The negative impact of Shining Path on indigenous mobilization in Peru: A complementary approach using POT and NSMT

Abstract

This article contends that the rise of Shining Path in the rural areas of Peru and its revolutionary war between 1980 and 1992 contributed significantly to the weakening of indigenous mobilization in that country. To examine this issue, this work utilizes a mixed theoretical framework built from Political Opportunity Theory (POT) and New Social Movements Theory (NSMT). Shining Path took advantage of the history of rural isolation and a political vacuum to quickly take control of rural areas and impose extreme repression of counter-revolutionary mobilization. In addition, the erratic and disproportionate response of the Peruvian government also negatively affected the indigenous communities. Shining Path systematically pressured the indigenous communities to collaborate with the insurgent organization and embrace a materialist-based peasantry identity. This article concludes that merging concepts from NSMT and POT allows a better understanding of the intense and lasting influence that Shining Path had on indigenous mobilization in Peru.

Keywords: Shining Path, indigenous movements, Peru, New Social Movements Theory, Political Opportunity Theory

INTRODUCTION

Even though indigenous people make up a significant percentage of Peru's population —
2.703 communities of 44 indigenous peoples, according to INEE (2018, p. 23)—Peru has
historically lacked political parties representing these communities (Puig Martí, 2008; Van
Cott, 2005). Although some authors have analyzed the relevance of an emerging indigenous
mobilization (see, e.g., Merino (2020), there is no shortage of literature evidencing the low
level of politicization of ethnic cleavages in Peru in comparison to its neighboring
countries—Ecuador and Bolivia (Degregori, 1998; Paredes, 2008).

Researchers have proposed a myriad of explanations of this phenomenon. For example,
Dávila Puño (2005) claims that it was caused by institutional obstacles and circumstantial
influences. By contrast, Madrid (2011) argues that the key explanatory factor was the
leadership of the Peruvian presidents Alberto Fujimori, Alejandro Toledo, and Ollanta
Humala. Finally, Paredes and Došek (2020) argue that the institution of an indigenous
quota—instead of a reserved-seat system—undermined the consolidation of Peruvian
indigenous movements.

In an effort to systematize the already existing theories, Paredes (2008) divided the
factors into two main branches: those focused on the structural political context that
constrained indigenous mobilization and those focused on the cultural processes that
affected the indigenous identity. Continuing with these efforts, this research pursues the
twofold objective of analyzing the role of *Partido Comunista del Perú-Sendero Luminoso*
(Communist Party of Peru - Shining Path - PCP - SL) in the weakening of the Peruvian

indigenous mobilization and highlighting the relevance of bringing together structural and cultural perspectives in this kind of analysis.

The uprising by Shining Path in 1980 started a civil conflict that lasted for more than a decade and resulted in more than 70,000 casualties from Shining Path's and other groups' attacks, as well as the government's response. Although Shining Path has received considerable academic attention (Degregori, 1988; Gorriti, 1990; La Serna, 2012), its impact on the consolidation of Peruvian social movements has been often presented as an obvious consequence of the violence. This article analyzes Shining Path's influence on the weakening of indigenous mobilization in Peru both in structural and cultural terms.

More concretely, this research conducts a two-step analysis using Political Opportunity Theory (POT) and New Social Movements Theory (NSMT). First, using POT, we analyze the structural context that benefited the insurgent organization. More concretely, Shining Path's rural guerrillas took advantage of the governmental vacuum in the rural areas and the lack of consistent security to successfully spread over an extensive rural area and increase Shining Path's legitimacy. Then, we show how the implementation of an intensely repressive campaign over the controlled territory, combined with a long history of indiscriminate repression by the government, generated a severely negative political context.

Second, using NSMT, we analyze how Shining Path radicalized the already existing ideological background of the Peruvian Revolution and certain socialist authors to promote the materialist concept of the peasantry and weaken the indigenous identity. Taking advantage of its rapid spread over the rural areas, the insurrectionist organization used the mixed strategy of co-optation and repression that put Indians in the dilemma of cooperating

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with Shining Path—and therefore abandoning indigenous mobilization—or facing severe repression if perceived as counter-revolutionary elements.

We conclude that Shining Path's impact was crucial for understanding the weakness of the Peruvian indigenous mobilization nowadays, as this organization generated a context of repression and co-optation that severely compromised any kind of alternative politics in Peru's rural areas. In fact, only in 2004 Peru witnessed an alliance between Andean and Amazonian communities agglutinated under an "indigenous slogan" (Greene, 2006), while indigenous resistance has mainly emerged on the Amazonian zones (Calienes, 2018). In addition, this article demonstrates that a mixed analysis using structural and cultural theories allows a better understanding of this influence.

