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Between the liberators and deactivators:
Place, power and protest in Lima's memoryscape

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Abstract

Late 2020 saw a wave of civil disobedience in Peru, with young protestors calling for radical change in public spaces heavily coded with militaristic, colonial, patriarchal imagery. Yet this nothing new in Lima. Despite attempts by the government and tourism industry to cultivate an image of Lima as the historic and gastronomic centre of South America, artists, activists and social movements have regularly used public space as a battleground in which to contest this image through acts of protest, civil disobedience and commemoration of Peru's internal armed conflict (1980-2000). In this article, I examine the historic symbols and narratives embedded within Lima's memoryscape, and how these are contested and undermined by acts of protest. I will then draw on two examples of public commemoration of the internal conflict, demonstrating how competing narratives of political violence are prioritised differently in Lima's public space, while pointing to ways that protest and commemorative acts can reinforce, or undermine, competing narratives of Peruvian nationhood. *Keywords*: Protests, civil disobedience, public spaces, Peru.

Resumen: Entre libertadores y deactivadores: Lugar, poder y protesta en el paisaje de la memoria en Lima

A finales de 2020 se produjo una ola de desobediencia civil en Perú, con jóvenes manifestantes que pedían un cambio radical en los espacios públicos fuertemente codificados con imágenes militaristas, coloniales y patriarcales. Aunque esto no es nuevo en Lima. A pesar de los intentos del gobierno y de la industria turística de cultivar una imagen de Lima como centro histórico y gastronómico de Sudamérica, los artistas, activistas y movimientos sociales han utilizado regularmente el espacio público como campo de batalla para impugnar esta imagen mediante actos de protesta, desobediencia civil y conmemoración del conflicto armado interno de Perú (1980-2000). En este artículo, se examinan los símbolos y las narrativas históricas incorporadas al paisaje de la memoria de Lima, y cómo estas narrativas son impugnadas y socavadas por actos de protesta. A continuación, me baso en dos ejemplos de conmemoración pública del conflicto interno, demostrando cómo las narrativas de la violen-

cia política que compiten entre sí se priorizan de manera diferente en el espacio público de Lima, al tiempo que señalo las formas en que las protestas y los actos conmemorativos pueden reforzar, o socavar, las narrativas de la nación peruana que compiten entre sí. *Palabras clave*: Protestas, desobediencia civil, espacios públicos, Perú.

Introduction

In November 2020, a wave of public demonstrations took place across Peru in protest against the removal of President Martín Vizcarra by Congress. In Lima, many of these demonstrations were based in the Plaza San Martín, and were noted for the high participation of young Peruvians, including some acting as "deactivators" of tear gas bombs thrown by the police. These protests built on the square's previous use as a regular site of protest, and more generally as a "civic meeting ground", in previous decades (Feldman, 2021, p. 10). This use of Plaza San Martín as a popular space, where diverse sectors of society meet and make demands upon the state, appears incongruent with the touristic image of the square (and indeed, much of Lima), which rests predominantly on its colonial architecture and connections to male, Creole, militaristic Liberators and national heroes. [1] The protests could therefore be understood as examples of the "contestation and rearticulation" of public space in which "people are engaged in political acts that invest objects and sites with positive and negative connotations" (Palonen, 2008, p. 220). Yet protests are not the only acts that contribute to this process; forms of commemoration and public disobedience developed to challenge state narratives of violence in the aftermath of Peru's internal armed conflict (1980-2000) also use public space as a battleground to challenge elite narratives of Peruvian nationhood.

The 2003 publication of the final report of the Comisión de la Verdad y Reconciliación (CVR – Truth and Reconciliation Commission) was a pivotal moment in the development of public and scholarly understandings of this conflict. While the report itself contributed crucial new perspectives on the conflict – revealing a death toll more than double previous estimates, with the vast majority of victims coming from indigenous, Quechua speaking regions of Peru – it also provided the basis for a vast array of academic studies, artistic works and commemorative projects, many of which explore the structural inequalities and racism within Peruvian society. However, alongside a slow and often stalling transitional justice process that has failed to produce many of the reparations and forms of accountability for perpetrators recommended by the CVR, the extent to which these projects have been integrated into, or allowed a place within, Lima's public space has been mixed.

In its street names (Milton, 2018, p. 189; Willis, 2018, p. 315), planning and public art (Majluf, 1994, p. 38), Lima in many ways continues to reflect nineteenth-century visions of Peruvian nationhood. Cecilia Mendéz (1996) argues that nineteenth-century Creole nationalism was predominantly defined by "disdain for everything provincial" and a deep oligarchic conservatism. Li-

ma's streets and statues continue to reference many male, Creole, militaristic figures from this period today. But as much as public space reflects these top-down historical narratives, it has also been used to challenge elite power and injustice. As Vich (2015) has highlighted, creative acts of civil disobedience came to be deployed by Lima's growing community of "memory activists" (Willis, 2018, pp. 34-35) in order to challenge government corruption in the 1990s, while in the post-Fujimori era public commemorative acts were aimed at challenging "official" accounts of the internal conflict and exposing the human costs of state violence.

