

FACEBOOK PAGES AND PUBLIC SPACES:
GUATEMALA'S 2015 MOVEMENT AND THE YEARS THAT FOLLOWED

By

Michael Chikos

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Approved by:

Dr. Marcela Vásquez-León

Department of Latin American Studies

Abstract:

Guatemala's 2015 Summer demonstrations were the largest public protest in the country since the Guatemalan Spring in 1944. These demonstrations were organized rapidly via social media, with Facebook Pages in particular playing a vital role, making them comparable to other digital mediated social movements and new forms of social protest in Latin America. The aims of this study are to explore the role of Facebook Pages in this historic moment, through an approach that considers both the cultural and political impacts of new technologies. Since the 1960s an emerging discourse around "New Social Movements" emphasizes the communicative and ideological nature of social movements, in contrast to social movements that seek purely political aims. This research found that while the Facebook Page should be understood as a Public Space where cultural forms are challenged and reshaped, it is also a highly political technology with real world effects.

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List of Hashtags and Organizations

#RenunciaYa:

“Resign Already.” A hashtag created by Gabriel Wer that sparked the Summer 2015 demonstrations.

#JusticiaYa:

“Justice Already.” A group and accompanying hashtag created in 2015 by Wer and other organizers of the Summer 2015 demonstrations.

AEU:

Association de Estudiantes Universitarios. “Association of University Students.” A long-standing and politically powerful student group from the Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala (USAC). Founded in 1920, the group is controls university finances, national and international relations, and events.

CEUG:

Coordinadora Estudiantil Universitaria de Guatemala. “University Student Coordination of Guatemala.” A coordination between four universities in Guatemala. Created in 2015.

#USACEsPueblo:

A student group of the Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala (USAC). Created in 2015.

Landivarnos:

A student group of the Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala (USAC). Created in 2015.

AccionUVG:

A student group of the Universidad de Valle de Guatemala (UVG). Created in 2015.

MovimientoMarro:

A student group of the Universidad Francisco Marroquín (UFM). Created in 2015.

Introduction

President of Guatemala, Otto Perez Molina, resigned from office September 2nd, 2015. At the time I was in the country, my first time outside of the United States, for a study abroad program through the Center of Latin American Studies at the University of Arizona in collaboration with a Guatemalan social science research center, AVANSCO (Asociacion para el Avance de las Ciencias Sociales en Guatemala). The unprecedented political situation gave both professors and students concern that our program could not continue. Of course, our academic concerns were dwarfed by the broader air of political uncertainty. President Otto Perez Molina's resignation had come as a surprise: though there had been three months of protest prior many did not expect the massive demonstrations to actually lead to the president's resignation, especially with primary elections only three days after. Yet the protests on the street had a profound impact, one that not only influenced the resignation of Perez Molina but continues to influence the nation today.

The three months prior to September saw the largest series of continual public demonstrations in Guatemala's history. The demonstrations were triggered by a massive corruption scandal. A coalition headed by the United Nations, Comisión Internacional contra la Impunidad en Guatemala (CICIG), released an investigation on April 16th which linked the Superintendency of Tax Administration, the National Civil Police, and Otto Perez's administration to the extortion of state funds from Guatemala's principal customs ports, "the oldest state source of corruption in the contemporary era" (Open Society Justice Initiative, 2017, p.80-81). This case, referred to as *La Linea* (The Line) case in reference to the line of corruption uncovered, sparked an almost immediate reaction of protest. Gabriel Wer, a 33-year-old small-business owner in Guatemala City with no history in politics, was one of many Guatemalans who

took his indignation to Facebook, starting the viral hashtag “#RenunciaYa,” or “Resign Now.” Wer and a group of eight other Facebook event organizers planned a public demonstration for April 25th at the capital’s Central Plaza, originally anticipating a turn-out of about 50-60 people (Rogers, 2015). The protest instead drew over 20,000 people, and three weeks later vice president Roxana Baldetti resigned. Another protest was planned for May 16th, and at over 60,000 people it was the largest public manifestation in Guatemala since the 1944 Revolution. Similar protests, all demanding that those involved in “La Linea” resign, continued throughout the summer. Though it is difficult to differentiate public influence from international pressure, these demands were met as key members of Perez Molina’s administration resigned throughout the Summer of 2015. As the “#RenunciaYa” hashtag spread to Honduras, which was undergoing its own problems with corruption, international media dubbed the time a “Central American Spring” (The Economist, 2015; Brodzinsky, 2015; Reynolds, 2015).

This paper will analyze Facebook as a medium of communication that plays a significant role in social activism. What this role is exactly is the question at hand. Broadly speaking there are two ways to approach the study of social movements, emphasizing the cultural and symbolic forms of a society that lead to change or emphasizing the political strategies of individual agents of change. By exploring the posts of prominent Facebook Pages during and after the Summer 2015 demonstrations, we can understand better the connection between social media and social movements. As I will show, the Facebook Page should be understood as a Public Space, but not solely as a Public Space of communicative or symbolic action. The Facebook Page is not just a cultural communicator, it is a highly political technology.

While there is no dearth of academic literature on spontaneous protests, or the phenomena of massive demonstrations organized and conducted quickly via social media (Snow

and Moss 2014; McGarty 2010; Postmes 2002), there is a need for discussion on how social media continues to be a platform of political conversation after these booms in activity. We study how social media facilitates viral moments, but less what happens afterwards. Specifically, in the case of Guatemala, the Facebook Pages created in the 2015 continue to have a political and cultural relevancy after the initial summer protests. In the Summer 2015 protests, it was through Facebook Pages and Facebook Events that demonstrations and public conferences were organized and disseminated. After Summer 2015 these pages continued to be sources of media content, with their political goals and positions changing over time. The creators of #RenunciaYa created a Facebook page titled #JusticiaYa, which continues to post content educating the public on political problematics. Student activist groups, particularly la Coordinadora Estudiantil Universitaria de Guatemala (CEUG) and #UsacEsPueblo, were created in response to the 2015 La Linea scandal, but expanded their student activism into other causes. Through a commentary on the development of these Facebook Pages during and following the September 2015 protests, we can get insight the relationship between social media and social movements.

I found myself Guatemala, without much preparation, watching a digitally mediated social movement unfold in a context where the nature of political activism is changing. This type of massive and continual protesting is new, but it has been seen before. The articles dubbing this a “Central American Spring” drew comparisons to the 2011 “Arab Spring.” Comparisons could also be drawn to the Occupy Movement in New York that same year, or, for that matter, any instance of massive demonstrations organized via social media, a new form of protest which Jennifer Earl and Katrina Kimport argue is a part of an emerging “digital repertoire of contention” which activists draw from (2011, 16). The use of the hashtag places the movement among other viral social campaigns occurring at the same time, such as #YoSoy132 of 2012,

#BlackLivesMatter of 2013, #NiUnaMenos of 2015. The use of social media is not the only internationally significant trait about this movement, it also fits into a broader history of changing goals and methods of contentious politics in Latin America. Since Mexico's Zapatista movement in the 1990s, activists and scholars alike have seen in mobilizations a shift from the formation of political parties and towards efforts of autonomy recognition, best epitomized perhaps by Argentina's *Horizontalidad* movement (Sitrin 2006; Stahelr-Shok, 2014). At the same time, many nations in Latin America are in a period of what the international community calls "transitional democracy" or "democratization," Guatemala being a prime example. Guatemala's Peace Accords were signed in 1996, meaning that the young adults and most students involved in the 2015 demonstrations grew up without much memories of the violent 30-year civil war. Sociologists have argued that the generations growing up under "democratization" are more likely to engage in political protest, and that perhaps democratization would see a new wave of social protests in the region, with Chile's 2011 Student movement and Mexico's #YoSoy132 movement being often cited examples of new student movements (Bianchi, 2014, 38; Cavarozzi 1992). Guatemala's 2015 #RenunciaYa campaign, and the demonstrations and political action it sparked, is then a significant case study in how forms of protest within Latin America during a digital age.

Being in Antigua and Guatemala City in person reshaped my political perception. Prior to 2015, my only experience with "spontaneous protests" had been what I viewed through social media: the viral posts from "Occupy Wall Street" and the "Arab Spring" informed me that very real changes were taking place in the world, but my exposure to that reality was only digital. In Guatemala that changed. I participated in protests, met with student activists, heard citizens at bars take cheers to the call "No Tengo Presidente!" ("I have no president!"). the night of Perez's

resignation. Of course, I was only in Guatemala for a limited time, those first two weeks in September 2015 and the first six months of 2016, yet this physical presence meant that upon returning to the United States I could observe events unfold via social media with a greater sense of context. I emphasize my perspective and position because I am no professional, I am a student still learning much about Guatemala's history and anthropological methodology, and I do not want to claim otherwise. The research that I present here is a mix of personal experience and systematic analysis, a mixed methodology coming-to-grips with how we can understand social media driven social movements.

Chapter One of this Thesis further contextualizes Facebook Pages within larger questions of activism in the digital age. While this research is interested in broad conclusions about social movements in the digital age in general, the exact technology of the Facebook Page needs to be explained before analysis can continue. Chapter Two contextualizes the state of social movements in Latin America, explaining the concept of Horizontalidad and transitions-to-democracy. Chapters Three and Four outline the various approaches to understanding social movements, and how other movements which incorporate social media have been analyzed in the past. A dichotomy is drawn between approaches that emphasize -micro political strategies of agents, like Political Process Theory, and approaches that emphasize -macro cultural trends that drive movements, like New Social Movement Theory. The major question posited is how the two approaches can be used to understand Guatemala's recent mobilizations. Chapter Five summarizes briefly the history of Guatemala, with specific attention given to the student movements of the past, while Chapter Six explains the months of the Summer 2015 demonstrations. Chapters Seven and Eight discuss the #JusticiaYa's Facebook Page and student group Facebook Pages, respectively. Finally, Chapter Nine concludes by arguing that in order to

fully understand how Facebook Pages function in social movements we need to approach them as both cultural and political spaces.

Chapter One: Digital Anthropology and the Facebook Page

“#BlackLivesMatter,” “#NiUnaMenos,” “#OccupyWallStreet,” “#YoSoy132-” these names each signify a viral social movement of the 2010s, movements that are increasingly incorporating and incorporated by new technology in unclear ways. The signs themselves refer to this relationship: the “#” symbol is not just a functional tool but a part of the name’s of social movements themselves. Publications on Black Lives Matter, for example, interchangeably refer to the movement as “Black Lives Matter” or “#BlackLivesMatter.” At protests, participants may write “#NiUnaMenos” or “#YoSoy132” on the signs they hold, bringing physicality to a symbol that originally had a purely digital and functional purpose. When the hashtag was implemented into an early 2007 Twitter, its original proponent, open source advocate Chris Messina, intended it as a simple tool to tag and track conversations, facing criticism for the hashtag because people “didn’t like how [it] looked” (Gannes, 2010). Yet only ten years later the hashtag as an image carries significance across languages and nations, used not only as a literal indexing tool that links together conversations but also as a symbolic character that references the idea of a topic being a part of public discourse. For better or for worse, the hashtag is with us. The hashtag is just one example that opens questions about the relationship between technology and social change.

With every advent of new technology, tensions arise between optimistic readings of the technology’s ability to emancipate individuals and the technology’s limitations or even deterministic qualities (Baym 2010, 22-23). Likewise, discourse around the hashtag contains a mix of both emancipatory and limiting critiques. These critiques are not isolated in the sphere of academia, indeed literature on the relation between social media and social movements remains a new field (Snow and Moss 2014). It is instead activists, journalists, and every day users of social

media who are grappling with the digital's connection with social movements. Doubts surrounding new technology's political role create a divide between "real activism" and "hashtag activism" or "slacktivism" (Taibi 2014, Carr 2012, Khan-Ibarra 2014). The phrase "hashtag activism" itself is a derogatory term coined by journalists to describe a lack of real activism. David Carr of the New York Times describes social movements on social media as an experience of a "'favoriting fatigues' – meaning that causes of the day or week are all starting to blend together." (2012) However, Carr continues his reflection by discussing how social media campaigns do sometimes lead to responses from powerful figures, citing president Obama speaking on the tragedy of Trayvon Martin's death as an example. Sabina Khan-Ibarra responds to the criticism of "hashtag activism" by arguing that social media has already brought more attention to issues than previously possible. At a center of this conversation is the question of how much increased attention to an issue actually correlates to an issue being solved.

These conversations are not limited to the hashtag, but surround the political potential of technologies like the Blog, Youtube, and Facebook. Broadly speaking these are conversations about "Web 2.0" technologies, or social applications of the Web including "all interactive websites, Facebook groups, virtual worlds, blogging and Youtube." (Horst and Miller 2012, 106). How New Media or Web 2.0 technologies affect social phenomena is the question at hand. However, if we only refer to "social media" without demarcating and describing what specific media is being analyzed there is a trap of erasing the specifics of the affordances and interactions available on one media over another (Miller 2012; Baym 2010). This paper analyzes Facebook, and specifically the Facebook Page, as the media being analyzed.