New Social Movements Theory: The importance of identity-making processes

New Social Movements Theory (NSMT) has its origin in European political philosophy and social theory traditions (Cohen, 1985; Della Porta & Diani, 2011; Klandermans, 2008). NSMT tries to overcome the old-fashioned reductionism of Marxism when interpreting and analyzing the emergence of social movements and puts at the center of its analysis the issues of social change and collective identity formation as a mobilizing resource (Hunt et al., 1994).

Buechler (1995) notes that NSMT is not a single theory but is best described as a group of theories. There are several aspects that NSMT analyzes: ideology, movement culture, and identity, among others. From that myriad of aspects, this article focuses on collective identity as it is a key element when analyzing indigenous movements, especially because their members already have a latent collective identity based on ethnicity. As Klandermans (2008) argues, collective identity and participation's hypothesized relationship—which is "overwhelmingly supported" by existing empirical evidence—is straightforward: a strong identification with a collectivity makes participation on behalf of that collectivity more likely.

For instance, the mobilizations in the 1990s that began with the indigenous movement in Ecuador under the slogan "never again without us" showed a clear ethnic factor behind a generalized social unrest. In this case, the indigenous movement in Ecuador was making specific claims for their peoples by merging both ethnic and class based demands under an agglutinating new organization: CONAIE (Becker, 2008). A collective identity refers to

the shared definition of a group that derives from its members' common interests, experiences, and solidarities (Melucci, 1988; Polletta & Jasper, 2001). NSMT emphasizes one of their explanatory efforts in the emergence of collective identities—particularly those born within the cultural sphere—as key catalysts of collective action. Even after recognizing that an identity is already present in existing class-based movements, NSMT claims that such an identity is "new" when it is used to foster self-realization and autonomy outside of the established political, social, and economic system in lieu of merely being absorbed by it. For instance, although indigenous movements initially share ethnic commonalities, only after a socialization period do they use these characteristics as a mobilizing or organizing factor to form federations or confederations along ethnic lines.

Pizzorno (1989) states that it is during collective action that identity formation and consolidation take place. What is at stake in this case is not the achievement of a certain benefit but rather the recognition of a certain identity. Similarly, Brysk maintains that movements produce collective identity, and while most indigenous movements share a similar agenda, their precise meaning and applications are developed in the conflicts and negotiations that accompany political resistance (Brysk, 1994). Hence, indigenous collective identities are as much a product of movements as a cause of them (Pallares, 2002).

Numerous authors argue that the latter is a distinctive characteristic of new social movements (Calhoun, 1991; Cohen, 1985; Melucci, 1982; Pizzorno, 1989). More specifically, social movements construct their identity under the logic of the so-called identity-oriented paradigm, in which collective action participants search for the construction of a new collective identity, together with its legitimation and expression. The

claim for other interests is considered a secondary effort, and only when the collective

identity is consolidated is it possible to obtain further economic or material objectives.

For del Olmo (2003), ethnic identity can be understood as a form of collective identity

based on common social and cultural characteristics that are intrinsic to a group of

individuals. In the case of indigenous movements in Latin America, the consolidation of

their identity is proactive in nature; they commonly express demands for expanding civil

rights based on past discrimination and systematic exclusion from political and/or

economic participation.

For instance, although indigenous movements in Bolivia demanded material rights,

under Morales' MAS, they used regional, national, and international coalition-building to

equate indigenous and non-indigenous issues through resonant political analogies that

framed Bolivia's national crisis of political legitimacy in terms of indigenous rights, while

making common cause with diverse urban popular sectors who, though not indigenous,

recognized their indigenous cultural heritage as a crucial background to their own struggles

against disenfranchisement (Albro, 2005).

For Touraine (1965), ethnic identities could be "defensive, as their ultimate objective is

the protection, conservation and recognition of ethnic traits inside a recognized social

structure. The consequence of searching for these symbolic interests is the establishment

of the identity itself as a pressure group that can no longer be ignored. Similarly, for

Touraine, ethnic identities depend on concrete circumstances, contexts, and opportunities.

As postindustrial societies witness the emergence of these new social movements, it is

possible to affirm that such societies do have some windows of opportunity that allow their

emergence (Touraine, 1993). In this sense, "people's actions clearly confront certain limits

that structures engender and structures often demarcate a certain range of possibilities. But structures do not unconditionally dictate what people do" (Selbin, 2005:128).

