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The Dragon, the Bear, and the Eagle in Latin America

How Superpower Interventions Affect Human Security In Latin America

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ABSTRACT

This thesis aims to evaluate effects that superpower interventions have on human security in Latin America. The objective is to find and address possible correlations between the foreign policy of superpowers and human security in various Latin American countries. For this purpose, the research relies on a multidisciplinary approach to analyze certain foreign policy strategies and their qualitative effects on the region under the scrutiny of human security. While Latin America is clearly an economically attractive region to major powers, the overall effect these major powers have on the region's human rights standards must be understood. Establishing Russia, the People's Republic of China, and the United States of America as the superpowers in question, this survey of their perspective foreign policies clearly establishes a negative correlation between their foreign policies and human security in the region. Even though these superpowers will never claim to be working against human rights and human security, their actions in the region appear to show otherwise, whether meaning to or not.

Key Words; Superpowers, Interventions, Human Security, People's Republic of China, Russia, United States of America, Latin America.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ALBA	Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America
CCS	Coca Codo Sinclair
CELEC	Corporación Eléctrica del Ecuador
CIA	Centre Intelligence Agency
CPSU	Soviet Communist Party
ECSA	Ecuacorriente S.A.
EU	European Union
ITR TV	Inter Russia TV Channel
KGB	Committee for State Security
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights
PdVSA	Petróleos de Venezuela
PKO	Peacekeeping operation
PRC	People's Republic of China
RT	Russia Today
SICA	System of Central American Integration
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
UHV	Ultra-high voltage
UN	United Nations
US	United States of America
USSR	Union of Socialist Soviet Republic (Soviet Union)
WHO	World Health Organization

1. Introduction

When addressing the increasingly complex region of Latin America many factors must come into consideration. Its troubled history, its convoluted social and political theaters, its “start and stop economy”, and a multitude of other things. However protean the situation the region has found itself in, the one constant in its history has been persistent interventions by superpowers. Ever since its colonization by Europeans, the region has been a playground for major powers, and this has only been more present in the 20th and 21st centuries, with the most prevalent time being during the Cold War, however the decades after have been equally important to discuss due to the presence of China (PRC), the Russian Federation (Russia), and the United States (US).

Amnesty International claimed that “inequality, corruption, violence, environmental degradation, impunity and the weakening of institutions continued to be a common reality across the Americas, resulting in daily human rights violations for millions of people”¹. InSight Crime also reported that

“Unrest gripped much of Latin America and the Caribbean throughout 2019. From record violence in Mexico that recalled the darkest days of the drug war, to increased fighting among armed groups in Colombia vying for control in the absence of the FARC and a rise in massacres in Honduras, the region was again one of the world’s most homicidal last year”².

Furthermore, Transparency International reported that “with an average score of 43 for the fourth consecutive year on the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), the Americas region fails to make significant progress in the fight against corruption”³. Amnesty International also reported that “at least 210 people died violently in the context of protests across the Americas”⁴ in 2019. In addition, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) reported that “30.8% of the population in Latin America lived below the poverty line in 2019, with 11.5% living in extreme poverty”⁵.

Human rights are constantly being violated and the region has some of the most prevalent violators of human rights. These violators oftentimes are encouraged by societal and political situations in the region. These situations, although many times arising from local actors and factors, are often complicated by the introduction of superpowers. Superpower involvement in the region has been omnipresent in the region throughout history. The “involvement” in question consists of certain economic actions, supporting particular actors, and outright interfering in the local politics. These

¹ Amnesty International. Human rights in the Americas Review of 2019. Amnesty International. pp.3.

² Asmann, Parker, and O’Reilly Eimhin. InSight Crime’s 2019 Homicide Round-Up. InSight Crime. 28 January 2020.

³ Transparency International. CPI 2019: AMERICAS. Transparency International. 23 January 2020.

⁴ Amnesty International. Facts and Figures: Human Rights in the Americas in 2019. Amnesty International. 27 February 2020.

⁵ Ibid.

interventions— a term that will be explored and defined momentarily— have only and will only serve to further exacerbate the situation and ultimately create more human rights violations.

It is with this short introduction, and with more information to follow that the question this thesis seeks to address must be established. Is there a correlation between superpower interventions in Latin America, and human security in the region? This analysis will take into consideration the actions and interventions of the PRC, Russia— and partially the Soviet Union— and the US and the effects that their power and influence projection and interventionist policies have on the region. In particular, how the policies of these superpowers may affect human security in the region, and subsequently how viable these policies make it so that fundamental human rights are protected and expanded. Ultimately, while using a three-pronged case study of the effects of the foreign policy of the three aforementioned countries have on the region, whether they be intentional or not, this analysis aims to explore correlations between superpower interventions in Latin America. Though certain forays into history will occur, the presences of the aforementioned countries in Latin America will primarily focus on the 21st century as that is when the aforementioned countries can all be labeled as superpowers. Furthermore, due to the guidance offered by the information found, this analysis will use the following cases as its primary points of analysis: the PRC in Brazil and Ecuador, Russia in Nicaragua and Venezuela, and the US in Bolivia, Honduras, and Venezuela. Though it is also important to note that although not every country will be deeply analyzed, the use of the in-depth analyses of the aforementioned examples were used as they offer a wide window into superpower involvement in Latin America. However, before further concepts are explored, certain spatial and temporal limitations must be established. First and foremost, this analysis will focus on the region commonly known as Latin America. This region includes all of Central and South America, however it excludes the Caribbean in great detail. Meaning that countries as far north as Mexico and as far south as Argentina will be used, while there will still be certain points addressing Caribbean nations, these will only serve as minor details in analysis or to show the widespread effects of the concepts and policies explored. Furthermore, while there will be certain references to historical interventions and foreign policies, these will only be used to give a foundation to the modern foreign policies of the nations in question, as the primary focus of this analysis will be on relations between Latin America and the three aforementioned nations in the 21st century.

The label “superpower” is one explicitly addressing China, Russia, and the US. Though the label is often used in common parlance, and its meaning has been diluted to a certain degree. A superpower is “country that has the capacity to project dominating power and influence anywhere in the world, sometimes in more than one region of the globe at a time, and so may plausibly attain the status of global hegemon”⁶. China, Russia, and the US tick every box of the definition. The concept of power in this definition is not only referring to sheer military strength, but also soft power. Renowned US political scientist Joseph Nye defined “soft power” in his 1990 article for

⁶ Miller, Alice L. A Superpower? No Time Soon. Hoover Digest, 2005 no.2. 30 April 2005.

Foreign Policy titled “Soft Power”. He described this sort of power as a “country get[ting] other countries to *want* to do what it wants”⁷, further explaining that “the ability to affect what other countries want tends to be associated with intangible power resources such as culture, ideology, and institutions”⁸. China, though more heavily involved in its own region, has been increasing its influence over the globe as an alternative to customary US backed policy and its financial might cannot be overlooked. Meanwhile Russia’s influence has been felt in the Middle East, the Crimea, and Eastern Europe, all the while the close ties that Moscow has with undemocratic regimes in the region are also a cause for concern. Lastly, the close and tumultuous history between the US and its southern neighbors is not one to gloss over as it continues to affect every crevice of society in Latin America. However, what differentiates these three individual countries from, say the European Union or another potentially influential country, is their nearly unrivaled capabilities. Though the US stands far above China and Russia, its stock is falling under the Trump administration, while Chinese and Russian influences are appearing ever prevalent. The only true rival these three superpowers have are each other, and Latin America is becoming their battleground, while human security is the primary victim.

The simultaneous ambiguity and specificity of the concept of human security became the most suitable framework for this research because, though encompassing human rights as a whole, it also addresses the people’s needs and desires for security. Furthermore, this author believes that moving away from state centered security and towards human centered security is the most viable way to protect human rights. Human security as a concept was adopted into mainstream international relations when the 2005 World Summit Outcome was accepted by all the heads of states. Primarily “the right of people to live in freedom and dignity, free from poverty and despair”⁹ being a seminal notion of human security. Willy Bruggeman defines human security as the “protect[ion] [of] vital freedoms. It implies the protection of people from critical and pervasive threats and situations”¹⁰. Mient Jan Faber expands on the meaning of human security by explaining that “there are two competing schools of human security”¹¹, with those being ‘freedom from want’ and ‘freedom from fear’. Faber further defines ‘freedom from want’ as relating to “human needs in economic, health, social, and environmental terms”¹² while ‘freedom from fear’ being “about removing the use or threat of force and violence from people’s everyday lives”¹³. Though Faber uses the term “competing” when differentiating the two schools of human security, this term is made obsolete by the fact that a human’s desire for a healthy, social, and economically viable life would be denied by violence being done upon them, therefore violating their chance for an “equal

⁷ Nye, Joseph. *Soft Power*. *Foreign Policy* no.80. Autumn 1990. pp.153-171.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ UN General Assembly (2005). 2005 World Summit Outcome 2005. A/60/150. 15 September 2005. parr.143.

¹⁰ Bruggeman, Willy. *Failing Global Justice and Human Security*. In den Boer, Monica, and de Wilde, Jaap (eds). *The Viability of Human Security*. 2008. pp.47-70.

¹¹ Faber, Mient Jan. *Human Security from Below: Freedom from Fear and Lifeline Operations*. In den Boer, Monica, and de Wilde, Jaap (eds). *The Viability of Human Security*. 2008. pp.149-178.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*

opportunity to enjoy all their rights and fully develop their human potential”¹⁴. Mary Kaldor also explored the concept of human security, and though she did not add much in terms of different definitions to what has been mentioned, she did write of human security being “a means as well as a goal”¹⁵. She further explains that to make such a reality happen, the use of force may have to be involved, however that it should be “directed towards protection rather than fighting or revenge”¹⁶. Furthermore, the Commission on Human Security (CHS), in its final report *Human Security Now*, defined human security as:

“... [the protection of] the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance human freedoms and human fulfillment [sic]. Human security means protecting fundamental freedoms – freedoms that are the essence of life. It means protecting people from critical (severe) and pervasive (widespread) threats and situations. It means using processes that build on people’s strengths and aspirations. It means creating political, social, environmental, economic, military and cultural systems that together give people the building blocks of survival, livelihood and dignity (CHS: 2003: 4)”¹⁷

Ultimately, what can be distilled from this is the unfortunate, yet useful opaqueness of human security and the flexibility that comes with such a terminology. With this in mind, for this analysis, human security at its most simple will be understood as “freedom from want and freedom from fear”, as Faber established. Though this does not discredit the other sourced authors on this topic, as their insight, along with others, will be supplementing the definition established by Faber.

As the OHCHR stated in the UN Human Rights Report 2019, “the year [in the Americas] was marked by social grievances that were exacerbated by persistent inequalities and weak institutional trust due to corruption, discriminatory policies and, in some places, by violence generated by organized crime and drug-trafficking”¹⁸. Furthermore, the report also stated that “those involved in environmental rights, land conflicts and members of marginalized groups, such as indigenous peoples, Afrodescendants, peasants and LGBTI activists, are among those who are most at risk”¹⁹. Though this is only a small sample of the issues that will be further explored, Front Line Defenders also reported that 304 human rights defenders were killed in 2019, with 208 of them coming from Latin America and the Caribbean²⁰. While the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) detailed a 0.1% GDP growth in the region in 2019²¹. Ultimately, and as will

¹⁴ UN General Assembly (2005). 2005 World Summit Outcome 2005. A/60/150. 15 September 2005. parr.143.

¹⁵ Kaldor, Mary. *Human Security. Society and Economy*, vol.33, no.3. 2011. pp.441-48.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Human Security Unit Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs United Nations. *Human Security in Theory and Practice Application of the Human Security Concept and the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security*. United Nations. 2009.

¹⁸ Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights. *UN Human Rights Report 2019*. 2019. pp.262.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Front Line Defenders. *Front Line Defenders Global Analysis 2019*. Front Line Defenders. 2020.

²¹ Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. “Table; Update of growth projections for Latin America and the Caribbean in 2019 and 2020 (as of November 2019)”. ECLAC. November 2019.

be shown later, there is a severe lack of ‘freedom from want’ and ‘freedom from fear’ in the region, thus individuals are not able to securely achieve their full human potential.

With Latin American being a hotspot for superpower interventions, it is time to address what is meant by “intervention”. Christian Reus-Smit explored the concept of intervention in 2013, focusing on the concepts of international intervention, humanitarian intervention, and legitimate intervention²². First drawing upon the Oxford English Dictionary definition, Reus-Smit discusses to ‘intervene’ as ‘to come in as something extraneous’ or ‘to come between so as to prevent or modify a result’²³. Addressing the two definitions, he continues his analysis by describing four characteristics of interventions. First, that “the idea of intervention assumes an initial realm of differentiation: it assumes the extraneous and the intrinsic, the exogenous and the endogenous”²⁴. Second, that “to intervene is to enter from the outside as an outsider”²⁵. Third, that “intervention is purposive, it is to transgress with intent”²⁶. Lastly, “intervention is a transformative act. Its purpose is to ‘prevent or modify a result’. No actor intervenes to observe or leave untouched”²⁷. With these four characteristics clearly understood, Reus-Smit continues to explore the three qualifiers of intervention he initially mentioned: international, humanitarian, and legitimate. Reus-Smit established certain purposes of international interventions such as “to punish violations of natural law, suppress slavery, prevent revolution, defend property rights or the rights of international creditors, change the nature of domestic political systems, protect religious minorities, prevent gross human rights violations, etc”²⁸.

Reus-Smit continues on this spectrum of interventions by discussing the thoughts of many different thinkers regarding humanitarian intervention, of which this analysis will go into further detail when more appropriate. Certain interventions in Latin America have been done in the name humanitarian assistance or have been aimed towards compelling a sovereign to respect fundamental human rights, however their effectiveness is left for debate. Lastly, Reus-Smit claims that interventions are “always justified”²⁹. However, when speaking of the legitimacy of interventions he does not give a clear definition. This leads to the thought that interventions are always justified, however only by those intervening. Simultaneously, these “justified” interventions can be seen as legitimate by those who benefit, while are considered illegitimate by those it harms, but then again so is any action in international politics. For this reason, the “legitimacy” of interventions will not be coming into consideration in this analysis. In conclusion, drawing upon Reus-Smit’s definition of intervention, the definition used for this analysis will be

²² Reus-Smit, Christian. The concept of intervention. *Review of International Studies*, vol.39, no.5. December 2013. pp.1057-1076.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

as follows; foreign involvement in another state, with or without that state's governmental approval, with the intent of modifying ecopolitical and social movements, for the benefit of certain actors.

For the purposes of this research the rest of the thesis will continue as follows; first, the theoretical lenses will be established, primarily addressing Immanuel Wallerstein's World Systems Analysis, however there will also be mentions and discussion on Gramscian hegemony, and dependency theory. The chapters after that will take into consideration certain foreign policy strategies by the PRC, Russia, and the US, and discuss correlative examples that these foreign policies have on human security in the region. Moreover, the methodological framework to this analysis includes a mixture of quantitative and qualitative approaches. The qualitative aspects appear when analyzing and exploring trade deals, foreign direct investment, arms imports and exports, and other data points. On the other hand, the quantitative aspect appears when analyzing the impacts that the aforementioned things have on indigenous populations, the environment, and the internal politics of countries. Lastly, the effects of the foreign policies of these superpowers will be addressed through the following specific examples: the PRC in Brazil and Ecuador, Russia in Nicaragua and Venezuela, and the US in Bolivia, Honduras, and Venezuela. The focus on these nations is not arbitrary, as that is where the most relevant information found guided this research.

2. Theoretical Framework

First and foremost, Gramsci's concept of hegemony has to be explored and joined with previous definitions of superpower and intervention. This exploration of hegemony will give us a better foundation to later examine Wallerstein's world systems analysis and the interconnected nature shown throughout the mentioned history of the core, semi-periphery, and periphery countries. Moreover, once understanding the world systems analysis, we can traverse the concepts surrounding certain false paradigms of development and international backwash effects, and importantly understanding dependency theory. Ultimately, the focus on the world systems analysis was chosen above other theoretical approaches because for the purposes of this thesis, the world systems analysis was the most appropriate since it describes and analyses the relationship between the center countries— superpowers— and the periphery countries— in this case Latin America.

Hegemony as a concept itself is clearly not new, however its application onto this subject is most appropriate when used with Gramsci's conceptualization of the term. Cultural hegemony is the term that is most commonly associated with Gramsci. Nicki Lisa Cole determined that "cultural hegemony refers to domination or rule maintained through ideological or cultural means"³⁰. It is usually achieved through social institutions, which allow those in power to strongly influence the values, norms, ideas, expectations, worldview, and behavior of the rest of society"³¹. Furthermore

³⁰ Joseph Nye's academic additions to the studies of "power" will be referenced later on.

³¹ Cole, Nicki Lisa. What Is Cultural Hegemony?. ThoughtCo. 6 January 2020.

such cultural hegemony has been achieved in today's globalized world through the fact that the world is globalized and extremely reliant on international institutions, which are more often than not dominated by the superpowers in question, therefore pushing forth their ideological dominance more effectively. Referencing the dialectical components of Marxism, Gramsci often uses coercion/force and consent/persuasion³² as the antithesis. When applied to the concept of hegemony one can think of hegemony as being coerced hegemony or consensual hegemony. Though Cole argues that Gramsci's definition of cultural hegemony relied on "consent to the rule of the dominant group [which] is achieved by the spread of knowledge"³³, his antithetical comparison of consent and coercion means that for there to be consensual cultural hegemony, there must also be coerced cultural hegemony. In the context of this analysis, both types of hegemony are going to be explored, as both have immensely important effects on Latin America.

With this brief understanding of cultural hegemony in mind, the application of Wallerstein's world system analysis can be better understood. Wallerstein claimed that the "modern world-system had its origins in the sixteenth century... it is and always has been a world-economy. It is and always has been a capitalist world economy"³⁴. Wallerstein explains what is meant by a "world-economy", claiming that it signifies a "large geographical zone within which there is a division of labor and hence significant internal exchange of basic or essential goods as well as the flows of capital and labor"³⁵. Furthermore, a world economy "is *not* bounded by a unitary political structure"³⁶, but instead functions as a plethora of politically independent units unified by the division of labor within it. Wallerstein then explains that a capitalist system is one which "gives priority to the *endless* accumulation of capital"³⁷ meaning it is a system in which "people and firms are accumulating capital in order to accumulate more capital, a process that is continual and endless"³⁸. With this simple structure in mind, the exploring of the existence of core, peripheral, and semi-peripheral countries can commence.

Wallerstein claims that what is meant by the core-periphery relational concept "is the degree of profitability of the production process"³⁹, which indicates a hierarchical system of importance, with the core countries being more valued than those in the periphery. Wallerstein explains that "core-like processes tend to group themselves in a few states"⁴⁰ while "peripheral processes tend to be scattered among a large number of states"⁴¹. Ultimately, Wallerstein himself declared that

³² Bobbio, Norbert. Gramsci and the conception of civil society. In, Mouffe, Chantal (eds.). Gramsci, and Marxist Theory. Routledge & Kegan Paul. 1979. pp21-47.

³³ Cole, Nicki Lisa. What Is Cultural Hegemony?. ThoughtCo. 6 January 2020.

³⁴ Wallerstein, Immanuel. World-Systems Analysis An Introduction. Duke University Press Durnham and London. 2006. pp.23.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid. pp.24.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid. pp.28.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

“for shorthand purposes we can talk of core states and peripheral states, so long as we remember that we are really talking of a relationship between production processes”⁴². Lastly, Wallerstein defines a semi-peripheral state as a state that has a “near even mix of core-like processes and peripheral products”⁴³. Lastly, at least for our general understanding of the world-systems analysis is the role that each state plays, and particularly the connection between their economic role and their autonomous power.

