

For the Love of Money: The Guatemalan Far Right's Dehumanization of Human Rights Defenders

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Abstract: This article draws on the literature on dehumanization to explore Guatemala's Foundation against Terrorism (*Fundación contra el Terrorismo*) and its multi-faceted and intersectional dehumanization of human rights defenders, imagined as contemporary heirs to the 'terrorists' (that is, leftist guerrillas) to which the *Fundación's* name refers. This research is based on the *Fundación's* social media posts and those of its followers. I explore the ease with which the *Fundación* and its followers deny humanity to human rights defenders, especially in reaction to death. These posts go beyond the very clear dehumanization involved in labelling human rights defenders parasites, leeches, and rats to include denying them the ability to feel. That is, in addition to the animalistic dehumanization commonly seen as a precursor and contemporary to genocide and other gross human rights violations, including in Guatemala, human rights defenders suffer from what Nick Haslam describes as mechanistic dehumanization.

Keywords: Guatemala, hate speech, dehumanization, human rights defenders

Introduction

Public debate about how to characterize Guatemala's violent past exploded from March to May 2013 in the midst of the trial against former de facto head of state, Efraín Ríos Montt, and his Director of Military Intelligence, José Mauricio Rodríguez Sánchez, for genocide and crimes against humanity. The charges related to the military's massacre of 1771 Indigenous Ixil during Guatemala's 'internal armed conflict' (1960-1996). Ríos Montt was found guilty of these crimes and condemned to 80 years in prison on 10 May. Rodríguez Sánchez was found not guilty. The victory over impunity was short-lived. Ten days later, the ruling was overturned.¹

Inside the courtroom, Ríos Montt's lawyers stalled the trial while lawyers for the victims focused on the legal question of intent, how much Ríos Montt did or did not know about what was happening in

1 Jo-Marie Burt, 'From Heaven to Hell in Ten Days: The Genocide trial in Guatemala', *Journal of Genocide Research*, 18.2-3 (2016), 143-169; Manuel Ollé Sesé, Jo-Marie Burt, and Claire Colardelle, *Genocide in Guatemala: Ríos Montt Guilty* (Paris: International Federation for Human Rights, 2013).



the Ixil Triangle, and how much control he had over officers' actions.² Outside the courtroom, the public was concerned more broadly with whether or not the massacre of hundreds of unarmed Ixil was genocide or not. Demonstrations were organized in support of both sides while buses and city walls were plastered with affirmations that yes, what had happened was genocide.

The debate also played out in the media, in opinion pieces and in ads paid by various actors to support one side or the other. One of these actors was the Foundation against Terrorism (*Fundación contra el Terrorismo*),³ which announced its arrival on the national stage with a series of pamphlets titled 'The Farce of Genocide in Guatemala: the Catholic Church's Marxist Conspiracy'. The terrorists to whom the group's name refers, are the former guerrilla and all those the *Fundación* views as the former guerrilla's allies: priests, human rights defenders, relatives of the victims of human rights violations, journalists, foreign diplomats, and, more broadly, anyone who seems to be a threat to the military, its reputation, and the country's corrupt status quo. Psychologists would place this broad category of 'terrorists' in the out-group in contrast to an in-group that agrees with the *Fundación* and its founder and president, Ricardo Méndez Ruiz.⁴

2 Journalist Oswaldo Hernandez chronicled the trial. A few articles have been translated into English, for example, 'Double Negative', *Plaza Pública*, 20 April 2013, <<https://www.plazapublica.com.gt/content/double-negative>> [accessed 14 April 2021]; 'The Verdict Ríos Montt Couldn't Refute', *Plaza Pública*, 12 May 2013, <<https://www.plazapublica.com.gt/content/verdict-rios-montt-couldnt-refute>> [accessed 14 April 2021].

3 The Myrna Mack Foundation and Washington Office on Latin America's detailed 2020 report, *Criminalización, ataques mediáticos y discurso de odio: una reacción de las redes ilícitas*, includes the *Fundación* in the category of Illicit Economic-Political Networks (REPIs) and describe REPIs as the heirs to the Illegal Clandestine Security Apparatuses (CIACS) that emerged during Guatemala's armed conflict. See: Fundación Myrna Mack and WOLA, *Criminalización, ataques mediáticos y discurso de odio: una reacción de las redes ilícitas (Guatemala City: Fundación Myrna Mack, 2020)*. CIACS are 'loosely defined groups' of mostly (former) military personnel, often intelligence officers, who 'were not criminal operators as much as criminal facilitators' (For more on CIACS, see Steven Dudley, 'Guatemala Elites and Organized Crime: the CICIG', *InsightCrime*, 1 September 2006, <<https://insightcrime.org/investigations/guatemala-elites-and-organized-crime-the-cicig/>> [accessed 3 July 2021]). In addition to criminal activities, both CIACS and REPIs activities are focused on guaranteeing impunity. In the case of the *Fundación*, as the US Department of State determined in July 2021, Méndez Ruiz and the *Fundación's* two lawyers (Raúl Falla and Moises Galindo) have 'attempted to delay or obstruct criminal proceedings against former military officials who had committed acts of violence' and have also engaged in 'harassment or intimidation against governmental and nongovernmental corruption investigators' (US Department of State, 'Report to Congress on Foreign Persons who have Knowingly Engaged in Actions that Undermine Democratic Processes or Institutions, Significant Corruption, or Obstruction of Investigations into Such Corruption in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras Section 353(b) of the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2021 (Div. FF, P.L. 116-260)', 1 July 2021).

4 What Méndez Ruiz sees as an organized campaign against the military is both political and personal. His father, Ricardo Méndez Ruiz Rohrmoser, was appointed Minister of the Interior when

There are two points of departure for this article. The first is that the *Fundación* and Méndez Ruiz's publications are hate speech, defined by the UN as 'Any kind of communication in speech, writing or behaviour, that attacks or uses pejorative or discriminatory language with reference to a person or a group on the basis of who they are, in other words, based on their religion, ethnicity, nationality, race, colour, descent, gender or other identity factor'.⁵ Other characteristics or identity factors protected by international standards include 'political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status, including indigenous origin or identity, disability, migrant or refugee status, sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex status'.⁶