Political Opportunity Theory: The relevance of the political context

From the discussion above, it can be said that the consolidation of a collective identity is the result of a dynamic and temporal social process that develops under certain conditions. Therefore, indigenous collective identity formation and consolidation can only be understood by taking into account the contextual factors around it. Accordingly, this section explores some of the features of the political context that could prevent or create an ideal scenario for the Peruvian indigenous identity to awaken and consolidate.

The intent of the political opportunity perspective, and more specifically, the political opportunity theory (POT), is to explain when collective action occurs. In this sense, POT's basic claim is that the context in which a movement arises influences its development and potential impact (Meyer, 2004: 125). Consequently, political opportunity theorists direct many of their explanatory efforts to the world outside a social movement, having in mind that exogenous factors could encourage or inhibit collective action. Based on the work of McAdam (1982) and Tarrow (1989), there are four clusters of political opportunities that align with the openness or closedness of institutional mechanisms within states. The first cluster refers to the degree of openness in the polity, meaning the degree to which people participate in political life. The second cluster refers to the stability of political alignments and their changes. The third cluster concerns the presence of allies and support groups. Finally, the fourth cluster encompasses state actions repressing or facilitating dissent; a repressive state poses more threats for people who mobilize, meaning there are greater costs

and fewer incentives for embarking upon collective action. This article emphasizes the analysis of clusters one and four, as these were the opportunities that were most compromised by the emergence of Shining Path in Peru.

Regarding openness toward citizens' participation in political life, there are a number of studies that show that participation in the social sphere (i.e., protests, social movements, and strikes) is present in states where citizens enjoy full political rights (Norris et al., 2005; Tarrow, 2011; Van Aelst & Walgrave, 2001). There is a second group of studies that suggest that political rights are conquered, precisely, through mobilization, protests, and the pressures exerted by social movements (Dalton, 2013). More specifically, this literature argues that citizens who are disaffected with established channels of representative democracy are more likely to engage in protest and other forms of collective action. Regarding the state's response to dissent, there are numerous empirical studies that show two different consequences of repression for collective action and mobilization. The first group of studies, which are more rationally oriented, concludes that high levels of repression will diminish collective action as citizens face high costs for engaging in social movements or protests (Jenkins & Perrow, 1977; Opp & Roehl, 1990).

The second group of studies suggests that high levels of repression foster sentiments of solidarity and promote collective action because the cost of doing nothing becomes higher (Francisco, 1996; Khawaja, 1993; White, 1989). Further studies, such as one conducted by Siegel (2011), indicate that the extent to which repression influences participation depends on the structure of social networks. For example, in the case of the indigenous movement in Ecuador, the lack of repression—especially in the Amazonian region—allowed indigenous organizations to form confederations by taking advantage of already existing

social networks—for example, CONFENAIE—and organize themselves along ethnic lines (Yashar, 2006).

This article contends that because openness to citizens' participation in Peru was minimal and repression was high—both from the government and Shining Path—Indians had fewer incentives for organizing themselves through collective action initiatives. This occurred because socialization is necessary for collective identity consolidation. Hence, although ethnic identity was a common factor in several indigenous communities in Peru, it could not be "awakened" because of extreme state repression. However, the Peruvian indigenous movement was able to partially consolidate in the Amazonian region, where the civil conflict barely arrived, and where it did, indigenous groups successfully resisted Shining Path guerrillas and others seen as representing an external threat (Rénique, 2009).

Nevertheless, this adverse political scenario for indigenous populations translated into potential opportunities for Shining Path. As POT emphasizes the analysis of context for understanding the rise of social movements, the lack of political opportunities is also an important factor for understanding why certain social movements did not emerge. The lack of political opportunities helps explain why Shining Path could arise and why the indigenous movement in Peru never had the chance to develop and consolidate its identity as a mobilizing factor. Similarly, revolutions' theorists (Selbin, 2018; Foran, 2005) suggest that structural conditions may be of importance but that they alone cannot explain how specific groups act and evolve, implying a need of evaluating both the structure and agency within social movements' consolidation –which is developed in the following sections.

THE STRUCTURAL CONTEXT EXPLAINING THE WEAKENING OF THE MOBILIZATION IN INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

In the following pages, this article focuses on Shining Path's revolutionary strategy and explains how it took advantage of the limited range of political opportunities in the rural zones of Peru. In addition, Shining Path constrained the political context of the indigenous communities when it turned rural zones into the headquarters of its guerrilla strategy and repressed all perceived counter-revolutionary mobilization.