“The role of each state is a very different vis-à-vis productive processes depending on the mix of core-peripheral processes within it. The strong states, which contain a disproportionate share of core-like processes, tend to emphasize their role of protecting the quasi-monopolies of the core-like processes. The very weak states, which contain a disproportionate share of peripheral production processes, are usually unable to do very much to affect the axial division of labor, and in effect are largely forced to accept the lot that has been given to them”⁴⁴

In addition, the semi-peripheral states are “under pressure from core states and [are] putting pressure on peripheral states, their main concern is to keep themselves from slipping into the periphery and to do what they can to advance themselves towards the core”⁴⁵. It is within this context of slipping, advancement, and different pressure in which Gramsci’s cultural hegemony comes into play.

Returning to Cole’s definition of cultural hegemony, the creation and subsequent domination of social institutions allows those in power to determine the values, norms, ideas, expectations, worldview, and behavior of the rest of society, therefore they are able to shape the world into their image and making the rest of the world dependent on their actions. Linking it back to the question at hand, this theoretical lens can be used to give us a theoretical foundation of analysis for the effects that the foreign policy of superpowers has on Latin America.

This dependency leads us into the final concept, dependency theory. Albeit supplemental to world systems analysis, and according to many contradictory to world systems analysis, the core concepts of dependency theory can be shifted to blend well with world systems analysis and provide us with an even deeper understanding of the world system and the hegemonic superpowers behind it. “Dependency theory argues that under-development as experienced in Latin America and elsewhere is the direct result of capital intervention, rather than a condition of “lacking” development or investment”⁴⁶. It is the concept that the core countries are constantly getting richer

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid. pp.29.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Schmidt, Steven. Latin American Dependency Theory. Global South Studies: A Collective Publication with The Global South. 21 January 2018.

by extracting wealth and resources, be they human or natural, from peripheral countries thus making them poorer and more susceptible to further exploitation. Though there is clearly a lot more detail to understand about dependency theory, this key concept of wealth extraction is what is necessary to understand for this analysis. Such wealth extraction can be done by pure interventions as defined by Reus-Smit, which are done by superpowers. Or a cultural hegemonic world system may be implemented by the core countries, either by sheer force or overwhelming economic power. However, ultimately the outcome is the same. The peripheral countries must succumb to the demands of the core and the pressures of the semi periphery, therefore placing them at the mercy of such powers. Though in Latin America the powers at play are mostly the core countries and the semi peripheral countries must align themselves with the superpower, either politically or economically.

Lastly, this leads to what becomes the largest section of analysis in this thesis: the involvement of superpowers in Latin America, and the consequences of their actions. The superpowers in question are China, Russia, and the US. Though a small measure of historical actions of these states will be included in their analysis, they will serve as the contemporary actors conducting events in the region. Though it is clear by their current world standing that the US is the most traditional superpower of the three, and a leading member of the core countries, the other two powers must also be considered as the triumvirate of core countries. The rapidly increasing economic might of China's manufacturing and cultural behemoth cannot be understated, and their position as one of the largest economies in the world places them a clear second to US hegemony. As the closest superpower to the US, China has offered many in the periphery and semi-periphery a different hegemonic path than the US. Russia on the other hand may not be as economically powerful as China and the US, however their influence around the world is felt on a daily basis, and their power and influence projection capabilities are unrivaled except by China and the US. Seeing as the core-periphery concept is not only an economic one but also one intertwined with political power, traditional core countries/regions such as Europe are not being included as a member of core countries in this analysis. Though their influence and power are also extremely evident around the world, their reliance on the US cannot be overstated. Though this reliance is decreasing under the current US administration, Europe does not have the same level of political and economic autonomy in Latin America in order to be considered a core country for this analysis.

3. Case Studies

The following chapters will seek to now analyze in detail the cases of the PRC, Russia, and the US, in that order. Each chapter will take a similar shape, first establishing the aforementioned countries as superpowers by analyzing some recent history of their foreign policy, while also exploring the contemporary methods used to ingrain themselves in Latin America. Second, using the aforementioned theories of understanding— those being Gramscian hegemony, World Systems Theory, Dependency theory, and the false paradigms of development— to analyze their

interventions and involvements in the region. Ultimately, each chapter will then discuss potential correlations and connections between these interventions and human security in the region.

3.1. PRC: The Dragon in Latin America

3.1.1. A Superpower?

With a real GDP numbering at approximately 15.22 thousand billions⁴⁷, the PRC is second only to the US in terms of being an economic powerhouse. Though this is not the only factor that would identify the PRC as a superpower. Before further ado, the context behind Miller's definition of superpower must be established. Miller's definition was aimed at disproving the PRC's superpower status, but it was written in 2005 and things have drastically changed since then⁴⁸. As such, the PRC's superpower status today cannot be understated.

The PRC's power and influence projection capabilities can be felt throughout the world. Closer to its shores its influence can be felt in the South China Sea.

“In recent years, satellite imagery has shown [the PRC's] increased efforts to reclaim land in the South China Sea by physically increasing the size of islands or creating new islands altogether. In addition to piling sand onto existing reefs, [the PRC] has constructed ports, military installations, and airstrips—particularly in the Paracel and Spratly Islands, where it has twenty and seven outposts, respectively. [The PRC] has militarized Woody Island by deploying fighter jets, cruise missiles, and a radar system”⁴⁹.

This is not a new development however, as territorial disputes over the resource rich islands in the South China Sea started in the 1970's⁵⁰. The PRC continues to militarize the region; however, its influence now spreads far beyond its immediate neighborhood. In Africa, the hand of the PRC is all reaching. The PRC is being very politically savvy in its influence and power projecting in the region. In September of 2020, the PRC was “participating in 13 UN peacekeeping operations (PKO) around the world, including 8 in Africa”.⁵¹ And in addition they plan to continuously reinforce the 8,000 strong peacekeeping standby force⁵². Though its main interventionist method of choice in Africa is economic development.

⁴⁷ International Monetary Fund. World Economic Outlook October 2020. International Monetary Fund. 2020.

⁴⁸ Miller, Alice L. A Superpower? No Time Soon. Hoover Digest, no.2. 30 April 2005.

⁴⁹Council on Foreign Relations. Territorial Disputes in the South China Sea. Global Conflict Tracker. Council on Foreign Relations. 20 October 2020.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Olander, Eric. China to Increase Support for Peacekeeping Operations According to New White Paper. The China Africa Project. 22 September 2020.

⁵² Ibid.

The PRC's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is becoming increasingly influential in terms of economic development, but even before the initiative was "announced in 2013, China was making major strides into Africa's urban development sphere"⁵³. During the latter half of the 20th century, the PRC was already heavily politically involved with the African continent, and did its best to fill the power vacuum left there after the end of colonialism, with the main goal being gaining access to the stockpile of resources the continent had⁵⁴. "[The PRC] is now Africa's biggest trade partner, with Sino-African trade topping \$200 billion per year[,] over 10,000 Chinese-owned firms are currently operating throughout the African continent, and the value of Chinese business there since 2005 amounts to more than \$2 trillion"⁵⁵. It is with this context of economic development in Africa that we can assess the PRC's power and influence projecting capabilities in Latin America.

With Latin America being firmly under the sphere of influence of the US, the PRC is not able to be as militarily involved in the region as it may want to be, for doing so would simply antagonize the US. Therefore, the PRC's power projection in the region is reliant on the increase of its soft power. Rather than antagonizing the US and using its military to inject itself into Latin America, the PRC instead has used a similar strategy that it is using in Africa, economic development.

According to the US Congressional Research Service,

"A 2016 PRC government policy paper on Latin America and the Caribbean stated that [the PRC] seeks to strengthen cooperation on the basis of 'equality and mutual benefit' in several key areas, including exchanges and dialogues, trade and investment, agriculture, energy, infrastructure, manufacturing, and technological innovation"⁵⁶

Furthermore, with massively unreliable power grids and energy sources in the region, the PRC has focused its economic development plans in the region on the energy sector. PRC President Xi Jinping declared that is a national strategy "to build a global electricity grid mainly based on ultra-high-voltage (UHV)—a technology that enables electricity to be carried across enormous distances with greater efficiency than current high-voltage lines" in the region⁵⁷. Such a plan "can be described as the energy equivalent of the transportation infrastructure-focused Belt and Road Initiative"⁵⁸. This is how the PRC has gotten involved in the region. Using many of its SOEs to build a variety of projects such as the "the San José hydroelectric plants in Bolivia, the Reventazón Dam in Costa Rica, two nuclear power plants in the Patagonia region of Argentina, the natural gas Martano power plant in Panama"⁵⁹, and many more.

⁵³ Shepherd, Wade. What China Is Really Up To In Africa. Forbes. 3 October 2019.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Lum, Thomas. China's Engagement with Latin America and the Caribbean. Congressional Research Service. 1 June 2020.

⁵⁷ Roa, Carlos. The United States is Losing Latin America to China. The National Interest. 15 August 2019.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

Rhys Jenkins, Professor of International Development at the University of East Anglia, stated that

“Economically, the Chinese economy is seen as complementary to those of other developing countries that stand to gain from [the PRC’s] growth. Politically, the optimists see [the PRC] as offering an alternative to the domination of the old colonial powers in Africa or the United States in Latin America. Particularly in Africa, this is reflected in the tendency for Chinese aid to involve far fewer conditions than those imposed by Western donors. Even for Latin America, the emergence of [the PRC] can be seen as a counterweight to US influence in the region”⁶⁰.

Professor Jenkins, however, continues by stating that there is also an economically pessimistic view which “emphasises the competition between [the PRC] and other developing economies”⁶¹. Establishing the fact that the PRC “represents a threat to the exports of other Southern exporters of manufactures, while imports from [the PRC] compete with producers on the domestic market”⁶², Jenkins continues by asserting that the PRC’s “high level of competitiveness in manufactured goods and its booming demand for primary products is tending to push other developing countries back into specialising in commodities [a false paradigm of development], which do not provide the same dynamic benefits as the manufacturing sector”⁶³. When relating to foreign investment, a topic that is heavily influential in the PRC’s intervention strategy in Latin America, Jenkins explains that “Chinese investment simply serves to reinforce this specialisation, while at the same time other foreign investors divert their investment from other developing countries to China”⁶⁴. By establishing the competition between the PRC and other developing economies in terms of receiving foreign investments, Jenkins gives us the perfect backdrop to understand the PRC’s economic investment capabilities in the region, a topic will be broached momentarily.

Ultimately, Jenkins also provided a politically pessimistic view on the PRC’s involvement in the region. Claiming that “the pessimistic view sees [the PRC] as undermining a trend towards increased democratic governance in the developing world, both through its example of successful economic development under an authoritarian political regime and through its support of repressive governments that violate human rights”⁶⁵.

Not only has the PRC been expanding its influence and power under the guidance of its economic development strategy, but it has also signed many “strategic partnerships” with countries in the region such as Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela. With this context in mind, it can be clear that the PRC is clearly a superpower. It has

⁶⁰ Jenkins, Rhys. China’s Global Expansion and Latin America. *Journal of Latin American Studies*, vol. 42, no.4. 2010. pp.809-37.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

power and influence projecting capabilities in many regions of the world—the South China Sea, Africa, Latin America, etc.— and, as the other superpowers in this study, seeks to attain the title of global hegemon. Furthermore, the involvement of the PRC in Latin America will be best exemplified in the subsequent section, using the countries of Brazil and Ecuador as the primary points of analysis.

3.1.2. Interventions

With interventions in this analysis focusing on foreign involvement with the goal of modifying ecopolitical or social movements, we can begin to understand the PRC’s interventions in Latin America. The major form of intervention in the region is focused on the establishment and promotion of the “Beijing Consensus”. An economic model “which posits far more state intervention in the economy and a greater concern with political stability and strong government to guide the development process”⁶⁶ meaning “state-directed economic development without political liberalization”⁶⁷. This economic development strategy has become the spearhead of the PRC’s interventions. Such a strategy is further exemplified by the fact that Chinese state firms have built over 330 dams in 74 countries, including many Latin American countries, and are the largest financiers and builders of dams in the world⁶⁸. Buoyed by its plethora of condition-free loans and many infrastructural projects, the PRC’s soft power and influence is increasing.

Though not only focusing on infrastructure and energy development, the PRC’s approach in Latin America is multifaceted and growing. “China has become the top trading partner of Brazil, Chile, Peru, and Uruguay and the second largest trading partner for many other countries”⁶⁹, all the while “total China-Latin America trade increased from \$17 billion in 2002 to almost \$315 billion in 2019”⁷⁰. In addition to its vast trade dealings with the region, the PRC’s security investment and arms trade must also be mentioned. According to the Arms Transfers Database maintained by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute PRC arms sales to Latin America amounted to almost 5% of total arms exports between 2009 and 2019. Though Venezuela accounted for 86% of the sales, the PRC has other clients including Bolivia, Trinidad and Tobago, Peru, and, more important to this analysis, Ecuador⁷¹.

Continuing on this trend of security investment and arms trade the PRC, though understandably not seeking to aggravate the US and without any real capacity of deploying their armed forces to

⁶⁶ Li, He. China’s growing interest in Latin America and its implications. *Journal of Strategic Studies*, vol.30, no.4-5. 2007. pp.833-62.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Nathanson, Max. How to Respond to Chinese Investment in Latin America. *Foreign Policy*. 28 November 2018.

⁶⁹ Lum, Thomas. China’s Engagement with Latin America and the Caribbean. *Congressional Research Service*. 1 June 2020.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

the region, “has [instead] focused on importing something into Latin America that is far less provocative but is no less worrisome: its internal security model”⁷².

“China’s own 2015 defense strategy white paper notes that, ‘in response to the new requirement coming from the country’s growing strategic interests, the armed forces will actively participate in both regional and international security cooperation and effectively secure China’s overseas interests’”⁷³

An example of such interests is a satellite and space control station in Argentina that was built by the Chinese military and is currently being leased rent-free to China for a period of fifty years⁷⁴. Ideally, the PRC would attempt to curtail the need to station its own military in the region, however due to the constant economic and political instability in the region, the PRC may feel that further military investment into the protection of certain facilities may be necessary⁷⁵. Furthermore, many Chinese built or expanded commercial shipping ports in the region could be acquired and converted to military bases under the pretext of safeguarding Chinese commercial and economic interests⁷⁶.

However, returning to the primary method of intervention by the PRC, meaning the exportation of the Beijing Consensus, the many loans and subjects of those loans must be explored. Carlos Roa, writing for the US based foreign policy magazine *The National Interest*, stated that between the years 2000 and 2017 “Chinese companies invested over \$109 billion in Latin America”⁷⁷, all the while “the Inter-American Dialogue’s China-Latin America Finance Database estimates that, since 2005, Chinese policy banks (the China Development Bank and the Export-Import Bank of China) have disbursed more than \$141 billion in loans, with 87 percent of those funds directed towards energy and infrastructure projects”⁷⁸. These are not the only reports of extravagant PRC investment in Latin America, as a “more recent report from the Inter-American Dialogue and Boston University’s Global Economic Governance Initiative puts the [aforementioned] loan amount at over \$150 billion, which exceeds the combined lending of the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank and the Development Bank of Latin America”⁷⁹.

Furthermore, as was previously mentioned, much of the PRC’s investment is coming in the energy, mining, and infrastructure sectors. “Out of the aforementioned \$141 billion in policy bank loans from 2005 to 2017, \$96.9 billion (68.5 percent) has gone into energy-related projects, \$25.9 billion (18.3 percent) into infrastructure development, \$2.1 billion (1.5 percent) into mining projects and

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Roa, Carlos. The United States is Losing Latin America to China. *The National Interest*. 15 August 2019.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

\$16.2 billion (11 percent) into other ventures (including government bonds, trade financing, business development and more)”⁸⁰. This means that 89 percent of the loans in the twelve-year period of 2005 and 2017 went into the aforementioned sectors. In addition, the US Congressional Research Service claimed that according to the China Latin America Finance Database hosted by the InterAmerican Dialogue, Venezuela, Brazil, Ecuador, and Argentina were the primary recipients of “accumulated loans [amounting] to \$137 billion [between] 2005 [and] 2019”⁸¹. Once again, “a majority of the lending (67%) has been for energy projects, and almost 20% has been for infrastructure projects”⁸².

Ultimately the main concern relating to the plethora of loans provided to the region by the PRC is the fact that most if not all of these loans are “condition free”. This means that “these loans do not have governance and environmental conditions attached to them. In other words, there is no need to conduct lengthy, time-consuming environmental surveys, cost-assessment studies, inordinate transparency measures and more”⁸³. “Such loans typically have less stringent terms without policy conditions and less rigorous environmental guidelines compared with the loans of major international financial institutions”⁸⁴.

However, claiming these loans and project investments are condition free is ultimately a misnomer as there are indeed a variety of conditions attached to these loans.

“Namely that infrastructure projects must employ Chinese SOE construction firms and use Chinese equipment, barring other competitors from partaking in infrastructure development contracts. These sorts of conditions can exclude international, and more importantly, domestic firms from participation in the building process. Additionally, this limits the potential positive impact on the local economy—little to none of the construction work is sourced out to local workers, nor is there an increased local demand for food/products/services”⁸⁵.

Furthermore, “these loans have a higher interest rate on average than their international counterparts, leaving recipients having to pay back more over time”⁸⁶ thus forcing the recipient countries into a debt trap. It is the PRC’s predatory behavior that has put human safety and human security in Latin American countries in peril. These actions are predatory for the obvious reason

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Lum, Thomas. China’s Engagement with Latin America and the Caribbean. Congressional Research Service. 1 June 2020.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Roa, Carlos. The United States is Losing Latin America to China. The National Interest. 15 August 2019.

⁸⁴ Lum, Thomas. China’s Engagement with Latin America and the Caribbean. Congressional Research Service. 1 June 2020.

⁸⁵ Roa, Carlos. The United States is Losing Latin America to China. The National Interest. 15 August 2019.

⁸⁶ Lum, Thomas. China’s Engagement with Latin America and the Caribbean. Congressional Research Service. 1 June 2020.

that the PRC is unequivocally more powerful than every Latin American country in every single metric, and it is using its power and influence to gain resources, and further expand its power and influence at their loss. Throughout these examples, one thing has been clear, the PRC, a superpower, has been disproportionately exploiting Latin America's natural resources. Moreover, these exploitative interventions have put a major strain on the indigenous and rural communities of Latin America and have been primarily benefiting the PRC rather than truly developing the region. In the following section, an in-depth analysis of the effects these interventions have on human lives and human rights in the region will occur, using Brazil and Ecuador as the backdrop and main point of entry into this complex subject.

3.1.2.1. Brazil

When addressing the many dam projects in the Brazilian Amazon, many factors must be established. In Brazil, Amazonian hydropower mega projects have been shown to have catastrophic environmental, social, and fiscal consequences⁸⁷.

“The most notable example is the massive Belo Monte Dam, the world's fourth-largest hydroelectric project. The dam itself has already blocked the 1,000-mile [approximately 1609km] Xingu River, a major tributary of the Amazon. Belo Monte's reservoir, filled at the end of 2015, flooded 260 square miles [approximately 673sqkm] of lowlands and forest, displaced more than 20,000 people, and caused extensive damage to a river ecosystem that contains more than 500 fish species, many of them found nowhere else. When the turbine installation is complete, 80% of the river's flow will be detoured from the river's natural channel, which – among other impacts – will leave three indigenous groups without the fish and turtles on which they depend”⁸⁸.