Commemorative projects that depict structural racism and violence, and highlight that the capital's middle and upper classes barely even noticed that thousands of their poorer compatriots were dying, interrupt and challenged the carefully cultivated myths of national, Republican unity in Lima's public space. Similarly, whereas parts of Lima's historic centre and more affluent suburbs have been cleaned up and replanned to attract international tourists, memory works that emphasise the experiences of indigenous and working class communities (and the violence enacted against them) disrupt this order and assert a stake for marginalised communities in the public realm. Lima's public space therefore represents a battleground between competing narratives of the internal conflict and different conceptions of Peruvian nationhood. In this context, the actions of Lima's memory activists support claims that social movements are often not only consumers of cultural heritage, but active participants in reconstituting heritage "from below" (Jones, Mozaffari & Jasper, 2018; Robertson, 2008).

In this article, I will demonstrate that acts of protest, disobedience and commemoration are deeply connected in post-conflict Peru and remain important methods of disrupting the order and logics of *limeño* public space. I will outline the features and structures of what I call Lima's "memoryscape". Building on work by Palonen (2008) and Dwyer and Alderman (2008), I see the memoryscape as the geography of sites where historical narratives are represented and integrated into public space, both by elite and grassroots actors (but predominantly the former), and as an intersection between post-conflict memory, urban planning and the tourism industry. This approach shares similarities with the emerging field of critical heritage studies, in which scholars tend to view cultural heritage as a "performance in which the meaning of the past is continuously negotiated in the context of the needs of the present" (Gentry & Smith, 2019, p. 1149). Within this memoryscape, I will highlight the narratives and projects that are prioritised, well maintained and integrated into public space. Alongside these sites, however, are a range of spaces and acts that seek to disrupt and subvert elite logics of order. I will analyse in detail the history of one such case, the Monumento en Honor a la Verdad para la Reconciliación y la Esperanza (MHVRE), which was constructed in the district of Villa María del Triunfo in southern Lima before later being destroyed. [2] By exploring this case, I will demonstrate that, just like acts of protest and civil

disobedience, commemorative projects, memorials and public artworks can challenge elite narratives of nationhood and citizenship.

Methodology and contribution

This article contributes to the existing literature on memories of violence in Peru and Latin America, the growing transnational literature on sites of memory, and nascent critical heritage studies literature in Latin America (Badilla, Clark & Mason, 2022). Numerous previous studies have examined the production and contestation of memory narratives in Peru's national memory museum (Feldman, 2021; Sastre Díaz, 2015), victim memorials such as the *Ojo que llora* (Eye that cries) (Drinot, 2009; Hite, 2007; Milton, 2011), or other museums and artistic projects which seek to construct a particular history of Peru's internal conflict (Feldman, 2012; Murphy, 2015; Vich, 2015). However, in this article I seek to move beyond understandings of sites of memory that may stop at the museum, monument or exhibition – in a similar manner to how critical heritage scholars have sought to decentre the role of museums and official institutions in understanding the process of heritage construction (Gentry & Smith, 2019). Instead, this article examines how post-conflict memories have become embedded in Lima's streets, squares and parks through forms of protest, civil disobedience and commemorative acts, and explore how these instances conflict with previous attempts to use public space to construct and impose a shared, Creole, collective heritage. In this sense, we can understand *limeño* public space as a "battleground for political control over space and symbols" in which "groupings are differentiated from one another (and differentiate themselves from one another) through evaluations of the national past" (Palonen, 2008, p. 219).

Each site could be considered one of Nora's (1989) *lieux de mémoire*, a wide range of spaces, symbols and cultural artefacts which act as repositories for historical discourses and symbolisms, and in doing so contribute to the construction of "imagined communities" (Anderson, 1983). However, it is also vital to consider, as Legg (2005, p. 500) argues, that such sites are not eternal holders of historical memory, but are constantly reproduced and contested through forms of ritual, cultural practice and performance. Critical heritage scholars have similarly highlighted how such spaces can generate new protests and social movements, opening up further possibilities for contesting power and demanding human rights in the present (Badilla Rajevic, 2020; Mason, 2018). This may encompass iconic sites of protest such as Tahrir Square in Cairo, Place de la Concorde in Paris or Plaza de Mayo in Buenos Aires, but equally will include less notable sites used and passed by people in their everyday lives. While each of these sites can reveal individual examples of how historical narratives and public space intertwine, assessing them collectively, in what I call Lima's "memoryscape" (Willis, 2018, p. 36), can also reveal how particular groups and narratives are privileged, while others are pushed to the

periphery, across the city as a whole. In my conceptualisation of Lima's memoryscape, I consider Palonen's (2008, p. 220) argument that "through the act of naming and replacing political symbols, people are engaged in political acts that invest objects and sites with positive and negative connotations", to be useful for interpreting how shared understandings of Peruvian history and nationhood are produced and contested in urban space. I have also considered how public engagement with sites of memory can be heavily influenced not just by the content or aesthetics of a site, but also by (what might be considered to be) everyday considerations around public transport and accessibility, locale, signage and more (Dwyer & Alderman, 2008).