In August 2013, the Human Rights Ombudsman (PDH) affirmed that the *Fundación's* publications and declarations qualified as 'hate speech that attempts to degrade, intimidate, and promote prejudice against human rights defenders' and suggested that the *Fundación* 'feeds hate and intolerance'.⁷ In response Méndez Ruiz declared that 'the 150 *vividores*' who had denounced him as a human rights violator, the PDH, and judge Gloria Porras could all 'go to hell'. The Real Academia Española defines a *vividor* as 'living at the expense of others, looking for what he needs or what suits him using harmful means'.⁸ The word is discussed in greater detail in the conclusion; suffice it to say here that, for the *Fundación* and Méndez Ruiz, *vividores* literally live at the expense of hard-working, tax-paying Guatemalans. In response to the PDH's declaration, one of Méndez Ruiz's followers declared he would wear the label 'human rights violator' with honour, while another asked 'What

Ríos Montt came to power. Ricardo Méndez Ruiz was kidnapped by the guerrilla not long after. In addition, before becoming Minister of the Interior, Méndez Ruiz Rohrmoser had commanded the military base in Cobán where, between 2012 and 2015, forensic anthropologists found the remains of 558 individuals. Most showed signs of torture and many were blindfolded and were shot in the head. In 2016, the Public Ministry detained a handful of officials in relation to these assassinations. Méndez Ruiz Rohrmoser had died shortly before.

- 5 'Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech: Detailed Guidance on Implementation for United Nations Field Presences', *UN Genocide Prevention*, September 2020, <https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/UN%20Strategy%20and%20PoA%20on%20Hate%20Speech_Guidance%20on%20Addressing%20in%20field.pdf> [Accessed 1 February 2021].
- 6 'Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression, Note by the Secretary-General', *UN*, 9 October 2019, <<https://undocs.org/A/74/486>> [Accessed 1 February 2021].
- 7 Carolina Gamazo, 'PDH sanciona a Méndez Ruiz por discurso "insidioso y agresivo" y solicita investigación al MP', *Plaza Pública*, 27 August 2013, <<https://www.plazapublica.com.gt/content/pdh-sanciona-mendez-ruiz-por-discurso-insidioso-y-agresivo-y-solicita-investigacion-al-mp>> [accessed 20 January 2021]. See also Fundación Myrna Mack and WOLA.
- 8 'Vividor', *Real Academia Española* [n.d.], <<https://dle.rae.es/vividor>> [accessed 10 December 2021].

can be expected from these motherfucking, son of a bitch, idiotic, delinquent, terrorist parasites?⁹

This article's second point of departure is the ever more evident fact that social media is not a world apart from 'real life'. As an increasing number of studies show, the digital world has real impact on the non-digital world. Allyson Haynes Stuart points to the danger of social media. In reference to separate attacks on worshippers at a synagogue in Pittsburgh and mosques in Christchurch in 2019, she concludes that, 'while social media did not cause these individuals to take the action they did, it provided an echo chamber for their disturbed views, validated those views, and encouraged hate'.¹⁰ Khandis Blake and her colleagues demonstrate that misogynistic tweets predict domestic and family violence across the US¹¹, while the results of a voting experiment conducted by Robert Bond and his colleagues shows that 'political mobilization messages' sent to Facebook users 'directly influenced political self-expression, information seeking and real-world voting behaviour of millions of people'.¹² Zach Bastick conducted a seemingly more banal experiment involving finger tapping to demonstrate that 'even a brief (under 5-min), one-time exposure to a fake news article can modify [...]unconscious behavior'. That is, having read a false article linking intelligence to finger-tapping speed, participants tapped faster.¹³

Social media has also been shown to have a significant impact on inter-group conflict. Palestinian and Israeli leaders, for example, view social media as 'much more likely to spread violence and hate than aid in any attempts at conflict resolution'.¹⁴ In Sri Lanka, rumours and fake news spread on Facebook and WhatsApp triggered violence

9 @MendezRuizV, 20 February 2016. Méndez Ruiz has (at least) two Facebook accounts. The posts here are taken from the account he opened as a 'public figure' (@MendezRuizV). His other account (@mendezruizricardo) seems to be his personal account, though posts are still public. Many posts from the public figure account are reposted from the personal account.

10 See also Allyson Haynes Stuart, 'Social Media, Manipulation, and Violence', *South Carolina Journal of International Law and Business*, 15.2 (2019), 118.

11 Khandis R. Blake and others, 'Misogynistic Tweets Correlate With Violence Against Women', *Psychological Science*, 32.3 (2021), 315-325. See also Benjamin Paul Bennett, 'Thick Enough to Stop a Bullet: Civil Protection Orders, Social Media, and Free Speech', *Columbia Human Rights Law Review*, 50.3 (2019), 229-289.

12 Robert M. Bond and others, 'A 61-Million-Person Experiment in Social Influence and Political Mobilization', *Nature*, 489 (2012), 295-298.

13 Zach Bastick, 'Would You Notice If Fake News Changed Your Behavior? An Experiment on the Unconscious Effects of Disinformation', *Computers in Human Behavior*, 116 (2021), 6.

14 Gadi Wolfsfeld, 'The Role of the Media in Violent Conflicts in the Digital Age: Israeli and Palestinian Leaders' Perceptions', *Media, War & Conflict*, 11.1 (2018), 120.

between Muslims and Buddhists.¹⁵ The UN Human Rights Council's independent fact-finding mission on Myanmar in the context of the gross human rights violations against the Rohingya was very clear: 'Facebook has been a useful instrument for those seeking to spread hate'. The mission then called for an independent study to determine 'the extent to which Facebook posts and messages have led to real-world discrimination and violence'.¹⁶

I explore how the *Fundación* and its followers dehumanize and so discursively exclude those who think differently from the sphere in which 'moral values, rules, and considerations of fairness apply', turning them into 'nonentities, expendable, or undeserving'.¹⁷ I draw on Nick Haslam's work on non-mutually exclusive varieties of dehumanization (animalistic and mechanistic) to analyse just what kind of 'nonentities' human rights defenders and their perceived allies are imagined as on the *Fundación* and Méndez Ruiz's Facebook pages. Identifying *how* dehumanizing language dehumanizes is an essential step in understanding both hate speech and dehumanizing processes and language.

I analyse posts related to the deaths of a father, a brother, and a son to explore how the relationship between out-group members is imagined and compare it to how the relationship between in-group members is lived to better understand how the in-group sees the out-group. I argue that, even if the *Fundación* and Méndez Ruiz do not describe 'terrorists' as rats, declarations that human rights defenders and perceived allies are 'only in it for the money' nevertheless dehumanize the targets by denying them interpersonal warmth, emotional responsiveness, depth, and cognitive openness. Without these characteristics, described by Haslam as 'human nature', the targets of the *Fundación* and Méndez Ruiz's hateful posts are mechanistically dehumanized and become like machines.