Furthermore, another hydropower megaproject is set to be built on the Tapajós River, a major tributary of the Amazon River, which drains an area larger than California⁸⁹. Both “the Belo Monte and the Tapajós dams involve Chinese interests, with negotiations currently underway for the Chinese purchase of part of Belo Monte and with the already-consummated Chinese purchase of control of the São Manoel Dam, located adjacent to an indigenous area in the Tapajós Basin”⁹⁰. Such unchecked dam building in Brazil causes an innumerable amount of damage to the region. In addition, if such a fast pace of dam building continues, the country would practically turn half of the Amazon basin into continuous chains of reservoirs, destroying local environments, and expelling all residents, rural and indigenous, from two-thirds of the Brazilian Amazon⁹¹. However,

⁸⁷ Nathanson, Max. Damming or damning the Amazon: Assessing Ecuador / China cooperation. Mongabay. 22 November 2017.

⁸⁸ Fearnside, Philip. How a dam building boom is transforming the Brazilian Amazon. China Dialogue. 25 October 2017.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

the adverse effects of these dams are not only seen in the environmental impacts and displacement of indigenous peoples, but also in the governmental system. “The case of Belo Monte [...] involves documented corruption, including affidavits submitted by some people participating in dam construction affirming that they made both legal and illegal ‘donations’ to finance the 2010 and 2014 presidential campaigns of the victorious Workers’ Party in exchange for lucrative contracts”⁹². In addition, ignoring expert opinions against the approval of the Belo Monte and São Manoel operating licenses, the head of IBAMA (the Brazilian Ministry of the Environment’s agency in charge of licensing) still approved them⁹³. Despite overwhelming evidence against approval of these licenses, the fact that they were nevertheless approved is almost definitely tied to the immense amount of PRC investment. Lastly, “both the Tapajós and Belo Monte projects featured extraordinarily damaging planned dams that would flood indigenous land, but plans for those dams vanished from official discourse despite multiple indications that the government intended to proceed with them”⁹⁴, further showcasing the corruption and lack of transparency that come with projects heavily supported by PRC investment.

Continuing on the topic of dams, Philip Fearnside, a leading hydropower expert, stated in 2016 that despite the fact that tropical dams are often portrayed as clean, carbon emissions-free energy sources, the truth of the matter is that emissions from storage hydroelectric dams exceed those from electricity generation based on fossil fuels⁹⁵. Furthermore,

“In a study of more than a hundred existing hydropower dams in the Amazon published in *Nature*, an international team of 16 academics asserted that ‘the accumulated negative environmental effects of existing dams and proposed dams, if constructed, will trigger massive hydrophysical and biotic disturbances that will affect the Amazon basin’s floodplains, estuary and sediment plume’. They also note that, ‘the social and environmental impacts of large dams are severe, disruptive and characteristically irreversible’”⁹⁶

It is with this environmental aspect in mind that we continue the discourse of dams. Fearnside claimed that the economic allure of dams is shattered if their actual environmental and social costs are considered⁹⁷, further proclaiming that “hydropower is already unreliable and is projected to become much more so in light of climate change and projected shifts in rainfall patterns, and dams also emit significant quantities of methane, a greenhouse gas, from hydropower reservoirs”⁹⁸.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Nathanson, Max. Damming or damning the Amazon: Assessing Ecuador / China cooperation. Mongabay. 22 November 2017.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Fearnside, Philip. How a dam building boom is transforming the Brazilian Amazon. *China Dialogue*. 25 October 2017.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

Though it is not only the unreliability of these dams that is put into question, nor is it the amount of greenhouse gasses released into the atmosphere that questions the environmental impacts of dams, but the prevalence of forest loss is also clear. Dam projects provoke deforestation not only by reservoir flooding, but also by,

“[...] the displaced population and by those attracted to the dam location, by occupation and invasion of forests along roads built to each dam site, and by activities stimulated by associated development, such as waterways for transporting soybeans. Dams are but one prong in a multifaceted deforestation process — involving logging, agriculture, ranching, and other development — that is destroying Brazil’s Amazon forest, especially from its eastern and southern edges”⁹⁹.

Though already having mentioned many human security issues throughout this section, the analysis will further continue onto the case of Ecuador and will ultimately return to discuss in detail the human security and human rights dilemmas facing Brazil in the last subchapter of this section.

3.1.2.2. Ecuador

Recalling the previously mentioned Beijing Consensus, and the many “condition free loans” that the PRC provides to many countries, we must address Ecuador’s hydroelectric projects, and the source of funding for these projects. In 2018, the Inter-American Dialogue determined that Ecuador had taken around \$18.4 billion in loans from China’s policy banks, amounting to around a third of the country’s public debt, with the largest portion, being approximately \$1.7 billion, being used to build the Coca Codo Sinclair (CCS) hydroelectric dam¹⁰⁰. Any country in the world would have issues paying any amount of money that amounts to a third of its public debt, especially one whose GDP ranked number 62 in the world according to the IMF¹⁰¹. Rather than paying back the PRC in currency, Ecuador is instead paying back the PRC oil, its most valuable commodity, making up around 58% of exports¹⁰². More specifically, the PRC gets to keep around 80% percent of the country’s oil at a discount due to the loan contracts¹⁰³. The PRC’s eyes have been set on Ecuadorian oil enterprises for over decade now as “in 2005, a joint venture of [PRC] petroleum companies agreed to buy EnCana Corporation’s oil and pipeline assets in Ecuador for \$1.42 billion”¹⁰⁴. This situation is simply compounded upon when one takes into account “article 15 of a 2010 deal [that] has what Analytica Investments calls a ‘waiver of sovereign immunity’ that

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Roa, Carlos. The United States is Losing Latin America to China. The National Interest. 15 August 2019.

¹⁰¹ International Monetary Fund. GDP Ranked by Country 2020. World Population Review. International Monetary Fund.

¹⁰² Roa, Carlos. The United States is Losing Latin America to China. The National Interest. 15 August 2019.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Li, He. China's growing interest in Latin America and its implications. Journal of Strategic Studies, vol.30, no.4-5. 2007. pp.833-62.

allows [the PRC] to seize many of Ecuador's assets if the country fails to repay the loans, appearing to only exclude items like Ecuador's military, cultural heritage, embassies, and archives”¹⁰⁵. This not only puts Ecuador’s petroleum reliant economy at risk, but in many ways puts its own sovereignty at risk.

Furthermore, these loans come with a lack of transparency, thus resulting in lower standards of material acquisition and construction. In case of the CCS dam, “over seven thousand cracks have developed due to the usage of substandard steel and an inadequate welding job by Chinese builders”¹⁰⁶. This lack of transparency has provided Ecuador with an overly expensive and faulty dam that can only work at half capacity due to the country’s wet and dry seasons¹⁰⁷. Lastly, as is the case of most if not all PRC lead infrastructure plans, construction of the CCS dam imports Chinese workers, materials, machinery, and other things necessary to maintain the people and machinery; meaning that the overall economic effect on the local population and region is miniscule. Surmounting the already mentioned conditions surrounding the CCS dam is geology. “The CCS dam sits within a highly seismically active zone beneath the El Reventador Volcano, an area that scientists have advised against developing since the 1970s”¹⁰⁸. Furthermore, a series of earthquakes in 1986, 2010, and 2012 caused serious damage to buildings surrounding the CCS site¹⁰⁹. Such concerns surrounding the seismic activity in the region were also put forth by CELEC (Corporación Eléctrica del Ecuador), claiming that another earthquake or volcanic eruption could be cataclysmic¹¹⁰. In addition,

“Observed environmental impacts of the CCS dam include increased sedimentation above the dam, and significantly lowered water flows in the Napo and Coca Rivers below the site, which has threatened fish supplies and led to the likely severe diminishing of the San Rafael Waterfall, one of Ecuador’s primary tourist attractions. One section of the Coca River has vanished directly downstream from a subterranean tunnel drilled 25 kilometers (15.5 miles) through the bedrock, a tunnel through which the river’s water is routed to the project’s turbines”¹¹¹.

Lastly, an independent environmental impact assessment prepared by PRC SOE Sinohydro, determined that the construction of the CCS dam created certain negative effects such as deforestation, improper waste removal, and other impacts that threatened local flora and fauna in

¹⁰⁵ Zuckerman, Adam. Unclean Hands: Corruption Plagues Ecuador’s Oil Deals with China. Amazon Watch. 22 June 2016.

¹⁰⁶ Roa, Carlos. The United States is Losing Latin America to China. The National Interest. 15 August 2019.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Nathanson, Max. Damming or damning the Amazon: Assessing Ecuador / China cooperation. Mongabay. 22 November 2017.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

the surrounding Cayambe-Coca National Park and Sumaco Natural Reserve, alongside the local populations living there¹¹².

It is this amalgamation of concerning factors surrounding the CCS dam that come into question when exploring the human and environmental impact of such projects. Although we will shortly return to more humanitarian impacts of these dam projects, we must quickly address the oil explorations in Yasuni in Ecuador and go into further detail on the Mirador open pit mine also in Ecuador.

“Indigenous people, rainforest campaigners and many Ecuadoreans said [...] that they expect oil exploitation in Yasuni national park to lead to pollution, forest destruction and the decimation of the nomadic Tagaeri and the Taromenane tribes who have chosen to have no contact with the outside world”¹¹³. Furthermore, Kelly Swing, director of the Tiputini biodiversity research center on the edge of the Yasuni park, claims that Ecuador is losing around \$15 per barrel, and claims that drilling made no sense, yet the government plans to continue forth with the drilling and exploitation¹¹⁴. This almost definitely is tied to the stringent loan deals that the PRC has with Ecuador, and the country’s constant need to repay its insurmountable debt. Lastly, this oil exploration project must be mentioned because it is yet another example of indigenous peoples being disturbed and displaced, and native flora and fauna being decimated for the search of oil in the country.

The last major project that needs to be addressed is the Mirador and Panantza-San Carlos open-pit copper mines run by Ecuacorriente S.A. (ECSA) and owned by the Chinese consortium CRCC-Tongguan. Both are in the Cordillera del Cóndor region and within the Shuar indigenous territory¹¹⁵. “The Mirador mine’s pit will be about a mile [approximately 1.6km] across and half a mile [approximately 0.8km] deep, and generate 600 million tons of potentially toxic waste to be stored on nearby steep slopes and in tailings impoundments next to the Quimi River—only 1 kilometer from the village of Tundayme”¹¹⁶. This massive mining endeavor presents Ecuador an opportunity to diversify its portfolio and move away from a petrol reliant economy, and a possible ability to relieve the austerity squeeze presented by over a decade of high interest rates and oil-backed loan repayments to the PRC¹¹⁷. “Despite hopes that the development of mining in the Cóndor will bring jobs, most of the employment will be temporary and unskilled; the higher-paying engineering and technical jobs go to Chinese workers or to Ecuadoreans from outside the

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Vidal, John. Ecuador drills for oil on edge of pristine rainforest in Yasuni. *The Guardian*. 4 April 2016.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Nathanson, Max. Indigenous communities resist Chinese mining in Amazonian Ecuador. *Mongabay*. 5 September 2017.

¹¹⁶ Wald, Beth. Inside the Struggle for Ecuador’s Cordillera del Condor. *Global Greengrants Fund*. 10 March 2016.

¹¹⁷ Nathanson, Max. Indigenous communities resist Chinese mining in Amazonian Ecuador. *Mongabay*. 5 September 2017.

Cóndor”¹¹⁸. This fact additionally supports the case that PRC investment is in fact not beneficial to the local economy, as local workers would not be employed in stable and high paying positions.

Furthermore, due to the fact that the mine, waste piles, and toxic tailings will be located very near water sources, experts claim that there is a significant risk that local streams and rivers will be contaminated seeing as the Cordillera del Cóndor’s receives 160 inches, approximately 406cm, of rain each year¹¹⁹. The primary concern of Richard Kamp, the director of E-Tech International, a US-based engineering consultancy which has studied the potential environmental impacts of El Mirador since 2011, is the “plan to store millions of tonnes of toxic mining waste in an enormous tailings pond just half a mile [approximately 0.8km] from the Quimi river. The river flows into the Zamora river, which in turn supplies the Santiago river which winds south into Peru connecting with the Marañón, a major tributary in the Amazon watershed”¹²⁰. This contamination will clearly affect the local flora and fauna, and importantly further damage the lifestyle of the indigenous Shuar people.

The case of the Mirador and CCS projects is not a new one, as

“Indigenous peoples across the country have opposed the Government’s consideration of new mining and oil concessions and have called for alternative models of development. Over the last decades, such projects have had severe impacts on indigenous peoples’ lands and resources, including pollution of the environment and water sources, deterioration of health, food insecurity and been the cause of conflict within indigenous communities”¹²¹.

The Cordillera del Cóndor, as was mentioned before, is the ancestral home of the Shuar people.

“For the Shuar, the thousands of waterfalls, streams, and springs in the Cóndor are sacred places and the source of healing, spiritual renewal, and life itself. The Shuar people still maintain many aspects of their traditional life, language, and culture among the forests and waters of the [Cordillera del] Cóndor”¹²².

It is within this mountain range that the first detailed analysis of the human security aspect comes into effect.

¹¹⁸ Wald, Beth. Inside the Struggle for Ecuador’s Cordillera del Condor. Global Greengrants Fund. 10 March 2016.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Colllyns, Dan. Was this indigenous leader killed because he fought to save Ecuador's land? The Guardian. 2 June 2015.

¹²¹ Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights. Ecuador must put indigenous peoples’ rights before resource extraction and short-term economic gains. Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights. 29 November 2018.

¹²² Wald, Beth. Inside the Struggle for Ecuador’s Cordillera del Condor. Global Greengrants Fund. 10 March 2016.

3.1.3. *Effects on Human Security*

The examples that have been shown, and all the examples that will follow, have been chosen simply because that is where the research guided this thesis. The primary effects that the PRC's interventions have on Brazil, Ecuador and the region are environmental and other related fields, primarily those of indigenous people's rights.

According to “the Ecuadorean constitution, as well as international agreements signed by Ecuador, including the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, guarantee that indigenous people will be allowed ‘free, prior and informed consent’ before the development of extractive projects in their territories”¹²³. However, Shuar leaders have not been consulted nor given their consent to the aforementioned mine projects¹²⁴, a clear violation of national and international law. Furthermore, “[in 2017] a tribunal held by indigenous communities in Gualaquiza, in the Amazon headwaters region of Ecuador, accused the nation's first large scale mining operation, [the Mirador project], of major human and environmental abuses”¹²⁵. These charges included the destruction of the town of San Marcos de Tundayme, the forceful displacement of over 100 indigenous individuals, environmental degradation, discrimination, intimidation, and threats, all accumulating with the death of Shuar leader José Tendetza¹²⁶. Moreover, Michelle Báez, professor at the Pontifical Catholic University of Ecuador, has also detailed systematic discrimination, intimidation and threats utilized by the government against local populations in defense of ECSA activities¹²⁷. Additionally, Esperanza Martínez, President of Acción Ecológica, claimed that due to security risks, many Shuar leaders were not able to attend the aforementioned tribunal, however they recorded video messages describing the circumstances surrounding the mine projects as human rights violations¹²⁸. The aforementioned death of Shuar leader José Tendetza serves as a prime example of the lack of freedoms in this case.

In 2015, Shuar leader José Tendetza joined a protest meeting against the Chinese-backed mine being carved out of his ancestral homeland¹²⁹. His body was found four days later in an unmarked grave, “showing signs of torture and strangulation”¹³⁰. A prominent critic of former president Rafael Correa, Tendetza was subjected to constant harassment and threats prior to his death, with a poignant example happening in a 2012 arson attack on his house and crops¹³¹. Unfortunately, Tendetza and his family have not been the only affected by the Mirador mine project. “Shuar

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Nathanson, Max. Indigenous communities resist Chinese mining in Amazonian Ecuador. Mongabay. 5 September 2017.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Collins, Dan. Was this indigenous leader killed because he fought to save Ecuador's land? The Guardian. 2 June 2015.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid.

families have already been displaced by the [Mirador mine] project, which if completed will result in the destruction of 450,000 hectares of cloud forest”¹³². Tendetza’s harassment and murder, is clearly only one of many examples showing the fear and repression that indigenous individuals go through to protect their homelands.

Former UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples, Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, claimed that

“A plurinational state has not yet been achieved [in Ecuador]. True plurinationality requires respect of indigenous peoples’ rights to their lands, territories and resources as well as permanent institutions that allow for the participation and autonomy of indigenous peoples and nationalities in shaping their self-determined development”¹³³

As the case of the Shuar people shows, the aforementioned participation and autonomy of indigenous peoples is clearly not present. Rather, what is present is constant threats against indigenous environmental activists. For example:

“On April 30 [of 2019], an Amnesty International report faulted the [Ecuadorean] government for a lack of will to adequately provide protection and conduct serious criminal investigations into the 2018 attacks and threats against the female Amazonian environmental defenders Patricia Gualinga, Nema Grefa, Salome Aranda, and Margoth Escobar. Human rights organizations expressed concern about intimidation tactics used against these activists from unidentified sources, including death threats and physical assault. Amnesty International reported these tactics were intended to silence their environmental activism”¹³⁴.

Though these threats and assaults are not connected to the current administration of President Lenin Moreno, the lack of action to investigate cannot be ignored. Furthermore, under former president, Rafael Correa, Ecuador setup the ECU-911, a 4,300-camera national video surveillance and emergency response system designed and built by Chinese companies Huawei and China National Electronics Import and Export Corporation (CEIEC)¹³⁵. The ECU-911 security system had many faults, as an investigation by the New York Times discovered. This investigation determined that much of the recordings went to the country’s feared domestic intelligence agency, which under the former president Correa had a lengthy track record of following, intimidating, and attacking political opponents¹³⁶. These political opponents almost certainly included

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights. Ecuador must put indigenous peoples’ rights before resource extraction and short-term economic gains. Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights. 29 November 2018.

¹³⁴ US Department of State. 2019 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Ecuador. Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. 2019.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Roa, Carlos. The United States is Losing Latin America to China. The National Interest. 15 August 2019.

environmental activists such as the late Shuar leader José Tendetza, and though no new connections between such actions and the current administration have been established, the possibility of these connections cannot be ignored.

When returning to the Brazilian Amazon and the many dams being built there, one can see a similar trend appear. The Mundurukú people are in a similar place to the Shuar people in terms of their sacred and ancestral lands being destroyed. In the Tapajós basin, the Sete Quedas rapids, the most sacred location for the Mundurukú people—equivalent to heaven for Christians—were destroyed by the Teles Pires dam in 2013¹³⁷. While “the planned São Luiz do Tapajós Dam would destroy the site where the Mundurukú’s revered ancestor is said to have created the Tapajós River from four seeds of the tucumã palm”¹³⁸. Mundurukú leaders have put forth claims over destruction of their sacred sites and the loss of fish and other vital resources. However, these consequences are not being considered important by the Brazilian government’s environmental impact assessments¹³⁹. It must not be forgotten that a lot of the funding for many of these dams, particularly the ones in the Tapajós region, have PRC interest and funding.

In the same trend of destruction and displacement of local populations due to dam construction, “the Marabá Dam on the Tocantins River is expected to displace 40,000 people, most of whom are traditional riverside dwellers known as ‘ribeirinhos’”¹⁴⁰. However, displacement and destruction are not the only threats facing these local populations. Fearnside explains that a lack of oxygen at the bottom of dam reservoirs causes a presence of mercury in the soil, which ultimately concentrates with each link in the food chain, culminating in humans¹⁴¹. Further explaining that “fish in the reservoir have more than double the mercury level permitted for human consumption by World Health Organization (WHO) standards”¹⁴². This puts the food security of those who rely on local fish into massive peril. The populations relying on these fish for survival must either submit to eating fish soiled with mercury, therefore succumbing to mercury poisoning, or move away from their homes. This last option could easily create a domino effect of constant internal migration within Brazil and could feasibly develop into a crisis of internally displaced peoples.

Shifting away from the localized effects that PRC interventions have to the more regional effects, we can understand the effects by using the theoretical lenses previously mentioned. Of particular note being Wallerstein’s World Systems Analysis and Dependency Theory.