As well as seeking to broaden our understandings of how public space and public memories interact in contemporary Peru, this article seeks to contribute to the transnational history on space and memories of violence. In Latin America, this literature is deeply influenced by the experience of Southern Cone nations in commemorating the victims of dictatorship after a return to democracy in recent decades (Hite, 2015; Jelin, 2003; Schindel & Colombo, 2014), with sites such as the ex-ESMA in Buenos Aires, or the Estadio Nacional in Santiago, becoming key reference points. As noted above, in Peru scholars have tended to focus more on the political and institutional battles involved in the creation of sites of memory more than on their interaction with the surrounding urban environment. In seeking to explore this relationship further, I engage with the work of Buntinx (2016) on how the "remains" of buildings and public spaces demolished by past acts of violence are treated, and of Gordillo (2014, p. 256) on how some historic "ruins" are preserved as sites of "transcendental importance" (while others are neglected as "rubble"). Other contributions to this literature have explored how post-conflict commemoration has moved out of stuffy museum halls into the streets through acts of protest (Levey, 2016), graffiti (Griffin, 2019) and forms of public art across Latin America; below I seek to demonstrate how similar processes have unfolded in Peru.

The research for this article was primarily conducted during a six-month fieldwork visit to Peru in 2015 and 2016, during which time I visited the MHVRE (accompanied by its creator Jaime Miranda) as well as the Lugar de la memoria, la tolerancia y la inclusión social, Plaza San Martín, Tarata monument and other sites of memory several times each. I also conducted face to face interviews with a wide range of artists, scholars and activists (whom I collectively term "memory activists") who work on post-conflict memories in Peru and who have been involved personally in the construction of these aforementioned projects.

Lima's memoryscape

Before assessing how different groups have subverted Lima's memoryscape, it is important to first sketch out how elite efforts to establish a masculine, militaristic, Creole vision of Peruvian nationhood has shaped public spaces around

the capital. In attempts to establish a shared national heritage in *limeño* public space from above, conservative ideology and efforts to develop Peru's international tourism industry combine. Much of central Lima has been given over to emphasising Peru's European influences and grand colonial architecture, alongside the ubiquitous celebration of Peru's Creole military "Liberators" (which also promotes masculine strongmen as national heroes). Peru's indigenous communities are mostly relegated to being a historic curiosity, with numerous museums and sites exhibiting Peru's Incan and pre-Incan heritage, but little to no attention paid to how indigenous or Afro-Peruvian communities shape Peru to this day. There are spaces within this memoryscape to commemorate the internal conflict and more controversial elements of Peru's recent past, yet these are mostly confined to the periphery, outside of the city's typical touristic circuit.

For international visitors, while Peru's primary attraction remains a tour to Machu Picchu, significant attempts have been made in recent years to build Lima's appeal as a tourist destination. This has predominantly been centred on Lima's *centro histórico* (historic centre), the old colonial city which encompasses Plaza San Martín, the grandiose Plaza de Armas (home to the Presidential palace and cathedral of Lima), and numerous large churches which are recommended in tour guides as main attractions (especially the Basílica y Convento de San Francisco de Lima with its infamous catacombs). As such, Peru's colonial-Catholic influences are presented as fundamental influences on the nation today. Yet this history is also deeply entwined with references to nineteenth-century Republicanism, particularly with military heroes and former Presidents. Street names in the *centro histórico* commonly reference nineteenth-century Presidents (e.g. Av. Nicolás de Piérola), Liberators and heroes of Peru's War of Independence (Plaza Ramón Castilla, Pasaje de José Olaya), and military figures from the War of the Pacific (Av. Alfonso Ugarte, Plaza Grau, and the Paseo de Héroes Navales). This is replicated throughout the capital (and many Peruvian cities) with major avenues and streets often dedicated to the armed forces or figures such as Bolívar, Sucre (another liberator and former president), or Miguel Grau (an admiral during the War of the Pacific who is almost universally renowned in Peru despite being killed and decisively defeated during the Battle of Angamos).