15 Amanda Taub and Max Fisher, 'Where Countries Are Tinderboxes and Facebook Is a Match', *New York Times*, 21 April 2018, <<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/21/world/asia/facebook-sri-lanka-riots.html>> [Accessed 7 February 2021]. See also Haynes Stuart.

16 UN, 'Report of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar', *Human Rights Council*, 12 September 2018, <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/FFM-Myanmar/A_HRC_39_64.pdf> [accessed 7 February 2021] (par. 74).

17 Susan Opatow, 'Moral Exclusion and Injustice: An Introduction', *Journal of Social Issues*, 46.1 (1990), 1.

Dehumanization Theory

Much of the research on dehumanization has been conducted by social psychologists who create experiments to measure participants' attitudes toward other groups. Leyens and his colleagues' work on infra-humanization, often described as a milder form of dehumanization, offers a useful point of entry. In infrahumanization, members of an in-group deny members of an out-group 'secondary emotions'. Primary emotions are those emotions that humans share with animals, including surprise, anger, joy, and fear, while secondary emotions are uniquely human emotions, such as hope, regret, nostalgia, and enthusiasm. Secondary emotions involve cognition, memory, and morality, among other things. They are understood as an essential part of what it means to be human; thus, denying secondary emotions to an out-groups denies that group some humanity.¹⁸ Infrahumanization has a significant impact on behaviour and can lead to a failure to intervene in emergencies or indifference to requests for assistance.¹⁹

Nick Haslam drew on work on infrahumanization to address what he viewed as a gap in the literature on dehumanization. That is, researchers took for granted that everyone knew what dehumanization was and instead focused their efforts on the impact of dehumanization on social relationships. Haslam's experiments, therefore, seek to understand dehumanization itself by defining humanness. He tries to understand what precisely is being denied to a person or group when they are dehumanized. Haslam concludes that two 'senses of humanness' exist, one rooted in 'uniquely human' characteristics and the other in characteristics of 'human nature'. Uniquely human traits are 'low in prevalence and universality, [...] appear late in development, and [are] unrelated to emotionality'. These traits are civility, refinement, moral sensitivity, rationality/logic, and maturity. Traits related to human nature, on the other hand, are 'high in prevalence, universality, and emotionality, and [...] emerge early in development'. They are seen as 'immutable,' 'biologically based, and consistently expressed across

18 Jeroen Vaes and others, 'We Are Human, They Are Not: Driving Forces behind Outgroup Dehumanisation and the Humanisation of the Ingroup', *European Review of Social Psychology*, 23 (2012), 64-106; Jacques-Philippe Leyens and others, 'The Emotional Side of Prejudice: The Attribution of Secondary Emotions to Ingroups and Outgroups', *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 4.2 (2000), 186-197.

19 Jacques-Philippe Leyens and others, p.195.

situations.' They are emotional responsiveness, interpersonal warmth, cognitive openness, agency/individuality, and depth.²⁰

Haslam then identifies two kinds of dehumanization, animalistic and mechanistic dehumanization. In animalistic dehumanization, uniquely human characteristics are denied to an individual or group. Animalistic dehumanization implies a lack of culture, coarseness, amorality/lack of self-restraint, irrationality/instinct, and childlikeness. On the other hand, if an individual or group is denied traits seen to be part of human nature, they are dehumanized in a mechanistic manner. Mechanistic dehumanization implies inertness, coldness, rigidity, passivity/fungibility, and superficiality.²¹ Though Haslam recognizes that 'people might simultaneously be dehumanized in both ways (e.g. the objectification and degradation of women in violent pornography)²², mechanistic dehumanization is the focus of this article.

With a better understanding of what dehumanization denies to out-groups, it is possible to explore some of the literature on the impact of dehumanization on social relations. Susan Opatow's work on moral exclusion and injustice is especially relevant. She writes that

we each have beliefs about the sorts of beings that should be treated justly. Moral values, rules, and considerations of fairness apply only to those within this boundary of fairness, called our 'scope of justice' or 'moral community'.²³

Though the boundaries of the moral community are not fixed²⁴, those excluded are 'perceived as non-entities, expendable or undeserving. Consequently, harming or exploiting them [whether this implies "passive unconcern" or "overt evil"] appears to be appropriate, acceptable, or just'.²⁵

The 1968 M̃y Lai massacre is undoubtedly what Opatow labels a 'severe'²⁶ form of moral exclusion, though social psychologist Herbert Kelman did not explore it in those terms in the 1970s. With an eye

20 Nick Haslam, 'Dehumanization: An Integrative Review', *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 10.3 (2006), 257-7.

21 Haslam, 257.

22 Haslam, 259-260.

23 Susan Opatow, 'Moral Exclusion and Injustice: An Introduction', *Journal of Social Issues*, 46.1 (1990), 3. See also Pumla Gobodo-Mandikizela, *A Human Being Died that Night: A South African Woman Confronts the Legacy of Apartheid* (New York: Mariner Books, 2004).

24 Opatow, 5.

25 Opatow, 1, 13.

26 Opatow, 1.

to prevention, Kelman reflected on 'the sources of mass violence'.²⁷ He locates the explanation for 'sanctioned massacres' like the M̄ Lai massacre in three processes, all of which work to remove 'moral inhibitions' against murder: authorization, routinization, and, most significant here, dehumanization. Briefly, 'authorization processes override standard moral considerations [while] routinization processes reduce the likelihood that such considerations will arise'.²⁸ Dehumanization processes strip the target of their humanity by denying them identity and community, meaning that the 'principles of morality no longer apply to them and moral restraints against killing are more readily overcome'.²⁹ Identity means that an individual is able to make choices and is 'entitled to live his own life on the basis of his own goals and values'. Community means that someone is 'part of an interconnected network of individuals who care for each other, who recognize each other's individuality, and who respect each other's rights'.³⁰ Thus, an individual is accepted as an end in himself, not a means to an end.³¹ Dehumanization, on the other hand, reduces an individual to a category (e.g., communist) that is excluded from the 'human family'; with this, 'moral restraints against killing [...] are more readily overcome'.³²

Rowan Savage draws on much of this earlier work to explore dehumanization's function in genocidal violence and argues that dehumanization both legitimizes and motivates. Savage writes that justifying illegitimate violence can be achieved by either 'adopt[ing] a new ideology in which the violence is acceptable' or, more often, by re-interpreting violence as legitimate. He writes that 'In genocide, this takes place when perpetrators redefine the human identity of the victim group³³; that is, when they are dehumanized. Re-imagining the target as non-human or

27 Herbert C. Kelman, 'Violence without Moral Restraint: Reflections on the Dehumanization of Victims and Victimizer', *Journal of Social Issues*, 29.4 (1978), 28.