According to the US Congressional Research Service, “some countries [in Latin America] have amassed unsustainable levels of debt owed to the PRC and that their economies risk becoming less

¹³⁷ Fearnside, Philip. How a dam building boom is transforming the Brazilian Amazon. China Dialogue. 25 October 2017.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Ibid.

competitive in manufacturing and agricultural technologies and more dependent upon commodities exports to [PRC] and elsewhere”¹⁴³. Meanwhile, “investments in infrastructure either enable greater economic activity that favor Chinese interests, and/or thrust Latin American countries into debt traps, effectively turning them into economic vassals”¹⁴⁴. As a result, the region is becoming increasingly economically asymmetrical¹⁴⁵. Previously mentioned Professor Jenkins constantly places the PRC in comparison to developing nations, commonly using the word “other” as the point of reference. Though pointing out the PRC as part of the “developing world”, the sheer imbalanced nature of trade it has with developing countries would disprove that thought. Rather, the previously mentioned asymmetrical nature plays right into the lens of World Systems Analysis. The PRC’s economic endeavors in the region more closely resembles center-periphery relations¹⁴⁶ rather than those of a periphery-periphery relationship. Latin American countries have a severe trade imbalance thus heavily relying on exports of raw natural resources. Meanwhile the profits of such exports are reinvested into further extracting natural resources, rather than being invested in appropriate and sustainable economic and social development¹⁴⁷. The region has ultimately found itself fighting against externally imposed economic policies¹⁴⁸, however instead of being further subject to Western colonialism, they are now becoming subject to a “new imperialism originating from the East”¹⁴⁹.

Jenkins further analyzes the hegemonic nature of the PRC’s relationship with Latin America by claiming that

“the growing trade links between China and Latin America are reproducing the classic centre–periphery relations which Raúl Prebisch and the Economic Commission for Latin America criticised 50 years ago, with the region becoming increasingly specialised in primary commodity production while the manufacturing sector contracts in the face of increased Chinese competition both at home and abroad. Multinational companies relocate their plants from Latin America to China in order to take advantage of the large-scale production, low-cost labour and competitive exchange rate available there, diverting investment away from the region, while what little investment comes from China simply reinforces specialisation in primary products and creates very limited linkages with the local economy. In this view, the Latin American economies are caught in the middle

¹⁴³ Lum, Thomas. China’s Engagement with Latin America and the Caribbean. Congressional Research Service. 1 June 2020.

¹⁴⁴ Roa, Carlos. The United States is Losing Latin America to China. The National Interest. 15 August 2019.

¹⁴⁵ Barker, Chris. What Implications Does Rising Chinese Influence Have for Latin America? E-International Relations. 13 August 2013.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Chun, Zhang. Latin America’s Oil-Dependent States Struggle to Repay Chinese Debts. The Diplomat. 15 April 2017.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Roa, Carlos. The United States is Losing Latin America to China. The National Interest. 15 August 2019.

between low-cost Chinese production and high-tech production in the North, resulting in a shrinking of their development space.”¹⁵⁰

Furthermore, the already small sample of Latin American exports to the PRC have shown little sign in diversifying, and in addition the number of resource-based manufacturers have grown in size compared to the production of primary products¹⁵¹.

The center-periphery relationship between the PRC and Latin America can also be seen through the dependence that the region is being forced into. As mentioned before, many countries are becoming less competitive in manufacturing and agricultural technologies, rather their economies are dependent on exporting commodities and raw material to the PRC, with manufactured products being sent back in return¹⁵². “Local manufacturers have complained that they are adversely affected by Chinese competition”¹⁵³. Though anti-dumping measures have been taken by certain Latin American countries, other countries such as Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Peru, and Venezuela have all granted the PRC ‘market economy status’¹⁵⁴, thus making dumping of products more viable. This ability to dump their manufactured products is perfect for the PRC as its “main objectives in Latin America are to obtain secure sources of raw materials and market access for its manufactured goods”¹⁵⁵. It is this ability to dictate what these Latin American countries produce and can trade that makes the PRC’s position the center of the asymmetrical trade between the two. Furthermore, Kevin Gallagher, a professor at Boston University, explained that “Latin American governments mainly use Chinese loans to build infrastructure linking mines and oil fields to refineries and ports, a far cry from real economic integration or sustainable development”¹⁵⁶. Many countries in the region are caught suffering from many curses. From creating a single-resource economy such as the petro-economies of Ecuador and Venezuela or having to have tourism as a major supplier to economic stability or having to rely on export-led growth. These countries are failing to establish proper systems of economic integration or sustainable development.

Ultimately, those who suffer most at the hands of such failures— failures heavily promulgated by PRC intervention in the region— are the impoverished and subaltern individuals. It is the indigenous people who lose their ancestral and sacred lands, it is the environmental activists who are threatened and assaulted for speaking out, and it is the people whose livelihoods and food sources are ripped out from under them. It is through these examples that one can see the lack of freedom from want and freedom from fear. Through the affected individuals one can see that the

¹⁵⁰ Jenkins, Rhys. China’s Global Expansion and Latin America. *Journal of Latin American Studies*, vol.42, no.4. 2010. pp.809-37.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁶ Chun, Zhang. Latin America’s Oil-Dependent States Struggle to Repay Chinese Debts. *The Diplomat*. 15 April 2017.

concept of protecting the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhances human freedom and human fulfillment, has failed. All the while, PRC economic interventions and involvement in the region continue to exacerbate the already difficult and complex situation in the region, offering more problems and little solutions, and ultimately forcing these countries into unequal economic dealings with the superpower that is the PRC. It is clear to see that though the detailed examples in this section focused primarily on Ecuador and Brazil, PRC interventions and effects of such interventions are omnipresent in the region. PRC investment is leading to detrimental effects to the environment and indigenous peoples in Brazil and Ecuador, therefore, the proper conclusion is that the same kind of investment by the same PRC in different countries causes similar issues. As mentioned before, the PRC has investments and strategic facilities throughout the region, as previous mentions of works in Bolivia, Argentina, Panama, and other countries show¹⁵⁷.

3.2. Russia: The Bear in Latin America

3.2.1. *A Superpower?*

First and foremost, we must understand a small amount of Soviet relations in Latin America during the Cold War. During this time period, the world was truly in a bipolar state, with the USSR and the US sharing superpower status. As it is commonly understood that the USSR was a superpower, we will not go into much detail justifying its inclusion in this analysis, rather, this section will focus on the current Russian state's actions and its capabilities as a superpower. Though this analysis will focus on a post-Cold War timeline, the foundations for Russian involvement in Latin America were laid during the Cold War.

Generally, the USSR's superpower capabilities can be best understood in two ways: the expansion of their military umbrella, and the exportation of their ideology. First, the USSR's expansion of their military umbrella must be established. In the decades of the Cold War, the USSR used force and the threat of force around the world, though primarily centered around its immediate sphere of influence. In the 1950s, USSR supported the North Korean invasion of South Korea, assisted East Germany in suppressing an uprising, threatened military intervention in Poland, and brutally crushed the Hungarian revolution¹⁵⁸. Following these events, the USSR pushed the world to the brink of nuclear war during the Cuban Missile crisis, occupied Czechoslovakia, and invaded Afghanistan¹⁵⁹.

Though in Latin America, the USSR was not outwardly militarily involved, apart from the events that led to the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962¹⁶⁰. Rather, the USSR was more ideologically involved in the region. "Relations with Latin America, as with other regions, were conducted through three

¹⁵⁷ Roa, Carlos. The United States is Losing Latin America to China. The National Interest. 15 August 2019.

¹⁵⁸ US Central Intelligence Agency. Soviet Military Power 1985. CIA. 19 October 2009. pp.7.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ History.com Editors. Cuban Missile Crisis. History.com. 10 June 2019.

channels: The Communist Party [of the Soviet Union] (CPSU), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry of Foreign Trade”¹⁶¹. Furthermore, “one of the more important agencies that falls outside the three channels was the variously named Committee for State Security (KGB)”¹⁶².

“During the Soviet period the KGB was active in Mexico, presumably operating against the United States. US intelligence probably kept in loose touch with those operations through Mexican intelligence. High KGB officials played a key role in Moscow's initial ties with Castro and continued in an important role thereafter. Intelligence officers with personal ties to Raul and Fidel Castro constituted a Cuban lobby that tried hard to save aid to Cuba as the USSR came to an end”¹⁶³.

As was mentioned, one of the main channels for USSR power and influence projection was the CPSU. One can understand that the connection between the CPSU and other communist parties around the world was clearly an ideological one. While the involvement with nations around the world and particularly in Latin America was centered around ideological ties. Similar to the US containment policy during the Cold War, ideology drove the USSR to spread its influence around the world.

“Moscow's official involvement with Latin America rapidly increased after Castro seized power and the USSR got a regional headquarters in Cuba. After opening diplomatic relations with Cuba in 1960 the USSR gradually established diplomatic relations with most governments in the region, strengthened trade ties, and encouraged Communist Parties to compete for popular support in many countries. The Parties affiliated with Moscow aligned themselves with left wing parties in Guatemala, Nicaragua, El Salvador [...] Peru, Chile, to mention only a few. This strategy confronted the United States, the hegemonic power, with critical at best or hostile forces aligned to the USSR throughout the region”¹⁶⁴.

“Ideological and psychological approaches also help explain Soviet leaders' thinking and actions. International Communism was based on the premise that the fall of capitalism is inevitable as is the triumph of Communism”¹⁶⁵. This ideological connection, in addition to more active military movements, differentiates the USSR with the modern Russian state.

Following the collapse of the USSR in 1991, the modern Russian state has diversified its power and influence projection strategies. Though still militarily active within its own sphere of influence, as shown by the 2008 Georgian War and subsequent recognition of South Ossetia and

¹⁶¹ Blasier, Cole. Soviet Impacts on Latin America. Russian history, vol. 29, no.2-4. Summer-Fall-Winter 2002 / Été-Automne-Hiver 2002. pp.481-497.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

Abkhazia as independent¹⁶⁶, the 2014 invasion and subsequent occupation of Crimea¹⁶⁷, and ongoing Russian support of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad during Syrian's civil war¹⁶⁸. Furthermore, Russia's cyber presence cannot be understated, as has been shown by its interference in the 2016 US elections¹⁶⁹. However, Russia has been very politically savvy in its dealings in Latin America, as they understand that military action would only antagonize the US, something that both the PRC and Russia seek to avoid. Instead, Russia, like the PRC, has focused on expanding its soft power in the region, and therefore creating strong relations that way.

“With no significant trade interests, limited arms sales and a tepid diplomatic commitment, Russia's presence in Latin America is weak. However, there is evidence it is seeking to influence the region at a low cost and to appear to be a major power, challenging the US¹⁷⁰”.

Though the modern Russian strategy is not wholly reliant on ideological similarities, as the USSR strategy was, there is still a distinct association between Russia and traditional left leaning governments such as the “‘Caribbean triangle’ of Venezuela, Cuba and Nicaragua, [as the] close political and military ties to the Kremlin act as a base for its geopolitical penetration of the continent”¹⁷¹. However, Russia is not opposed to trading and engaging in diplomacy with non-left leaning governments, as “Brazil and Mexico are Russia's main trading partners”¹⁷². In 1999, Russia signed a series of agreements of varying scope for cooperation in trade, energy, industry, culture and military affairs with Argentina, Bolivia, Cuba, Brazil, Ecuador, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Peru¹⁷³. Furthermore, a return to Latin America was greater solidified in the second half of the 2000s, particularly highlighted by loans and arms sales to Venezuela in 2005¹⁷⁴. The closeness between Russia and Venezuela cannot be understated, and this connection will be further mentioned and analyzed throughout the remains of this chapter. But again, Russia does not have a one-track mind when it comes to the region. “Furthermore, “Nicaragua stands out as Russia's key partner in Central America. Since the Daniel Ortega administration began in 2007, Managua and Moscow have cooperated in security and military affairs. Nicaragua is the only major buyer of Russian arms in Central America”¹⁷⁵.

Beyond trade deals, Russia has sought out many different ways to expand its influence, such as arms sales and military training.

¹⁶⁶ CNN Editorial Research. 2008 Georgia Russia Conflict Fast Facts. CNN. 31 March 2020.

¹⁶⁷ US Mission OSCE. On Russia's Ongoing Aggression against Ukraine and Illegal Occupation of Crimea. US Mission to the OSCE. 2 April 2020.

¹⁶⁸ Rahman-Jones, Imran. Why does Russia support Syria and President Assad?. BBC. 11 April 2017.

¹⁶⁹ Adams, Abigail. Here's What We Know So Far About Russia's 2016 Meddling. Time Magazine. 18 April 2019.

¹⁷⁰ Milosevich-Juaristi, Mira. Russia in Latin America: Repercussions for Spain. Elcano Royal Institute. 10 July 2020.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Klyszcz, Ivan Ulises. Russia's Central American Engagements. Foreign Policy Research Institute. October 2019.

“[Russia] has employed various strategies to advance its strategy of broad objectives despite limited resources in Latin America. Weapons sales are popular because of attractive financing terms, technology transfer, and the ability to conduct training, which has increased the revenues of the Russian military industrial complex at the same time that it expands Moscow’s geopolitical influence”¹⁷⁶.

In addition to weapons sales, there has been a measure of investment in the energy and raw resource sectors of Latin America. R. Evan Ellis, a research professor of Latin American Studies at the Strategic Studies Institute at the U.S. Army War College, stated that

“Russian firms have made investments in a number of Latin American countries, including oilfields in Venezuela and bauxite mines in Jamaica and Guyana, among others. Russian firms such as Inter Rao and Power Machines have bid for, and supplied, components for the construction of hydroelectric and thermoelectric facilities, while Rosatom has positioned itself to build civilian nuclear reactors in Brazil and Argentina, and less realistically, Ecuador, Peru, and Paraguay”¹⁷⁷.

Russia’s multi-pronged strategy in Latin America also expands to its involvement in regional governmental and economic integration bodies. It “has been particularly attracted by the idea of developing relations with the countries of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA), founded by Cuba and Venezuela and whose members also include Bolivia and Nicaragua”¹⁷⁸. Meanwhile, Russia also “received observer status to SICA (System of Central American Integration)”¹⁷⁹ in 2018. Using these connections, Russia is showing the world that it is willing to challenge the US for influential dominance in the region¹⁸⁰. It is also important to note that “[Russia] seeks a presence in the Caribbean [and Latin America] that mirrors [US] presence in Eastern Europe, thus reinforcing [Russia’s] claim that it is a great power with a global reach”¹⁸¹.

The last branch of Russian strategy to its power and influence projection is similar to the USSR’s propaganda machine and is vital to expanding Russian soft power. Its cultural presence is intensifying and has been shown by the “creation of a number of Spanish-language television

¹⁷⁶ Chaguaceda, Armando. The bear comes to the west: the Russian agenda in Latin America. *The Global Americas*. 20 March 2019.

¹⁷⁷ Ellis, R. Evan. *The New Russian Engagement with Latin America: Strategic Position, Commerce, and Dreams of the Past*. Strategic Studies Institute and U.S. Army War College Press. June 2015.

¹⁷⁸ Milosevich-Juaristi, Mira. *Russia in Latin America: Repercussions for Spain*. Elcano Royal Institute. 10 July 2020.

¹⁷⁹ Klyszcz, Ivan Ulises. *Russia’s Central American Engagements*. Foreign Policy Research Institute. October 2019.

¹⁸⁰ Milosevich-Juaristi, Mira. *Russia in Latin America: Repercussions for Spain*. Elcano Royal Institute. 10 July 2020.

¹⁸¹ Klyszcz, Ivan Ulises. *Russia’s Central American Engagements*. Foreign Policy Research Institute. October 2019.

channels and news agencies”¹⁸², all of which are funded by the Russian government. In 2009 “the Kremlin launched the Inter Russia TV Channel (ITR TV), the first Spanish-language television channel targeting Latin America. Broadcasting out of Panama, ITR TV comprises 12 Russian stations [but most influentially is] Russia Today (RT)”¹⁸³

“Since 2009, RT en Español has become the most influential Russian television station, broadcasting in Argentina, Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador and Cuba, and maintaining a close relationship with [other Latin American TV stations] [...] RT [also] uses its programmes targeting Latin American viewers – branded with the slogan Saber más (‘Know more’)– to attack the US and its European allies, offering an ‘alternative point of view’ on issues such as human rights, war crimes and corruption. In short, not only does it whitewash Russia’s role in global affairs, it also presents the country as a successful alternative political model to liberal democracy”¹⁸⁴.

Russian “presence in Latin America forms part of a broader international strategy whose main objective is to achieve the status of a major power able to undermine US leadership in the region and in the international order, competing with the other [superpower in this analysis, the PRC]”¹⁸⁵. However, one aspect of Russian policy that cannot be ignored is its “support for non-democratic governments like Venezuela, together with arms sales and military cooperation with Nicaragua, Cuba and Venezuela, [all of which] have the potential to destabilise the region”¹⁸⁶. Furthermore, “together with [the PRC], Russia often blocks votes on the United Nations Security Council that aim to condemn the regime in Venezuela”¹⁸⁷. “Russia’s attitude in the current crisis facing Venezuela is determined by its own interest, which is to save its economic interests”¹⁸⁸. This is a break from the traditional ideological drive to preserve left-leaning governments, however the effect is the same.

Ultimately, what can be seen through this section is not the idea that Russia is an emerging power, rather it is a superpower. Its power and influence projection capabilities are as prevalent as the PRC, though clearly not at the level of the US.

¹⁸² Milosevich-Juaristi, Mira. Russia in Latin America: Repercussions for Spain. Elcano Royal Institute. 10 July 2020.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

3.2.2. *Interventions*

Russian interventions in the Latin America can be split into two major strategies: military dealings and loan and investments strategies. We will first address the military dealings in Latin America, as there are fewer cases of the former compared to the latter.

Understandably, Russia's military presence in the region is limited, however this does not mean that Russia does not deal in arm trades with the region. "Data from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) indicates that Russia has provided Nicaragua with 128 million units worth of arms since the year 2000"¹⁸⁹. Additionally, between 2000 and 2010, Russia "sold \$11 billion in armaments to Caracas, including fighter-bombers, helicopters, transport planes, heavy tanks, armored cars, artillery, anti-aircraft and anti-submarine systems, radar, transport and logistic vehicles, and firearms"¹⁹⁰. Furthermore,

"In April 2018, Venezuelan Defense Minister Vladimir Padrino participated in the 8th International Security Conference in Russia and met with his counterpart, Sergey Shoigu, to discuss military cooperation. Padrino told the press about Caracas' interest in expanding the training exchange programs, beginning construction on a Venezuelan factory of AK-103 assault rifles, and opening a training center for pilots of Mi-17, Mi-35 and Mi-26 helicopters. The technology, doctrine and training provided by Moscow are largely responsible for the militarization of Venezuela's internal politics and its possible geopolitical impacts"¹⁹¹

This militarization is not only happening via trade deals, but it has also been reported that "Russia has sent private military contractors to shore up the Maduro regime in the case of civil war"¹⁹². The effects of the militarization of Venezuela's politics will be explored in the following chapter, though it is important to note that a similar militarization of politics has been felt in Nicaragua, the only major buyer of Russian arms in Central America. "Russian arms deals "in Nicaragua [are] vehemently welcomed [by President Ortega] as the United States [and other members of the international community are] condemning and sanctioning the country for abuses against students, journalists, and clergy members"¹⁹³.

Yet as was previously mentioned, arms and military dealings are not the only way Russia intervenes in the region, nor are they the most prevalent. The most prevalent Russian interventions in the region are the loans and investments provided by the Russian government and Russian SOEs.

¹⁸⁹ Shuya, Mason. Russian Influence in Latin America. *Journal of Strategic Security*, vol.12, no.2. 2019. pp.17-41.