Milton (2018) has argued, highlighting other sites dedicated to Republican generals such as Francisco Bolognesi and Andrés Cáceres, that this demonstrates the continuing soft cultural power held by the Peruvian armed forces in contemporary Peruvian society. This is certainly one element of Lima's memoryscape, yet importantly it is overwhelmingly nineteenth and early twentieth-century military figures who are venerated in street names, plazas and public parks. Majluf (1994, p. 38) connects this to attempts to use sculptures and public art to "create and mould a collective memory and national spatiality" in Lima in the nineteenth century. Lima's public space is not *only* celebrating macho military heroes, but is also mobilising their reputations as part of

broader efforts to construct an imagined nationhood, centred on elite, Creole history, in Lima's memoryscape.

The Plaza San Martín reflects these elite attempts to curate public space. The square itself is of comparable size to the Plaza de Armas and contains a large statue of José de San Martín, liberator and first protector of independent Peru, at its centre. The square was officially inaugurated on the hundredth anniversary of Peruvian Independence in 1921, with the Hotel Bolívar, named after the most famous Creole liberator, opening three years later. Surrounding buildings and arcades were added, in a neo-colonial style, in the decades that followed. By the 1990s, the area had gained a seedier reputation and efforts were made to gentrify areas of the *centro histórico* to make them more attractive to tourists and Lima's middle classes. Feldman (2021, p. 10) says of the Plaza San Martín that "although the surrounding white buildings and plaza itself retain the architectural charm and *criollo* sensibility that have driven efforts to 'clean up' the city centre, the zone also preserves a dingier, less refined heritage". In contrast with the grand image projected by the square's architecture and statue, the Plaza was home to "informal vendors, street performers and petty criminals" (Feldman, 2021, p. 10). In this sense, the top-down construction of a shared cultural heritage in central Lima has been insufficient for maintaining a colonial sense of order and cleanliness. Because of the ways in which Plaza San Martín, and other areas, have been used in the every day, the square retains perceptions of a being a less ordered, more chaotic space in a way that undermines the visions of neo-colonial grandeur that its creators attempted to impose on it.

More importantly, for the purposes of this article, however, is how various groups have used acts of protest and commemoration in central Lima to stake a claim for marginalised groups in the city centre. The demonstrations of November 2020, when thousands gathered to condemn the ousting by Congress of President Martín Vizcarra, were just the latest in a line of recent protests in and around the Plaza San Martín. In 2016, in what has been described as the largest march in Peru's history, hundreds of thousands marched from the Campo de Marte to the Palacio de Justicia via Plaza San Martín alongside the Ni Una Menos feminist movement in protest against femicidal violence in Peru. Earlier that year, Plaza San Martín had been the focal point for #KeikoNoVa protests, opposing the presidential candidature of Keiko Fujimori, as it had been in 2000 when a large anti-*fujimorista* coalition organised the infamous Marcha de los Cuatro Suyos against the corruption and falsification of election results by president Alberto Fujimori.

To an extent, the use of the Plaza San Martín as a site of protest is to be expected. Faleh (2018) and Rosenthal (2000) have highlighted how public squares historically have facilitated acts of protest and contestation around the world and Latin America, respectively. Furthermore, during several of these protests, Peruvian police have encircled the square to prevent groups down to the Plaza de Armas. This suggests that the use of Plaza San Martín as a focal

point for these demonstrations is both an expected function of the square, and one that state forces deem an acceptable trade-off to prevent large demonstrations outside the Presidential palace in the Plaza de Armas. That particular demonstrations have taken place in central Lima, is not, in and of itself, evidence that elite power or nationhood is being challenged. However, in the specific character of these protests, the diversity of groups that participate and the slogans chanted, these demonstrations do articulate a particular rejection of conservative Peruvian nationalism and stake a claim for marginalised groups' equal rights to public space and citizenship. Participants from 2020 noted the "polyclassist" nature of the protests, involving many "middle-class women, from 18-24 years old", students and young people (noted for their role as "de-activators" of tear gas bombs), trade unions and indigenous communities, who marched in anger at the removal of president Vizcarra but also in rejection of inequality and police violence (Chávez, 2021). Feminist groups, including many indigenous women and victims of forced sterilisation (by the Fujimori regime in the 1990s), have organised and participated in many of these demonstrations, leading chants of ¡*Somos las hijas de las campesinas que no pudiste esterilizar!* (We are the daughters of the villagers you could not sterilise!). Of course, primarily these protests have been organised in response to episodes of political corruption and state violence. But, importantly, they have been effective in bringing together a more ethnically and gender diverse coalition of actors together in public space in central Lima to make demands on the state.