28 Kelman, 48.

29 Ibid.

30 Kelman, 48-49.

31 Kelman, 49.

32 Ibid. Daniel Bar-Tal's understanding of delegitimization and Albert Bandura's work self-sanctions on 'inhumane conduct' reach similar conclusions. Daniel Bar-Tal, 'Delegitimization: The Extreme Case of Stereotyping and Prejudice', in *Stereotyping and Prejudice: Changing Conceptions*, ed. by Daniel Bar-Tal, Carl F. Graumann, Arie W. Kruglanski, and Wolfgang Stroebe (New York; Springer-Verlag, 1989); Albert Bandura, 'Selective Activation and Disengagement of Moral Control', *Journal of Social Issues*, 46.1 (1990), pp. 27-46.

33 Rowan Savage, 'Modern Genocidal Dehumanization: A New Model', *Patterns of Prejudice*, 47.2 (2013), 153.

as sub-human ‘makes destructing legitimate’³⁴, but it is not enough for genocide to occur: ‘referring to Jews as “pieces” or “units” allowed perpetrators to harm them more easily, but it did not motivate harm. That motivation arrived when they were identified as “viruses” or “blood-suckers”.’³⁵ Thus, only when dehumanization both legitimates *and* motivates does genocide occur.

Emanuele Castano and Roger Giner-Sorolla add the element of time and conclude that justifying violence via dehumanization can be retroactive. Dehumanization allows perpetrators to reason that ‘we may have killed them, but if they are “like animals”, then surely we should not feel so bad about our actions.’³⁶ Jeroen Vaes, Jacques-Philippe Leyens, Maria Paola Paladino, and Mariana Pires Miranda take this further: ‘dehumanization of a (once) threatening outgroup may allow people to morally disengage...[meaning they] can refrain from getting involved with the outgroup’s suffering and do not feel the moral obligation to reconcile their differences.’³⁷

Death and Dehumanization

I analyse the *Fundación* and Méndez Ruiz’s posts related to three deaths: the death of congressman Fernando Linares Beltranena’s son as a result of a heart attack in April 2017, the January 1980 death of Rigoberta Menchú’s father in the Spanish Embassy Massacre, and the death of Rosalina Tuyuc’s brother in a hit-and-run in January 2014. Linares Beltranena, a lawyer, has defended a long list of officers, politicians, and businesspeople accused of human rights violations, organized crime, sex crimes, and corruption. This includes former de facto leader and general, Oscar Humberto Mejía Víctores. Spain was seeking Mejía Víctores’ extradition to stand trial for genocide.³⁸ The US has revoked

34 Savage, 154.

35 Savage, 157.

36 Emanuele Castano and Roger Giner-Sorolla, ‘Not Quite Human: Infrahumanization in Response to Collective Responsibility for Intergroup Killing’, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 90.5 (2006), 804-805.

37 Vaes and others, 86.

38 Luis Solano, Ellen Moore, and Jen Moore, ‘Mining Injustice Through International Arbitration: Countering Kappes, Cassidy & Associates’ claims over a gold-mining project in Guatemala’, *Institute for Policy Studies*, 24 August 2020, <https://ips-dc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Guatemala-Mining-Injustice-Report_gr_eng.pdf> [accessed 3 July 2021] and Nómada, ‘El “último-dinosaurio” se prepara contra MP-CICIG’, *Nómada*, 4 January 2017, <<https://nomada.gt/pais/el-ultimo-dinosaurio-se-prepara-contra-mp-cicig/>> [accessed 3 July 2021].

Linares Beltranena's visa twice for his role in drug-trafficking cases and a third time 'reportedly for being an outspoken critic in the Guatemalan Congress against the head of the now-defunct International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala and the U.S. Ambassador himself, Todd Robinson'.³⁹ Linares Beltranena was also named the Special Prosecutor in the Diana Ortíz case. Ortíz, a nun and US citizen, accused the Guatemalan military of kidnapping, torturing, and raping her in November 1989. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights concluded that as Special Prosecutor, Linares Beltranena's actions 'were oriented more toward discrediting Sister Ortíz' than in helping the case progress. The Commission also pointed out that Linares Beltranena made various false statements to the press about Ortíz, that his constant reminders that she never had a gynaecological exam violated Guatemala's criminal code, and that his related insistence that she have an exam years after the rape qualified as harassment.⁴⁰

Rigoberta Menchú is a K'iche' activist best known for winning the Nobel Peace Prize in 1992. Before this, she had become an active member of the Committee for Peasant Unity (CUC); suffered the loss of her brother, father, and mother at the hands of the military; was forced into exile in Mexico; and worked with Elisabeth Burgos-Debray to publish *I, Rigoberta Menchú: An Indian Woman in Guatemala*. Since receiving the Peace Prize, Menchú has sought justice for her father's and others' death in the Spanish Embassy Massacre and the genocide more broadly, as well as founded the *Fundación Rigoberta Menchú Tum* to support others survivors who wish to do the same. She also founded the left-leaning political party, WINAQ, and ran for president two times (in 2007 and 2011). Her activism, and the publication of her *testimonio*, have turned Menchú into a controversial figure for conservative Guatemalans.⁴¹

Rosalina Tuyuc is a Kaqchikel human rights activist and one of the founding members of the National Coordinating Committee of Guatemalan Widows (CONAVIGUA), founded in 1988. Her father

39 Solano, Ellen Moore, and Jen Moore, p. 23.

40 Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, Informe No. 31/96, Caso10.526 Guatemala, 16 October 1996, <<https://www.cidh.oas.org/annualrep/96span/Guatemala10526.htm>> [accessed 3 July 2021] (par. 100-105)

41 See, for example, Diane M. Nelson, *A Finger in the Wound: Body Politics in Quincentennial Guatemala* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); David Stoll, *I, Rigoberta Menchú and the Story of All Poor Guatemalans* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1999); Arturo Arias, *The Rigoberta Menchú Controversy, With a Response by David Stoll* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001); Jo-Marie Burt and Fred Rosen, 'Truth-telling and Memory in Postwar Guatemala: An interview with Rigoberta Menchú', *NACLA Report on the Americas*, 32.5 (1999), 7-9.

was also disappeared during the internal armed conflict. In 1995, she became the first Indigenous woman to be elected to Congress. In the Óscar Berger administration, she served as the head of the National Reparations Commission.⁴²

To expect that people who are 'against terrorism' would mourn the death of 'terrorists' is idealistic. However, in the *Fundación's* posts I explore here, the main target is not the dead father or brother (Vicente Menchú and Juan Tuyuc). The posts are largely directed against the dead's daughter and sister (Rigoberta Menchú and Rosalina Tuyuc) who, to be sure, are also seen as terrorists. The focus of this analysis is the relationship between Menchú and her father and Tuyuc and her brother, and the two women's reactions to the death of a family member. I first explore posts offering condolences to congressman Fernando Linares Beltranena, a friend and ally, after the death of his son, Sebastián Linares Grainger. These posts show, first and foremost, what followers believe the appropriate response to death is. They also offer a clear view of what followers think of those who do not have this response.