¹⁹⁰ Milosevich-Juaristi, Mira. *Russia in Latin America: Repercussions for Spain*. Elcano Royal Institute. 10 July 2020.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁹² Shuya, Mason. Russian Influence in Latin America. *Journal of Strategic Security*, vol.12, no.2. 2019. pp.17-41.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*

In a similar strategy as the plethora of the PRC's dam projects,

“[One of] the most significant project[s] receiving Russian participation is the construction of the strategic Salvadoran Chaparral dam. The Russian company Tyazhmash is not only helping to construct the dam, but also contributing technology transfer and financing. Diplomats tout the project as a cornerstone of Russian-Salvadoran engagement. Once completed in 2020, the dam will contribute greatly to Salvadoran energy production, as the country is currently a net energy importer. The Salvadoran government has further signaled that it wishes to keep Russian companies interested in participating in domestic infrastructure projects”¹⁹⁴

3.2.2.1. Nicaragua

The ties with current Nicaraguan president Daniel Ortega did not begin this century, rather, “the victory of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) in the summer of 1979, made Nicaragua an essential element of the Soviet Union's zero-sum competition against the United States”¹⁹⁵. Following the collapse of the USSR, Russian support clearly dwindled. However, the victory of Ortega and the FSLN in the 2007 elections, and a stronger Russia gave headway to renewed relations. As mentioned before, Russia is a major arms supplier to Nicaragua, As of December 2017, “Russia made up 90 percent of Nicaraguan arms and munitions imports”¹⁹⁶.

During and after 2018, Nicaragua has been in a state of almost perpetual conflict. Following protests in 2018 that were violently repressed, “which a United Nations report in August said included extrajudicial killings, arbitrary detentions and torture”¹⁹⁷. The country has been ravaged by violence since then. According to the Human Rights Watch World Report 2019, “police, in coordination with armed pro-government groups, brutally repressed them, killing hundreds, and injuring several thousands”¹⁹⁸.

“In Nicaragua, bands of hooded paramilitaries have allegedly been raiding towns, firing on unarmed protesters, burning homes and kidnapping opponents. The squads have additionally been accused of using military-grade weapons to attack protesters, alongside committing extrajudicial killings, kidnappings and callous forms of torture”¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁴ Klyszcz, Ivan Ulises. Russia's Central American Engagements. Foreign Policy Research Institute. October 2019.

¹⁹⁵ Sukhankin, Sergey. Will Nicaragua Become Russia's 'Cuba of the 21st Century?' Eurasia Daily Monitor, vol.15, no.118. 7 August 2018.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ Kenning, Chris. A year into Nicaragua crisis, uncertainty and scepticism prevail. Al Jazeera. 16 April 2019.

¹⁹⁸ Human Rights Watch. World Report 2019 Events of 2018. Human Rights Watch. 2019. pp.425-430.

¹⁹⁹ Papadovassilakis, Alex. Nicaragua Latest Central American Country to Deny Paramilitary Abuse. InSight Crime. 15 August 2019.

The Nicaraguan Center for Human Rights has reported the occurrence of “illegal detentions, forced disappearances, and executions”²⁰⁰. Gonzalo Carrion, the director of the just mentioned center is quoted in a Washington Post as claiming that ““it is impossible that [paramilitaries] could operate without the direct participation of the state [...] they are an apparatus of repression and terror””²⁰¹. Furthermore, the Inter-American Human Rights Commission (IAHRC) reported that “more than 700 have been imprisoned, 325 killed and nearly 2,000 injured”²⁰². In addition to the hundreds killed and thousand injured, an “estimated 62,000 fled to other countries”²⁰³. In June of 2018, the United Nations Human Rights Commissioner claimed that “killings happened ‘almost entirely at the hands of police forces and by armed pro-government groups’”.²⁰⁴ Furthermore, “during so-called ‘clean-up operations’ in July, police and masked pro-government gunmen were accused of carrying out raids of pro-opposition neighbourhoods”²⁰⁵. Additionally, the violence was not limited to 2018 either, as US Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) published magazine, *Diálogo*, reported that “in 2019 alone, 2,600 victims reported various forms of torture conducted by government forces”²⁰⁶. Nicaragua’s military chief denied the presence of these paramilitary groups in 2019²⁰⁷, there are a multitude of reports by both international and national organizations claiming otherwise. President Ortega also “denied any connection to the [paramilitary] squads, [though he] previously referred to paramilitary troops as “‘voluntary police’”²⁰⁸.

IACHR Nicaragua Commissioner Antonia Urrejola told Al Jazeera that “at the beginning of the protests, it was more acquiescence [on the part of the police] ... but the last two weeks we have registered a high degree of collaboration between the national police and the [third armed] groups and actually they haven’t even been hiding it”²⁰⁹. The question is then proposed, is there a connection between these armed groups and Russian arms deals with the Ortega government? Though there is no causation between the two events, there is a certain correlation between the two. In 2018, Russian-Nicaraguan relations were strengthened by two events. First, the Russian chancellery called for a policy of non-interventions in Nicaraguan internal affairs, secondly, the two countries signed the “Memorandum of Intent on Matters of Consultative Cooperation” further showcasing their intent for greater political cooperation²¹⁰.

²⁰⁰ Partlow, Joshua. ‘They took my humanity’: Pro-government paramilitaries terrorize Nicaraguan protesters. Washington Post. 2 August 2018.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² Kenning, Chris. A year into Nicaragua crisis, uncertainty and scepticism prevail. Al Jazeera. 16 April 2019.

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ Witschge, Loes. Las turbas: Who are Nicaragua’s pro-government armed groups? Al Jazeera. 13 August 2018.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Baires, Lorena. Nicaragua: Paramilitaries Spread Terror with Kidnappings. *Diálogo*. 12 February 2020.

²⁰⁷ Papadovassilakis, Alex. Nicaragua Latest Central American Country to Deny Paramilitary Abuse. InSight Crime. 15 August 2019.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ Witschge, Loes. Las turbas: Who are Nicaragua’s pro-government armed groups? Al Jazeera. 13 August 2018.

²¹⁰ Chaguaceda, Armando. Russia and Nicaragua: Progress in bilateral cooperation. Global Americans. 28 March 2019.

This call to not interfere in the internal politics in Nicaragua by Russia is one rooted in Machiavellian politics. Russia understands that as long as Ortega and his supporters still have control of the country, Russia's "Caribbean Triangle" will stay strong and Russia can continue to spread its influence in the region. Furthermore, by requesting non-intervention in Nicaragua, while being the nation's largest provider of weaponry, Russia can be certain that Ortega can stay in power, as long as there is no other outside interference. As has been seen by the examples provided, Russia's support of Ortega's regime, in combination with its arms sales to Nicaragua, are militarizing the internal politics of the country, creating an atmosphere of impunity, and allowing for immense social instability to govern the country. The close ties between Russia and Nicaragua, in addition to the connection between Ortega's government and the paramilitary forces cannot be ignored. Ultimately, though it may be through correlation instead of causation— as direct causation may be impossible to prove in such a miasmatic environment— Russia's arms dealings— which fall under the definition of interventions being used in this analysis— are negatively impacting human security in Nicaragua.

3.2.2.2. Venezuela

The situation in Venezuela is incredibly similar to that in Nicaragua, an illiberal, violent regime, propped up by Russian investment and interventions. "Perhaps the most direct inroad to the Latin American financial market is through Evrofinance Mosnarbank, a major Russian bank whose largest shareholder is a Venezuelan state-owned National Development Fund (Fondo Nacional para el Desarrollo Nacional-FONDEN) known for its total lack of transparency in its handling of billions of dollars from the national oil company, [Petróleos de Venezuela] PdVSA"²¹¹. Through this lack of transparency, the Russian government is keeping the Venezuelan government afloat, primarily to protect its economic interests. While heavily dependent on the Russian SOE oil company, Rosneft, the last 20 years have turned PdVSA, from a world-class giant into a bankrupt skeleton²¹². Originally, deals between the two countries were guaranteed by Venezuela's oil sales, however with the crumbling of the Venezuelan economy, these deals became more complex, and with Russia demanding more assets as guarantees, Russian companies got shares of oil companies and even the right to operate entire Venezuelan oil fields²¹³. The dealings with Rosneft and PdVSA have continued, as "in 2017 the Russian State energy company Rosneft took control of 49.9% of the Citgo refinery, based in the US and owned by Venezuela"²¹⁴. Furthermore, "in November 2017, Russia agreed to refinance \$3.15 billion in bilateral loans and delay almost all payments

²¹¹ Milosevich-Juaristi, Mira. Russia in Latin America: Repercussions for Spain. Elcano Royal Institute. 10 July 2020

²¹² Naím, Moisés, and Toro, Francisco. Russia Is Now Venezuela's Only Hope. The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. 11 December 2017.

²¹³ Naím, Moisés, and Weiss, Andrew S. Putin's Latest Anti-American Intervention: Venezuela. The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. 06 September 2017.

²¹⁴ Milosevich-Juaristi, Mira. Russia in Latin America: Repercussions for Spain. Elcano Royal Institute. 10 July 2020.

until after 2023, a delay that has given Caracas additional breathing room as it manages the consequences of defaulting on its sovereign debt”²¹⁵.

But the question put forth is, what economic interests does Russia have in a failing economy such as Venezuela? Is the aforementioned economic cooperation strategic or involuntary? Information and reports lean towards the latter. The Venezuelan economy is in ruin, it is a petro-economy during the time that petroleum is priced at cents a barrel, and with a plethora of economic sanctions in place, Venezuela has no choice but to rely on Russia.

It is understood that the majority of the oil reserves in Venezuela will never be produced, “the country [still] has more oil than Kuwait, Russia, Qatar, Mexico, and the United States combined [...]. Even if Venezuela increases production volumes tenfold, it would still have oil for another 40 years”²¹⁶. Rosneft itself “resells around 225,000 barrels of Venezuelan oil per day, around 13% of the country’s total exports”²¹⁷. Furthermore, Rosneft “also currently holds major shares in nine large oil projects in Venezuela: five in Orinoco, the country’s largest oil-producing region, three in Lake Maracaibo, the second largest and oldest production area, and a shallow-water oil project in the Gulf of Paria”²¹⁸. Additionally, in 2017, Rosneft was reviewing plans to take over the Amuay Refinery in Venezuela’s Paraguana peninsula, a facility that once processed up to 645,000 barrels of crude a day²¹⁹. In the same year “PdVSA [was also] in talks to sell to Rosneft stakes in other lucrative oil and gas projects at a deep discount”²²⁰. This incredible amount of investment is clearly strategic. In return for all of its investment, Russia “is gaining preferential access to Venezuela’s enormous oil reserves—as well as leverage it could use to advance its interests when dealing with current and future Venezuelan governments”²²¹. Venezuela has lost control of its most valuable resource, oil, and for a country with a heavy dependence on petrol for survival, it has fallen down a chasm from which it will not easily climb out. In the end, Venezuela has become to Russia what Ecuador has to the PRC, an economic vassal dependent on a superpower. Ultimately, “after two decades of leftist screeds against American imperialism, Caracas has managed only to trade one imperial master for another”²²².

²¹⁵ Gurganus, Julia. Russia: Playing a Geopolitical Game in Latin America. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. 3 May 2018.

²¹⁶ Naím, Moisés, and Toro, Francisco. Russia Is Now Venezuela’s Only Hope. The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. 11 December 2017.

²¹⁷ Milosevich-Juaristi, Mira. Russia in Latin America: Repercussions for Spain. Elcano Royal Institute. 10 July 2020.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ Naím, Moisés, and Toro, Francisco. Russia Is Now Venezuela’s Only Hope. The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. 11 December 2017.

²²⁰ Naím, Moisés, and Weiss, Andrew S. Putin’s Latest Anti-American Intervention: Venezuela. The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. 06 September 2017.

²²¹ Gurganus, Julia. Russia: Playing a Geopolitical Game in Latin America. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. 3 May 2018.

²²² Naím, Moisés, and Toro, Francisco. Russia Is Now Venezuela’s Only Hope. The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. 11 December 2017.

The majority of Russian intervention in Venezuela has already been mentioned, however of further importance is the arms deals that Venezuela and Russia have. In 2019, SOUTHCOM estimated approximately \$9 billion in Russian arms sales to Venezuela in the past decade²²³. Meanwhile, other reports claim that Venezuela took out “three loans between 2009-2014 totaling \$10 billion”²²⁴ in order to buy Russian arms. In a similar strain to the arms deal between Nicaragua and Russia, there is no direct connection between the Russian weapons imported by Venezuela, and the abuses on protesters, however a certain measure of correlation cannot be understated.

The previously mentioned *Diálogo* magazine reported that

“During an oral update on human rights in Venezuela on September 25 [2020], U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet said that since July 2 [2020], ‘we observed restrictions on freedom of expression, including the application of anti-hate legislation, attacks against human rights defenders and assaults on and arrests of journalists’”²²⁵

Furthermore, as a result of governmental “security operations”, the OHCHR recorded 711 deaths from June to August 2020, bringing the total number of deaths since January to more than 2,000²²⁶. Supplementing Bachelet’s report was a report done by the UN Independent Fact-Finding Mission on the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela which found “reasonable grounds to believe that Venezuelan authorities and security forces have since 2014 planned and executed serious human rights violations, some of which — including arbitrary killings and the systematic use of torture — amount to crimes against humanity”²²⁷. These reports, in addition to the massive amount of money spent on the Venezuelan armed forces under the regimes of Hugo Chávez and Nicolás Maduro, lead to a reliable conclusion that Russian arms are being used to commit these heinous crimes.

Unfortunately, the problems of the number of Russian weapons in Venezuela does not end with violence against protestors. There are a multitude of non-state actors that seek to gain from Venezuela’s arms dealings with Russia, such as the Colombian guerrilla movement the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN), and certain Brazilian drug-trafficking groups. The ELN is particularly interesting to note, as both Chávez and Maduro have formed a close relationship with the group²²⁸. This relationship is exemplified by the cooperative relationship between the Venezuelan military and the ELN, alongside “multiple reports of the Venezuelan military directly

²²³ Tass. Russian arms sales to Venezuela stood at \$9bln in past decade — US admiral. Tass, Russian News Agency. 10 July 2019.

²²⁴ Roblin, Sebastien. \$10 Billion in the Hole: Venezuela Owes Russia Tons of Money for Weapons. The National Interest. 6 November 2019.

²²⁵ ShareAmerica. UN Rebukes Maduro for Torture, Executions, Disappearances. *Diálogo*. 23 October 2020.

²²⁶ Ibid.

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ Berg, Ryan C., and Martínez-Fernández, Andrés. Venezuela is Armed to the Hilt. *Foreign Policy*. 2 May 2019.

arming guerrilla groups and even ceding territory and governance roles to them”²²⁹. The regime has also “shown a willingness to arm paramilitary colectivos to maintain repressive control over urban areas”²³⁰, thus harkening back to the reports by U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet and the UN Independent Fact-Finding Mission on the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

Further than just sponsoring and arming Colombian guerilla groups, certain Brazilian narco traffickers are also gaining from Venezuela’s arms trade with Russia. Brazilian gangs such as the “Família do Norte (Northern Family) and the dominant Primeiro Comando da Capital (PCC) have an established presence in several countries in the region”²³¹. Importantly, the PCC has been caught smuggling Venezuelan military weapons in Brazil²³². According to police from the Brazilian state of Roraima, some PCC members were caught purchasing AK-47s and AR-15s from Venezuela²³³. The infamous and Russian made AK-47s “are official weapons of Venezuela’s Bolivarian National Armed Forces (FANB)”²³⁴. Furthermore, “the [FANB] has been accused in the past of selling or giving weapons to Colombian rebel groups and the gang leaders, or “pranes,” who control the prisons and mining region of Venezuela”²³⁵. Though clearly the illicit trade of weapons is incredibly complex to comprehend, let alone stop altogether, the not so simple coincidence that Russian weaponry is finding its way into the hands of guerilla groups and drug cartels is worrisome at best. Not only are Venezuelan imports of Russian weapons most likely causing the deaths and injuries of hundreds of Venezuelans, but they are also causing more issues for Colombia and Brazil and their respective populations as they have to deal with the aftermath of the illicit arms trade involving the FANB. It is clear to deduce that Russian shipments of arms and support of the Venezuelan government militarize internal politics in Venezuela, leading to serious human rights violations and causing further socio-political instability in the country.

3.2.3. *Effect on Human Security*

Quickly addressing the Chaparral dam in El Salvador is necessary before this analysis continues onto the cases of Nicaragua and Venezuela. There is heavy investment in the dam by Russia company Tyazhmash which, as previously mentioned, is providing financing, technology, and even assisting in constructing the dam. According to the Salvadoran nonprofit organization, Voices on the Border, the dam was not being built “with the Salvadoran population in mind”²³⁶. The

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² Ibid.

²³³ Venezuela Investigative Unit. Brazil’s PCC Expands Criminal Activity, Trafficking Arms From Venezuela. InSight Crime. 21 February 2018.

²³⁴ Ibid.

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ Voices on the Border. El Chaparral Hydroelectric Dam Promises Clean Energy And Hundreds of Displaced Communities. 21 May 2009.

organization further explained that though El Salvador needs to diversify its energy sources, the dam is not being ethically built as many of the local populations have not agreed to the building of the dam while “others living in the affected areas say that they were deceived by [Comisión Ejecutiva del Río Lempa] (CEL) concerning the purchase of lands”²³⁷. In addition, one can only look back at the previous comments by hydroelectric expert Philip Fearnside to note the catastrophic environmental, social, and fiscal consequences of dam building. Recalling Fearnside’s comments, in addition to previous analysis of the destructive capabilities of dams, it is clear to see the human security dimension. These dams displace local populations and destroy ecosystems. Primarily, many of the displaced peoples are indigenous, as was mentioned in the section regarding the PRC’s construction of dams. These people then have their livelihood and culture taken from them, and while fighting for their rights are oftentimes injured or killed, as the previous example of Shuar leader José Tendetza showed.

However, and of more relevance to this analysis, are the situations surrounding the militarization of Nicaraguan and Venezuelan internal politics. According to the 2020 Global Peace Index (GPI) Nicaragua fell 15 ranks from the previous year to rank 135 out of 163 and Venezuela fell four ranks to place 149 out of 163 countries, respectively²³⁸. Both of these governments are violently repressing the opposition and seeing as Russia is a primary arms dealer to both governments, one can only see the direct connection between Russian dealings in both countries, and the deteriorating human rights situations there.

It is here where another foray into world systems analysis can occur, albeit in not as purely economic terms as Wallerstein may have intended. Rather, this analysis will focus more on the political power dynamics between the center, Russia, and the periphery, Nicaragua, and Venezuela. World systems analysis poses the interesting dilemma which gives the center complete autonomy while giving the periphery only partial autonomy. In other words, the periphery has the ability to do what it wants, as long as it will also benefit the center; for if the periphery attempts to break from the center guided norms, the periphery is “punished”. Russia is clearly the center in this scenario due to its superpower status, while Nicaragua and Venezuela are peripheral countries due to their dependency on Russia. In these cases, Russia is a pivotal pillar of support for the two countries. In Nicaragua, Russian weaponry is heavily used by the government to maintain itself in power and oppress dissidents. Whilst in Venezuela, Russian weaponry has the same effect, though more importantly, Russia is almost single handedly keeping the Venezuelan government afloat. “Punishment” could come in these peripheral countries in the way that if they were to oppose Russia, they would then relinquish any power they had due to a withdrawal of Russian political and economic support.

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ Global Peace Index. 2020 Measuring Peace in a Complex World. Institute for Economics & Peace. 2020.