These acts of protest and commemoration achieve several things. Firstly, they have contributed to understandings of Plaza San Martín as being a space of grassroots activism, confrontation and criticism of the state, rather than one which simply reflects elite discourse on Peru's history. In this sense, these performative acts could be considered a form of "heritage from below" (Robertson, 2008) that have generated new public connotations for the Plaza San Martín of resistance, diversity and liberation. Secondly, whereas previous forms of planning, gentrification and public heritage have attempted to erase women and indigenous groups from the city centre, these demonstrations give these groups a loud and visible presence in public space. Of course, it should be understood that neither this presence nor the coalitions involved in the demonstrations, are permanent. Therefore, their challenge to patriarchal, Creole images of Peruvian citizenship, while symbolically important, can only be fleeting.

In other times, the *centro histórico* has been used for acts of commemoration and civil disobedience, stirring debate on state violence and corruption in the heart of the capital. The groups involved in this work are probably less diverse and are centred around the scholars, students and artists that make up Lima's community of memory activists. Yet while the protests described above stake a claim for marginalised groups in public space and Peruvian society, these projects instead stake a claim for narratives of political violence and corruption that are critical of the Peruvian state. For instance, Plaza San Martín was used to host a "Meeting for memory" to commemorate the work of the

CVR on the internal conflict (Feldman, 2021, pp. 9-12) and encouraged public reflection on the violence. Towards the end of the Fujimori era, the Colectivo Sociedad Civil chose the Plaza de Armas as the site for acts of civil disobedience (Vich, 2015). This included *Lava la bandera* (Clean the flag, when activists symbolically washed Peruvian flags as a protest against the corruption of the Fujimori regime) and *Pon la basura en la basura* (Put the rubbish in the rubbish, a project which involved throwing bags of rubbish emblazoned with the face of Fujimori at government buildings). Victor Vich argues (interview with author) that these performances represent attempts to "reappropriate public space" from the interests of capital and the Peruvian state. Yet these instances are few and far between, and remain vastly outweighed by the vast array of sites in the *centro histórico* that support visions of Creole, Republican nationalism and citizenship.

Acts of protest and civil disobedience can therefore be seen as engagements in wider battles over the right to the city, and as means of reappropriating public spaces to reflect non-elite reflections on political discourse, historical memory and nationhood. It is in this discursive battleground that a wide range of memorials, exhibits and art works commemorating Peru's internal conflict have fought for recognition, audiences, or usually just a space to continue existing – the difficulties with finding a permanent home for the *Yuyanapaq– Para recordar* (Feldman, 2021, pp. 63-79; Murphy, 2015) photographic exhibit being indicative of these struggles. Memory activists have often struggled to find and afford a place for their works within Lima's highly politicised and atomised municipal geography, and even then sites are open to criticism, public controversy and even defacement. Within this war of representation, an analysis of the memorials, exhibits and artworks that are neatly preserved on prime real estate, versus those that are left out of sight on the periphery, can indicate which actors and historical narratives of the conflict are being prioritised. Of course, while public space largely reflects elite discourses and the interests of capital in attracting international tourists, these sites can also subvert dominant narratives and remake public space from below.

Below, I briefly analyse two such sites that reflect how different approaches to post-conflict memory are shaped by Lima's public space and the battles between different groups for representation. On the one hand, the monument to the bombing of Calle Tarata is a well-maintained memorial that reflects the victimisation of more middle class communities by Sendero Luminoso (at one point in the conflict). Meanwhile, the creation and ultimate demolition of the MHVRE highlights how projects that represent the perspectives of indigenous and working class communities, are critical of the state, or call attention to the structural racism and violence which perpetuates in Peruvian society, are targeted and excluded in battles over Lima's public space.

Memorial on the *calle* Tarata

On 16 July 1992, Sendero Luminoso detonated a car bomb on the *calle Tarata* in Lima's affluent Miraflores district. The blast killed 25 people, wounded 155, and caused approximately $3 million in damage to local buildings, banks and hotels (CVR, 2003, VII, pp. 663-667). In the immediate aftermath of the bombing, there was extensive coordination between residents, the police, local hospitals, and planners to assist the wounded, distribute supplies and aid the reconstruction. Days later, a "march for peace" was organised by the local municipality in memory of the victims. For certain sectors of *limeño* society, "who until then had been distant to the subversive violence in the Andes and jungle", the bombing represented a pivotal moment at which Sendero Luminoso had decisively "entered Lima" (CVR, 2003, VII, p. 667). Of course, Sendero Luminoso had already perpetrated numerous assassinations, robberies and acts of sabotage across Lima, but much of this violence had been limited to neighbourhoods in the working class periphery. By this time focusing on Miraflores, ostensibly to target the district's financial institutions, Sendero Luminoso had shaken understandings of which spaces could be effected by violence, subverting the imagined geography that located violence in the city's outer districts.

Image 1. The Tarata moument.