Approaches in Digital Anthropology in the past have examined social media platforms as research sites, building off the work of Tom Boellstorff (2008), Heather Horst (2012), and

Daniel Miller (2012). However, Boellstorf himself warned against overextending the concept of a field site, arguing that while “virtual worlds,” meaning the structured 3-dimensional environments of video games, warrant being “studied on their own terms,” the same cannot be said for chatrooms, message boards, or any other media without fully simulated environments (2012, 238). This research then decidedly does not take an approach that views social media platforms as field sites themselves. Doing so would assume that the medium already has certain communicative properties. Instead, this paper examines Facebook as a media of communication, specifically examining the texts and photos produced by the Facebook Pages and comparing likes and frequency of posts between pages.

Facebook is a medium that is defined by a stream of content, called a “feed,” that contain “posts” by other users, pages, and groups. The feed is the primary way of experiencing Facebook, it is what we see when users open the website and it offers exposure to every “Page,” “Group,” and “Friend” the user follows. What one sees in one’s feed are not simply the most recent posts, but defined by algorithms that prioritize what content one is most likely to “like,” “share,” or “comment on.” In addition to feeds, users can visit the webpages of their Facebook Friends, Groups, and Pages to view all content posted. Thus, content on Facebook is experienced primarily in two ways, users seeing content while casually browsing their own feed, and users intentionally visiting the webpage of a Page, Friend, or Group.

It is important to note that Facebook is not a static medium, but changes its coding and interface every couple of years. Additionally, Facebook may have different social and cultural functions depending on the context in which one interacts with it. The Facebook of today is not the same as the Facebook of ten years ago, nor is the Facebook of the United States the same as the Facebook of Guatemala (Miller 2011). While the Facebook feed of the late 2000’s was

populated mainly by the posts of friends, or “real communication between real people” with no “attempt... to substitute a virtual reality for the actual one” (Scruton 2010), the Facebook feed of today is increasingly defined by these “Facebook Pages” that obscure the real person who is posting. These pages can be anything from fan pages of movies to pages supporting political parties, humor pages run by a single person as a hobby to business pages run by paid employees. We focus here on the Facebook Pages of Guatemalan political activist groups that arose out of the 2015 movements.

Both in Guatemala and the United States, Facebook Pages have been my main connection to political events in Guatemala City. By following #JusticiaYa, #USACEsPueblo, CEUG and FrenteEstudiantil, I am made aware of any upcoming events, news articles, political commentary, and sharing of popular posts across pages. Livestreams, the ability to stream video footage directly to a page, have become popular for activist groups to share footage of conferences and protests. If I had not been casually browsing my Facebook while waiting for a bus at the mall Grand Tikal Futura, I would not have attended the book release of *La Fuerza de la Plaza* (2016) and the screening of the documentary *'44-'15* (2016), both of which reflect the impact of the 2015 protests. I knew of these events because #JusticiaYa made Event Pages for them, which showed up in my Facebook feed. Upon returning to the States, continuing to see these posts in my Facebook feed provided a sense of continuity. Despite being far away I could stay informed and in conversation with the people I had met. Though we may not yet have the literature to articulate it, the importance of Facebook Pages as distributors of media and organizers of events is evident from experience.

A Facebook Page enables users to share Facebook posts -multimedia content with images, text, videos, and links to other pages- to all of their followers. Page creators distribute

selected content to their audience, forming an online presence. Contrasted against Facebook Groups, which allow for a more egalitarian space where group members share content as themselves amongst other group members, Facebook Pages function more like independent Facebook Profiles. With groups, members can “post to a group” and “share to a group,” but with Facebook Pages admins (and only admins) can “post *as* a Page” and “share *as* a page.” The distinction is that there is a degree of anonymity with Facebook Pages. Of Followers of a page still have ways to express their views with other followers, but this is more limited. To elaborate, it is possible to share and post to a Facebook Page as a follower, but these posts are not readily visible either on the Facebook wall or in followers’ feeds. Followers must click on a separate “community” button to view this content. Followers can also communicate their views by commenting on posts. Pages that have larger followings will have these comments sorted by algorithms that prioritize comments with the most reactions and comments, along with any comments that receive a comment from the Facebook Page itself. The Facebook Page is then the dominating agent within this digital layout, it is not designed to equalize posts but to maintain a stark contrast between the page and its followers.

The algorithms Facebook uses dictating how Pages are suggested to users are hidden away from users. There are more technical features of the Facebook Page and its capabilities, but a total review of these is outside the scope of this review. A more comprehensive review may explore how following Facebook Pages will recommend users similar pages based on what the page’s followers and admins “like,” creating an “echo chamber affect.” will recommend users similar pages based on what the page’s followers and admins “like.” For our purposes, what is important is a recognition that the structured context of Facebook prevents a complete organic conversation.

Chapter Two: Social Movements in Contemporary Latin America

Writing about recent social movements in Latin America is difficult without first contextualizing significant recent movements in the region. While mainstream political analysis emphasizes the emergences of a “New Left” under a broader phenomenon of “transitions-to-democracy,” radical forms of grassroots contentious politics form as well. The Zapatista movement in Mexico and the Horizontalidad movement in Argentina are two significant examples of movements that seek autonomy from conventional power structures, stay mindful of participatory and horizontal processes, and build solidarity in social justice issues shared across subjective identities (Stahler-Sholk 2014, 4). This coupled with transitions-to-democracy means a changing landscape in the region (Cavarozzi 1992). Elaborating on this context does not imply that Guatemala’s current political moment is in direct response to these regional phenomena, however, there is a history here that needs to be emphasized.

Rethinking Latin American Social Movements: Radical Action from Below (Stahler-Shok, Vander, Becker 2014) explains bests how new movements like the Zapatistas reflect a changing type of contentious politics, reviewing case studies from across the region. The introduction incorporates a broad analysis influenced by thinkers like Manuel Castells, Jurgen Habermas, and John Holloway. Stahler-Sholk identifies two distinct changes in the Latin American landscape that subsequently redefined the nature of social movements in the region. The first is the decline of neoliberalism’s hegemonic acceptance; the growing consensus among both the general population and the elite political body is that the structural adjustments of the 1980s are not sustainable (Stahler-Sholk 12). The second, which directly ties to much of the literature on New Social Movements, concerns the changing goals and strategies of social movements in Latin America. New movements, like Mexico’s Zapatistas and Argentina’s Horizontalidad, no longer

aim to take political power or form political parties, and instead focus on autonomy and power resistance.

The the Zapatista movement in Mexico of the 1990s began in reaction to increasing encroachment of neoliberal policies in Chiapas. The Ejército Zapatista de Liberación (EZLN), and Indigenous Grassroots Organizations, declared themselves autonomous from Mexico on January 1st, 1994, intentionally coinciding with the implementation of NAFTA. Though the Zapatistas had armed forces to defend their land from the Mexican police and army, their movement was strictly non-violent, and they did not attempt to extend their political power. This led sociologist and commentator John Holloway to describe their movement as an example of post-Cold War era politics, where revolutions no longer aim to control or take power from the state but instead seek autonomy from state relations. The Zapatista movement is also significant because of its use of the internet and cell phones, both recent inventions at the time. Their autonomy was facilitated with the new communication afforded to them by new technologies.

The Horizontalidad moment in Argentina, though different in its context and agents, shares a similar philosophical bent to the Zapatista movement. After the economic crisis in Argentina in 2001, social collectives in both rural and urban contexts sought forms of collective action where all involved would have participation. These new social movements would form spaces of direct democracy while seeking a complete change of political systems. Marina Sitrin describes Horizontalidad as a philosophy that “implies democratic communication on a level plane and involves-or at least intentionally strives towards-non-hierarchical and anti-authoritarian creation rather than reaction” (Sitrin 3, 2006). The concept of Horizontalidad extends beyond Argentina, and has become a way of understanding and enacting contentious politics.

It has become common to cite both the Zapatista movement and Horizontalidad as examples of a changing understanding of contentious politics in an increasingly globalized and Post-Cold War context (Nail 2015). The seemingly apolitical nature of these movements face criticism, however. In his discussion on how Zapatistas reflect a “return to revolution,” Nail comments that prominent writers, such as Slavoj Zizek and Alain Badiou, have criticized the outlook of new social movements as supporting political ambivalence and ultimately undercutting real revolutionary action (Nail 2015, 12). These critiques go beyond contemporary cases in Latin America. Social theory involving “New Social Movements” that emphasis autonomy over state power have existed since the 1960s, the difference here is that contemporary social movements in Latin America are not theoretical abstractions of what direction social movements may take but very real practices already in action.

Other broad scale changes in Latin America as a region have defined new forms of contentious politics and political struggle. In his work on activism in the digital age, Mattias Bianchi defines two significant changes in the region in the 21st century: The democratic transition and the digital revolution (Bianchi, 2014, 12-32). While the digital revolution is a global change in technology, the democratic transition in Latin America is specifically the economic and social recovery of the region after the debt and civil strife that defined many countries at the second half of the 20th century. Perhaps more important than these changes themselves are the new actors who have grown up under them, the “digital natives” and “democratic natives” of Latin America that are becoming young adults (Bianchi, 2014).

Chile is referenced as a major example of a country going through a transitional democratizing process. Under the first two democratic governments the economy doubled (Jara 2014). Yet this has coincided with an increase in mobilizations and political protests, particularly

with a growing middle class and urban population. Particularly, the 2011 Chilean student movement was one of the largest demonstrations the country had seen in 20 years. The movement originated when Minister of Education Joaquín Lavín voted to increase the funding of non-traditional private universities, at the cost of Chilean public schools. In response, the Conferación de Estudiantes Universitarios de Chile (CONFUECH) and the Federación de Estudiantes de la Universidad de Chile organized marches, flash mobs, and public demonstrations to demand for education reform (Jara 2014). The protests went viral internationally, and ultimately led to policy changes by the education minister.

A similar example of the sort of movements described here is the #YoSoy132 movement in Mexico in 2012. Though Mexico is not undergoing a democratic transition, the 2012 elections were following twelve years of PAN rule, a change from the previous nearly century-long one-party rule of the PRI. One could say that after the PRI Mexico was undergoing a period of democratic transition. Peña Nieto, at the time the presidential candidate for the PRI, was touring the nation for his campaign. One hundred thirty one students at Ibero University in Mexico City protested Nieto's campaign in light of a recent violent police confrontation against flower vendors in San Salvador, Atenco. Though the protest was peaceful, national media coverage of the protesters depicted them as violent and paid, suggesting none were even students. In response, the 131 students uploaded videos to Youtube showing their student IDs and citing their reasons for protesting. In solidarity the hashtag #YoSoy132 became viral. Because 99% of Mexican media outlets are owned by Televisa or TV Azteca, companies with known economic ties to the PRI party, the state of national media was also a topic of the #YoSoy132 campaign.

Guatemala's movement shares major elements with these new movements. It was an informal movement organized largely through social media (Bianchi, 2014, 23; Bizber, g2015),

it reflected the desires of a new generation that grew up during a transition to democracy (Bianchi, 2014, 38, Cavarozzi 1992), and demands included a complete reshaping of the political system (Bianchi, 2014, 51; Sitrin, 2006, 37). With this background in mind, it is also important to note that though these movements have influenced discourse about social movements across the region, not all social movements necessarily keep these approaches. The writings of John Holloway, for example, are certainly influential in Guatemala, with him heading the 2016 conference the Congreso de Esudios Mesoamericanos (CEM). As discussed later, the Facebook pages the Facebook pages of #JusticiaYa, #USACEsPueblo, and CEUG evoke concepts of horizontalidad and autonomy. However, to say that Guatemala's current moment refrains from political action would be a mistake. In fact, the new student movement enforces an ethos of political participation, and two years after the initial mass demonstrations, students of USAC did take political action towards control over their school.

Chapter Three: Theoretical Approaches to Social Movements

A primer on social movement theory is necessary to begin any discussion on massive mobilizations, but especially so when new technologies are involved. Because the object of study here, the Facebook Page, is still so new, which theoretical background and framing tools we pull from is relatively open. Do we look at the Facebook Page as political organizing tool for different social actors? Or is the Facebook Page better understood for the cultural forms it communicates and reproduces? Broadly speaking, there are two approaches here, one that emphasizes political strategy and one that emphasizes cultural forms in the public sphere. The question is which theoretical lenses are more applicable to the understanding the Facebook Page's role in social movements.

When we come to conceptualize how social movements form and function, there are at least two dominate threads of thought (Munck 1995; Buechler 1995; Lofland 1993). One thread, originating in the North American social sciences, is a discursive tradition connecting Collective Action Theory, Resource Mobilization Theory, and Political Process Theory (Kleidman et al 1999; Tilly 1978; Bob 2002). These theories are distinct but build on each other, all stemming from the emergence of "collective action theory" in the 1960s, an origin that places emphasis on the incentives and strategies of agents seeking to achieve political goals (Buechler 1995, Munck 1995). Another thread of thought developed independently across the Atlantic, taking a wholly different approach to how we define and understand social movements. The European approach to understanding social movements is rooted in Marxist frameworks that examine how conflict in society leads to broad changes. Traditionally, this meant political economy analyses which emphasized class conflict, but after the 1960s, emergence of social movements worldwide which focused less on purely political and economic gains and more on articulations of identity and

social consciousness. This led to an assemblage of theories referred to as New Social Movement Theory, which, though different, seek to understand how politics, ideology, and culture broadly affect collective action (Buechler 1995: 442). Both collective action theory and New Social Movement theory are still used today to describe social phenomenon, despite their differences in approach.