It is important to note that Russia also disproportionately benefits from this relationship. Nicaragua, as was previously established, is used to give Russia a foundation for its political encroachment and expansion in the region. While Venezuela is also used for the same reasons as Nicaragua, it is primarily used for its main raw resource, petroleum. Furthermore, the governments of these two peripheral countries are almost wholly reliant on Russian financial support and the importation of Russian weaponry. Having established these facts, world systems analysis gives this analysis the ability to put forth the following correlation: Russian support of these countries is a primary reason for diminishing human security. The primary reason being that Russian presence appears to allow for extreme polarization and militarization of internal politics, which has led to violence done upon protestors and the common individual in the aforementioned countries.

Simultaneously, the following correlation can also be claimed: if Russia were to retract a certain amount of its support to Nicaragua and Venezuela, human security in these two countries may improve. The latter statement comes with many caveats, however. Though not caused by the presence of Russian support, there can be a measure of correlation between the lack of peace in these two countries and Russian support for the respective governments. Since these conclusions are merely correlative rather than causative, a direct link between the two cannot be concretely established, as the sociopolitical situation in these peripheral countries are miasmatic and trace their roots to a plethora of causes. Furthermore, Russian retraction of support in these two countries could likely lead to a vacuum of support which could further destabilize the countries, which could endanger human security more than it already is.

3.3. US: The Eagle in Latin America

3.3.1. *A Superpower?*

Analyzing the US as a superpower appears to be a moot point, however it must still be done. According to the CIA World Factbook, the US “has the most technologically powerful economy in the world, with a per capita GDP of \$59,500”²³⁹. However, it fell second to the PRC in 2014 according to its GDP per purchasing power parity conversion rates²⁴⁰. Bouncing between the label of the world’s leading economy, and the world’s second leading economy, its economic might is clearly understood.

From a military point of view, the US has a standing force of “approximately 1.372 million active duty personnel”²⁴¹. The range of the US military can be felt around the world, as can be seen by the *Smithsonian Magazine* statistic that in January 2019 the US was “operating in 40 percent of

²³⁹ CIA World Factbook. United States. CIA. Last updated 16 October 2020.

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

²⁴¹ Ibid.

the world's nations”²⁴². Comprising of an estimated 800 military bases²⁴³, the US military is clearly the most active military in the world. In many ways, the US military power is unable to be matched. Not only is the US military nearly unrivaled, but the US State Department spending on related fields is also vital to mention. Between the events of 11 September 2001 and January 2019, “The [US] State Department [...] spent \$127 billion in the last 17 years to train police, military and border patrol agents in many countries and to develop antiterrorism education programs, among other activities”²⁴⁴.

The US is not only a superpower in terms of economic and military capabilities, but its influential web of alliances and ever-expanding soft power can also be used to establish it as a superpower. Due to the US being in the limelight of global politics, nations have often looked to it for leadership. During his administration, Donald Trump has “set the global agenda, but the effect on his credibility was devastating”²⁴⁵. David Haigh, chair, and CEO of Brand Finance claimed that the US “has shown that ultimately, despite the reputational challenges of impeachment and unpredictable foreign policy, its position as the rule-maker in the international system ... is unrivalled”²⁴⁶.

Though the Soft Power 30 report has placed the US on a steady decline since 2016, it still places it at number five in its world rankings²⁴⁷²⁴⁸, the same report claims that “while no single president can wipe out the wealth of soft power assets that the US has built up over decades, they can still make an impact through rhetoric and policy alone”²⁴⁹.

As was mentioned, US soft power is slowly declining under the new administration, however that does not mean its soft power is nonexistent. US soft power can be most appropriately seen via its plethora of world leading companies and universities, while its pop culture attracts people from all over the world²⁵⁰.

Furthermore, “many people outside the US remain attracted by American films, science, universities, companies, and foundations. Many people in democracies are also attracted by the

²⁴² Savell, Stephanie, and 5W Infographics. This Map Shows Where in the World the U.S. Military Is Combatting Terrorism. Smithsonian Magazine. January 2019.

²⁴³ Lazare, Sarah. US Military Bases Are Key Pieces of the Global War Machine. Jacobin Magazine. 5 October 2020.

²⁴⁴ Savell, Stephanie, and 5W Infographics. This Map Shows Where in the World the U.S. Military Is Combatting Terrorism. Smithsonian Magazine. January 2019.

²⁴⁵ Nye, Joseph S. Jr. American Soft Power After Trump. In, McClory, Jonathan. The Soft Power 30 A Global Ranking of Soft Power. 2019. pp.49-52.

²⁴⁶ Handley, Lucy. The US is the world's top 'soft' power — but Trump has damaged its reputation, survey says. CNBC News. 25 February 2020.

²⁴⁷ McClory, Jonathan. The Soft Power 30 A Global Ranking of Soft Power 2019. Soft Power 30. 2019.

²⁴⁸ The top four of the Soft Power Rankings are in order: France, the United Kingdom, Germany, and Sweden.

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

²⁵⁰ Soft Power 30. United States 2019 Review. Soft Power 30. 2019.

resilience of [the US's] independent courts and free press that stand up to presidential power”²⁵¹. It has been shown in previous analysis that both the PRC and Russia are worried about antagonizing the US when it comes to Latin America, this due the massive force the US can quickly and easily position to protect its strategic assets. While attempts by both Russia and the PRC to expand their soft power and influence are within their foreign policy strategy because of the massive influence the US has in the Americas. This combination of overwhelming military strength, nearly unrivalled economic prowess, and, though diminishing, still massively influential and attractive soft power, makes the US stand above the other superpowers in this analysis. The following section on US interventions in Latin America will first generally discuss a measure of historical interventions in Latin America. Following this historical introduction, a more detailed exploration on US historical interventions in Chile and Guatemala during the Cold War will occur. Lastly, more contemporary interventions in Honduras, Bolivia, and Venezuela will be analyzed, as these modern interventions will serve as the windows into modern US interventions in the region. It is important to understand the reason for more examples of US interventions in the region compared to the previous superpowers analyzed. The reason being that the US simply has closer historical ties to the region, as will be described in the next section.

3.3.2. *Interventions*

The quantity of US interventions in Latin America and the Caribbean are plentiful, and though certain historical and contemporary interventions will be mentioned in detail, some 20th century examples are certainly important to note. For example, the 1964 US supported coup deposing Brazilian president Joao Goulart and subsequently installing a vicious military government that lasted until the 1980s²⁵². Or a much longer lasting example being the Banana Wars from 1898 to 1934, in which the U.S. militarily intervened in Central America and the Caribbean in order to protect its business endeavors²⁵³. But ultimately, US interventions in Latin America can trace their roots to the 19th and early 20th centuries. The most relevant concepts to this analysis are the Monroe Doctrine and the subsequent Roosevelt Corollary. Becoming part of the US foreign policy in 1823, the Monroe Doctrine claimed that “the American continents ... are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European powers”. It established the American continent as the sphere of influence of the US and formed its foreign policy towards its southern neighbors for decades to come. Building on the Monroe Doctrine, the Roosevelt Corollary was added in 1904 and subsequently claimed that the US would act as a police force, while President Roosevelt claimed that the US would “exercise international police power in ‘flagrant cases of such wrongdoing or impotence’”. This foreign policy, though not initially

²⁵¹ Nye, Joseph S. Jr. American Soft Power After Trump. In, McClory, Jonathan. The Soft Power 30 A global Ranking of Soft Power. 2019. pp.49-52.

²⁵² The Associated Press. Before Venezuela, US had long involvement in Latin America. Associated Press. 25 January 2019.

²⁵³ Jansen, Kees. Banana Wars and the Multiplicity of Conflicts in Commodity Chains. *Revista Europea De Estudios Latinoamericanos Y Del Caribe / European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies*, no.81. 2006. pp.97-113.

effective at the time of its inception, set the stage for the establishment of US imperialism and its rise to hegemony. “By the 1930s [the US] had annexed Puerto Rico, occupied Cuba and encouraged a rebellion in Panama after that country’s Colombian rulers rejected a proposal for an inter-oceanic canal” “with the U.S. taking control of the canal”, while “military occupations of the Dominican Republic...Haiti, Nicaragua, and Mexico’s Veracruz port” also occurred in the same time frame.

The cases of Cuba and Panama during this time are vital to note for one common reason; the US offered its assistance to the inhabitants of those countries to aid them in their quest for independence, but due to backhanded imperialist policies, the US came out with extremely advantageous consequences, and the inhabitants came out suffering and without the full autonomy sought after.

The case of Cuba is one that is directly tied to the Spanish-American War in 1898 and the independence of the island nation. During the creation of the independent Cuba, the US implemented the Platt Amendment which “established the terms under which the United States would end its military occupation of Cuba... which had begun in 1898”. “The Platt Amendment laid down eight conditions to which the Cuban Government had to agree before the withdrawal of U.S. forces and the transfer of sovereignty would begin”. The conditions established by the Platt Amendment “...prohibited the Cuban Government from entering into any international treaty that would compromise Cuban independence or allow foreign powers to use the island for military purposes...”. “The United States also reserved the right to intervene in Cuban affairs in order to defend Cuban independence...”. Meanwhile, other conditions “demanded that the Cuban Government implement plans to improve sanitary conditions on the island, relinquish claims on the Isle of Pines..., and agree to sell or lease territory for coaling and naval stations to the United States...”. This last-mentioned clause laid the foundation for the establishment of Guantánamo Bay. “Finally, the amendment required the Cuban Government to conclude a treaty with the United States that would make the Platt amendment legally binding, and the United States pressured the Cubans to incorporate the terms of the Platt Amendment in the Cuban constitution”.

The case of Panama is one that occurred at around the same time as that of the aforementioned Cuba case. After a series of ineffective negotiations with Panama regarding the construction of the Panama Canal “the U.S. sent Marines to guard all trains crossing Panama and stationed ships off both terminals” in order to coerce Panama to give more concessions to the US. Ultimately, in the final treaty the US only guaranteed Panamanian independence. “In fact, the new treaty gave the U.S. full sovereignty over the [canal] zone and required Panama to pay the full capital and operating costs “of any works of sanitation, such as the collection and disposition of sewage and the distribution of water in the said cities of Panama and Colon” .

These two cases are not just ones that we can observe over one hundred years later and claim they were examples of US imperialism. As a matter of fact, there was a lot of contemporary criticism of US foreign policy, even in the years preceding the occupations of Cuba and Panama. Such criticism can be best observed from Cuban writer and national hero José Martí. On the 20th of January of 1891, he published an essay titled *Nuestra America* (Our America) in “El Partido Liberal” of Mexico City. In this essay he distanced Spanish speaking America from its English counterpart (the US) by claiming that “a Llanero’s bolting colt can’t be stopped in its tracks by one of Alexander Hamilton’s laws”. He is claiming that the force of the “llanero”, the countryman of Latin America, cannot be stopped by the laws of “civilization” (Hamilton’s law meaning the US). However, more prudently for this criticism of imperialism came when he claimed that the “the tiger frightened away by the flash of gunfire will creep back in the night to find his prey” and that the nations of Latin America “may also face another danger, which does not come from within it, but from the differing origins, methods, and interests of the continent’s two factions. The hour is near when [Latin America] will be approached by an enterprising and forceful nation that will demand intimate relations with her, though it does not know her and disdains her”. Seeing as Martí lived in the tumultuous and revolutionary 19th century, it can be understood that this tiger in question meant imperialist ambitions, yet the origins of these ambitions is more pertinent. Martí already hypothesized that this tiger would be the US but to what extent he was not aware.

Following the Spanish-American War in 1898, and the subsequent Treaty of Paris which ended the war, US President William McKinley claimed that

“We cannot be unmindful that without any desire or design on our part the war has brought us new duties and responsibilities which we must meet and discharge as becomes a great nation on whose growth and career from the beginning the Ruler of Nations has plainly written the high command and pledge of civilization”²⁵⁴

This claim put forth US foreign policy in the 20th century as one riddled in interventions. This analysis will not go into further detail on the context of the Spanish-American war, as that was briefly touched upon in the historical overview. However, though mentioned in the historical overview, this section will touch upon the certain interventions in Latin America, led or heavily supported by the US, that changed the face of the region as we know it. US involvement in Latin America during the 20th century is incredibly complex. Importantly, this section will place a more direct focus on the historical cases of Guatemala and Chile, respectively. Although focusing on the two aforementioned cases, US interventions can be seen throughout the 20th century. In the first quarter of the 20th century, US Marines repeatedly intervened in Central America and the Caribbean often to protect US business interests²⁵⁵. Meanwhile, though US dealings in Cuba have

²⁵⁴ Office of the Historian. 1898: The Birth of a Superpower. United States of America Department of State.

²⁵⁵ The Associated Press. Before Venezuela, US had long involvement in Latin America. Associated Press. 25 January 2019.

been previously mentioned, it is also important to note the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion, and multiple CIA attempts to assassinate Soviet backed Fidel Castro²⁵⁶. Of further importance is US supported and South American led Operation Condor which was highlighted by a “brutal campaign of repression and assassination aimed at perceived leftist threats”²⁵⁷. During the complexity that governed Cold War era politics, the US under President Reagan also “[backed] anti-Communist Contra forces against Nicaragua’s Sandinista government and [backed] the Salvadoran government against leftist FMLN rebels”²⁵⁸ in the 1980s. At around the same time, the US “[invaded the] Caribbean island of Grenada after accusing the government of allying itself with Communist Cuba”²⁵⁹ in 1983. Now that there is a general overview of US actions in the region during the Cold War, a more detailed analysis of the Guatemalan case will continue.

3.3.2.1. Guatemala

In 1954, President Jacobo Arbenz of Guatemala was overthrown in a coup organized by the US government, following his land reforms which threatened profits to the US based United Fruit Company; the company then lobbied the US government for his removal²⁶⁰. “The Eisenhower Administration painted the coup as an uprising that rid the hemisphere of a Communist government backed by Moscow”²⁶¹. The CIA backed Colonel Carlos Castillo Armas, the commander of the coup, and he subsequently became president²⁶². It is important to note that as soon as Armas took power reversed the land reforms and removed voting rights for illiterate—meaning poor—Guatemalans²⁶³. The reversal of the land reforms was clearly encouraged by his supporters in the CIA and United Fruit Company, as that had been a major threat to profits. Meanwhile, the removal of voting rights only further pushed forth the anti-democratic tendencies that governed Guatemala for the next decades.

Guatemala would subsequently descend into over thirty years of civil war. This war would end up claiming as many as 200,000 lives, many of which were peasants killed by government security forces²⁶⁴. Furthermore, the time before and during the civil war was riddled with interethnic strife, as Miguel Ydigoras Fuentes’ autocratic regime was particularly racist and discriminated against the Maya and oppressed women in Guatemala²⁶⁵. The US maintained a closeness with the Guatemalan security forces during the civil war as documents show that the US “gave the Guatemalan military \$33 million in aid even though U.S. officials were aware of the army's dismal

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

²⁶⁰ BBC News. How America overthrew Guatemala's reformist president. BBC News. 19 June 2019.

²⁶¹ Malkin, Elisabeth. An Apology for a Guatemalan Coup, 57 Years Later. New York Times. 21 October 2011.

²⁶² PBS. Timeline: Guatemala’s Brutal Civil War. PBS. 7 March 2011.

²⁶³ Ibid.

²⁶⁴ Malkin, Elisabeth. An Apology for a Guatemalan Coup, 57 Years Later. New York Times. 21 October 2011.

²⁶⁵ Combat Genocide Association. GUATEMALA 1981-1983. Combat Genocide Association.

track record on human rights”²⁶⁶ during the 1960’s and 1970’s. Nevertheless, the US attempted to curb the Guatemalan tendency to curb human rights abuses as in 1977 it proposed \$2.1 million in U.S. military aid, on the condition of improving its human rights record, which the Guatemalan government duly rejected. However, these conditions would be lifted under the Reagan administration in the early 1980s despite occasional clashes over the military’s brutal tactics²⁶⁷. Importantly, the Reagan administration lifted a Carter era trade embargo on arms sales to Guatemala in 1983²⁶⁸. The relations between the two countries also warmed due to the rise of General Efraín Ríos Montt as head of state. Montt “enjoyed close ties with the Reagan administration and with Christian conservatives in the United States”²⁶⁹, with President Reagan, declaring that Montt has “great personal integrity” and had gotten a “bum rap” after meeting him in 1982²⁷⁰. This was at the same time “as the military was conducting its brutal onslaught against Maya communities”²⁷¹.

The civil war campaign, which mainly targeted Mayans included atrocities such as:

“bombing villages and attacking fleeing residents; impaling victims; burning people alive; severing limbs; throwing children into pits filled with bodies and killing them; disemboweling civilians and slashing open the wombs of pregnant women”²⁷².

All of this was done with CIA knowledge according to the Center for Justice and Accountability²⁷³.

Of particular note is the now labeled Silent Holocaust of 1981-1983, under the supervision of Montt, which are considered the darkest hours of the civil war²⁷⁴. During this time

“the army and its paramilitary units—including ‘civilian patrols’ of forcibly-conscripted local men—systematically attacked over 600 villages. The inhabitants were raped, tortured, and murdered. Over 300 villages were completely razed. Buildings were demolished; crops and drinking water were fouled”²⁷⁵.

²⁶⁶ Farahm, Douglas. Papers Show U.S. Role in Guatemalan Abuses. Washington Post Foreign Service. 11 March 1999.

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

²⁶⁹ Center for Justice and Accountability. Guatemala. Center for Justice and Accountability.

²⁷⁰ McDonnell, Patrick J. Guatemala’s civil war devastated the country’s indigenous Maya communities. Los Angeles Times. 3 September 2018.

²⁷¹ Ibid.

²⁷² Ibid.

²⁷³ Center for Justice and Accountability. Guatemala. Center for Justice and Accountability.

²⁷⁴ The Week. What was Guatemala’s ‘Silent Genocide’?. The Week. 27 September 2018.

²⁷⁵ Center for Justice and Accountability. Guatemala. Center for Justice and Accountability.

According to Yale University's Genocide Studies Program, the Guatemalan army had massacred and destroyed 626 villages²⁷⁶. During this time, almost 1,800 indigenous Ixil civilians were killed, and tens of thousands more disappeared²⁷⁷. Though the period right before Montt's rise to power was equally horrific. The last twelve months, March 1981 to March 1982, of General Lucas Garcia's regime saw 45 massacres with 1,678 victims²⁷⁸. Furthermore, "between 500,000 and 1.5 million Mayan civilians fled to other regions within the country or became refugees abroad"²⁷⁹ during the time of Garcia's and Montt's regimes.

The Commission for Historical Clarification of Guatemala claimed that

"The massacres, scorched-earth operations, forced disappearances and executions of Mayan authorities, leaders and spiritual guides were not only an attempt to destroy the social base of the guerrillas, but above all, to destroy the cultural values that ensured cohesion and collective action in Mayan communities"²⁸⁰

The same commission also stated that "the Guatemalan government was responsible for more than 90% of deaths, disappearances and other human rights violations during the war"²⁸¹.

Luke Moffet, a senior lecturer in transitional justice and human rights at Queen's University in Belfast, stated in 2018 that the search for justice for this genocide has been going on for nearly 40 years²⁸². Moffet further stated that "the killing of so many Mayans badly damaged their transmission of oral history and traditional knowledge, such as the use of local plants as medicines and traditional healthcare, and their own language and cultural practices"²⁸³. Relating to the teachers that were killed, disappeared, or fled during the genocide, Moffet claimed that many adults who were children during the genocide were left without an education, and are subsequently suffering now²⁸⁴. Moffet also wrote a personal anecdote in his article, claiming that "one survivor of the massacre who lost his parents and siblings in the massacre told [him], the army 'left us with only dust after they burned all of our relatives'"²⁸⁵. It is this impoverished state that still affects Mayan communities in Guatemala. Moffet continued by stating that the Silent Holocaust was underpinned by poverty, marginalization, and racism against the Maya, further stating that these factors still exist to this day. He further concluded that if these factors are not addressed, the

²⁷⁶ Sanford, Victoria. Violence and Genocide in Guatemala. Yale University Genocide Studies Program. 2020.