Linares Grainger, a soldier in the US military, died of a heart attack at age 27. Méndez Ruiz's followers sent their condolences to the family, confirmed that losing a son is difficult, and hoped he rested in peace (@MendezRuizV, 7 April 2017). The *Fundación* repeated these sentiments. Two comments on the *Fundación's* page are more significant and further show how death should be met. The *Fundación* declared that 'We ask for respect for *licenciado*⁴³ Beltranena [...] Comments that lack respect will be eliminated' and the profile removed from the *Fundación's* list of followers. This comment seems to have been in response to a comment about the 'irony' of Linares Beltranena criticizing the US Embassy in Guatemala while his son served in the US military. The person who made this comment then wrote that 'Independently of what we think and believe, other people's pain should be respected!' (@Fundacion-ContraelTerrorismoGuatemala, 7 April 2017). This person's comment is the proper response to death.

Another user, D,⁴⁴ however, did not have this response to death. He had written: 'I don't really see anything admirable, heroic or unusual

42 Rosalina Tuyuc, 'Guatemala Rosalina Tuyuc', *NACLA Report on the Americas*, 31.1(1997), 29-31.

43 *Licenciado* refers to someone with a university degree.

44 My decision not to use users' names is inspired both by the research on social media cited above and by Adam Lankford and Eric Madfis' call not to report the names of mass killers in the media because doing so 'gives them what they want'. I am not equating mass killers with the *Fundación's* Facebook followers. Lankford and Madfis, however, do cite research showing that, unrelated to mass killings, 'one of the most powerful behavioral motives is the expectation that the actor will get credit for what

about losing a son. Having lost a son doesn't change how horrible this guy is.' He continued that Linares Beltranena is a 'Defender of the corrupt, nasty, not very intelligent, old-fashioned, ignorant' (@MendezRuizV, 17 April 2017). Méndez Ruiz posted a screen shot of User D's comment with an introduction:

What do you think about the comment of this member of the pro-abortion, homosexual, feminist, environmentalist and socialist left in regards to my publication from congressman Fernando Linares Beltranena where Linares comments about the death of his son? What kind of person is he? How would you describe him? It would be good to write on this peculiar character's [Facebook] wall. (@MendezRuizV, 17 April 2017).

Many of Méndez Ruiz's followers told him just what they thought about User D. A few comments are more revealing in terms of dehumanizing those who do not have the proper response to the death: 'He has no feelings' and 'Only someone without feelings could say those things' (@MendezRuizV, 17 April 2017). Mechanistic dehumanization denies the target emotional responsiveness.⁴⁵ These two comments do this in no uncertain terms.

One final comment states this more explicitly and brings in an additional element of mechanistic dehumanization:

He could have written something more REASONABLE...or at least with a greater sense of humanity. But this is impossible for someone progressive. (Aaaaah, but if there had been €€€€ involved....ha! It's better if I don't say)(@MendezRuizV, 17 April 2017).

I explore superficiality, another of Haslam's elements of mechanistic dehumanization, below in relation to Menchú and Tuyuc. It is impossible to say if Méndez Ruiz's followers commented on User D's wall in April 2017, though they certainly did a month later. User D posted somewhat critical comments in response to Méndez Ruiz's 11 and 12 May publications about the media and human rights defenders and their perceived

he or she has done' (Adam Lankford and Eric Madfis, 'Don't Name Them, Don't Show Them, But Report Everything Else: A Pragmatic Proposal for Denying Mass Killers the Attention They Seek and Deterring Future Offenders', *American Behavioral Scientist*, 62.2 (2018), 266). Lankford and Madfis make reference to journalism, cinema, and inventing, among others; Méndez Ruiz's follower's declaration that he would wear the human right violator label with 'honor' positions him far from these creative professions. I do not apply the same logic to Méndez Ruiz, who also has a presence in traditional media. Though Méndez Ruiz also seems to revel in the attention, it is important to denounce known figures whose language dehumanizes human rights defenders and their perceived allies, and who create a space for others to do the same, with all the possible consequences this entails.

45 Haslam, 256-257.

allies. On 13 May, Méndez Ruiz again shared User D's post about Linares Grainger's death and wrote: '[User D] made vile remarks about the horrible loss Fernando Linares Beltranena suffered. I invite you to visit his Facebook page and comment on this armchair communist's wall' (@MendezRuizV, 13 May 2017). Méndez Ruiz then responded to User D himself: 'Go see what I published...on my 2 Facebook pages and on Twitter. The aim is that people don't forget, and that you become even more famous, which is what you want.' Méndez Ruiz's followers commented on Méndez Ruiz's page: he is a 'rat stuck living in the past'; 'damned homosexual'; and 'Call centre'. Méndez Ruiz followers also heeded Méndez Ruiz's call to comment on User D's own profile. 'He erased the post' (@MendezRuizV, 13 May 2017), one follower wrote. Méndez Ruiz's bullying had worked.

The *Fundación* and Méndez Ruiz's posts in relation to the death of Vicente Menchú and Juan Tuyuc stand in stark contrast to publications about Linares Grainger's death and calls to respect his father's grief. While the *Fundación* and Méndez Ruiz highlight the pain Linares Grainger's death caused Linares Beltranena, his wife, their family, and even Méndez Ruiz and a broader community of allies, Rigoberta Menchú and Rosalina Tuyuc are denied the ability to feel the loss of a family member. They, like User D, are denied emotional responsiveness. They are also denied what Haslam terms interpersonal warmth and depth.⁴⁶ Instead of deeply feeling the loss of a family member, Menchú and Tuyuc are described as using relatives' death for personal profit. They are machine-like; they are cold and superficial.⁴⁷

Early in January 2014, the *Fundación* began posting about the 1980 Spanish Embassy Massacre, one of the conflict's most discussed events.⁴⁸ In the first post on 3 January, the *Fundación* posted a picture of then-Spanish ambassador to Guatemala, Máximo Cajal y López and announced:

JANUARY 2014 IS THE 34TH ANNIVERSARY OF ONE OF THE BLOODIEST TERRORIST ATTACKS IN GUATEMALA'S HISTORY: THE INVASION OF THE SPANISH EMBASSY AND THE SACRIFICE OF THOSE INSIDE, PLANNED AND CARRIED OUT BY THE URBAN FRONT OF THE SELF-NAMED 'guerrilla army of the poor' (EGP) (@FundacionContraelTerrorismoGuatemala, 3 January 2014).