It is not uncommon for social theorists, when summarizing approaches to social movements in general, to dichotomize these two threads of thought. Munck describes “two schools of analyses... in the United States and in Europe... emphasizing the notions of strategy and identity respectively” (Munck 1995, 667). Doug McAdams, one of the pioneers in the political process model, himself argues that “the dominance, within the United States, of the ‘resource mobilization’ and ‘political process’ perspectives has privileged the political, organizational, and networked/structural aspects of social movements while giving the more cultural or ideational dimensions of collective action short shrift” (McAdam 1994, 36; as quoted in Polletta 1999, 63). The divide between the two sets of theories reflect common dichotomies already present in the social sciences. Resource Mobilization Theory and Political Process Theory may also be described as “-micro” and “political” in contrast to the “-macro” and “cultural” New Social Movement Theory (Munck 1995, 668). Questions of the political versus the cultural, agency versus structure, micro- versus macro-, are at play here not just in methodological approach but in the studied phenomena itself. The question for the investigator of social movements, especially with the involvement of new technologies, is which theories will be invoked and how. Before discussing how these theories have been used in describing the use of social media in social movements, I will elaborate further on the history of the approaches.

Underpinning North American literature on social movements is an emphasis on rational agents using instrumental action for political goals (Munck 1995; Buechler 1995; McCarthy and Zald 1977; Tilly 1978). This emphasis can be seen from the origins of Collective Action Theory to Resource Mobilization Theory and Political Opportunity Theory. Mancur Olson's *The Logic of Collective Action* (1965) placed the groundwork for much of today's Collective Action Theory, defining 'group action' as a collective of individual actors who each respond rationally to their own incentives. This model allowed for a cost and benefits analysis of social movements. The problematic of Olson's model, however, is that collective groups can only achieve goals when leaders strategize to lower the costs of participation in the group (Munck 1995, 665; McCarthy and Zald 1977). It is from this problem that theorist expanded beyond collective action with Resource Mobilization Theory. In response to the proliferation of social movements emerging out of the 1960s, McCarthy and Zald (1977) studied how organizations in movements secure and maintain their resources. Resource Mobilization Theory incorporates economic forces external to the social movement, examining how social movement groups navigate economic realities to retain their membership, build incentives for action, and achieve political goals (McCarthy and Zaid 1977; Tilly 1978).

From the 1970s-1990s, Resource Mobilization Theory dominated theorization of collective action (Jenkins 1983; Buechler 1995), allowing for a political economic analysis of how instrumental action achieves political ends. However, sociologist Sidney Tarrow criticized Resource Mobilization Theory for over emphasizing economic factors of social movements (Munck 1995, 665; Tarrow 1994: 2-3, 14-6). Tarrow argued that because social movements reflect societal grievances, individuals are already incentivized to join, but may not be able to because of their involvement in other groups and organizations. For Tarrow, the problem social

movements face is not the incentives of individual participants, but a larger societal cost shared among group members. Because daily social life demands the time and energy of group participants, the real problem social movements face is how they coordinate efforts to achieve a common goal. The impetus of understanding the strategies of movement organization is not lost in Tarrow's critique, but the question becomes more holistic than that of economics. A school of thought based out of Tarrow's critiques created Political Process Theory. Political Process Theory retains Resource Mobilization Theory's emphasis on organization strategy and economic resources, but incorporates and stresses the specific political contexts movements arise within. Most importantly, Political Process Theory focuses on how political opportunities can determine the success or failure of a movement in addition to the organizational strengths described by resource mobilization theory. Political opportunities can refer to increasing political pluralism, division within elites, and declines in repression (Tarrow 1998). Political Process Theory also emphasizes that strategies of groups are passed through "repertoires of contention," a concept that describes the "toolkit" of common strategies groups have at their disposal, such as boycotting, petitioning, or lobbying (Tarrow 1998; Tilly 2003). The concepts opened up by Political Process Theory are more dynamic, allowing theorists to incorporate macro cultural and social trends while retaining an emphasis on the strategy of agents and organizations.

Continental Sociology's approach to Social Movements uses a lens that is distinct from the North American approach. Instead of a focus on the incentives and choices of individual groups, a macro- approach seeks to understand how contention in a society is framed and understood. Theorists like Alberto Melucci, Jürgen Habermas, Alan Touraine, and Manuel Castells sought to understand the relation between culture, ideology, social relations and social movements. Their ideas are grouped together as "New Social Movement Theory." It is important

to stress that the name “New Social Movement Theory” does not point to one defined set of theories, but instead refers to interconnected research and literature that address similar questions. Buechler describes New Social Movement Theory as approaches that:

...underscore symbolic action in civil society or the cultural sphere as a major arena for collective action alongside instrumental action in the state or political sphere, ... stress the socially constructed nature of grievances and ideology [while problematizing] the process of... collective identities and identifying group interests, [and highlight] a variety of submerged, latent, and temporary networks that often undergird collective action.”
(Buechler 1995: 442)

Alongside the emergence of post-structuralism, New Social Movement theory turned towards an examination of social constructions and assemblages of networks rather than rigid identities and static structures. These theories are also often rooted in the state of post-industrial society.

Melucci, for instance, identifies an oversaturation of information, symbols, and media as a defining feature of contemporary society. This oversaturation means a day-to-day involvement and relation to social control, conformity pressures, and information processing. Social movements must therefore compete within the realm of ideas to be authentic (Buechler 1995, 446). Castells has a similar stance, arguing that “social movements exercise counter power by constructing themselves in the first place through a process of autonomous communication” (Castelles 2009, 9). To Castells communication technologies inherently possess a power of “meaning making,” and that post-industrial citizens increasingly are able to enact “communicative power” (Castells 2009). Jurgen Habermas similarly emphasized the role of social movements play in the cultural sphere of society. Habermas was particularly interested in how “public spheres” of a society takes shape, and how agents communicate their messages within these public spaces. When social movements influence the public sphere, a “legitimation crises” may emerge, meaning the existing power and economic structures lose “the requisite level of mass loyalty” (Habermas 1975: 46). Another common feature in New Social Movement

theory is a shift from centralized movements to networks. Both Melucci and Castelles argue that the potential for collective action lies nested in networks of submerged groups, meaning it is difficult to identify one central site or organization for a “movement,” and it is only occasional that these groups coalesce into cohesive self-referential organizations (Buechler 1995, 443-446). For Melucci, social movements should be rethought of as the emergence of previously submerged or repressed cultural norms or identities.

One critique of New Social Movement theory is that it overly emphasizes cultural gains over political gains. Social science literature focuses on processes that “promote autonomy and self-determination instead of strategies for maximizing influence and power,” (Buechler 1995: 442) , with sociologist John Holloway even titling his Zapatista-inspired book *How to Change the World Without Taking Power* (2002). This shift towards autonomy and away from political power is not just theoretical, but it reflects the ethos of many movements at the tail end of the Cold War. Touraine and Habermas, argue that this apolitical politicization can be a serious threat to the success of social movements (Buechler 1995, 449-450). Similar to Touraine and Habermas, Melucci identifies New Social Movements moving away from political goals and towards social and cultural goals. However, Melucci is not so pessimistic. By arguing that this oversaturation of information also creates a “homelessness of identity,” where subjects must choose their identities out of a multiplicity of narratives and symbols, Melucci suggests that a movement’s influence in the cultural realm is already a success. For Melucci, “people’s propensity to become involved [in a movement] is tied to their ability to define an identity in the first place” (Melucci 1988; as quoted in Buechler 1995, 443), implying that movements achieve historical significance simply by creating new political identities. Castells is also optimistic, agreeing with Holloway that “where there is power there is also counter power,” believing that

through communicative action people can disrupt political power (Castells 2009, 6). One argument in defense of autonomous movements is that though they may not fit traditional ideas of engagement with the political sphere, they are political in another sense. Brandt (1986) argues that new social movements present metapolitical challenges with political affects, that though New Social Movements may be more ideological than political they have affects of political socialization and conscious raising of individuals. The issue is polemic, there is not an agreement on the definition of “new social movements,” let alone their successes or failures.

Describing the full scope of social movement literature is beyond the aims of this research. In summary, two very different approaches to understanding social movements dominant the literature. One approach emphasizes takes as its basis of analysis the actors within social movements and how they strategize to either maintain resources, as in Resource Mobilization Theory, or navigate political processes, as in Political Process Theory. Another approach, defined broadly as New Social Movement Theory, study how social movements function as broad scale cultural changes. While Resource Mobilization Theory and Political Process Theory are both critiqued for reducing agents to rational choices and incentives, New Social Movement Theory is critiqued for purely focusing on the symbolic and cultural at expense of actual political gains. Both styles of approach have their merits in application, and in the next section we will review how they have both been applied in social media driven social movements.

Chapter Four: Social Movement Theory in Practice

The main question of this research is how we can understand the role of Facebook Pages within social movements in light of these theories. Looking towards how these theories have been criticized and applied in the past is a first step. Resource Mobilization Theory and Political Process Theory's emphasis on incentives and cost of entry lose relevancy in an era of spontaneous mobilization, while New Social Movement theory's emphasis on communicative approaches, challenging norms, and politicizing spaces makes it a natural fit for understanding Social Media. However, when considering the long-term techniques and strategies of specific groups, a Political Process and Framing Approaches can explain how Facebook Pages are used to strategically mobilize groups.

Before elaborating, it is necessary to mention that in Latin America theorist the Resource Mobilization Approach is often avoided in favor of the -macro and structural approaches. In the introduction to *Power and Popular Protest* (Eckstein, 2001), Sarah Eckstein argues that "Rational-choice theory cannot account for the ways group solidarities, moral commitment to the collectivity, and other non-rational values may mobilize people to act independently of individual self-interest" (2001, 4). Resource Mobilization Theory's use of rational choice theory assumes the rationality and individuality of agents, overlooking the social and cultural forces that drive people to engage in political behavior together. Specifically in a Latin American context, where there are norms of solidarity and histories of longstanding resistance to capitalism and colonialism, this assumption of individuality fails to be holistic. While accepting this critique of rational actor theory, we must not fall into the trap of discounting all concepts connected to Resource Mobilization Theory and its related theory, Political Process Theory. In agreement with

John Lofland, we need a “This *and* that” approach rather than a “This *not* that” approach (Lofland 1993, 50)

Where Resource Mobilization Theory finds its relevancy to social media in social movements is its concept of social movements having an inherent cost to entry. A key to understanding new media is knowing what affordances they provide for communication, such as rate of communication or scope of audience (Baym 2009, 23-25). McGarty (2010) explains that the spontaneity of the Arab Spring was only possible because social media had lowered the barrier to entry so much. Social media lowers the cost for organizing mass protests because it allows for rapid communication to mass audiences (Postmes 2002). If we take a Resource Management approach, where social movement participation is viewed in terms of the cost for participants, social media significantly decreases the costs for communication and organization.

Political Process Theory is relevant for its concept of “repertoires of contention” (Tarrow 1998; Tilly 2003), or a finite set of strategies that social movement organizers pull from. With the rise of digital technologies, activists are beginning to pull from new repertoires that have only recently emerged. The spontaneous protest, flash mob, and hashtag are a part of these new repertoires of contention (Earl and Kimport, 2013). This aligns with Ruben Dominguez’s characterization of new social movements as an eruption of serial protests. In his description of the #YoSoy132 movement, Dominguez argues that new communication technologies create movements that are “vertiginous and viral” (172). The creation of hashtags and planning of spontaneous protests are not agent-less cultural phenomena in this view, but instead very intentional methods of bringing awareness to an issue.

The increased ease of organizing and new strategies that arise from this are the main ways Resource Mobilization Theory and Political Process Theory have been applied to digitally

mediated social movements, respectively. With the barrier to enter social movements so low, however, much of the phenomena that Resource Management Theory previously sought to understand may no longer be as relevant. When disseminating information is as simple as sharing content on a Facebook Page, questions turn away from how groups gather the resources to disseminate information and towards the content of that information. This is one reason why New Social Movement Theory is so attractive when seeking to understand social media's relation to contentious politics.

The constructivist and decentralized nature of New Social Movement theory is in many ways a natural fit for understanding new media. Castells himself basis much of his work in how the internet creates new public spaces, which is significant given his emphasis on the symbolic power of occupying public spaces. On the ideals of the digital age, Castells writes: "By engaging in the production of mass media messages, and by developing autonomous networks of horizontal communication, citizens of the Information Age become able to invent new programs for their lives with the materials of their sufferings, dreams, and hopes" (2009:7).

To Castells social movements function by transforming spaces: Symbolic spaces are turned into public spaces, which are then turned into spaces of deliberation, or political spaces. Established networks of power today are continually disrupted by counter-power, which Castells envisions as "mass self-communication" (Castelles 2009, 7), which is mass communication that processes messages from many to many. These new types of communication are difficult to control by governments and corporations, letting them disrupt existing power. Griffiths and Barbour similarly argue that Web 2.0 technologies create new forms of publics that "allow contestation of dominant ideological structures" (2016). In its ability to foster new public discourse, social media allows for novel forms of contestation of dominant ideologies and formation of new

identities. This emphasis on the communicative may mean that understanding social media's role in social movements may naturally lean towards approaches that incorporate the macro- shifts in public contention described by New Social Movement theorist. This creates an association with social media and cultural movements.