A small, well-preserved monument and an annual ceremony of remembrance organised by the municipality commemorate the bombing. The monument consists of a large stone, carved to represent the shape of a damaged building, which stands in the middle of a fountain on Calle Tarata. Wooden footpaths lead across the fountain, allowing visitors to read the inscriptions on either side: "In memory of the victims of the terrorist attack of 16 July 1992" "Solidarity promenade: a solidary and united Peru was born here. Miraflores, 16 July, 1994". The monument is open and free to access, and no guide is pre-

sent (or indeed necessary) to interpret the monument. However, the site is more or less unpublicised in Miraflores and near invisible to tourists. It is not sign-posted, appears on none of the many walking tours of the district, nor on a number of maps produced to highlight local hotspots. Around the monument, the street itself has been reconstructed and is, like many in Miraflores, full of restaurants, cafes and hotels, as well as local amenities such as internet cafes and pharmacies. Following Dwyer and Alderman's (2008) argument that the "spatial context" (including neighbourhood and surrounding commercial activities) is vital for reading memorial landscapes as text, we can also deduce that the surrounding environment of the monument is not designed to support the memory practice of the monument but to make use of expensive Miraflores real-estate and develop business opportunities. These businesses represent the municipality of Miraflores as it wants to be seen; as a district open to entrepreneurs, foreign capital and tourists alike, and not as a site of past political violence. Montalbetti (2013, p. 252) argues that the reconstruction of Tarata almost suggests that "nothing happened here" and represents a, perhaps subconscious, desire to move on from the trauma.

The bombing is also commemorated by an annual ceremony. Saona (2014) asserts that, whilst the street has recovered from the physical damage that was inflicted upon it, the commemoration ceremonies aim to "present the centrality of the district, not only in memorialising the victims, but in asserting its role in the nation". This correlates with both the inscription on the monument, that a "solidary and united Peru was born here", and the CVR's suggestion that, for Miraflores, the bombing felt like the first real experience of violence during the conflict. This is further demonstrated by the rapid response to relief efforts by the local community and municipality, and the participation in the *Marcha por la Paz* during which Peruvian flags were flown from the damaged buildings. Such a response not only went far beyond the level of reaction generated by assassinations or massacres against indigenous communities in Peru's interior, but also gave the impression that, by attacking affluent communities who did not expect to be victims of violence, some kind of Rubicon had been decisively crossed. In this sense, both the Tarata monument and the annual ceremony highlight the victimisation by Sendero Luminoso of Lima's more middle-class communities, elevating that experience to a central role in Peru's post-conflict memory in a way that diminishes and downplays the widespread violence suffered by other communities throughout the preceding twelve years of the conflict. In this sense, the Tarata monument could be considered the "materialisation" (Viejo-Rose, 2015) of memory narratives on the internal conflict most closely associated with middle and upper-class sectors of Peruvian society based in Lima.

Commemorating the conflict from the perspective of Tarata, however, necessarily diminishes the disproportionate violence that indigenous and working-class Peruvians suffered during the conflict, from both Sendero Luminoso and the Peruvian state. In depicting a "solidary and united Peru", the monument

imposes a singular vision of Peruvian nationhood, in which its whiter, middle-class communities are central, rather than depicting the deep structural divisions and inequalities that precipitated the conflict (and which continue to this day). In this sense, the Tarata monument sits comfortably alongside the singular vision of Creole, Republican nationhood depicted throughout public space in Lima's historic centre. These two impulses, to avoid interrogating the mass violence in the Peruvian interior during the conflict and to hark back to cosier myths of unified nationhood, are both central to forms of collective social memory that push indigenous communities to the margins of Peruvian society. The remaking of public space, erection of monuments and organising of ceremonies are crucial for the maintenance of this discourse; as Legg (2005) argues, "social memory is maintained through objects and performances... [which] are not static but manipulated and updated with changing regimes".

In short, the Tarata monument represents a form of heritage that prioritises the experiences of particular groups over others. That the site exists and is preserved in Miraflores demonstrated the ability of local residents and victims of the bombing to access resources and assert their own claim to public space. In this sense, the monument complements other forms of public art and commemoration that project historical narratives of whiter, middle-class communities onto the nation as a whole, while pushing the experiences of working-class and indigenous communities to the periphery.

Monumento en Honor a la Verdad para la Reconciliación y la Esperanza

In contrast to the Tarata monument, the Monumento en Honor a la Verdad para la Reconciliación y la Esperanza (MHVRE – Image 2) demonstrates how projects that focus on the experiences of marginalised groups, and give them a commemorative space in the city, have been treated. The MHVRE was designed by the sculptor Jaime Miranda as part of a public competition, coordinated by the Comité cívico Para que no se repita – Lima sur (a local human rights committee) to develop a monument to commemorate communities displaced form the Andean interior to Lima by the internal conflict. Inaugurated in 2007, its design featured an uprooted tree (representing uprooted families and communities) held several metres above the ground by a steel frame in the middle of the Óvalo Nueva Esperanza (a roundabout where three of Lima's poorest districts, Villa María del Triunfo, Villa El Salvador and San Juan de Miraflores, meet). At the base of the structure was an octagon carved with the departments, towns and villages where locals had migrated from (now the sole surviving piece of the monument). The winning design was selected by a panel featuring the mayors of the three conjoining districts, including Washington Ipenza who was mayor of Villa María del Triunfo at the time (Buntinx, 2010a).