46 Haslam, 256-257.

47 Haslam, 256-257.

48 See, for example, Myrna Ivonne Wallace Fuentes, 'The Spanish Embassy Occupation and Assault: History and the Partisan Politics of Memory Since 1980 in Guatemala', *A Contracorriente*, 10.1 (2012), 365-412.

The posts specifically related to Rigoberta Menchú, who was, in 2014, seeking justice for the massacre and death of her father in courts, are revealing. The *Fundación* set the tone on 4 January 2014, calling Menchú a liar and inviting followers to ‘KNOW THE TRUE STORY OF RIGOBERTA MENCHÚ’ (@FundacionContraelTerrorismoGuatemala, 4 January 2014). The *Fundación* justified this declaration by posting much of the same information that David Stoll published in *Rigoberta Menchú and the story of all poor Guatemalans*. For example, and unlike she claimed, the Menchús were not landless, and the conflict over land that is a central part of her book and that she described as being against large, non-Maya landowners was actually a feud with her father’s in-laws over a relatively small plot of land. As for the Spanish Embassy, the Maya peasants who went to the capital were tricked into going by radical university students, and these students brought the Molotov cocktail that caused the fire that destroyed the building, killing or seriously injuring those inside. The *Fundación* then made various posts in the comments section, including the following: ‘a being [ser] who lives at the expense of another being is a parasite. The term social parasite as defined by the DRAE [Dictionary of the Royal Spanish Academy] could apply [to Menchú]....“person who lives at the expense of another”’ (@FundacionContraelTerrorismoGuatemala, 4 January 2014).

The *Fundación* added that ‘She uses racism to play the victim and get MILLIONS of dollars SHE DID NOT WORK FOR OR EARN’. At the end of the month, the *Fundación* re-published a Méndez Ruiz’s post that began ‘RIGOBERTA MENCHÚ, ALWAYS AFTER MONEY!’ in response to her demand for a ‘dignified reparation’ for her father’s death.⁴⁹ The *Fundación* invited followers to respond by asking ‘WHAT DO YOU THINK?’, and followers were eager to offer their opinions, 177 times (@FundacionContraelTerrorismoGuatemala, 4 January 2014). Given Méndez Ruiz and the *Fundación*’s prompts, a significant number of posts focus on Menchú’s quest for ‘easy money’: ‘This woman is a parasite on the Guatemalan people’; ‘Always shameless, living off the taxes we pay. When will we tell these scoundrels who call themselves

49 He added, ‘What nerve! ...We all know that Rigoberta is a living fraud, the source of confrontation and hate between Guatemalans, worthy of the rejection of her own people’ who have shown that rejection in two presidential elections (@FundacionContraelTerrorismoGuatemala, 31 January 2014). With this, Méndez Ruiz denies Menchú community, one of the factors Kelman identifies in dehumanization processes. For Méndez Ruiz, Menchú is ‘worthy of rejection by her own people’, a view the *Fundación*’s followers echo. They also denied her a more immediate sense of community: ‘I am sure her own children don’t even love/want her’ (@FundacionContraelTerrorismoGuatemala, 31 January 2014).

Mayas to go to hell?'; 'If you want money, go sell *atol* in the market'; 'If it weren't for the fire in the Spanish Embassy, which the terrorists started, La Menchú would be flirting in her home town surrounded with kids. She should work like the majority of Guatemalans'; 'Enough of giving away our taxes... It's time to stop these parasites. Work if you want to live well'; 'This kind of specimen should work'; and 'She is willing to sell anything for money, even her soul (if she has one, which I doubt)'. Many of these comments clearly reveal an intersectional hate that combines misogyny, racism, and nationalism.

These comments are dehumanizing because they strip Menchú of emotional responsiveness, interpersonal warmth, and depth, three of Haslam's elements of 'human nature'. For the *Fundación*, Méndez Ruiz, and their followers, Menchú's comment about a 'dignified reparation' for her father is not a sign of her being a complex being with feelings who mourns her father and seeks justice to help return his dignity. In the eyes of Méndez Ruiz and like-minded Guatemalans, Menchú, like others who seek the truth, justice, and reparations, cannot be driven by a need to, for example, 'denounce nationally and internationally [what happened] so that it comes to light, [so that it is] recorded [...] in a document that tells everything⁵⁰ after years of official denial and obfuscation. This is what one survivor from San Miguel Chicaj, Baja Verapaz, told the Interdiocesan Project for the Recuperation of Historical Memory (Remhi) in relation to the atrocities committed against the Achí. Menchú cannot be driven by a belief similar to a survivor from Sayaxché, Petén, who declared that 'we cannot keep dying like animals, without justice, without anyone being our voice. Enough! This violence must stop!⁵¹ And she cannot agree with a survivor from Santa Cruz del Quiché who gave her or his testimony to the Historical Clarification Commission (CEH) and demanded that 'impunity end, that there be justice and that the army's responsibility be recognized, that the bodies be found so they can be given a Christian burial⁵² and so that, as a survivor from Rabinal, Baja Verapaz, told Remhi, the perpetrators will stop 'acting in this brutal manner'.⁵³

50 ODHA (Oficina de Derechos Humanos del Arzobispado de Guatemala), *Guatemala: Nunca Más, Informe Proyecto Interdiocesano de Recuperación de la Memoria Histórica*. 4 Vols. (Guatemala City: ODHA, 1998), I, p. 42.

51 ODHA, p. 273.

52 CEH (Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico), *Guatemala: Memoria del Silencio, Capítulo Tercero: Consecuencias y Efectos de la Violencia* (Guatemala City: Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico, 1999), (par. 4036).