In practice, viewing social movements through this lens will lead to an emphasis on how cultural forms are challenged or reproduced. For example, in Chile's student movement, student flash mobs, organized via social media, transformed public spaces into areas for their political contention. By evoking popular culture, national identity, and generational strife, students were able to draw international attention to their concerns about the defunding of their schools (Lafferte et al 2011; Fuentes 2014). Similarly, the #YoSoy132 movement in Mexico expressed collective student identity through creating Youtube videos that challenged the narratives of national media which portrayed students as paid protestors. Treré argues that the real movement of #YoSoy132 was a reclaiming of identity of students, and that the real battle was between traditional media and new media's control over the narrative. Both examples gained international attention through a period of online virality. According to Jara (2014), a sociologist who analyzed the flash mobs in Chile, these types of performances express, and propel, legitimization crises felt widespread across Latin America. Content created for social media protests, such as the Youtube videos from #YoSoy132 and the flash mobs from Chile's movement, can be analyzed as cultural artifacts or claims for identity.

One downside of viewing digitally mediated social movements through the lens of New Social Movement theory is that the critiques of New Social Movements come with. Critiques of both Chile's student movement and #YoSoy132 argue that they were perhaps being purely performative, bringing attention to an issue while not fully offering viable political methods of

resistance. Dominguez categorizes YoSoy132 as a movement “that could have been” because the groups involved ultimately failed to disrupt Pena Nieto’s campaign for the presidency. These critiques echo Habermass’s view that New Social Movements are increasingly reactive instead of proactive, capable of making identity claims or expressions for desired change without setting change in action.

Out of the example I have seen in Guatemala, I argue that a closer analysis of the groups creating the performative or cultural content will show that there are in fact strategic and political struggles that occur in conjunction to the broader cultural struggles. If this is true, then there may be a risk inherent to emphasizing the purely performative and cultural elements of social media. In the case of Facebook Pages, we have the options to approach the Facebook Page as a text, reading posts solely for their cultural and performative significance, and as a type of agent itself, that responds to the political reality it is engulfed in. In the following analysis, I hope to show that both approaches are possible and complimentary. First, I will explain in more detail the nature of the Facebook Page as a technology.

Chapter Five: Social Protest in Guatemala

The 2015 protests were not the first mass protests in Guatemala. In fact, demonstrations are a revered part of Guatemalan culture and history, at least in Guatemala City. The Huelga de Dolores, a yearly demonstration in front of the National Palace organized by the Universidad de San Carlos (USAC) since 1898, is a tradition that encourages students to express social and political problems of the nation. The tradition reflects Guatemala's long history of protests.

Most famously, Guatemala was site to a ten-year revolutionary period between 1944 to 1954, before being interrupted by a CIA-led military coup. In 1944, Guatemala had some of its largest and most influential series of protests, what is now dubbed the "Guatemalan Spring." A rising proletariat class of workers, artisans, and teachers challenged the fourteen-year dictatorship of Jorge Ubico through strikes and marches, leading to the disintegration of Ubico's regime and the election of Dr. Juan Jose Arevalo, a formerly exiled professor of philosophy.

Largely influential in this movement was the student organization Asociación de Estudiantes Universitarios (Association of San Carlos Students) or AEU. The AEU is not just a student government, but a political entity within the school that votes for how the university will allocate funds for the nation's only public university. These were the students who organized the continual marches and demonstrations leading to the resignation of Jorge Ubico (Pocasangre, 2016).

The ten years that followed, 1944-1954, were known as Guatemala's "Revolutionary Period" and the two presidents of the period, Juan Jose Arevalo (1945-1951) and Jacobo Arbenz (1951-1954), sought reforms for the country. This period saw a series of political, economic, and social reforms, including labor unionization, political parties, and social security. Arbenz

specifically fought for an agrarian reform bill that would have dispersed uncultivated portions of large plantations to peasant families (Schlesinger and Kinzer 1982, 54), yet the bill ignited a response from the United States. In 1954, in a United States-backed coup, Arbenz was overthrown and replaced by the authoritarian ruler Carlos Castillo Armas, leading to the civil war from 1960-96 between a violent military government and various leftist rebel groups.

The most violent years of the civil war were in the early 1980s, when President Rios Montt committed a “scorched earth campaign” against Mayan people. The AEU showed strong resistance during the civil war in the 1980s (Castillo Regaldo, 2005, 40), but had its major student leaders assassinated and has been considered “co-opted” by political parties since (Pocasangre, 2016). Prominent student leaders, such as Oliverio Castañeda, members of the AEU, were assassinated. Due to this history, the AEU of today does not reflect the concerns for justice and human rights of the AEU of the past. Since the 1980s the group has been co-opted by political groups and interests.

In 1996, the Peace Accords were signed and democratic reforms were supported, yet many political and military officials still had ties to Rios Montt’s regime. The fear created during these violent times continued to define the political landscape of Guatemala after the 1980s, but has abated slightly in the aftermath of the Peace Accords, especially among the younger generations (Green 1994). In conversation over the new protests, Dr. Casolo of the Universidad Rafael Landivar personally remarked to me:

Something to remember is most people on the streets do not know that during the 60s and 70s nearly every urban leader was killed. We had so many academic’s bodies disappear. So for anything to happen now is amazing. That’s why people are so excited... The fear has disappeared because you have a whole generation that doesn’t know [about these killings], that’s how long we had to wait.

While it is certainly questionable if fear has “disappeared” like my professor suggested, the shift towards open political discussions is a marked feature of Guatemala’s present.

However, the signing of the Peace Accords did not entail an automatic change. There is increasing gang violence. Indigenous land is still abused. Human rights abuses still happen. At USAC, the affects of the civil war period are still felt. Corruption, connection with gangs, extortion from students, violence used against dissent, and a culture of fear on campus- all of this has been the norm on campus for the past couple of decades. There had not been democratic elections for the AEU since the year 2000, and its current members graduated in either the early 2000s or earlier. This means a student culture that is disconnected from the narrative of a new peaceful Guatemala free of the scars from the past. This began to change in 2015, as the massive demonstrations inspired new wave of student activism.

Chapter Six: Guatemala In Summer 2015

The last two years have seen a sudden rise of new socially active groups in Guatemala, and a rise in membership or interest in groups that have already existed. Groups like Flores contra la Corrupcion, la Coordinadora Estudiantil Universitaria de Guatemala (CEUG), #USACEsPueblo, Asamblea Popular y Social, and #JusticiaYaa came into being in the Summer of 2015 (Rodriguez, 2015). Groups like Guatemala Basta Ya, PrensaComunitaria, and Grupo Semilla were created in 2014 but grew in membership and interest during summer 2015. Movimiento Semilla, for example, a central left political party with relationships to CICIG, defined its political base and position in August 2015, drawing on the energy of the anti-La Linea protests (Cabria, 2015). Although this boom in political activist groups began with the scandal of La Linea and the 2015 elections, the groups continue to mobilize around issues and create discursive spaces to this day.

In the book *La Fuerza de las Plazas: Bitácora de la indignación ciudadana en 2015* (“The Force of the Plazas: A Log of Public Indignation”) (Miranda, 2016) -- a collection of testimonials, interviews, and critical articles by organizers and leaders involved in 2015 demonstrations -- Bernardo Silva, the founder of BastaYa Guatemala, explains what led him to create Basta Ya in 2014:

It was the 27th of September, 2014 ... I decide early in the morning to click on the “Create Page” option on my Facebook and to name it something that shouted from my guts: Guatemala Basta Ya (“Guatemala Enough Already”). I felt the need to say to someone that I am no longer willing to let them mock us and blatantly use their power to perpetuate a system, which I now know has existed for years, hundreds of years, of corruption and abuse towards us. Abuse towards you! (Miranda, 2016)

Silva was already politically involved, attempting actively to mobilize and energize others prior to April 2015. Despite this, Silva explains that at the protest of April 25th “la transformación estaba en todo! El aire, el ruido, el ambiente, la fuerza, la energía, pero sobre todo, algo

cambiaba dentro de mi” (“the transformation was in everything! The air, the noise, the atmosphere, the force, the energy, but over everything, something changed inside of me,” Miranda, 2016, 41). After seeing the Facebook Event “Manifestacion Pacifica #RenunciaYa,” which he described as “un manifiesto muy limpio, ordenado y claro” (a very clean, orderly and clear demonstration”) he shared the event on Guatemala Basta Ya’s Facebook Wall, attended the event, and from there met with organizers of other groups, journalists, and even politicians (Miranda 2016, 42-45). One year after his political awakening in creating BastaYa, Silva awakened again.

In this same book, Gabriel Wer makes a strong point. In response to the idea that 2015 represented a “Central American Spring,” Wer writes that “aquí nadie dormía. No se puede descansar en un país donde la mayoría lucha por sobrevivir” (“Here no one sleeps. You cannot sleep in a country where the majority fight to survive,” Miranda 2016). Guatemala has a long-standing history of violence, state oppression, and social inequality, so the implication of a “political awakening” can be contrary when daily life is, for most who live in Guatemala, intensely political. With this acknowledged, Wer continues to reflect that in his youth, before the Peace Accords of 1996, it was taboo to talk about politics. .He writes: “Recuerdo de niño como mis padres y abuelos bajaban la voz al hablar de política. Salir a las calles a exigir algo era sinónimo de ponerse frente a un fusil. Crecí con ese miedo como algo normal y cotidiano, algo que se asumía sin cuestionar” (“I remember since I was a kid my parents and grandparents lowered their voices to talk about politics. To take to the streets to demand something was synonymous to putting yourself in front of a gun,” Miranda, 2016). This experience, of growing up in a culture of fear to discuss politics, is something nearly every young adult (or teen) I talked to in Guatemala, politically active or not, mentioned. One member of #USACEsPueblo told me

that the day of the second protest, his mother feared for his life. Another mentioned a feeling of “being in the closet” about his social activism, not wanting to face the response of his parents. Additionally, each time a conversation like this came up, the conversation turned towards the idea that the new generation would break this taboo. According to *La Fuerza de las Plazas*, social media is the catalyst for the awakening.

Chapter Seven: The Facebook Page of #JusticiaYa

It would be misleading to assume that because a movement is on social media it is inherently horizontal or leaderless. While the demonstrations of summer 2015 had no hierarchical organization, and the sharing of hashtags and information over the protests is something done informally and rhizomically, there are still centers within the network that produce information with their own biases and style. #JusticiaYa, created by a handful of the original #RenunciaYa organizers, is one such center.

When organizers from the “#RenunciaYa” demonstrations created the Facebook page “#JusticiaYa,” they began with a graphic introducing the goals of the page (Figure 1). This was posted on May 28th, 2015; over a week after the May 16th protest that drew 60,000 people and two days before a third protest. . The post describes that they created page #JusticiaYa as a “*plataforma ciudadana permanente y abierta,*” citizen platform open and permanent, to be used to “*informarnos, expresarnos y organizarnos,*” or “inform ourselves, express ourselves, and organize ourselves.” In addition to being against corruption and the public officials who head



Figure 1. The first image posted on the Facebook page of #JusticiaYa, introduces the goals of the page and invites the reader to the next protest. Adapted from *Facebook*, by #JusticiaYa, 2015 May, retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/justiciayagt/photos/a.982710221747479.1073741828.9823490584502.62/982709251747576/?type=3&theater>

corrupt efforts, the post calls for citizens to look for solutions in a completely discredited political system. The post concludes with a reminder for citizens to continue protesting peacefully and, in a separate blue bubble of text at the bottom of the page, tells the reader “¡Nos vemos el sábado en la plaza!” (“We will see you in the plaza!”)

A later post elaborates on the creation of “JusticiaYa” in place of “RenunciaYa” (Figure 2). The post is a part of a series of photos, the four grey dots at the bottom of the photo indicating which number of photo it is within the sequence. The photo begins by saying “los jóvenes del grupo #RenunciaYa no nos sentimos satisfechos clausurando completamente algo que... se ha logrado instaurar con credibilidad en el imaginario de nuestro país,” or “the young ones from #RenunciaYa do not feel satisfied

completely closing something that... has successfully been established with credibility in the imaginary of our country.”

Already, two things are worth noting about the identity #JusticiaYa is crafting for itself. First, the post references no authors or leaders of the group, and in fact refers to the people behind #RenunciaYa as “los jóvenes” or “young ones,” emphasizing that

this is a movement by the younger generation. Secondly, the post identifies that #RenunciaYa had already reached success in its entrance into the public



¿Qué pasó con #RenunciaYa y por qué ahora son #JusticiaYa?

Los jóvenes del grupo #RenunciaYa no nos sentimos satisfechos clausurando completamente algo que es de todos los ciudadanos y que se ha logrado instaurar con credibilidad en el imaginario de nuestro país. Estamos conscientes que otros miembros del grupo no están dispuestos a continuar por razones laborales y personales. Debido a lo que la ciudadanía ha logrado hasta ahora, proponemos abrir una nueva etapa, trabajando con otras iniciativas ciudadanas y donde el #RenunciaYa dé paso a un más amplio y necesario #JusticiaYa.

Figure 2. The first in a series of 4 images posted in June that elaborate on the goals and purpose of JusticiaYa. Adapted from *Facebook*, by JusticiaYa, 2015 June, retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/justiciayagt/photos/a.982710221747479.1073741828.9823490584502.62/984782551540246/?type=3&theater>

imaginary. The post concludes by saying that #JusticiaYa is “mas amplio y necesario,” or “larger and more necessary.” While it may go without saying that a group centered around “Justice” leaves itself open for broader focuses than one centered around “Resignation,” the implications of this come into light as the years go on.