As on the Calle Tarata, numerous public ceremonies were held at the monument between 2007 and the monument's destruction in 2010. Prior to the inauguration, Miranda also held fundraising events for the sculpture that saw

participation from the local population, community organisers and representatives of the Church. These events suggest that the local population felt at least some connection to the monument and were willing to engage in the memory practice that it represented – indeed Buntinx (2016) describes the MHVRE as a "community initiative". Furthermore, the monument did not represent a single instance of historical violence but the shared experiences on which the community was founded. For this reason, although the MHVRE is deeply tied to the violent upheaval associated with Peru's internal conflict, it was also designed to act as a focal point for the district, both representing the foundational narrative of the community and acting as an arena where the social memory of the community can be performed and reconstituted through annual ceremonies.

Image 2. The MHVRE during a public event in 2007.

Source: http://jaimemiranda.com/works/monumento-en-honor-a-la-verdad-para-la-
reconciliacion-y-la-esperanza

The circumstances regarding the monument's destruction are still rather unclear, but according to eyewitnesses who spoke with Miranda and Buntinx afterwards, contractors destroyed the monument in the night under the orders of the municipal government (Buntinx, 2010b). The newspaper *La República* (2010) reported on the demolition, quoting a local activist who said that this went against an agreement made with the previous mayor of Villa María del Tríunfo in 2007, and a response from the municipality saying that the demolition was necessary for works to nearby roads to be completed – which seems questionable given that the roundabout and plaques at the base of the structure remain. Indeed, Miranda and Buntinx (2010b) rejected this explanation arguing that "what we are seeing is how we are continuously losing fights for remembrance". Elsewhere, Buntinx (2010a) criticised the hypocrisy of the mayor Manolo Castillo (Ipenza's successor who at the time represented the conserva-

tive Unidad Nacional party), who had previously defended the monument in public, and said that the demolition went directly against the wishes of the local community.

Quijano (2013) has also criticised the destruction of the MHVRE and linked it to wider battles for memory in Lima's public space, stating that: "The official attack… is part of the long number of disagreements and conflicts about the place of the political sphere in local public space". Indeed, for those familiar with post-conflict memory in Peru, the incident is reminiscent of the 2007 attack on the *Ojo que llora* monument in the Jesús María district of Lima. Several intruders beat and tied up a municipal policeman guarding the site in the Campo de Marte, threw paint over the monument and attacked it with sledgehammers. The orange colour of the paint indicated a link to supporters of Alberto Fujimori who, only two days earlier, was extradited from Chile to Peru to face trial for human rights abuses. Moreover, as Drinot (2009, p. 16) highlights, the "attack on the monument was expressive of a desire to silence, indeed destroy, debate" on which groups were considered victims and/or perpetrators of the conflict – the attack was motivated by the discovery that several *Senderista* militants were commemorated in the *Ojo que llora*.

In post-CVR Peru, the attack on the *Ojo que llora* is best understood as an attempt to silence the criticism of Fujimori's government and the Peruvian armed forces in the CVR's final report, and to assert as strongly as possible that Sendero Luminoso were the primary perpetrators of the conflict. *Fujimorista* politicians and supporters have regularly advocated for amnesties and pardons for state actors accused of human rights abuses, including Fujimori himself, and have often led public outrage against memory projects deemed too sympathetic to Sendero Luminoso, e.g. a mausoleum created for *Senderista* militants, and an exhibition of *Senderista* artwork (Willis, 2020) and exhibitions in Peru's national memory museum (Milton, 2018, pp. 182-185). In each case, *Fujimorista* politicians and their parties clamoured to have such sites closed down, on the grounds that they represented "terrorist apologism" or were unduly critical of the Peruvian armed forces. As Theidon (2012, pp. 323-325) argues, accusations of apologism have regularly been used to "delegitimise opposition and civil society groups" who are critical of the state, and leave "scant political or discursive space" to examine the structural inequalities that precipitated the conflict.