Concerning the political context prior to the emergence of the insurrectionist group, Peru had been historically marked by the differentiation between the urban zones, which were more industrialized and had been settled by a mostly white and mestizo population, and the rural zones, which were almost entirely agricultural and inhabited by an ethnic majority of Indians. The rural regions were also characterized by the *gamonalismo* system, which had been in place since the 19ᵗʰ century and led to an extreme land concentration. According to the 1961 agricultural census, 1% of the landowners owned 80% of the private lands (Albertus, 2020: 4). This was conducive to the establishment of oligarchic relations between landowners and Indians, and the government increasingly supported the elite to maintain its control over the territory.

There is no shortage of academic literature describing the xenophobic attitudes that have existed in Peru since the colonial age toward the indigenous population and the governmental policies concerning the "Indian Problem" (De la Cadena, 2000; Méndez-Gastelumendi, 1996; Sulmont, 2005). Nonetheless, during the Peruvian Revolution (1968–1980), the government implemented two main sets of reforms that reconfigured the political scenario in the rural zones: the agrarian reform and the declaration of the "social death of Indian." On the one hand, the Peruvian government implemented an intense land

reform, which expropriated most of the landowners' holdings and distributed them among peasant cooperatives and societies. In fact, according to Albertus (2020), this Land Reform was crucial in the future development of the insurrectionist conflict: the regions more affected by the land distribution were those where Shining Path found less support and faced more resistance. On the other hand, inspired by Western socialist thought, the government encouraged Indians to consider themselves peasants and abandon their indigenous identity (Yashar, 2006: 258). From that point forward, the Peruvian government increasingly discouraged indigenous mobilization, considering Indians' values and culture as "remnants" and, ultimately, "ethnic" (Méndez-Gastelumendi, 2001: 158).

Because of these changes, the power of the *hacendados* (large landowners) significantly decreased and the oligarchic relations were replaced by a new cooperative-based system. Nonetheless, this system was not successful in resolving the historical problems of the rural regions. First, this system was perceived as ineffective by the rural population because they expected a quick and complete land redistribution. However, with the empowerment of cooperatives, resentments among neighboring communities began to increase, especially because the cooperatives began to lease land of "non-associates" in exchange for labor and hired non-associates at low wages. Consequently, people resented both the government and the cooperatives for depriving them of their rightful land and for perpetuating an exploitative elite. This situation led to the frustration of further peaceful organization among communities, which were now distrustful of each other (Degregori, 2000: 90).

In addition, even among those who agreed with the land distribution, the establishment of a cooperative system was perceived as a threat to the social status quo. Isbell described the concern within the Chuschi population as follows: "the argument that won the debate in the public assemblies was that if a cooperative was established, the community would lose control over its resources" (Isbell, 1994: 81–82). Second, the land reform dramatically

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reduced the power of the landowners without expanding the presence of the Peruvian government, thus decreasing the influence of the government in the region—as the government could no longer use the landowners as intermediates—and generating a political vacuum. As a result, even though the land reform reduced the land concentration, it also increased the isolation of the rural areas and the disaffection toward the Peruvian government.

As a result, when Shining Path started the revolutionary struggle, it found a very favorable political context. The reasons can be summarized as (a) a political disconnect between the rural regions and the central government, (b) the political vacuum left by the end of the *gamonalismo*; (c) the national policies concerning the demobilization of the indigenous communities and the abandonment of the Indian identity, and (d) the increase in social unrest due to unfulfilled expectations about the land reform. In this sense, Stern (1991: 8) describes how, even though Shining Path aimed at reducing the conflict to a class struggle, it also involved historic resentments, economic inequalities, ethnic conflicts and cultural legacies.

In this context, Shining Path initially benefited from the rural isolation from the urban areas—where the Peruvian government had its strength—in order to spread and gain supporters within the indigenous communities. This expansion benefited from the disdain of the big cities, who considered Shining Path's emergence to be a localized issue among the "uneducated and illiterate peasantry" (Palmer, 1992) and therefore refused to implement counter-insurgency measures until the beginning of the expansion to the cities.