It is worth noting the importance of the use of graphic design within these first two figures and #JusticiaYa’s posts at large. In an interview with Fusion (Rogers, 2105) Wer attributed a part of the success of the original April 25th protest to his decision to change the cover photo to an image of a crowd standing around “#RenunciaYa,” as this was something easier on the eyes and digestible. The posts of #JusticiaYa are simple and clean, and utilize the Guatemalan flag colors of blue and white, provoking a nationalism in spite of

criticisms levied against the state. The blue bubble at the bottom of Figure 1, and the use of the four grey dots in Figure 2, resemble respectively message bubbles and page indicators used in the applications of Smartphones. Other examples of posts where graphic design is important are photos that demonstrate hands holding up tweets (Figure 3), countdown posts to the next protest, organizational posts that act as schedules and maps for upcoming forms, graphics designed to convey economic information (Figure 4), and “UltimaHora” posts that act as news bulletins for

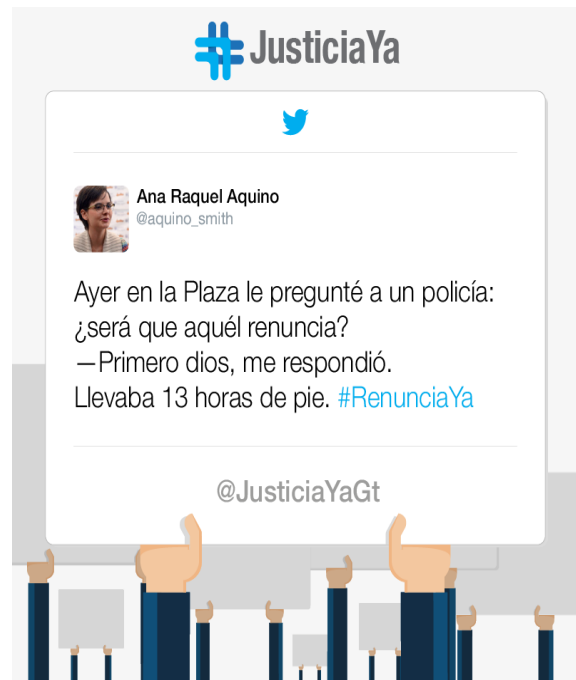


Figure 3. A tweet upheld in a crowd of hands. Adapted from Facebook, by JusticiaYa, 2015 June, retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/justiciayagt/photos/a.982710221747479.107374182.8.982349058450262/990692750949226>

#JusticiaYa followers. Although #JusticiaYa is a small group with no institutional connections, it works hard to maintain the clean-cut appearance and news of today's technology.

CORRUPCIÓN EN EL EJECUTIVO

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 Otto Pérez Molina
Presidente. Solicitud de antejuijo se encuentra en el Congreso, aún en proceso de discusión | 6 Erick Archila
Renunció 15/05/15. Exministro de Energía y Minas |
| 2 Roxana Baldetti
ExVicepresidenta. Renunció el 8/05/15 tras protesta por la revelación de la estructura La Línea el 16 de abril | 7 Omar Franco
En prisión. Jefe de la SAT. Se le acusa de asociación ilícita. Caso La Línea |
| 3 Gustavo Martínez
En prisión. Exsecretario Privado de la Presidencia. Asociación ilícita y tráfico de influencias. Caso Redes | 8 Carlos Muñoz
En prisión. Exjefe de la SAT. Se le acusa de asociación ilícita. Caso La Línea |
| 4 Juan de Dios Rodríguez
En prisión. Expresidente del IGSS. Acusado de fraude Caso IGSS - PISA | 9 Michelle Martínez
Renunció 21/05/15. Exministra de Ambiente |
| 5 Mauricio López Bonilla
Renunció 21/05/15. Exministro de Gobernación | 10 Juan Carlos Monzón
Prófugo. Ex secretario privado de Videpresidencia. Acusado de asociación ilícita. Sería cabecilla de La Línea |



#JusticiaYa

f t @ /justiciayagt

Figure 4. A graphic showing levels of corruption within the executive branch. Adapted from Facebook, by JusticiaYa, 2015 July, retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/justiciayagt/photos/a.982710221747479.1073741828.9823490584502.62/1017353441616490/?type=3&theater>

association built between tweeting and public protesting is comparable to the blue and bolded "hashtag" within "#JusticiaYa's" name (Figure 1, Figure 2). Including the hashtag within the title of JusticiaYa serves no purpose beyond a symbolic function; it signifies Justicia Ya's relationship with social media, social media becomes a part of Justicia Ya's identity as a group. Social media, justice, and protest become tied in one association.

#JusticiaYa's first three months saw posts directly related to upcoming protests and information over La Línea Case. By the beginning of September 2015, however, Otto Perez

The effort put into the graphic design of these posts is evident with images like Figure 3 and Figure 4, which shows a tweet posted by a student from the Universidad Rafael Landívar. The tweet is held up by a crowd of arms reminiscent of images of signs held up during demonstrations. Rather than simply sharing tweets, #JusticiaYa's graphic designer takes photos of tweets and puts them within this template. This

Molina had resigned from office and new elections had taken place. Nonetheless, as the first post on their page suggests, the platform created by #JusticiaYa is meant to be open and permanent. This leads one to ask what the next steps for #JusticiaYa were after the Summer 2015 protests.

One answer to this question is that #JusticiaYa still primarily deals with the *LaLinea* case and retains its role in the formation of the 2015 protests as a part of its identity. Beginning in August 2016 the group began to post images with the title “#FueraLos15,” referring to 15 members of the FCN involved in *LaLinea* case, posting updated images that mark individuals with a yellow “x” once their immunity is revoked. This is just one example of how #JusticiaYa retains an engagement with La Linea case, other examples being continued posts of “UltimaHour” and graphics that further visualized corruption and inequality within the country. The protests of 2015 have also become a date of celebration: both April 25th of 2016 and April 25th of 2017 had demonstrations in the Central Plaza in commemoration of the original 2015 protests. When I went in 2016, the plaza had more people than the original 2015 protest, but less than the turnout of over 60,000 people for May 16th 2015. The event involved a series of rallies and conferences leading up to the event (Figure 5) and a manifesto titled simply “25A,” with an accompanying “#25A,” describing the goals of this event (Figure 6). Though the graphics in these images have developed, if one were to look solely at these figures it could seem that the general message of #JusticiaYa has not changed.

25A: 1er año

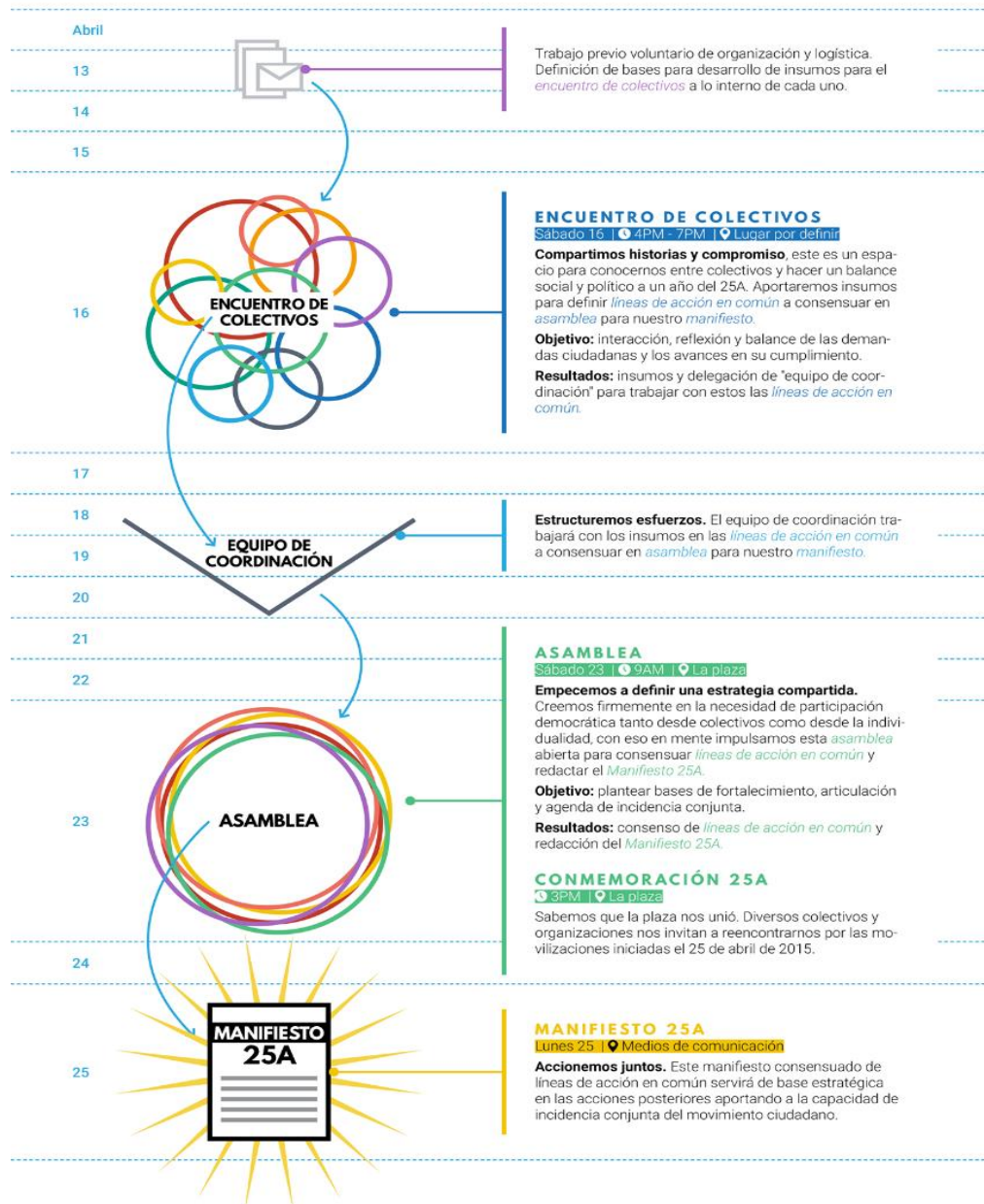


Figure 5. One calendar for the Manifestation for April 25th 2016. It is integrated with the March for Water. Adapted from Facebook, by JusticiaYa, 2016 August, retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/justiciayagt/photos/a.982710221747479.1073741828.982349058450262/1157360517615781/?type=3&theater/984782551540246/?type=3&theater>

MANIFIESTO 25A

25 de abril de 2016

A un año de la primera gran convocatoria ciudadana que dio inicio a las jornadas de manifestaciones del 2015 en todo el país, las personas y colectivos unidos por las plazas, consensuamos en asamblea y manifestamos que:

- **Nos comprometemos a promover cambios sobre las estructuras políticas que permiten y reproducen la corrupción.** Exigimos, principalmente al Congreso de la República, modificaciones **reales al sistema** que sirvan de herramienta para resolver la problemática actual.
- **Impulsamos y apoyamos reformas al Estado, que garanticen el cumplimiento de los derechos de todas y todos los guatemaltecos,** a través de métodos de consenso para construir una agenda de temas en común que permita la incidencia de los diversos actores políticos. Participamos y apoyamos el Diálogo Nacional para la reforma al Sistema de Justicia como punto de partida.
- **Exigimos al Estado que garantice el bien común priorizando la asignación de recursos para sanar las brechas sociales entre los sectores excluidos históricamente,** para garantizar a las presentes y futuras generaciones de todas las regiones, la igualdad de acceso a oportunidades, su desarrollo integral y sostenible.
- **Sabemos que para hacer esto posible debemos hilar un tejido social que tome en cuenta las necesidades de todas las formas de participación política.** Con este fin, proponemos construir una agenda de encuentros y asambleas entre las distintas formas de organización para la consolidación de una plataforma incluyente que fortalezca el poder popular.

El 25A fue el inicio, el camino será largo. **La esperanza es la gente.**
#LaPlazaVive

Figure 6. The manifest for the April 25th 2016 demonstration. Adapted from *Facebook*, by JusticiaYa, 2016 August, retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/justiciayagt/photos/a.982710221747479.1073741828.982349058450262/1166070783411421/?type=3&theater>

However, far from simply being a nostalgic return to the previous year's protest, the event opened a space to discuss larger systemic problems within Guatemala. This is evident within the 25A manifesto, which lists in bullet points four main topics. The four points listed cover: A reform to the Congress of the Republic, reforms to the Justice System, equal access to resources, and the construction of a social network for citizen political participation that will organize other assemblies and meetings. The manifesto itself is vague, but the call to action is different than a year prior. It is also an imperative to note here that the manifestation of April 25th coincided and worked with la MarchaPorAgua, which was largely coordinated by the Asamblea Popular y Social, though this will be described in more detail below. While 2015 had a direct call for the resignation of specific politicians, and this call to action was aimed broadly at all Guatemalan citizens, 2016 saw a broad call for new political conversations, and reached out to specific organizations to speak at conferences. In this way, the final point on the manifesto had already been partially achieved: #JusticiaYa, Batucada del Pueblo, Demos, Somos, CEUG, UsacEsPueblo, TECHO, Jovenes contra la violencia, and NiMD all were parties responsible for organizing the April 25th assembly.

