonas pastorales. El Salar de Punta Negra, donde los atacameños ejercían sus prácticas, ahora está seco debido a la explotación de agua por la minería. Las pasturas de pantano se secaron, y la zona pastoral de los atacameños se perdió, junto con el
hábitat importante de reproducción de los flamencos andinos (Babidge, “Contested Value” 90).

Las investigaciones muestran que la explotación de agua subterránea en el desierto “ha agravado la disparidad social que existía con anterioridad” (Babidge, “Sustaining Ignorance” 84). Además, algunos atacameños opinan que “el individualismo de la vida minera ha fragmentado la unidad social” de sus comunidades (87). Esta región andina ha resultado dañada por la explotación de sus aguas, y las comunidades indígenas anticipan más impactos negativos en sus tierras en el futuro. Más aún, el agua subterránea se mueve de un modo aún desconocido, a una velocidad impredecible, rellenando los acuíferos o apareciendo en la superficie. Esta complejidad de la dinámica de las aguas ha complicado la comprensión del frágil ecosistema (96). Aunque hasta el momento las concesiones de agua otorgadas a las mineras no se pueden impugnar, las comunidades indígenas han resistido con éxito nuevas solicitudes de concesión de aguas en sus territorios (Babidge, “Contested Value” 90).

**Conclusión**

En el contexto de las prácticas neoliberales, la actual disputa sobre el valor del agua en el desierto de Atacama, no sólo radica en la diferencia de intereses que se tienen sobre este recurso natural, sino también en el conflicto que existe entre los principios opuestos de las partes involucradas. Mientras los gobiernos occidentales continúen legalizando políticas que permiten la explotación y la mercantilización de la naturaleza, el valor comercial del agua seguirá estando en conflicto con su valor natural y espiritual. Los grupos ambientalistas trabajan junto con los pueblos indígenas, para frenar
solicitudes de concesiones de agua en las tierras indígenas. Mientras que la cosmovisión indígena critica los modelos de desarrollo que separan a la naturaleza de la sociedad, también ofrece opciones alternativas mediante las cuales las perspectivas de diferentes ontologías se pueden “coincidir e interactuar” (Gudynas 447). La cosmovisión aymara no propone el regresar a las prácticas de agricultura precolombinas. Lo que sí hace, es regresar a una relación de respeto y reverencia para vivir dentro de la naturaleza, fuente de toda vida en la tierra. Así, el Buen Vivir es un punto de partida, una manera de reconectar el bienestar de la naturaleza con el bienestar de la gente. Más investigaciones son imprescindibles para explorar formas en las que la cosmovisión aymara del Buen Vivir se pueda incorporar en la creación de políticas chilenas para regular y proteger este valioso recurso, el agua.

Obras citadas