In fact, during the first years, Shining Path filled the void that the central government had left in rural areas. The organization offered peasants protection and the acknowledgment of injustices through their initial selective use of violence—especially against the corrupt authorities and the *abigeato* (cattle rustling)—and the promise of a new

political reality in which their rights would be respected (La Serna, 2012). In Manrique (2007: 21)'s words, "Against the chronic injustice and abuse, *Sendero* assumed a moralizer and avenger role which provided it legitimacy in rural, urban and social spaces". For this reason, Shining Path found support in the poorest rural areas of the country (Ayacucho, Apurimac, and Huancavelica), where these grievances were commonly experienced. According to Degregori (2000), the insurrectionist group originated and developed in the authoritarian contexts of Andean peasant mestizo elite relationships, taking advantage of the political vacuum left by Alvarado's land reform.

As a result, Shining Path was able to successfully spread over the rural areas of Ayacucho and gain support for its revolutionary struggle. Inspired by Maoism, this organization implemented a peasant-based revolution oriented toward the establishment of a rural guerrilla—what Mao called "from the countryside to the city" revolution. Shining Path was able to quickly take control of extensive rural areas of the country and expel the governmental authorities (Manrique, 2007: 32). This success allowed Shining Path to create a parallel state through *Comités Populares* (Popular Committees), which exerted control over the territory and repressed any perceived anti-revolutionary behavior. To the indigenous communities, after an initial period of cooperation, this implied a dramatic decrease in political opportunities, as they were the object of increasing suppression of any kind of alternative mobilization outside Shining Path's Marxist agenda. This revolutionary violence included physical punishment, torture, and mass executions (CVR, 2003).

After this first defensive stage of the revolution, Shining Path developed a military campaign toward the urban zones, launching diverse attacks against the national economy (e.g., destroying the electrical infrastructure) or directly against the population through kidnapping and murdering, including car bombs and selective assassinations (Gorriti,

1990). This tactic—attacking the urban zones and quickly returning to the security of the rural ones—aimed at destabilizing the Peruvian government as a preliminary step to assuming full control of the country.

From a structural perspective, Shining Path took advantage of the isolation and the political vacuum that existed in Peru's rural areas, as well as the latent disdain toward the rural zones in urban areas, to successfully spread across the territory. More concretely, according to the *Comisión de la Verdad y la Reconciliación* (Truth and Reconciliation Commission), because of the distance from the cities to the locations of the first attacks by the Shining Path guerrillas, the Peruvian authorities ignored them, allowing the consolidation of the organization, both in terms of territory and population (CVR, 2003: 56). For the Peruvian government, putting down a rebellion in the poorest zones in the country was not worth the cost of mobilizing a military force strong enough to locate and defeat a guerrilla movement hidden in the tropical and mountainous zones of Ayacucho. Shining Path also benefited from the national political context. Some authors have pointed out that the Peruvian national government felt reluctant to mobilize military forces to the rural zones because they feared a possible military coup as happened in 1968 (Degregori & Rivera Paz, 1993: 9). It was not until Shining Path began a campaign against the main cities that the Peruvian government took seriously the insurrectionist challenge. However, by that time, Shining Path had already reached a high degree of consolidation in most of the rural communities of Ayacucho, and defeating Shining Path would require not only the support of the local authorities but also the mobilization of numerous forces and resources.

Concerning the counter-revolutionary governmental response, Albertus (2020) provides compelling evidence that the land reform had a positive impact on the Peruvian government's capacity to identify the insurgency's members and coordinate and strengthen

peasant groups—the *Rondas Campesinas*—to confront Shining Path. However, lacking a consistent security strategy and facing constant attacks from guerrillas hidden among the population, during the first years, the Peruvian government alternated periods of inaction with massive retaliation in the zones where Shining Path was established. Consequently, the indigenous communities faced the additional threat of indiscriminate governmental repression aimed at defeating Shining Path (Marks and Palmer, 2005). For example, the military campaign that developed between 1983 and 1984 caused more than 5,000 casualties among the population (Degregori & Rivera Paz, 1993: 9–10). Additionally, during the anti-terrorist campaign, the governmental armed forces were barely monitored by the national media, which were established mainly in the urban zones. In the context of guerrilla expansion, this lack of external control allowed the development of extreme repression over the rural zones; mass torture and executions of indigenous people became a common practice as government forces were often unable to distinguish between Indians and Shining Path's fighters (Sánchez-Cuenca & De la Calle, 2009). According to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's reports, about 20,000 of the 70,000 total casualties of this conflict were caused by forces under direct or indirect instructions from the Peruvian government (CVR, 2003: 55). Considering that Shining Path barely exceeded 1,000 fighters, the evidence of massive repression of the rural population is very clear (CVR, 2003: 13).