Beyond the specific calls for resignation and the general calls for the formation of a network of activists, #JusticiaYa expanded the range of issues covered in its post. This included discussions over Guatemala's public health, education, media bias, and more. One post that sticks in my memory was not over these public policy issues, but a post promoting "la convocatoria del XVI Desfile de la Diversidad Sexual e Identidad de Género" (*Figure 7*). The first comment that appears by Facebook's algorithms, based on likes and comment responses, wrote:

El movimiento Justicia ya ha sido la lucha contra la corrupción del gobierno anterior, no deben llevar agua a su molino llevando una bandera con la que no estoy de acuerdo. Muy mal el cambiar el propósito de este grupo. [sic]

“The Justicia Ya movement had been the fight against corruption before, they should not carry water to their mill bringing a flag that I do not agree with. The change to this group’s purpose is very bad.”

This comment critiques that #JusticiaYa has moved from its original purpose of fighting against corruption. It targets both this specific post’s use of the Rainbow Flag and #JusticiaYa’s new focus on water rights. The following next four top voted replies shared similar sentiments. #JusticiaYa responded to each comment individually, and posted within the comment thread that “La corrupción no es el único delito que nos debería preocupar” or “corruption is not the only crime that should concern us.”

The “MarchaPorAgua” and “RecuperemosLaAEU” are two strong examples of causes mobilized around that were completely unrelated to the case of La Linea. The first, the March For Water, was a walk that received international attention. Organized originally by Asamblea Popular y Social, a coordination of over 22 indigenous communities formed during the original summer of 2015 protests, the walk started from Tecun Unam on April 11th, 2015 to Guatemala City on April 22nd. The walk addressed the massive contamination of Guatemala’s rivers by unwanted hydroelectrics on indigenous land (Marcha por el agua..., 2016). Both Asamblea

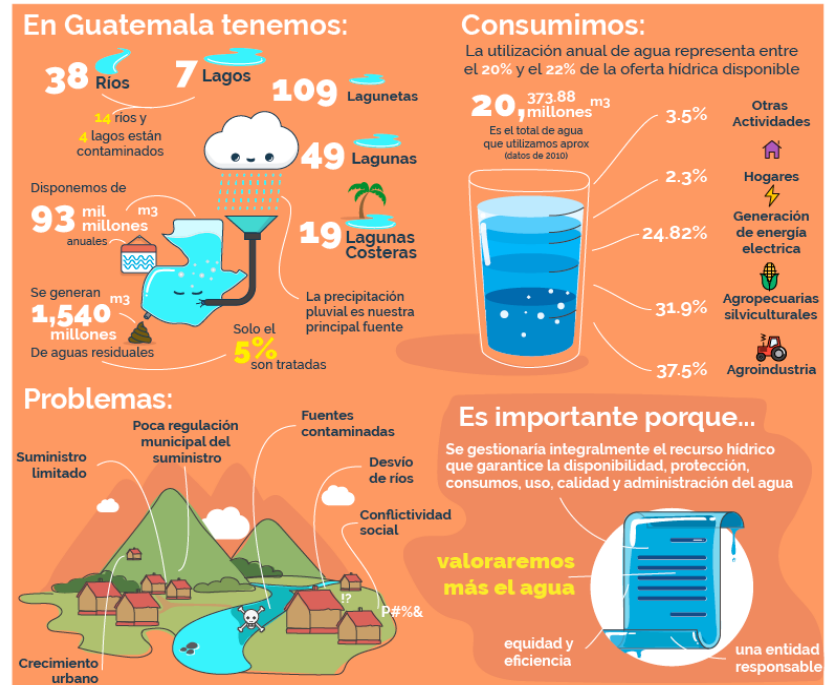


Figure 7. A post in promotion for the conference over Diversity in Sexual and Gender Identity. Adapted from *Facebook*, by #JusticiaYa, 2016 June, retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/justiciayagt/photos/a.982710221747479.1073741828.982349058450262/1162726760412490/?type=3&theater>

Social y Popular and USACEsPueblo have spoken on long standing problems within Guatemala that had previously not entered public discourse, and #JusticiaYa has worked with them to share information and organize.

Whether this broader discussion over “Justice” in such a short time frame is preferred or not is uncertain. As the original LaLinea corruption case loses relevancy, #JusticiaYa now can be better understood as a sort of news source for a variety of problems within Guatemala. Whatever the case, it is evident that within #JusticiaYa’s first year the position and purpose of the group has shifted, and this shift reflects national conversations.

¿Por qué es importante una Ley de Aguas?



Fuente: Perfil Ambiental de Guatemala 2010-2012

f t w i /justiciayagt

Figure 8. An informational post over water law in Guatemala, posted in conjunction with the March for Water with additional information shared in the post’s description over Asamblea Social y Popular. Adapted from Facebook, by #JusticiaYa, 2016 June, retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/justiciayagt/photos/a.982710221747479.1073741828.982349058450262/11>

Chapter Eight: Facebook Pages of Student Groups

As mentioned above, though #JusticiaYa was the major organizer for the weekly demonstrations during the Summer of 2015, it was far from the only group that was created during the period of high demonstrations. Specifically, student activist groups from each of the major Guatemalan universities formed at this time. While these groups did not receive the same international coverage as #JusticiaYa, national media like independent publishers like Nomada and PlazaPublica discussed the groups as a part of a national resurgence of student activism that had been dormant in the country since the civil war. A look at the Facebook pages of these groups tells how this increase in student activism has played out since 2015, a story which ultimately led to successful student elections at the USAC's AEU.

Four of prominent universities in Guatemala- USAC, the Universidad de Landivar, Universidad de Valle, and Francisco Marroquin- each formed student groups specifically to challenge issues of corruption and justice, broadly speaking, within the country. These groups were #USACEsPueblo, Landivarianos, AccionUVG, and #MovimientoMarro, respectively. While USAC, the nation's only public university, has a long history of student activism which defines the character of the university, the other three universities listed here had not before had a history of activism or a presence at demonstrations. The Universidad Rafael Landivar is a Jesuit founded university and the second oldest university after USAC, while the Universidad de Valle is a primarily United States funded university that focuses on the sciences, and Marroquin is a considerably more expensive United States funded university focusing on economics and business. The formation of student activist groups at these private universities is significant for this alone. There was also the Coordinadora Estudiantil Universitaria de Guatemala (CEUG), a coalition of students formed from each of these four groups. A student organization that crosses

between these universities had not existed prior to CEUG, understandably so given the ideological and demographic differences between the schools. To illustrate, while USAC has murals of Che Guevara and Marx on its walls, Marroquin is decorated with quotes from Milton Friedman and Ayn Rand. With these differences there is certain unprecedented nature to CEUG that challenge the notions of what it means to be a student activist in Guatemala.

The cultural significance of CEUG was explored in think pieces through the independent publications Nomada and PlazaPublica. The range of stances taken towards CEUG is reminiscent of the stances taken towards spontaneous massive demonstrations in general, discussed earlier. For example, while Alvaro Velasquez hopefully argues that CEUG represents a left movement re-emerging after decades of oppression (Velasquez 2016), Martin Berganza argues that CEUG lacks any real ideological convictions due to its broad alliances (Berganza 2015). Despite the range of critiques and praise of CEUG, what these articles share is a recognition that there is an attempt to change student culture broadly. Citing the fact that URL does not have the same history of student movements, Cabria argues that CEUG represents a culture where students are encouraged to be more politically involved regardless of which university they attend. Through the story of one student, Cabria explains how the CEUG formed through students across universities meeting at the Sumer 2015 demonstrations:

“Ella estudiaba en la Rafael Landívar (URL), la universidad jesuita, la segunda más vieja y grande del país. Según la teoría de clases chapina, no era su sitio... Carrera decidió llevar la contraria al funcionamiento clasista de las cosas. Junto a cuatro sancarlistas más, empezaron a juntarse, aunque con los años cada vez eran reuniones más esporádicas. ‘Gaby era la comunista de la URL y nosotros, los light de la USAC’, recuerda Alonzo. En el 2011, en su columna en el medio Plaza Pública, auspiciado por la URL, Carrera invitaba a los sancarlistas a crear un movimiento político.”

If Cabria explains how the founding of CEUG shows the seeds of an emerging student movement, Martin Berganza would write a year later that the continued meetings of CEUG met an important exchange of ideas among the student population (Berganza 2015) The documentary

Plaza 44-15, produced in conjunction by Universidad Rafael Landivar and Plaza Publica, compared the student activists of 1944 to 2015 by having students of CEUG meet and talk with AEU alumni involved in the 1944 movement (Universidad Rafael Landivar 2016).

Despite the significance of CEUG, its Facebook Page was never as active on its own compared to the student groups that it includes. Compared to #JusticiaYa’s audience of 86,211 followers and #USACEsPueblo’s 64,5723 followers, as of December 2017 CEUG has only 6,652 followers. Figure 9 visualizes total number of likes received on Timeline Photos per month for #JusticiaYa, CEUG, #USACEsPueblo, Landivarnos, AccionUVG, and MovimientoMarro. The number of likes from #JusticiaYa dwarfs that of the other groups, yet a pattern in spikes of activity is evident across pages during the height of the summer demonstrations of 2015, the 2016 June assemblies commemorating the previous year’s demonstrations, and September 2017’s Paro Nacional demonstrations against corruption. Figure 10 shows how many photos per month were posted on CEUG, #USACEsPueblo, Landivarnos, Accion UVG, and Movimiento Marro per month between the same time frame. From this graph it is clear that #USACEsPueblo

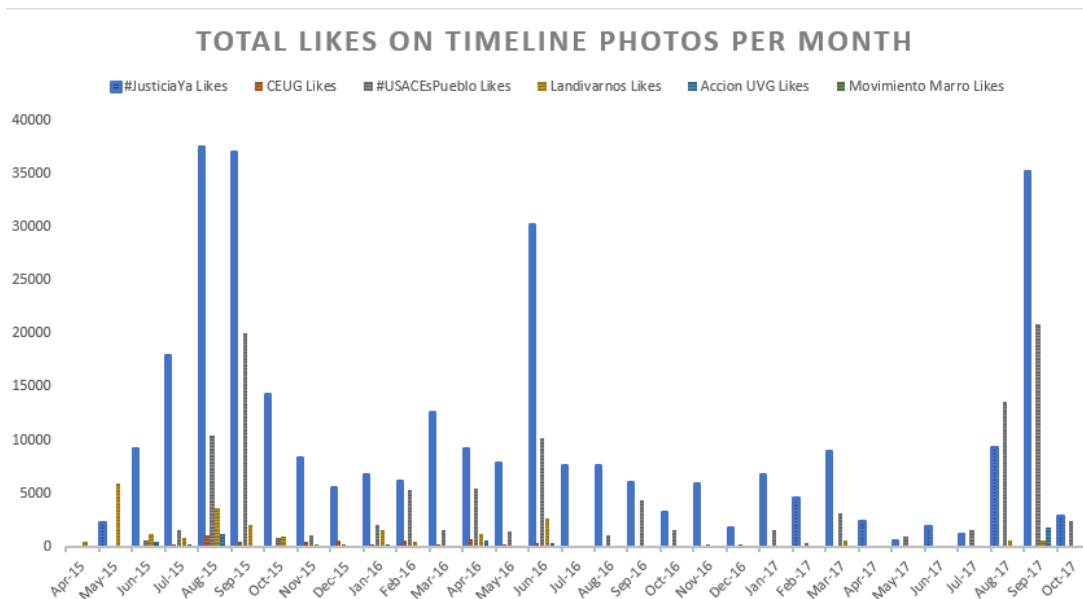


Figure 9. A graphic representation of monthly accumulated number of likes on Timeline Photos for Facebook Pages described.

is
the

most active of the student pages by a large margin, with Landivarianos being the most second active group behind them. We see that CEUG stopped posting Timeline Photos in July 2016. Nonetheless, given the context of CEUG’s importance to student activism and its connection to groups like #USACEsPueblo, it is worth investigating what content is shared on its page in comparison to #JusticiaYa.