Yet it would be incorrect to suggest that such narratives are confined to supporters of *Fujimorismo*. Indeed, Ollanta Humala – an ostensibly centre-left president (albeit one with a military background who maintained Peru's neoliberal status quo in office) – instituted a law against "apologism" and historical "negationism". Similarly, amnesties for state agents accused of human rights abuses were proposed by president Alan García in office, and politicians across the centre and right of Peru's political spectrum, as well as the armed forces, have regularly criticised human rights narratives of the conflict perceived to be too critical of state agents and too sympathetic to Sendero. In part,

this can be explained by the "soft power" (Milton, 2018) mobilised by the Peruvian armed forces, including to influence the content of Peru's national museum on the internal conflict. But it is also connected to a "retrospective demonisation" (Greene, 2016) of Sendero Luminoso which is mobilised to close down debate and delegitimise groups that "poverty and social exclusion" (CVR, 2003, VII, p. 315) experienced by rural and indigenous communities as an explanatory factor for violence.

In the case of the MHVRE, no *Senderistas* were commemorated by the monument as in the case of the *Ojo que llora*, but it was a monument dedicated to the structural inequalities and racism of Peruvian society, that commemorated the violence enacted on marginalised communities during the conflict. While the monument was not directly accused of representing terrorist apologism, it did reflect a CVR-based, human rights narrative of the conflict in recognising displaced rural and indigenous communities as victims. At the very least, the demolition was conducted without a prior conversation with Miranda or the Comité cívico, which demonstrates a complete disregard for the acknowledgement of displaced communities within public space. But, as León (2015) argues, the destruction of the MHVRE can be seen as an attempt to silence the population of Villa María del Triunfo, pointing to the silence of "those who can no longer speak". Although the removal of the monument does not represent a formal prohibition on commemoration, it is successful in removing visible reminders of structural violence from Lima's landscape and limiting the spaces in which commemoration can occur. In this sense, the removal of the MHVRE is comparable with the attacks on the *Ojo que llora*, in the sense that both were intended to "silence, indeed destroy, debate" (Drinot, 2009, p. 16). In contrast with the Tarata monument, which remains preserved and open to the public, the MHVRE is almost completely erased, its ability to act as an arena for the performative social memories of the local population has also been precluded. The demolition, therefore, diminishes the right of migrant communities to public space and to create their own narratives of the internal conflict. This demonstrates the ways that battles and control over public space can be used to reinforce or challenge narratives on violence, and by extension on the structures and hierarchies of Peruvian society.

Conclusion

Lima's public space, therefore, remains a vital battleground for the contestation of conservative notions of nationhood and state accounts of violence, but one in which forces who are opposed to allowing marginalised groups an increasing stake in public space retain tight control. The sites highlighted above all exist within a wider landscape that heavily references Peru's Wars for Independence and the early Republican era in the nineteehth century. This landscape has been generated both through past impulses for nation building, including the dedication of street names, construction of *plazas* and erection of

public artworks in previous decades. But it is not only municipal planners and elite administrators who can repurpose and redefine public space. Ceremonial acts and performances by communities can be used either to update social memory (Legg, 2005) or to resist and disrupt elite myths of nationhood. Within Lima's memoryscape we can see numerous attempts by marginalised groups and memory activists to use public space as a means of challenging historical narratives of violence and nationhood. Mass protests against political corruption, conservative *fujimorista* politicians and *machista* violence all make statements against the prevailing social order. The use of important symbolic sites for such demonstrations, such as the Plaza San Martín or Plaza de Armas, are not just a means of "reappropriating public space" (Vich, interview with author) but of appropriating the nation for more progressive ends. However, whereas acts of protest and civil disobedience provide important symbolic challenges to the Peruvian state, they remain fleeting.

Similarly, grassroots and guerrilla acts of post-conflict commemoration seek to traumatic memories public spaces to challenge the structural racism and inequalities that precipitated the conflict. They introduce new historical narratives into Lima's streets that undermine the idea of a singular, solidary, united nation and stake a claim for marginalised communities and victims of violence to remake the city. Yet attempts to develop permanent spaces for reflection on the structural inequalities of Peruvian society and violence of the internal conflict, such as the construction of the MHVRE or *Ojo que llora*, have regularly been attacked, in a similar way to how public protests are broken up and suppressed by police. That being said, while there are clear limitations on the ability of these protests and acts of commemoration to effect lasting social change in the short term, they remain symbolically important. The cases highlighted here show that it is possible for activists, artists and marginalised groups to give new meaning to Lima's public space and to stake a claim for public space from below. In doing so, they not only challenge orthodoxies on who has the right to the city; they are redefining ideas of what constitutes modern Peru itself.

* * *

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Notes

1 The "liberators" is a collective term used to describe the Creole military leaders, Simon Bolívar most prominent among them, who led South America's Wars of Independence against the Spanish Empire.

2 The MHVRE's similar history to that of the *Ojo que llora*, insofar as both have been attacked and damaged after their construction, means that a detailed discussion of both in this chapter is unwarranted, and so I have opted instead to focus primarily on the MHVRE as the history of this monument is comparatively unknown in the historiography of the conflict. For more on the *Ojo que llora* see Drinot (2009), Hite (2007) and Milton (2011).

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