As a result, Shining Path's guerrilla strategy put the rural areas under a double threat: (a) the direct repression by Shining Path of any perceived anti-revolutionary behavior and (b) the repression by the governmental forces (Starn, 1995). More concretely, it is estimated that of the 70,000 people killed, 75% were indigenous people. The people of Ayacucho,

where Shining Path began its consolidation, undoubtedly suffered the most during the war between the militant groups and the government (CVR, 2003: 54).

In conclusion, when there is openness to citizens' participation, the existence of collective action becomes more likely. In Peru, the repression reached noticeably high levels because of the radicalization of the civil conflict. First, Shining Path took advantage of Peru's internal problems to successfully spread throughout the rural areas and impose repressive control over the population. Second, Shining Path's attacks on the urban areas provoked an inconsistent response from the Peruvian government that also involved repression toward the populations. That context negatively affected the political opportunities of the indigenous communities as the increased repression narrowed the already scarce windows for participation in these communities.

THE WEAKENING OF THE INDIGENOUS IDENTITY AND ITS REPLACEMENT WITH A PEASANT-BASED AGENDA

The previous section explained how the indigenous communities faced limited political opportunities to mobilize and that this context radically deteriorated because of Shining Path's revolution. Nonetheless, understanding this structural perspective is not enough to completely understand the changes of that period. The reason is that during this structural change, the indigenous communities were also experiencing another threat to their identity that eventually influenced their political demobilization as Indians. Therefore, using NSMT, this section analyzes the increasing tension that the indigenous culture and identity experienced in favor of a materialist-based peasant identity.

There is no shortage of studies that analyze the structure of Shining Path and the role of its charismatic leader, Abimael Guzmán (Degregori, 2000; Gorriti, 1990; Palmer, 1992). Nonetheless, to fully understand the impact of Shining Path on the Peruvian indigenous mobilization, it is also necessary to analyze the ideological particularities of Guzmán's thought—officially known as *Pensamiento Gonzalo*—concerning the "Indian Problem." Shining Path's main goal was to adapt the Marxist revolution—created in a context of urbanity and modernity—to a country like Peru, where Indians made up a substantial part of the population and often maintained semi-feudal political relations.

To this end, Guzmán based his thought on Mao Tse-tung's and José Carlos Mariátegui's thought because they had already widened the context in which revolutions could take place. Like Mao, Guzmán understood the peasantry to be the revolutionary subject in agrarian countries—instead of the proletariat that is the focus of the Western Marxist tradition—and proposed a strategy focused on the rural areas. Similarly, Mariátegui (1994)

adapted Marxist theory to the Latin American context and pointed out the convergence between the indigenous claims and the socialist project.

Through these authors, Shining Path consolidated two ideological cornerstones concerning how the revolution should take place: (a) the strategy of the class struggle as "from the countryside to the city" guerrilla war and (b) the relevance of Indians as part of the peasant revolutionary subject. The previous section of this article explained how point (a) put the indigenous communities in a crossfire that increased their repression. Nonetheless, even though the relevant role of Indians in *Pensamiento Gonzalo* could seem conducive to indigenous mobilization, it quickly turned into a severe handicap.

The key point that explains this apparent contradiction is that, despite Shining Path's claim about the importance of Indians in the revolutionary process, this statement sustained on a strict materialist-based analysis—what Stern (1998: 471) denominates as a "hyperideologized vision of the dialectic and scientifically revealed path to revolutionary triumph".

. Hence, if Shining Path recognized the indigenous population as part of the revolutionary subject of Peru, it was only as belonging to the peasantry class. In Guzmán's words in an interview in 1989, "for the first time ever, the country is being led by workers, peasants and progressives, understood as those who want to change this country in the unique way that can be done through the popular war" (El Diario, 1989).

Therefore, Shining Path highlighted class over any alternative feeling or identity—including ethnicity or gender—because they were all perceived to be the results of the existing economic relations. In this sense, Shining Path systematically promoted the abandonment of the indigenous identity and the reorientation of indigenous political claims toward a peasant-based agenda. This attitude is consistent with those of the traditional left, which tended to

consider cultural diversity as something that would disappear with the unification of the working class (Selverston-Scher, 2001: 65).