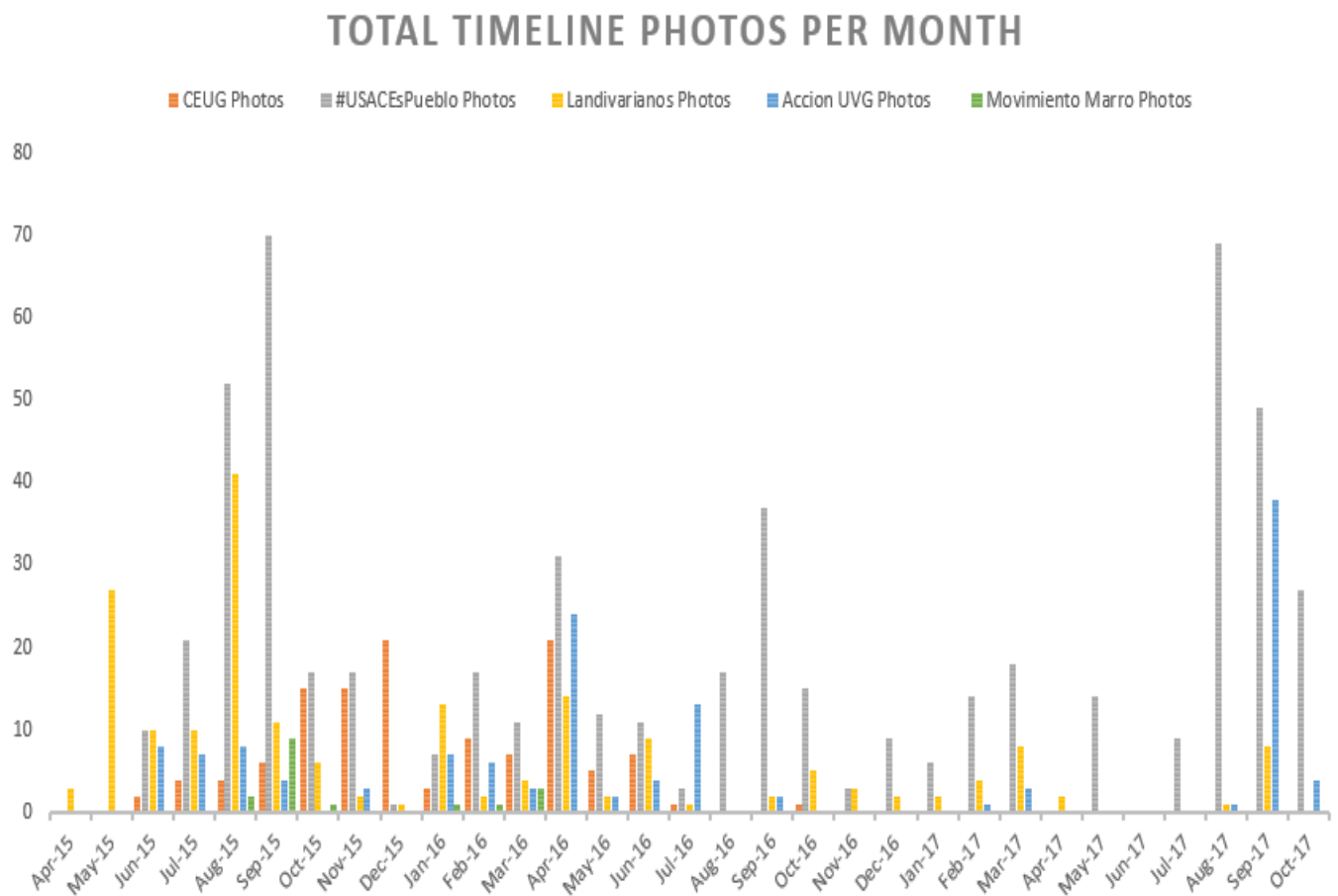


Figure 10. A graphic representation of Timeline Photos posted each month for CEUG and associated student groups.

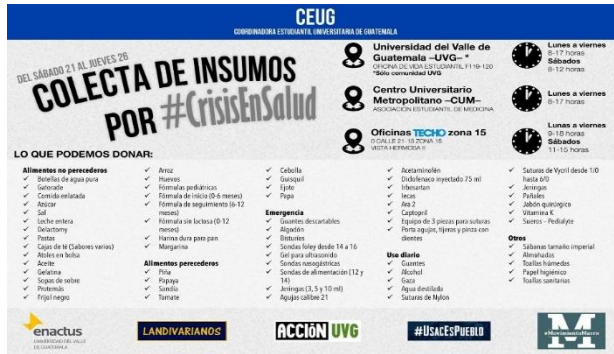


Figure 12. An early CEUG post outlining a program for a form on national health.

From the offset, the first year of CEUG covered a greater range of types of issues than #JusticiaYa. While #JusticiaYa focused primarily on corruption and La Linea scandal, CEUG focused on broad scale proposals for changes in the nation (Figure 11). As early as October 2015, CEUG published a series of

images outlining major concerns in the nation: The rural economy, reforms in justice, and the extractive industry. As the page continued, rural and indigenous concerns not covered by #JusticiaYa would be shared. Of course, a ready explanation for this could be simply that while #JusticiaYa leads discussion against the La Linea scandal, CEUG is not anchored to any particular national concern. There is also the matter of connections with universities- if one of CEUG’s four universities is hosting a forum on a national problem, CEUG can share information about the forum on its page. Figure 12 shows a forum on Guatemala’s “Crisis in Health” (#CrisisEnSalud) organized by “enactus” from the Universidad Del Valle. Note the graphics of the four CEUG universities at the bottom. Though CEUG has a smaller following than #JusticiaYa and arguably less aesthetic prowess in graphic design, this #CrisisEnSalud image shows that early on the page moved beyond issues of corruption. We also see this with #MarchaPorElAguaGT, a larger recognition of national



Figure 11. An early CEUG post that outlines government proposals for the extractive

issues among the indigenous community, and recognition of international movements.

Around the time of the Marcha Por El Agua in Spring 2016 this diversity in coverage is more prevalent. While #JusticiaYa did post content leading up to the Marcha Por El Agua, students of CEUG were major organizers for the tail end of the March. Figure 13 shows an image created for CEUG that outlines the goals for the Marcha Por El Agua in a way #JusticiaYa does not, specifically referencing the criminalization and persecution of political activists.

It is also worth mentioning the blue network placed in

the left corner of this image, as if to reference the movement's own networked nature.

There is also a greater recognition of issues facing Guatemala's indigenous and rural population on the posts of CEUG. International issues, such as the Ni Una Menos movement and the Mexico teacher strike in 2016, were also covered by CEUG. However, posts on land rights and rural issues received less traffic than the average posts on #JusticiaYa. For example, CEUG shared information on a demonstration organized around the trial of six community leaders who fought for fairer land rights and land treatment. The trial received little attention on major national media outlets but was recognized by human rights activists (PrensaComunitaria, 2016). Information on the trial was shared on CEUG's Facebook Page, but received only 20 likes and one comment. Judging by Timeline Photos alone, CEUG gives greater recognition to problems faced by Guatemala's indigenous population, but when likes and comments are factored in there is evidence that these topics receive less attention.

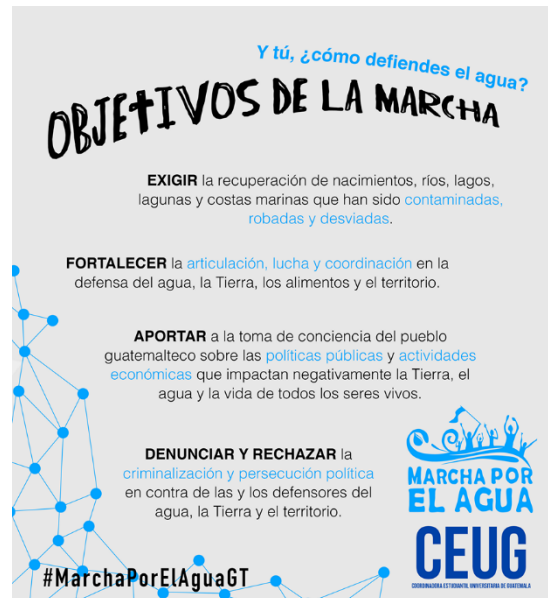


Figure 13. A CEUG post that outlines the goals of the March for Water.

#JUSTICIA YA AND #USACE SPUEBLO LIKES AND PHOTOS COMPARISON

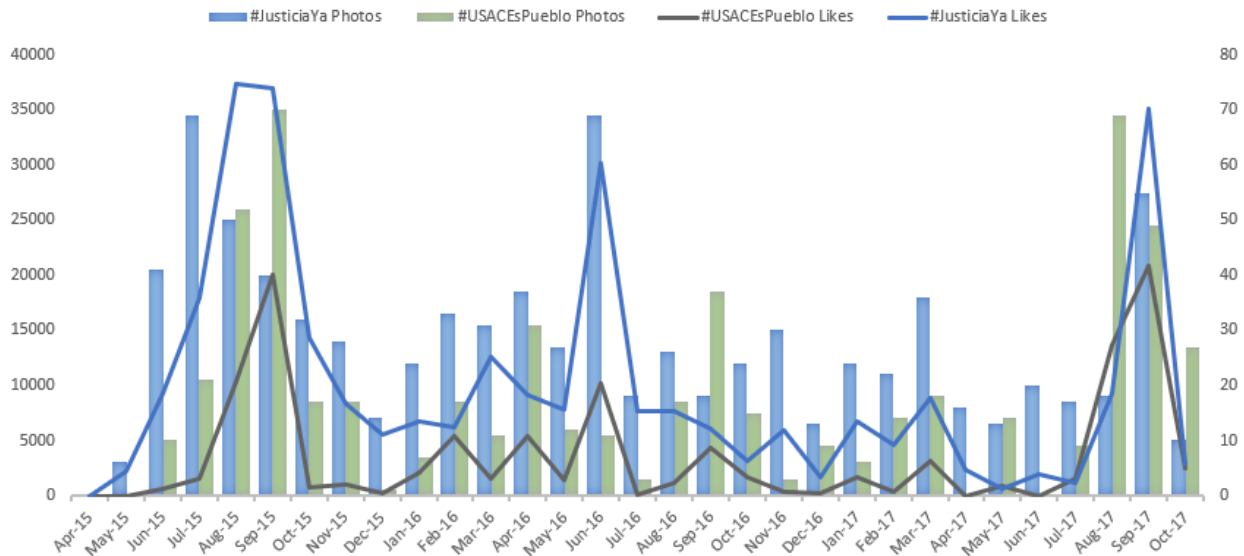


Figure 14. A graph comparing the monthly photos and likes of #JusticiaYa and #USACEsPueblo from April 2015 to October 2017. The line graph represents numbers of likes, while the bar graph represents number of photos. The left y-axis shows number of likes, while the right y-axis shows number of photos.

As mentioned above, CEUG is no longer as active as #JusticiaYa or #USACEsPueblo.

#MovimientoMarro similarly stopped posting Timeline Photos in 2016. The pages for Landivarianos and AccionUVG are however still active with occasional posts, while #USACEsPueblo is active in a way comparable to #JusticiaYa. When both total Timeline Photos and total likes on Timeline Photos per month are compared (Graph 3), the two pages' fluctuations in activity and audience parallel each other.

Given the USAC's history with student activism, it is not particularly surprising that it is the most active student page out of the other CEUG-affiliated groups. Like #JusticiaYa, #USACEsPueblo became a node for other organizations, sharing content and events from #JusticiaYa, CEUG, PrensaComunitaria, and Asamblea Popular y Social. Similar to CEUG, #USACEsPueblo has a higher tendency to post about a broader range of issues, especially pertaining to indigenous rights and land usage. The similarities between the posts of CEUG and

#USACEsPueblo may also suggest that the representation of student population in CEUG is primarily of students from USAC.

A significant cause that #USACEsPueblo took upon itself was the #RecuperemosNuestraAEU movement. Arguably this began as early as the 22nd of May 2016, when the Dia Estudiantil was celebrated for the first time in over 20 years in the Plaza of Martyrs. The Dia Estudiantil (student day) is a commemoration of the founding of the AEU at USAC, and the martyrs that died as members of AEU. Members of #USACEsPueblo organized to put up photos of the Summer 2015 protests in the schools Plaza of Martyrs, along with having speakers who personally knew and worked with martyr Oliverio Castaneda de Leon. I was there in person, and most significantly I remember meeting students who did not previously know that it was Dia Estudiantil due to lack of commemorations in the past. A year later the DiaEstudiantil was celebrated again, with Figure 15 posted comparing the AEU of the 1980s with the USACEsPueblo of 2015. This was the beginning of #USACEsPueblo's efforts to reclaim the AEU organization.



Figure 15. A post from #USACEsPueblo comparing AEU demonstrations of the 1980s to present day demonstrations.

The first instance of the “#RecuperemosNuestraAEU” hashtag was September 20th, 2016 (Figure 16). Less than a year after the resignation of Otto Perez Molina, students from USAC held a protest at the school demanding for new elections for a student run AEU. Figure X became the page’s cover photo, posted with the accompanying text:

“Este 20 de septiembre de 2016 quedará en la historia de nuestra Alma Mater.
Ese eras vos, ahí estás compañera, esos eramos todos y todas afuera de la sede de la AEU exigiendo que nos la devuelvan, Por una AEU al servicio del estudiante y comprometida con el campesino, el obrero, el indigena, con el pueblo de Guatemala.
Fecha donde el estudiantado deja los escritorios y las aulas para caminar fuerte, a una sola vos, exigiendo que nos devuelvan nuestra AEU.”



Figure 16. A cover photo from USACEsPueblo that shows students demonstrating for the #RecuperemosNuestraAEU movement.

The movement continued throughout the rest of the year, with over one fourth of the remaining photos in 2016 dedicated to the #RecuperemosNuestraAEU cause. Two notable examples include a photo which shows USAC students dropping a large banner saying “#RecuperemosNuestraAEU” in the USAC’s Consejo Superior Universitario (CSU, Higher University Council) and an informative post that articulates a right to student elections and denouncing the CSU for not previously allowing elections (Figure 17). A later image from 2017, Figure 18, an infographic which outlines the reasons for new elections, with students holding the same #RecuperemosNuestraAEU banner used at the CSU.

¡COMUNICADO URGENTE!