53 ODHA, p. 274.

For the *Fundación*, Méndez Ruiz, and their followers, Menchú is not motivated by any of these things. For them, Menchú's actions are solely a result of her superficial need to live comfortably without having to work. With this single-mindedness of purpose, Menchú can be seen as being rigid and so lacks another element of human nature, without which targets are imagined as automaton: cognitive openness or flexibility.⁵⁴

The series of posts about the 2014 death of Rosalina Tuyuc's brother, Juan Tuyuc, brings the denial of an emotional response to the death of a family member to the present. Vicente Menchú was killed in 1980 and so his daughter might be expected to have worked through some of the emotion involved in his death. Rosalina Tuyuc, however, can hardly be expected to have worked through the death of her brother from a few days earlier. Yet no matter how recent Juan Tuyuc's death was, his sister is still denied the possibility of having emotions and is instead described as superficial and only interested in money. The comments about Juan Tuyuc himself are also included here to provide additional context to comments about Rosalina Tuyuc. They work to other Juan Tuyuc even more than he already is as a rural, Indigenous leader and former guerrilla. Indeed, he is dehumanized as a 'cannibal terrorist' who was likely drunk when he was run over (and so is responsible for his own death), making it even more difficult to believe that his sister could legitimately feel pain or mourn his death.

Apparently killed in a hit-and-run, Rosalina Tuyuc called on the state to investigate to determine if Juan Tuyuc's death had been political. The *Fundación* quickly seconded Rosalina Tuyuc's call for an investigation to clarify what had happened. The *Fundación* wanted the death to be classified as a common hit-and-run, not a politically motivated crime, to prevent Rosalina Tuyuc from receiving 'some kind of reparation' for the 'lamentable' death of her brother (@FundacionContraelTerrorismo-Guatemala, 16 January 2014).

The next day, the *Fundación* surprisingly declared that 'the death of any Guatemalan is lamentable'. This is surprising because of their failure to lament the death of Vicente Menchú or the tens of thousands of civilians who died during the conflict. However, the *Fundación* added, using 'the victim's name and history to enrich oneself at the expense of our work, as propaganda and to justify the terrorism that caused so much pain and death in our country is outrageous'. They then suggested the investigation into his death to begin with a toxicology exam (@FundacionContrael-

54 Haslam, 257.

TerrorismoGuatemala, 17 January 2014). This was followed up on 21 January with a post about the 'self-described' Inter-American Court of Human Rights, which the *Fundación* dismissed as an NGO. The Court had called on the Guatemalan state to investigate Tuyuc's death. In the *Fundación's* perspective, Rosalina Tuyuc and the Court saw Tuyuc's death as an opportunity for 'business' as usual' (@FundacionContraelTerrorismoGuatemala, 21 January 2014).

As for Juan Tuyuc himself, the *Fundación* reminded readers on 18 January that, as Comandante Peter, the

CANNIBAL TERRORIST' [...] 'TORE OFF THE LEG OF A KAIBIL, ROASTED IT AND, ALONG WITH THE UNIT UNDER HIS COMMAND, ATE IT. THESE ARE THE PEOPLE WHO CALL THEMSELVES 'HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS' BUT APPLAUD BLOODY ACTS AND CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY [by saying they were inspired by] 'MARXIST IDEALS

Followers' comments include: 'One less dog' and 'A terrorist seen is a dead terrorist' (@FundacionContraelTerrorismoGuatemala, 18 January 2014). In the next days, followers described Tuyuc as a 'Motherfucking assassin [who] was probably hit by the car or whatever because he was drunk and now they want to make him a martyr' (@FundacionContraelTerrorismoGuatemala, 21 January 2014). 'Thank god he is dead', someone else wrote, adding, 'A dead terrorist is better than a living one' (@FundacionContraelTerrorismoGuatemala, 21 January 2014). One follower recognized that, 'It isn't human to be happy that someone died, but even so breathing a sigh of relief is unavoidable' when the person who died is 'a genocidaire,⁵⁵ torturer rapist, butchering terrorist, cannibal, child-killer' (@FundacionContraelTerrorismoGuatemala, 20 January 2014).

The *Fundación* returned to the issue of money and declared that Guatemalan 'Marxists' 'HAVE BECOME MULTIMILLIONAIRES AT THE EXPENSE OF GUATEMALANS' SUFFERING AND WORK' and are awarded with public positions (@FundacionContraelTerrorismoGuatemala, 21 January 2014). The *Fundación's* followers eagerly stepped into this opening and affirmed that Rosalina Tuyuc 'has learned how to get paid for her dead and live at the expense of all of those of us who work and pay taxes'. Some saw Rosalina Tuyuc as part of a larger problem: 'Motherfucking opportunistic *indios*, and note that I didn't say Indigenous since our Indigenous peoples have nothing to do with these assassins that call themselves defenders of the people' (@Fun-

⁵⁵ The user wrote *genocida*, not *genocidaire*. Since there is no short way to say "someone who committed genocide" in English, I use the more well-known French term for such an individual.

dacionContraelTerrorismoGuatemala, 21 January 2014).⁵⁶ Another wondered, 'How much money have these parasites received from my taxes?' (@FundacionContraelTerrorismoGuatemala, 28 January 2014).

Even though they describe Juan Tuyuc's death as lamentable, and even though they do it twice, the *Fundación* dehumanizes Rosalina Tuyuc just as they dehumanize Menchú, by denying her the possibility of having feelings and being saddened by her brother's death. For the *Fundación*, all she wants is money and she is willing to invent stories to get that money. Her call for an investigation is therefore not motivated by her deep awareness of and personal experience with threats, assassination attempts, assassinations, and other attacks against human rights defenders and other activists.⁵⁷ Nor is it motivated by a recognition that politically-motivated attacks are often made to seem like common crimes, as in the assassination of Monseñor Gerardi.⁵⁸ Instead, she 'LIES' (@FundacionContraelTerrorismoGuatemala, 28 January 2014).

Taken together, comments about Menchú and Rosalina and Juan Tuyuc are clear examples of dehumanizing language that excludes the target from 'us'. Importantly, as Opotow wrote, it is only this 'us' who deserve to be treated fairly. It is important to point out, however, that some commentators rejected the *Fundación's* dehumanizing language, far-right politics, and the resulting narrative of Guatemala's past and present. For example, in the series of posts about Menchú, User W wrote, 'the money aside, I don't think anyone would like their father to be burned alive'. More than only reject the *Fundación's* dehumanizing view of Menchú's superficiality, User W rejected the *Fundación's* overall narrative of the Spanish Embassy Massacre and labelled it 'State terrorism' (@FundacionContraelTerrorismoGuatemala, 31 January 2014). Certainly, the rejection of the pro-military narrative of the massacre is directly related to User W's view of Menchú as a human being with feelings.