As a result, even though Indians were recognized as an important part of the revolutionary class struggle in Peru (Palmer, 1992: 102), indigenous values were never introduced into the Shining Path's statements, and indigenous militants did not play significant roles in the organization. About this reality, Degregori points out that Shining Path's "official documents entirely omit the ethnic dimension or directly reject Andean cultural re-evaluation as 'folklore' or bourgeois manipulation" (Degregori, 1991: 243). Consequently, despite their formal recognition, indigenous values were subject to increasingly hostile attitudes from Shining Path's leaders. According to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, "The PCP-SL never took in consideration the necessities and hopes of the peasantry, nor its own organizations or of its cultural specificities, considering peasantry as a 'mass' subjected to the will of the party, punishing with death penalty to the dissidence, including mass slaughters" (CVR, 2003: 129). In Guzmán's view, socialist revolutions should be the result of socialist collectivization and social life programs, instead of consideration of the indigenous socio-political dynamics. In this sense, Shining Path promoted an intense reeducation in materialist values —totally ignoring the indigenous culture— and coordinated political activities in the rural zones within the "people's organizations", including the Movement of Poor Peasants which established a peasant-oriented political agenda (Strong, 1992: 88). Del Pino (1996)'s analysis of this organization evidenced how Shining Path, despite recognizing the ethnic differentiation of Peru, considered it as part of the countryside-city conflict.

These dynamics actively prevented any collective identity consolidation processes. In fact, several authors point out that social movement mobilizations tend to both generate and depend on collective identities (Bernstein, 2005; Gamson, 1991; Hunt et al., 1994), so denying Indians' collective identity was a direct threat to their eventual mobilization.

Shining Path's hierarchical structure—always lead by Guzmán and seconded by a select group of academics—kept Indians systematically away from the political decisions. Shining Path's organization was concentrated in a hermetic central committee, always held away from the military struggle, whose task was limited to the planning of the military and political line and left the implementation of its decisions to the militants. Ironically, "the new party's internal organisation replicated the colonial stratification of regional society: a privileged elite of white professionals commanded a mass of brown-skinned youth of humble origin" (Starn, 1992: 405). In this sense, most of Shining Path's leaders, including Abimael Guzmán and the Central Committee, did not speak Quechua, the most relevant indigenous language of the zone, nor they were from Ayacucho (Palmer, 2017: 429).

Even the design of the political education process, directed by professors in the rural zones, evidenced the verticality of the organization and the structural separation between the Shining Path "academy" and its armed wing (CVR, 2003: 19–21). More concretely, during his time as a teacher on the University of San Cristóbal de Huamanga, Guzmán exerted a strong influence in a generation of students, which eventually became rural teachers and proselytized Shining Path's ideology (Palmer, 1986). The latter process was exacerbated by the revisionist paranoia –the disproportionate efforts of eradicating any perceived anti-revolutionary behaviors– sustained by Guzmán, which led to totally patronizing indigenous participation within the organization.

This disdainful attitude toward the indigenous identity can be traced back throughout Peruvian history (authors, 2020). For example, Méndez Gastelumendi (1996), who studied the process under the Peruvian–Bolivian Confederation configuration, states that the creoles' appropriation of a rhetoric glorifying the Incan past existed side by side with a condescending judgment of the Indian. Later, during the 20th century, the government of

the Peruvian Revolution actively promoted the abandonment of the indigenous identity and declared the "social death of Indians" (Thorp et al., 2006). Finally, socialist authors like Mariátegui (1969, 1970) also highlighted the materialist facets of indigenous oppression, thus undervaluing the cultural and identity spheres.

Shining Path went a step further, exacerbating this dynamic and increasing the pressure on indigenous communities. For the insurrectionists, advancing the revolution meant that it was necessary to destroy the already existing social and political institutions and build a new society based on revolutionary organizations and *Comités Populares* (El Diario, 1988, p. vii). Under this radicalized interpretation of Mao's Cultural Revolution, indigenous organizations were conceived as an extension of the "old political order," which reproduced the colonial inequalities and alienated the Peruvian peasantry. Therefore, Shining Path oscillated between considering Indians to be alienated people who were remnants of the feudal-capitalist system and repressing them as counter-revolutionary elements. In either case, the Truth Commission concluded that Shining Path depicted racism and "superiority" over the indigenous population in Peru. Although collective identity emergence is associated with the conditions of socio-cultural change or challenge, in Peru, socioeconomic and political exclusion, political breakdown and renewal, and the radical repression of Indians' identity blocked any kind of mobilization despite the existence of the material conditions to initiate this process.

Wheat identifies this duality in the words of a Shining Path middle leader: "First they will be given political reeducation, and if that fails, they will receive what we get now: dictatorship, prison …death" (Wheat, 1990: 47). Even though there are numerous reports of this kind of behavior toward other groups, it was especially intense toward the

indigenous communities, as Shining Path could quickly take control over large rural areas and implement more reeducation campaigns.