Debido a las acciones que en estos últimos días ha tomado el Consejo Electoral Estudiantil en el proceso de la recuperación de la Asociación de Estudiantes Universitarios, Oliverio Castañeda de León -AEU-, dónde toman atribuciones que no le corresponden, y elaboran un Reglamento Electoral con inconsistencias legales que violan los propios estatutos de la AEU y derechos Constitucionales, informamos y hacemos saber al estudiantado sancarlista y pueblo de Guatemala:

El martes 11 de octubre El Consejo Electoral de la AEU presentó propuestas para limitar la participación en las contiendas electorales para el secretariado de la AEU. Entre estas propuestas estaban:

- a. Que los candidatos no deben de tener ninguna vinculación o participación en Comités de Huelga (incluyendo autónomos y alternativos);
- b. Ni tampoco ser representantes estudiantiles ante CSU, Juntas directivos o Consejos consultivos de Unidades académicas; entre otras.

Un reglamento electoral con dichas características viola los derechos políticos más básicos, y significa una transgresión a los principios democráticos, viola los derechos humanos y la constitución, y contradice lo indicado por los estatutos de la AEU.

Comprendemos que el Consejo electoral actúa motivado por el miedo a que los corruptos continúen con los espacios, pero les recordamos que **el objetivo de este proceso ES LIBERAR EL ESPACIO PARA ELECCIONES DEMOCRÁTICAS, Y NO CONTROLAR QUIÉN LLEGA O NO A LA AEU BASADO EN CRITERIOS PERSONALES.**

-"Artículo 29. Son atribuciones, funciones, derechos y obligaciones del consejo consultivo estudiantil universitario:

- a) Cumplir y velar porque se cumplan los estatutos y el reglamento general de AEU."

Invitamos al Consejo Consultivo a actuar el día de hoy con sabiduría y asegurar el respeto a los estatutos y los derechos de los y las estudiantes, rechazando la aprobación de este reglamento electoral a todas luces ilegal que viola los propios estatutos de la AEU. Y recordar que el Consejo Consultivo puede reglamentar pero sin pasar por encima de los estatutos de la AEU y la aprobación de este Reglamento Electoral vulneraría el proceso transparente y democrático que hasta ahora se ha llevado.

La verdadera victoria contra la corrupción, radicará en la capacidad que tengamos para ponernos de acuerdo, recordemos que es la falta de democracia y transparencia la que nos tiene en la crisis actual y encontremos la manera de trabajar juntos por democratizar nuestra AEU.

¡Por un proceso verdaderamente democrático y transparente que no responda a estructuras que quieren "limpiar" para cooptar nuevamente nuestra AEU!

#RecuperemosNuestraAEU

#USACEsPUEBLO

Figure 17. A USACEsPueblo post from October 2016 arguing for fair elections for AEU.

#USACEsPUEBLO

ELECCIONES AEU 2017

NI CON 17 AÑOS DE SECUESTRO PUDIERON ARRANCAR DE RAÍZ LO QUE SOMOS

Estamos a las puertas de un hecho histórico como sancarlistas. Estamos a días de las primeras elecciones democráticas para Secretariado General de la Asociación de Estudiantes Universitarios Oliverio Castañeda de León -AEU-. Que ha permanecido 17 años secuestrada por mafias, grupos políticos y crimen organizado; quienes se han dedicado a extorsionar, violentar, amenazar, agredir, pactar con autoridades corruptas y desprestigiar a la máxima organización estudiantil del país

Este 19, 20 y 21 de agosto las y los verdaderos estudiantes sancarlistas diremos fuerte y claro:
¡NI UN DÍA MÁS, LA AEU ES NUESTRA NO DE USTEDES DELINCUENTES!

POR LO QUE HACEMOS SABER:

- 1- Al estudiantado sancarlista: Invitamos a **respaldar al Consejo Electoral Estudiantil Universitario**, así como a participar en las elecciones democráticas para elegir al Comité Ejecutivo de AEU a realizarse los días **19, 20 y 21 de agosto de 2017**.
- 2- A las autoridades, profesionales y trabajadores de la USAC: Les invitamos a caminar junto al estudiante en esta fiesta democrática. La cual estamos seguros será de beneficio para la comunidad Sancarlista y para el país entero.
- 3- A las organizaciones sociales, sindicatos, colectivos urbanos y rurales, ex dirigentes estudiantiles, universidades privadas y todo aquel que se considere aliado del estudiante Sancarlista: Les invitamos a seguir de cerca este proceso de democratización de la AEU, que es el primer paso en la recuperación la USAC para el pueblo de Guatemala.

Al Consejo Superior Universitario le recordamos: Éste es un proceso 100% estudiantil. Producto de años de organización, resistencia y lucha. Que ha costado sangre a mano de los delinquentes de la **ilegal Comisión Transitoria que también ha manejado el Honorable Comité de Huelga de Todos los Dolores los últimos años**. Es por esto que les hacemos un llamado a no permitir que las fuerzas oscuras bloqueen este legítimo esfuerzo, que será observado por el país y juzgado por la historia.

"VOTA ESTE 19, 20 Y 21 DE AGOSTO POR UNA NUEVA AEU"



#RECUPEREMOSNUESTRAAEU

USAC

"Sembraremos Rebeldía, hasta que cosechemos libertad"

Figure 18. A USACEsPueblo post from August 2017 explaining the reason for the elections.

The CSU agreed to allow elections. Student political parties, most notably Frente Estudiantil and MEUC, each with candidates for the distinct positions were created. These positions included Comisión de Asuntos Internacionales, Comisión de Divulgación y Propaganda, Comisión de Cultura, Comisión de Deporte, Comisión de Arte, Secretario General

Adjunto, Secretario de Finanzas, Secretario de Actas, Comisión de Asuntos Nacionales y Populares, and Comisión de Asuntos Universitarios. Each term last for two years. Elections were to be held from the 19th to the 21st of August 2017.

Social Media played a majorly significant role in the campaign. Each student party created their own Facebook page, with Frente Estudiantil being the largest at 6,478 like and 6,536 followers as of December 2017. Another student group, MEUC, also had a significant audience with 2,185 likes and 2,212 followers as of December 2017. In preparation for the



Figure 19. A FrenteEstudiantil post showing a candidate for the Art Commission.

campaign, the page shared videos, photos, and text posts explaining its positions and candidates for the elections (Figure 19).

Students of FrenteEstudiantil were interviewed for national news outlets such as

GuateVision and Viva la Manana, increasing their legitimacy. A Facebook Page with no

association with any party, called El

Colectivo, was also created in 2017 with a

small following of 786 followers as of

December 2017. Though this following is

small, content created by El Colectivo has been shared by #USACEsPueblo, Frente Estudiantil, and MEUC. Reminiscent of the documentary *Plaza '44-'15*, El Colectivo created short documentaries explaining the history of AEU, its importance in the '44 Spring, and its repression and cooption during the Civil Conflict. Echoing the sentiments of (Cabria 2015),

USAC's history of student activism was evoked in order to construct an identity of the student as activist.

Facebook was not just a way of distributing information, however. While in Guatemala in the Summer of 2017, I visited a friend supporting Frente Estudiantil. At his house I saw a whiteboard with each political party listed, with tallies by their names. When I asked what the tallies represented, he responded that they were representative of how much support each group had. When I asked him how he had gathered the information, he responded simply that each tally represented 100 Facebook Likes. In this instance Facebook was not only a technology of communication, but a means of gauging the success of each political party.

As elections neared #USACEsPueblo increased its posting of content encouraging students to vote, including information on where and how to vote. The group also helped to organize and advertise a debate with the main parties, and would later livestream part of the debate from their page. #USACEsPueblo also shared photos of various false voting centers, which they believed to be set up by associates to the current AEU (Figure 20).

Regardless of the outcome of the elections, the fact that students were able to successfully mobilize for new elections is something significant. More significant is that many of Frente Estudiantil's candidates did in fact win the elections. 62% of the votes went to Frente Estudiantil. Nomada shared an infographic celebrating the elections as the beginning of a new era (Figure 21). Lenina Garcia, the first woman elected



Figure 20. A #USACEsPueblo post identifying an illegitimate voting station.

in the AEU in 97 years, was elected the position of secretary. Out of 15 newly appointed students, 7 were women, a drastic change from the lack of women before 2017. The new AEU's first action was joining a group of over 35 social organizations that demand the resignation of President Jimmy Morales, called the Articulacion por la Vida (Miranda 2017).



Figure 21. An infograph shared on the Nomada Facebook Page describing the elections as a success.

This summary outlines a development of increased student political activism in Guatemala. As is the case in any summary, there are certain movements that have been left out or not fully elaborated on for sake of simplicity. Landivarianos, AccionUVG, and #MovimientoMarro are still active within their respective schools, but their lack of activity on Facebook left them out of this analysis. #USACEsPueblo has created and supported other campaigns that are not mentioned here, such as the #ParoNacional movement. There is also much more that could be said in regards to the #MarchaPorLaAguaGT movement. I hone in the development of the #RecuperemosNuestroAEU movement because in my view it is an example of a very tangible political gain for the students of USAC, and I hope to show that under the broader boom in student activism represented by CEUG specific causes have formed with some success.

Chapter Nine: Conclusion

Given the context of Guatemala's 2015 demonstrations and the content of the Facebook Pages #JusticiaYa, CEUG, and #USACEsPueblo, we can return to the question of what theoretical approach best serves understanding Facebook Pages. The answer is a mix of both the emphasis New Social Movement Theories place on the public sphere and the emphasis Political Process Theory puts on strategy and political opening. Specifically, if we interpret mass demonstrations as a signifying performance and understand Facebook as a form of Public sphere, then methods of analysis from both New Social Movement Theories and Political Process Theory can function alongside each other without contradiction.

As explained prior, the 2015 Summer Demonstrations in Guatemala are comparable to viral movements like Chile's 2011 student movement and Mexico's #YoSoy132 movement. Like both of these movements, protestors evoked images of solidarity and national identity. In addition to #JusticiaYa's color palette evoking the national flag, images like Figure 3 suggest a solidarity inherent to tweeting and images like Figure 6 commemorate the demonstrations of the previous year as a national event. The performance of these continual demonstrations was communicative of a broader legitimacy crisis that extends beyond the La Linea corruption scandal. Though the momentum of the original 2015 protests died down, more attention was given to specific national problems, such as the MachaPorLaAgua of Figure 8. The analysis given by Treré (2015) is applicable here. Specifically, the student movements of Mexico, Chile, and Guatemala are similar in their emphasis on the identity of the student as activist. The *Plaza '44- '15* documentary, Figure 15, and the El Colectivo Facebook Page show this explicitly in their connection to student movements of the present to student movements of the past, but a

similar sense of student solidarity is evident in the very name “USAC Es Pueblo,” or “USAC is the people.”

However, more than simply communicative on social media, the Events and Assemblies organized by #JusticiaYa created spaces for like-minded politically active people to meet. As the interviews from *La Fuerza de Las Plazas* (2016) explained, CEUG formed because students were meeting at these assemblies. This social meeting ground for activists fits well with Castell’s vision of coalescing networks. The different groups active involved in forms like shows that organizations which were already present and groups that recently formed were now communicating with each other in a way they were not prior to 2015. The urban public sphere was changing not only online, but physically as well.

It is not only the social theories of Castells that can describe this phenomena. In a Political Process model, the massive demonstrations can be seen as the opportunity that various political agents took strategic advantage of to further political gains. Similarly, the use of the Public Sphere concept is not solely limited to social agents using communicative action to challenge norms. Each of the Facebook Pages studied can be understood as a part of the Public Sphere, and given their popularity and content one can argue that they express and propel the legitimacy crisis in Guatemala, or Latin America as a whole (Jara 2014). In this frame the Facebook Page as a Public Sphere evokes Habermass’s concept of communicative action and the challenging of hegemonic norms, but the Public Sphere is not solely limited to the communicative.

The elections of a new student run AEU show that Facebook is not only a technology where ideas are exchanged with no specific political goals, but that it is itself a political tool. The student movement, while more specific in its aims, led to real political gains. #USACEsPueblo

and FrenteEstudiantil were able to first change the narrative around the AEU, using blog posts and hashtags around #RecuperemosNuestraAEU. Then, this success in the cultural sphere led to a tangible political gain- the students organized and won elections for the AEU. The success of the AEU elections at USAC could be seen as a small-scale parallel to what is happening more broadly in Guatemala as a whole: A significant event has opened a discursive space, networks of activism have coalesced via this space, and to varying degrees of success these activist networks fight different political fronts.

To tie this case back to the larger context of notions of “hashtag activism,” the success of the #RecuperaraNuestraAEU shows how trends in social media can lead to real political aims. The debate surrounding “cultural movements” as opposed to “real political movements” will likely continue as the use of Web 2.0 technologies becomes more expansive and complex, however case studies like this show that the two concepts are not mutually exclusive or even at odds. Technologies like the Facebook Page allow new ideas to be disseminated and discussed rapidly, but that does not mean the implications of the technology are limited to the realm of ideas.

Future studies of Facebook Pages in social movements could conduct a discourse analysis of the Facebook Posts while simultaneously analyzing the numbers of likes, followers, comments, and shares of posts over time. Looking at this data as it correlates with significant events and other social phenomena can be a valuable measure of how social causes change in support. There are certainly more ways to mine Facebook for important data on the force of political movements, the only limitation is our own understandings of Facebook as a technology that is purely communicative.

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