²⁷⁷ Ibid.

²⁷⁸ Ibid.

²⁷⁹ Center for Justice and Accountability. Guatemala. Center for Justice and Accountability.

²⁸⁰ McDonnell, Patrick J. Guatemala's civil war devastated the country's indigenous Maya communities. Los Angeles Times. 3 September 2018.

²⁸¹ Ibid.

²⁸² Moffet, Luke. Guatemala's history of genocide hurts Mayan communities to this day. The Conversation. 18 June 2018.

²⁸³ Ibid.

²⁸⁴ Ibid.

²⁸⁵ Ibid.

conditions for violence will remain²⁸⁶. Ultimately, US involvement in these events cannot be ignored, and lay clear US policy during the Cold War, of which the effects are still felt today.

3.3.2.2. Chile

In 1973, General Augusto Pinochet Ugarte led a military coup against democratically elected Salvador Allende's Socialist government²⁸⁷. Through this coup and the complicated relations between the US and the Pinochet dictatorship in Chile between 1973 and 1990 another window into US interventions in Latin America is opened. Though these relations are incredibly important, the connections between the two began before the regime began.

During the 1960's, the US had many worries surrounding the rise of the left in Chile and the nationalization of industries such as copper²⁸⁸. According to declassified US documents, there was an incredible amount of investment from the CIA into Chilean politics during the 1960's and 1970's²⁸⁹. "In 1968, CIA analysts first anticipated that Allende's Popular Unity coalition could win in Chile"²⁹⁰. However, before Allende was elected, the CIA attempted to maintain then-President Eduardo Frei in power through a large variety of ways. According to a declassified report on CIA Chilean Task Force Activities, the CIA did its best to prevent Allende's election by heavily supporting Frei²⁹¹. These same declassified documents state that then CIA Director Richard Helms told the National Security Council (NSC) that the goal was to ensure Frei's reelection, and if necessary, lay the groundwork to overthrow Allende via military coup²⁹².

Despite CIA attempts Allende nevertheless became president of Chile on the 3rd of November 1970²⁹³. This pushed the CIA into its "Track II" plan, the promotion of a military coup²⁹⁴. Henry Kissinger, the then Secretary of State confirmed the continuing policy that Allende was to be overthrown by a coup²⁹⁵. Furthermore, during Allende's time in office, The CIA funneled funds to anti-Allende politicians, while also heavily supporting the conservative newspaper, *El Mercurio*, thus setting the stage for the coup²⁹⁶.

Equally importantly to the coup, were the CIA's actions within the Chilean military.

²⁸⁶ Ibid.

²⁸⁷ Read, Peter. World politics explainer: Pinochet's Chile. The Conversation. 11 September 2018.

²⁸⁸ Office of the Historian. The Allende Years and the Pinochet Coup, 1969–1973. United States of America Department of State.

²⁸⁹ Kornblue, Peter. Declassifying U.S. Intervention in Chile. North American Congress on Latin America. 25 September 2007.

²⁹⁰ Ibid.

²⁹¹ Ibid.

²⁹² Ibid.

²⁹³ Ibid.

²⁹⁴ Ibid.

²⁹⁵ Ibid.

²⁹⁶ Ibid.

“Covert agents also maintained close liaison with disgruntled Chilean military officers. To keep the military on edge, the CIA planted false propaganda suggesting that the Chilean left planned to take control of the armed forces. According to the Senate Select Committee report, the CIA even prepared arrest lists of Allende supporters in the event of a military takeover”²⁹⁷

The last and final stage of US policy was an “invisible blockade” of loans, which moved to prevent multilateral and bilateral foreign aid to reach Chile, further pushing the country into economic disequilibrium²⁹⁸.

As can be seen from these declassified documents, the US has an incredible amount of influence in the internal dealings of Chile leading to the Pinochet coup. Peter Read, a professor of history at the Australian National University claimed that “the last chaotic year of Allende’s presidency, [was] marked by massive protectionism, chaotic land expropriations, strikes, food shortages (some artificially induced) and galloping inflation”²⁹⁹. From Read’s comments, and the declassified documents showing CIA involvement, the conclusion must be that a large portion of the instability of Allende’s presidency, and therefore the foundations of the coup, were created largely by US interventions and involvement. Pinochet’s rule would then become almost 20 years of repression in Chile.

Between 11 September 1973 and the end of that year, 1,213 people died or disappeared³⁰⁰. In that same time, Pinochet “[suspended] the constitution, [banned] opposition, [arrested] trade unionists and [imposed] controls on the media”³⁰¹. The regime “was ultimately responsible for more than 3,000 dead, [and] tens of thousands of tortured”³⁰².

Ultimately, what is understood by Pinochet’s time in control of Chile, in addition to Guatemala’s civil war, is the expanse of US involvement. In particular, is the US strategy of intervention. Clearly hoping to create politically amicable regimes in each country, the US destabilized and supported, overtly or implicitly, regimes that abused human rights, and murdered thousands, all under the pretense of fighting against communism. Though US strategies since the Cold War have changed, its presence in Latin America is still omnipresent.

²⁹⁷ Ibid.

²⁹⁸ Ibid.

²⁹⁹ Read, Peter. World politics explainer: Pinochet’s Chile. The Conversation. 11 September 2018.

³⁰⁰ The Guardian. Chile under Pinochet - a chronology. The Gardian.15 January 1999.

³⁰¹ Ibid.

³⁰² Klein, Marcus. Review: The Human Rights Violations of the Pinochet Regime and Their Legacy. European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies / Revista Europea de Estudios Latinoamericanos y del Caribe, no.74. April 2003. pp.107-14.

The influence of the US in Latin America can be felt in every country in the region. Even though multiple books can be written about US relations with the region, this section of the thesis will focus on three contemporary examples of US relations, Bolivia, Honduras, and Venezuela. This trio of countries have seen political instability shake them to their core in the 21st century. Venezuela has been governed by an authoritarian regime since 1998³⁰³, since then multiple coup attempts have occurred, all of which have failed. Similarly, Honduras was rocked by a crisis in 2009 that led to a military coup³⁰⁴ which has led to political uncertainty that still shakes the country today. Lastly, Bolivia was rattled by a military coup in 2019³⁰⁵, though the country appears to have returned to democracy earlier this year³⁰⁶, the prolonged effects of the military coup are yet to be seen. The one similarity all of the aforementioned cases have is US involvement. Furthermore, the effects of such involvement appear to have bolstered further militarization of internal politics and appear to have encouraged political violence in all three countries.

3.3.2.3. Honduras

The root cause of the present socio-political crisis in Honduras can be traced back several years to 2009 when popular left-wing president Manuel Zelaya was ousted by an alliance of businesses, the military, and lawmakers from the National Party of Honduras (PNH)³⁰⁷. Following this coup, the government suspended key civil liberties, including freedom of the press and assembly³⁰⁸. The coup was universally condemned, and following a previously scheduled election in November 2009, Porfirio “Pepe” Lobo Sosa became president³⁰⁹. However, due to the conditions in the country while the elections were held, many Hondurans deemed the elections as illegitimate³¹⁰. Universal condemnation did not last long however, as many countries, including the US “agreed to recognize the results of the election despite Zelaya never being restored to office”³¹¹. With the lack of real consequences against the coup organizers, many have proposed that the coup was supported by many international communities, with the US being “accused of granting at least tacit support to [the coup] [...] in Honduras”³¹². Furthermore, US recognition of PNH candidate Sosa³¹³

³⁰³ Trinkunas, Harold A. Defining Venezuela’s “Bolivarian Revolution”. Military Review. Army University Press.

³⁰⁴ Meyer, Peter J. Honduran Political Crisis, June 2009-January 2010. Congressional Research Service. 1 February 2010.

³⁰⁵ Hetland, Gabriel. Many wanted Morales out. But what happened in Bolivia was a military coup. The Guardian. 13 November 2019.

³⁰⁶ Phillips, Tom, and Collins, Dan. Bolivia election: Evo Morales's leftwing party celebrates stunning comeback. The Guardian. 19 October 2019.

³⁰⁷ Weiss, Sandra. With Honduras in crisis, calls grow for president to resign. Deutsche Welle. 24 June 2019.

³⁰⁸ Human Rights Watch. Honduras Events of 2013. World Report 2014. 2014.

³⁰⁹ Meyer, Peter J. Honduran Political Crisis, June 2009-January 2010. Congressional Research Service. 1 February 2010.

³¹⁰ Ibid.

³¹¹ Ibid.

³¹² The Associated Press. Before Venezuela, US had long involvement in Latin America. Associated Press. 25 January 2019.

³¹³ Carroll, Rory. Honduras elects Porfirio Lobo as new president. The Guardian. 30 November 2009.

must shine a measure of doubt over the US's role in the coup, as Sosa's party had already been established as a participating group in the coup.

Though this analysis will soon address the current administration in Honduras, and its ties to the US, certain topics under the Sosa administration must be broached. In a March 2012 joint statement to the press by former US Vice President Joe Biden and former Honduran President Sosa, Biden claimed that “the United States and Honduras have had a long and close partnership, and we reaffirmed that today”³¹⁴. Honduras, though constantly troubled with issues, did not fare any better under the US supported Sosa administration. According to a report by Honduras's National Autonomous University, government police forces killed 149 civilians from January 2011 to November 2012, including 18 individuals under the age of 19³¹⁵. Furthermore, and in the spirit of impunity, then-Commissioner of the Preventive Police Alex Villanueva affirmed the report's findings, further stating that there were likely many more unreported killings by police³¹⁶. Furthermore, “despite a history of abuse by the military against civilians”³¹⁷, in August 2013 the Honduran congress authorized the creation of a military police force with the power to seize control of neighborhoods, carry out arrests, and have competence in other duties³¹⁸. The atmosphere of impunity, and possible complicity, in the abuse of force in Honduras is one that cannot be understated. Amnesty International reported that due to the “widespread climate of impunity and corruption, scores of people do not turn to the authorities to report crimes, either for fear of possible reprisals or simply because of the ineffectiveness of the justice system. Impunity is prevalent for human rights violations and abuses”³¹⁹. However, these issues did not stop with the arrival of Juan Orlando Hernández to the presidency in 2014³²⁰. Hernández came from the same party that organized the coup in 2009, the PNH³²¹. Hernández has had to deal with a plethora of issues plaguing Honduras long before his arrival in power, yet few things have been accomplished. Though certain efforts had been done to enhance the human rights situation in the country, the Hernández administration is at fault for many issues as well, with the US Congressional Research Service claiming that the Honduran government has not taken enough precautionary measures to protect its citizens, nor have they removed the atmosphere of impunity that governs Honduran society³²².

³¹⁴ The White House Office of the Vice President. Joint Statement to the Press by Vice President Joe Biden and Honduran President Porfirio Lobo Sosa. The White House President Barack Obama. 6 March 2012.

³¹⁵ Human Rights Watch. Honduras Events of 2013. World Report 2014. 2014.

³¹⁶ Ibid.

³¹⁷ Ibid.

³¹⁸ Ibid.

³¹⁹ Amnesty International. Honduras Failing to Implement Human Rights Commitments. Amnesty International Submission to the UN Universal Periodic Review. May 2015.

³²⁰ Meyer, Peter J. Honduras: Background and U.S. Relations. Congressional Research Service. 20 May 2015.

³²¹ Ibid.

³²² Ibid.

When returning to the current socio-political crisis in Honduras, one can understand the new spark being Hernández controversial reelection in 2017³²³. Hernández first began “amassing power over many of the country’s weak institutions during his first four-year term”³²⁴. Importantly, Hernández removed term limits by orchestrating a constitutional reform, while also facing mass protests and numerous accusations of corruption and electoral fraud³²⁵. This exemplifies Hernández’s continuous disregard for the separation of powers and the rule of law, while he has also repressed critics and criminalized the work of human rights activists³²⁶. Human Rights Watch has reported on the impunity surrounding the governmental abuse of force in Honduras. Reporting that following the controversial 2017 reelection of Hernández that “at least 22 civilians were killed during the protests, of whom at least 16 were shot by security forces”³²⁷. Meanwhile, HRW’s subsequent World Report 2020 stated that in a government crackdown of protests and demonstrations between March 2019 and June 2019 “killed at least six people, wounded 80, and included 48 arbitrary detentions”³²⁸. Furthermore, the incredible distrust of Honduran institutions is perfectly summed up by Miguel Calix, the Honduras representative for the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy. He claimed that “when you have an election that is very close, you have to trust the judge [...] and the problem is that nobody trusts the judge”³²⁹.

It is important to note, however, that “The US welcomes Hernández’ neoliberal, free-market policies and sees him as a capable leader”³³⁰. Juan Ramon Martinez, a columnist for Honduran newspaper *La Tribuna*, claims

“that Hernández depends on the country’s military and the United States government to maintain his grip on power. Indeed, on Friday the president welcomed US marines at Palmerola Air Base near the Honduran capital, Tegucigalpa. They will help fight the country’s youth gangs and drug cartels. Surrounded by top military brass, Hernandez also announced that the country’s security forces will be deployed across Honduras to combat vandalism and to clear road blocks”³³¹.

³²³ Kinoshia, Sarah. US recognizes re-election of Honduras president despite fraud allegations. *The Guardian*. 22 December 2017.

³²⁴ Malkin, Elisabeth. U.S. Backs Honduran President’s Victory in Disputed Election. *New York Times*. 22 December 2017.

³²⁵ González, Ricardo. The democratic crisis in Honduras has reached a boiling point. *The Washington Post*. 9 May 2019.

³²⁶ *Ibid.*

³²⁷ Human Rights Watch. Honduras Events of 2018. *World Report 2019*. 2019.

³²⁸ Human Rights Watch. Honduras Events of 2019. *World Report 2020*. 2020.

³²⁹ Malkin, Elisabeth. U.S. Backs Honduran President’s Victory in Disputed Election. *New York Times*. 22 December 2017.

³³⁰ Weiss, Sandra. With Honduras in crisis, calls grow for president to resign. *Deutsche Welle*. 24 June 2019.

³³¹ *Ibid.*

Furthermore, journalist Noe Leyva claims that as long as Hernández stays a loyal US ally and has the continuous backing of the US and its military, he will not step down³³². However, such backing has proven to be conditional, with the US freezing aid to Honduras and other countries for the apparent lack of action in stopping US bound immigrant caravans, however aid was later restored following asylum cooperation agreements between the countries and the US³³³.

However the conditions relating to the aforementioned aid freezing had little to do with the constant human rights abuses in Honduras, nor did they aim to address the constantly diminishing separation of power, growing impunity and corruption, and disregard for rule of law. Fulton Armstrong, a former CIA analyst and current professor at American University, stated that “the US is sacrificing support of the Honduran people and almost everything the US represents – democracy, anti-corruption – for what it thinks is stability. But how can you have stability without democracy?”³³⁴.

3.3.2.4. Bolivia

The same criticisms of the US regarding Honduras can be said about the recent coup and interim government in Bolivia. A statement by US President Donald Trump on the 11 of November 2019 claimed that “The United States applauds the Bolivian people for demanding freedom and the Bolivian military for abiding by its oath to protect not just a single person, but Bolivia’s constitution”³³⁵. More specifically, US Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo claimed that

“The United States applauds Bolivian Senator Jeanine Áñez for stepping up as interim president of state to lead her nation through this democratic transition, under the constitution of Bolivia and in accordance with the principles of the Inter-American Democratic Charter”³³⁶.

Importantly, the Áñez’s transitional cabinet “did not include a single indigenous person, in a country where at least 40% of the population belongs to one of 36 indigenous groups”³³⁷. Furthermore, Áñez was criticized after racist remarks against indigenous people were unearthed in tweets attributed to her from 2013³³⁸. Áñez publicly related indigenous individuals in Bolivia

³³² Ibid.

³³³ Ibid.

³³⁴ Kinoshia, Sarah. US recognizes re-election of Honduras president despite fraud allegations. *The Guardian*. 22 December 2017.

³³⁵ White House. Statement from President Donald J. Trump Regarding the Resignation of Bolivian President Evo Morales. White House. 11 November 2019.

³³⁶ Collins, Dan, and Tuckman, Jo. Clashes in Bolivia as Morales supporters challenge interim president's legitimacy. *The Guardian*. 13 November 2019.

³³⁷ Collins, Dan. Bolivia president's initial indigenous-free cabinet heightens polarization. *The Guardian*. 14 November 2019.

³³⁸ Ibid.

as “savages”³³⁹ and “satanic”³⁴⁰, all the while she had also approved the violent repression of protesters demonstrating in opposition to the coup— calling them ‘terrorists’³⁴¹. In the same month of the coup, street clashes between protestors and government forces left at least 23 people dead³⁴². Though the deaths of protestors is already a human rights abuse, the impunity that came with the decree issued by Añez’s government exempting soldiers who took part in efforts to break up protests and unrest from criminal responsibility³⁴³ is vital to mention.

However, Gabriel Hetland, an assistant professor of Latin American, Caribbean and Latino Studies and Sociology at University at Albany, stated that “the Bolivian conflict is not black and white”³⁴⁴. Hetland further stated that at the moment of the coup “a simplistic condemnation or uncritical defense of Morales and the Movimiento al Socialismo (Mas)”³⁴⁵ was not needed. Ultimately, almost a year after the coup, elections in Bolivia appears to have seen a return to power by Mas³⁴⁶. Jim Schultz, the founder of the Bolivia-focused Democracy Centre, commenting on the outcome of the elections, claimed that

“[...] the rightwing in Bolivia has no broad political support – not even close [...] The rightwing was given a chance to govern and proved that it is only interested in its own power and in itself and has contempt for the indigenous and poor of the country. They demonstrated that by pretending they had legitimacy that they didn’t, by overseeing real human rights abuses and impunity, and by being incompetent and corrupt in their governance. And people weren’t going to have it.”³⁴⁷

A measure of stability and democracy appears to have returned to Bolivia, though the long-lasting effects are yet to be determined. Though throughout this time a certainty has been established; US support of the coup in 2019 only served to polarize and militarize the internal politics of the country, further exacerbating internal problems within the country and in correlation, leading to a diminution in human security.

³³⁹ Bender, Alvert. Interim Bolivian president Añez calls Indigenous citizens “savages”. People’s World. 28 January 2020.

³⁴⁰ Garvey, Brian. Bolivian Coup Reflects Long History of US Intervention in Latin America. Massachusetts Peace Action. 14 February 2020.

³⁴¹ Ibid.

³⁴² Henaio, Luis Andres, and Karita, Juan. Bolivian interim leader meets UN envoy amid violence fears. Associated Press. 17 November 2019.

³⁴³ Ibid.

³⁴⁴ Hetland, Gabriel. Many wanted Morales out. But what happened in Bolivia was a military coup. The Guardian. 13 November 2019.

³⁴⁵ Ibid.

³⁴⁶ Phillips, Tom, and Collins, Dan. Bolivia election: Evo Morales's leftwing party celebrates stunning comeback. The Guardian. 19 October 2020.

³⁴⁷ Ibid.

3.3.2.5. Venezuela

The final country in this survey that needs mentioning is Venezuela. Though the country's recent past is incredibly important to understand, this brief analysis will address events that have occurred since Juan Guaidó declared himself the acting president in January of 2019³⁴⁸. Though a brief foray into the situation leading to Guaidó's declaration must occur.

According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, "there has been an 8,000 per cent increase in the number of Venezuelans seeking refugee status worldwide since 2014"³⁴⁹. Marcela Escobari, a Senior Fellow of Global Economy and Development at the Center for Sustainable Development, testified before the US House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs in February 2019. This testimony will serve to outline the humanitarian crisis facing Venezuela and set the stage for Venezuelan politics since Guaidó's declaration.