Therefore, Shining Path developed a co-optation–repression strategy that put Indians in the dilemma of either cooperating with the insurrectionist group—and therefore embracing a peasant identity and abandoning any kind of indigenous mobilization—or facing insurgents' extreme repression if they were considered counter-revolutionary elements. As a result, under what Degregori (1988) called a "utopian authoritarianism," Shining Path launched a campaign of attacks and executions against any peasant leader or organization that refused to cooperate with its revolution (Kent, 1993: 451)—for example, Alejandro Huamán, the indigenous leader of Uchuraccay, in 1982 (Perú21, 2013) and 55 Ashaninka peasants in 1993 (El País, 1993). Degregori (1991) exposes how 80 peasants were killed in Lucanamarca in 1983 because of their alleged collaboration with the government.

The latter was "justified" as *Pensamiento Gonzalo* spread the idea that "the blood quota" would be necessary for the triumph of the revolution and warned of the need to prepare for an inevitable "blood bath" (Degregori, 1991). This glorification of violence— including the repression of dissidents and terrorist attacks on the cities—led to massive repression of civilians, who were 98.3% of Shining Path's total casualties (CVR, 2003).

Hence, during this *Manchay Tiempo* (Time of Fear), Indians were increasingly forced to join Shining Path, even though they were peasants and part of an extremely hierarchical organization controlled by a white-mestizo elite. Alternatively, any effort to generate indigenous political mobilization faced intense systematic repression because it was considered part of the traditional oppressor system—or because it was perceived as a direct anti-revolutionary threat. As a result, the mobilization of the rural zones was increasingly developed in nonindigenous terms. In a final example, when the Peruvian government

finally designed a consistent security strategy and the rural population began to organize against Shining Path, these *Rondas Campesinas* —some promoted by the government and some self-organized—tended to refer to themselves as peasants looking for self-protection (Sulmont, 2005: 49).

CONCLUSION

This article examined the negative impact of Shining Path's revolution on indigenous mobilization in Peru. More concretely, the research developed a twofold analysis, simultaneously considering the structural context—through POT—and the cultural processes—through NSMT—prior to and contemporaneous with Shining Path's uprising. Concerning the structural perspective of POT, this analysis showed how Shining Path initially took advantage of a context of isolation and a political vacuum in the rural zones to gain influence and legitimacy in the indigenous communities.

In addition, the hesitation of the national government and its mistrust of the armed forces allowed the expansion and consolidation of the insurrectionist organization. When Shining Path established itself in a new territory, it began a repressive campaign against any kind of alternative political mobilization, which it accused of being counter-revolutionary. Furthermore, the erratic response from the governmental forces—often incapable of distinguishing the guerrilla fighters from others—also resulted in significant repression of the rural population. This context placed the indigenous communities in an extremely negative structural context and jeopardized any possibility of organized mobilization.

From the cultural perspective of NSMT, this article revealed how Shining Path implemented a strategy of co-optation and repression against the indigenous communities. On the one hand, Shining Path exacerbated the tendency of the Peruvian Revolution and socialist authors of discouraging indigenous identity. More concretely, because Shining Path recognized the peasantry as the revolutionary subject of Peru, it approached Peru's indigenous communities to convince them to join and collaborate with the revolutionary

cause. Nonetheless, because Shining Path's ideology was sustained over a materialist theory, this collaboration implied the reeducation and abandonment of the indigenous identity and culture. Any effort of these communities to develop an autonomous political mobilization was perceived as a counter-revolutionary effort and severely repressed.

Through this analysis, this article has highlighted the benefits of examining Shining Path's impact in both structural and cultural terms: taking into account the interplay between agency and structure. More concretely, the insurrectionists benefited from a context of political vacuum and internal political confrontation to take control of rural areas and impose a general repression of the population. But in order to fully understand Shining Path's strategy in the indigenous communities, it is advisable to also consider the cultural dynamics that this organization inherited from the Peruvian Revolution, as well as prominent socialist authors, and radicalized until it crystallized into a co-optation–repression strategy. As a result, the indigenous movements in Peru suffered a severe decrease in ideal political opportunities because of the high levels of repression and increasing pressure to embrace the peasant identity –directly affecting their political agency– and abandon indigenous values. Although one cannot establish a direct causality between the Shining Path irruption –and its effects– and Peru's shortage of organized indigenous groups, all these processes permeated in the resulting inactivation of a unified indigenous movement in Peru nowadays.

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