56 This was certainly not the only racist comment: One follower asked if 'the big scar she has on her snout...[was] a result of a fight she had with someone the same as her in a brothel?' (@FundacionContraelTerrorismoGuatemala, 16 January 2014).

57 There were 814 attacks against human rights defenders in 2014, an increase over the 657 attacks in 2013. UDEFEGUA (*Unidad de Protección a Defensoras y Defensores de Derechos Humanos de Guatemala*), *El Silencio es Historia: Informe sobre Situación de Defensoras y Defensores de Derechos Humanos Enero a Diciembre de 2013* (Guatemala City: UDEFEGUA, 2014); UDEFEGUA, *Soy Defensora, Soy Defensor, Promuevo Derechos Humanos: Informe sobre situación de Defensoras y Defensores de Derechos Humanos Enero a Diciembre de 2014* (Guatemala City: UDEFEGUA, 2015).

58 See, for example, Francisco Goldman, *The Art of Political Murder: Who Killed the Bishop?* (New York: Grove Press, 2008).

Final Considerations

Followers' comments like the ones quoted here are not exceptional. Helen Mack is a 'stinking Chinese woman' (@MendezRuizV, 9 December 2015) who should 'go back to her [own] land' (@MendezRuizV, 14 May 2016). Another follower 'invited' Mack to go to 'communist China' where she could her favourite meal, 'carrion with red flies' (@MendezRuizV, 2 August 2016). A *vividora* (ex., @MendezRuizV, 2 May 2016, 5 June 2016, 17 January 2017), she is, furthermore, a lesbian and a despicable leech (@MendezRuizV, 31 July 2016) who looks like a man because she does not wear earrings @MendezRuizV, 2 August 2016). As for the Fundación Myrna Mack, Justicia Ya, Somos, and the Center for Legal Action for Human Rights (CALDH) who, in 2017, campaigned to reform the Guatemalan Constitution, they are 'traitors...parasites of the state' and 'The worst kind of leeches'. 'These leftist parasites need to be given a one-way ticket to HELL', one user commented, while another declared that 'these parasites should say how much money they have bled from the state' (@MendezRuizV, 27 April 2017). When unknown figures spray-painted a hammer and sickle on a pick-up in downtown Guatemala City after a protest, one user wrote 'These people are totally irrational, if you can call stupid, backward people "people". Can you imagine what we could expect with these animals' in the government?' (@MendezRuizV, 21 October 2016).

Comments about the survivors of sexual slavery and other violations seeking justice in the Sepur Zarco trial,⁵⁹ which Méndez Ruiz dubbed 'Sepur Circo',⁶⁰ feed into tropes about Indigenous people, and Indigenous women in particular. The short exchange between a few individuals who did not agree about the trial, and Judge Jasmin Barrios' decision to allow survivors to cover their faces, is both revealing and representative. User P said, 'they hide their faces because [they are so ugly that] no one will believe them'. User P continued, 'Indigenous women who work [as servants in wealthy people's homes] always dream of ending up with the boss or his son'. And in all military bases 'the women who do the cooking always look for soldiers to sleep with'. When User G wondered

59 See, for example, Jo-Marie Burt, 'Gender Justice in Post-Conflict Guatemala: The Sepur Zarco Sexual Violence and Sexual Slavery Trial', *Critical Studies*, 4 (2019), 63-96.

60 Thank you to one of the anonymous reviewers of this paper for reminding me of David Stoll's description of the 2013 genocide trial as a 'media circus' (David Stoll, 'Guatemala – Was It Genocide?', *Middlebury College*, 31 October 2013, <<https://sites.middlebury.edu/dstoll/files/2013/10/Guatemala-Was-It-Genocide.pdf>> [accessed 10 July 2021]).

how people could be so ‘insensitive when faced with others’ pain’, User P replied, ‘it’s not insensitivity, but what you don’t realize is that these women are being manipulated by a group of foreigners who are taking advantage of the victims’ ignorance to extort our country’. In fact, he wrote, this group of manipulative foreigners is a group of lesbians. User P continued that User K, who had also criticized his comments, must be a lesbian too (@FundacionContraelTerrorismoGuatemala, 2 March 2016).

What all these individuals have in common is that they are *vividores*, defined above as someone who lives at others’ expense, ‘looking for what he needs or what suits him using harmful means’. The list of *vividores* Méndez Ruiz personally identified between January 2016 and May 2018 is long; indeed, *vividor* is a favorite term of his. They are: the organizations involved in the Sepur Zarco trial (and indeed in any trial against former military personnel), anyone trying to get reparations, CALDH, UDEFEGUA, Madre Selva, Sodeju Fundaju, Organización Lambda, the Instituto en Estudios Comparados en Ciencias Penales de Guatemala, all the organizations that Norway funded, Miguel Morth, people involved in human rights issues, members of NGOs that believe genocide was committed in Guatemala (in fact, the *vividores* invented the supposed ‘genocid’ to get money [@MendezRuizV, 22 April 2016]), FAMDEGUA, Mario Polanco (a ‘champion among *vividores*’ [@MendezRuizV, 11 May 2016]), Rosalina Tuyuc (also a ‘champion among *vividores*’ [@MendezRuizV, 11 May 2016]), Aura Elena Farfán (another ‘champion among *vividores*’ (@MendezRuizV, 11 May 2016), Pablo Monsanto, Helen Mack, Lucía Escobar, the Iniciativa Mesoamericana de Mujeres Defensoras de Derechos Humanos, the left, Iván Velásquez, and the individuals opposed to the Minera San Rafael.⁶¹

The key aspect of who a *vividor* is and what a *vividor* does relates to harm. A *vividor* harms others to survive. This is not so different from a parasite, and indeed, as seen in the introduction, the *Fundación* made the link between human rights defenders and their perceived allies and (social) parasites explicit. As with *vividor*, the key aspect of the definition of parasite relates to harm. Both the *vividor* and parasite harm others to live. This harm is a fundamental part of who they are and what they do, meaning that it is impossible for both the *vividor*/parasite and others to thrive.

‘Parasite’ is obviously dehumanizing in ways that *vividor* is not, and it is far easier to identify animalistic dehumanization than mechanistic

61 The list of those who are described as acting like *vividores* but are not specifically described as *vividores* is even longer.

dehumanization. As this article shows, it is essential to incorporate mechanistic dehumanization into widely-used understandings of dehumanization. When we understand what kind of humanness is being denied to the target of dehumanizing language, we can better understand and identify it and the dehumanizing processes words represent.

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