First addressing the economic situation in the country, Escobari stated that inflation has surpassed over 1 million percent in the last year, while it is obvious that salaries have not kept up with this inflation³⁵⁰. Escobari further that "poverty has gone from 48.4 percent in 2014 to 91 percent in 2017"³⁵¹. Poverty has only worsened the health situation in Venezuela as 60% of Venezuelans have involuntarily lost 19 pounds (approximately 8.62kg) in one year and 1.3 million people suffer from malnutrition³⁵². There is also a lack of basic medication in the country, as hospitals have less than 30% of necessary medication³⁵³. Meanwhile, the country has reported a "100-fold increase in neonatal deaths in the last three years due to lack of basic infrastructure"³⁵⁴ and a resurgence of once completely eradicated diseases such as malaria, which killed 820 people as of June 2018³⁵⁵. Furthermore, indigenous populations in the Andean region are being indiscriminately affected by diseases such as zika, polio, diphtheria, and measles, and a shortage of vaccines throughout the country is only likely to aggravate the situation³⁵⁶, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. Lastly, Escobari briefly mentioned the lack of security in the country. Claiming that

"Venezuela is one of the most violent countries in the world, at 89 homicides per 100,000 individuals, with 26,000 violent deaths in one year. It has a repressive government that in

³⁴⁸ Nugent, Clara. See Venezuelans Taking to the Streets as Opposition Leader Juan Guaidó Declares Himself Interim President. *Time Magazine*. 24 January 2019.

³⁴⁹ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. *Venezuela Situation*. UN Refugee Agency.

³⁵⁰ Escobari, Marcela. *Testimony Made by Maduro: The Humanitarian Crisis in Venezuela and US Policy Responses*. Brookings Institution. 28 February 2019.

³⁵¹ *Ibid.*

³⁵² *Ibid.*

³⁵³ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

the last month has killed over 40 people and detained 800, including minors, who have been charged with terrorism”³⁵⁷.

With this testimony laying out the circumstances facing Venezuela, the analysis can move towards understanding the US reaction. Beyond typical political talks between the two countries, the US first imposed sanctions on Venezuela in December 2014, under former president Obama, which were later extended through 2019³⁵⁸. The US has not been alone in its actions against Venezuela. “The Lima Group, the European Union, and other like-minded nations”³⁵⁹ have joined the US in pressuring Maduro to step down from power. Though with a worsening humanitarian crisis, policymakers have begun to worry that sanctions may only further aggravate the conditions facing Venezuelan citizens³⁶⁰. In a brief, the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) claimed that “sanctions did not cause the economic or humanitarian crisis in Venezuela as dire conditions in Venezuela preceded the implementation of sanctions”³⁶¹. Though that statement is factually correct, in August 2019, following a new set of sanctions Michelle Bachelet, the current UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, expressed her worry surrounding unilateral US sanctions placed on Venezuela³⁶². Since 2014, the 43 unilateral US sanctions applied against Venezuela “have effectively paralysed the economy”³⁶³ and have “[prohibited] the importation of essential, lifesaving products”³⁶⁴. Over 300,000 Venezuelans suffer due to a lack of lifesaving treatment and medications, including an approximate 80,000 HIV-positive individuals who have had no antiretroviral therapy since 2017³⁶⁵. Additionally, funds coming from PdVSA which are used for health-assistance programs are now frozen³⁶⁶. Some of these funds were used to treat children with leukemia, providing children with vaccines, or giving children access to antirejection medication after receiving organ transplants³⁶⁷. Furthermore, “food imports dropped by 78% in 2018 compared to 2013. The very serious threat to health and harm to human life caused by these US sanctions are thought to have contributed to an excess of 40 000 deaths in 2017–18 alone”³⁶⁸.

Reacting to these sanctions, UN expert, Idriss Jazairy reported that “the use of economic sanctions for political purposes violates human rights and the norms of international behaviour”³⁶⁹. Further

³⁵⁷ Ibid.

³⁵⁸ Center for Strategic and International Studies. Are Sanctions Working in Venezuela?. CSIS Briefs. 3 September 2019.

³⁵⁹ Ibid.

³⁶⁰ Ibid.

³⁶¹ Ibid.

³⁶² BBC News. US sanctions may worsen Venezuela suffering, says UN rights chief. BBC News. 9 August 2019.

³⁶³ Zakrison, Tanya L., and Muntaner Carles. US sanctions in Venezuela: help, hindrance, or violation of human rights?. The Lancet. 13 June 2019.

³⁶⁴ Ibid.

³⁶⁵ Ibid.

³⁶⁶ Ibid.

³⁶⁷ Ibid.

³⁶⁸ Ibid.

³⁶⁹ United Nations Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights. US sanctions violate human rights and international code of conduct, UN expert says. UN OHCHR. 6 May 2019.

stating that “such actions may precipitate man-made humanitarian catastrophes of unprecedented proportions. Regime change through economic measures likely to lead to the denial of basic human rights and indeed possibly to starvation, has never been an accepted practice of international relations”³⁷⁰. As has been shown, the discourse on the ongoing US sanctions on Venezuela is varied, however, as experts have claimed, though these sanctions did not push Venezuela into the humanitarian crisis it is in now, they are almost certainly not helping the country deal with its humanitarian problems.

The emergence of Juan Guaidó and his subsequent support of the US is another issue of contention. Though again, the US is joined by over 50 countries in supporting the opposition leader, Guaidó³⁷¹, due to the rivalry between the two nations, the US appears to be Guaidó’s most ardent supporter. Mirroring the previously mentioned Russian support of Maduro, the US has attempted to back Guaidó with the ferocity that Russia backs Maduro. Elliott Abrams, President Trump’s special representative to Venezuela stated that “in [the US’s] view the constitutional president of Venezuela today and after Jan. 5, 2021, is Juan Guaidó”³⁷². However, as the saying goes, “it takes two to tango”. Venezuela is slowly becoming a proxy battleground for Russia and the US, harkening back to the era of Cold War politics. Russia aims to maintain its economic interests in Venezuela safe, therefore it supports Maduro. On the other hand, the US is attempting to maintain its image of a power in support of democracies around the world and seeks to depose Maduro’s authoritarian regime, though in certain ways it is worsening the situation. However, the final outcome is the same, both nations are overtly or implicitly militarizing the internal politics of Venezuela and fueling greater political polarization and violence in the struggling country.

3.3.3. *Effect on Human Security*

Ultimately, through these examples many effects on human security have been explored: from directly destabilizing countries, to tacitly or implicitly supporting the militarization of internal politics throughout the region or using economic means to try to force regime changes. Once again, world systems analysis becomes a vital lens to understanding the relationship between the US and the countries mentioned in this section. Though it goes without saying, the US is a center country, it is a superpower, and it is a core country at the nucleus of international politics. On the other hand, Latin America as a whole lies on the periphery, subject to the whims of the center, be they political or economic. Returning to the application of world systems analysis mentioned in the section on Russia, the use of such a lens will once again apply a more political rather than purely economic dimension to Wallerstein’s analysis.

³⁷⁰ Ibid.

³⁷¹ Smith, Scott, and Sánchez, Fabiola. With renewed US backing, Guaidó pushes anti-Maduro fight. Associated Press. 05 August 2020.

³⁷² Ibid.

Understanding the fact that in Wallerstein's analysis, the center must benefit disproportionately from its dealings with the periphery, the US's dealings in Latin America can be explored. As was previously established, the US, as its foreign policy, sought to expand its sphere of influence over the entirety of the Americas. Comprehending this gives way to the conclusion that the US will seek to define regional politics in its image and attempt to force the region to conform to this image, therefore benefiting from being politically and economically unrivaled in the region. Wallerstein's concept of the center having complete autonomy, even branching out to dominating power over the periphery, comes into play here. The US, in its path to obtain and maintain prominence over the Americas, forced its will over a plethora of countries in the region. Beginning in the early 20th century, the examples of Cuba and Panama come to the forefront. With the US obtaining complete control over the lucrative Panama Canal in its early history, as well as the establishment of Guantanamo Bay in Cuba being prime examples of the US gaining the upper hand over its southern neighbors. Following these cases, the Cold War also offered many examples of such prominence. Though this analysis, due to a simple lack of space, only focused on the cases of Chile and Guatemala, these were not the only examples of US interventions during the Cold War. However, there was also a focus on these countries due to the clear negative effects that US involvement had, all in the name of maintaining political domination in the region during the Cold War. In modernity, the US has maintained this policy in the region by opposing anti-US regimes such as Maduro's Venezuela or Morales's Bolivia, or by supporting governments that favor the US such as Hernández's Honduras. Although the case of Venezuela offers an interesting dilemma, seeing as the country is facing a humanitarian crisis at the hands of the current regime, and it is "morally" correct to condemn it.

Following the examples laid out of how the US benefits from its interventions, world systems analysis also posits the fact that the periphery is at the mercy of the center. Already having mentioned US opposition to the current Venezuelan regime, be it for ethical reasons or not, the US has an immense effect on the country. The aforementioned unilateral economic sanctions were placed by the US to try to force the current regime to step down, though experts have voiced their concern that such a strategy could merely worsen the current humanitarian crisis in the country while further entrenching the regime. In addition, heavy support of the opposition leader in Venezuela, Juan Guaidó, has had a similar effect to Russian support of the Maduro regime, a militarization of internal politics, which as previously mentioned, has directly or indirectly led to many violent clashes between the opposition and the government. In Honduras, an equally complicated situation, the US has been heavily supporting the administrations that followed a 2009 military coup. Furthermore, as was shown, these administrations have been directly responsible for numerous deaths of protesters and opposition members, in addition to increasing government impunity and a decreasing rule of law. The last modern example, though the one with the least amount of information, due to its newfangled occurrence, is Bolivia towards the end of 2019 and throughout the majority of 2020. As was previously explored, a far right coup deposed Evo Morales in Bolivia in 2019, though it has not been confirmed that the US was directly involved in

this coup, the heavy political support of the coup leader, Jeanine Áñez, and her subsequent autocratic and violent interim regime, serves as an example of the US giving legitimacy to nondemocratic regimes as long as they are politically aligned with the US. Which lastly leads these conclusory statements towards the historical interventions of the US in Latin America, particularly Chile and Guatemala. Both of these countries were led by US supported authoritarian, military juntas, which either by civil war or pure autocratic tendencies, caused the deaths and disappearances of thousands of people. Ultimately, as was the case of the previous superpowers, no real causative connections can be drawn between US involvement in the region and worsening human rights. Rather, the connections between the two appear to be more correlative, as is the case in most political studies. However correlative these connections may be, the strength of such connections cannot be understated; whether the US meant to or not, its involvement in the region assisted in worsening human security.

4. Conclusion

This study attempted to explore the relationship between foreign powers and Latin America. In particular, the study sought to discover potential correlations between superpower interventions and human security in Latin America. After much research, the term “superpower” for this analysis was defined as follows: countries that are able to expand their power and influence in more than one region at a time, with the ultimate goal of becoming a hegemon. Furthermore, interventions were determined to mean ecopolitical and social involvement in another country, with or without that country’s approval. Lastly, human security was defined in its simplest terms as freedom from want and freedom from fear.

With these definitions in mind, the superpowers in question were determined to be the PRC, Russia, and the US. Moreover, the study could not focus in detail on every single country in the region. Rather it used a mixture of countries as a window into the general situation regarding superpowers and the region. Importantly, the countries chosen were not arbitrarily chosen by the author, rather by the information found during the research process. Understanding that there are also other cases that could have been mentioned throughout every section, this analysis instead attempted to use certain detailed examples in combination with minor mentions of other examples to portray the wider picture.

Ultimately, the conclusions of this study became that there were negative correlations between superpower interventions in Latin America and human security. In other words, superpower involvement in the region appeared to worsen human security.

First, this study explored the PRC and its involvement in the region, primarily using the examples of Brazil and Ecuador as the main entry point into the region. Having briefly and generally shown examples of PRC involvement in countries such as Argentina, Bolivia and others, this study shifted

to detail the cases of Brazil and Ecuador. Both of these cases shared similar aspects, which simply served to exemplify how the PRC inserts itself into the region. The PRC has focused primarily on providing loans and investing in infrastructure in the region, which, as mentioned, have had catastrophic consequences. In Brazil, many dams have been built primarily with PRC investment. The completed dams have already destroyed many sites of cultural significance to indigenous groups such as the Mundurukú people, while other dams, when completed, will displace all the inhabitants of two thirds of the Brazilian Amazon, possibly creating a crisis of internally displaced peoples. Meanwhile, Ecuador has been dealing with similar issues as Brazil. A combination of PRC led dam building and mining projects have destroyed local ecosystems and disturbed local indigenous communities. These infrastructure investments in Ecuador have come at the cost of two-thirds of Ecuador's public debt, but instead of improving the economy, they have instead put it in further peril. Due to the many conditions of PRC loans and investments, Ecuador has put its most valuable resource, oil, and its economic autonomy in the hands of the PRC. It is also important to note that in both cases, infrastructure investments come with the condition that Chinese companies will import the labor and technologies, with little to no job opportunities given to local communities. This then leaves the local economy in an arguably worse situation than where it began, while simultaneously worsening social conditions in the countries. Ultimately, what occurs is a lack of freedom from want, as local economies become dependent on the PRC and little investment is made into sustainable development, and a lack of freedom from fear, as many of these communities must then perennially worry about the destruction of their culture, and in certain cases must worry for their lives.

Following the case of the PRC, this study then moved onto addressing Russian interventions and the subsequent effects on human security. Admittedly, this section of the analysis delved a bit deeper into a small measure of history between Russia and Latin America, however that is because of the Cold War having dominated international politics for the most part of the second half of the 20th century. Importantly, the USSR was extremely involved in the region, and for these reasons the modern Russian state has historical precedence for its involvement there. Though a brief mention of the USSR's support of Castro's Cuba is mentioned, the analysis once again used specific detailed examples to portray the wider Russian policy and effects of such policy. As a part of Russia's "Caribbean Triangle", Nicaragua and Venezuela became the examples used. Again, Russian-Cuban relations were not mentioned in detail as there is already a plethora of academic research on that topic. Russian strategy in Nicaragua and Venezuela is very similar: both countries rely on Moscow to provide them with weaponry and economic support. It is again vital to mention that Russia uses these countries as its platform to challenge for political domination in the region and form close economic and political ties with other countries. However, moving forwards with Nicaragua and Venezuela, the primary effect that Russian involvement in these countries has is the militarization and polarization of internal politics. This militarization comes with the heavy-handed Russian support of the liberal regimes running the two countries, Ortega in Nicaragua and Maduro in Venezuela. Russian support for the two regimes comes primarily in the form of arms

trading, and the loan deals that come with them. However, the case of Venezuela goes a bit deeper than that of Nicaragua. Venezuela, as has been mentioned, is a country in economic ruin, however it has not completely collapsed because of Russia almost single handedly supporting the Maduro regime. Ultimately what occurs in both countries is that the local regimes are emboldened to break democratic norms, and abuse its populations, due to the fact that Russia will oppose any international sanctions enacted upon them. This has led to brutal repression of opposition movements, and an increase of violent government crackdowns, thus leading to many extrajudicial killings, government sponsored enforced disappearances, and government supported paramilitary gangs threatening and intimidating the population. Lastly, the final effects of Russian interventions, become a lack of freedom from want and from fear, as the two governments are using Russian funds and Russian arms to promulgate the already unstable and dangerous situations in the countries, therefore placing lives and livelihoods at risk.

Lastly, this study analyzed US interventions in Latin America. Compared to PRC and Russian involvement in the region, US history goes deeper than the previous examples. Historically, the US began its heavy involvement in Latin America towards the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, and such involvement has continued to this day. Having briefly mentioned the cases of Cuba and Panama in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the study also explored the cases of Chile and Guatemala during the Cold War. The later cases led to either brutal dictatorship, as was the case in Chile, or a nearly 40-year civil war in Guatemala, that was highlighted by a brutal genocide against the Mayan people. With these two examples having important US support or complicity and having briefly explored the effects of US involvement in Cuba and Panama, the historical effects of US interventions gave way to the contemporary examples of Honduras, Bolivia, and Venezuela. In Honduras, the US was accused of tacitly supporting a 2009 coup that deposed a democratically elected, albeit left-leaning president. Following the coup, the US acknowledged the regime of the next elected president, even though they had previously condemned the coup leaders, and ignoring the fact that this president was a member of the political party that led the coup. Since then, though the president has changed, the same party has been in power and has been accused of destroying the rule of law, ignoring democratic processes, concentrating governmental power within the executive branch, and violently repressing opposition leaders and protesters by using police and military forces, with economic and political support from the US. The case of Bolivia was one that was briefly mentioned, however became equally important for this analysis. Though a coup happened in November 2019, and since then a democratic leader has been re-elected, the US gave legitimacy to the coup leaders. These leaders formed an interim government which was poignantly racist and violently oppressed the opposition, which had close ties to the many ethnic groups in the country. In Venezuela, the US has had similar strategies of political interventions. Primarily coming in the support of the opposition to the Maduro regime, the US has been heavily politically involved in Venezuela, or possibly more involved, than in the previous two examples. Though spanning beyond political interventions, the US has also used unilateral economic sanctions to attempt to

force a regime change in the country. It is in this last economic strategy that the US has differed from its involvement in Bolivia and Honduras. Ultimately, these three examples have very similar effects on human security. The US, by either tacitly or overtly supporting opposition leaders and coups in these countries and throughout Latin America, has allowed for extreme militarization and polarization of internal politics in a similar vein to that of Russia. This militarization has caused extreme social and political strife and has led to a lack of freedom from fear, as all of these countries have experienced massive amounts of governmental oppression of the opposition, and clashes between political groups that have led to the deaths, disappearances, and injuries of thousands of people. Lastly, the economic sanctions placed on Venezuela, though not causing the humanitarian crisis facing the country, can be argued to have worsened the situation by denying the population access to vital resources and lifesaving medicine, thus causing a further deterioration of freedom from want in the country.

Admittedly, this was not a macro study, rather it was a small survey of micro examples with the goal of using such examples to attempt to make macro level conclusions. Therefore, taking a step back from the smaller, micro point of view centered on specific countries, certain macro, albeit general, conclusions could be determined. Spanning temporal and spatial planes, many patterns can be shown. Throughout history and in contemporary times, superpower involvement has inadvertently worsened human security and led to further violations of human rights. Economic, military, and political interventions in the region have negatively impacted the sociopolitical, economic, and the natural environments, ultimately uprooting and destabilizing local communities, ecosystems, and cultures.

However, certain limitations also surfaced in the study. More often than not, when attempting to research for the foreign policy goals of each superpower, general terms were commonly reached. The use of very diplomatic language in official government documents, either individually found or sourced through other authors, hindered this study's attempt to prove anything, therefore any findings and connections stayed correlative. Though not always particularly a true hindrance, as it is sometimes difficult to "prove" anything in politics and making correlative claims can assist in pushing the conversation forward and attempt to reach new consensuses.

With these findings and limitations established, this study would also like to recognize the absence of other influential powers such as Japan, the European Union, Canada, Australia, and others. These countries, or groups of countries, were not included in the study for a variety of reasons. The primary reason behind their absence is the hope for further study and discussion. In particular, and an interesting point of study, would be exploring the effects that smaller, albeit important, powers have on the region. Understanding that this study does not exist in a vacuum, nor do its findings, is what is key for further discussion. There are a plethora of interventions, involvements, and investments by these comparatively "lesser" powers that were not mentioned in this study, and it would be fascinating to discover if these actions would counterbalance the effects by

superpowers, or exponentially escalate them. Furthermore, as mentioned, these findings are correlative and can be skewed one way or another depending on a plethora of other factors. Therefore, these factors could be additional points of study and discussion concerning the relationship between foreign interventions and human security, not only in Latin America, but elsewhere in the world.

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