

THE POWER OF EMOTIONS IN THE NATIONAL STRIKE 2023: A STUDY OF RESISTANCE IN GUATEMALA CITY

By Diana María Roca Molina

Submitted to
Central European University
Department of Gender Studies

*In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Erasmus Mundus Master's Degree in
Women's and Gender Studies (GEMMA)*

Main Supervisor: Elissa Helms (Central European University)
Second Supervisor: Ángela Harris Sánchez (University of Granada)

Vienna, Austria

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Approval signed by the main Supervisor

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of original research; it contains no materials accepted for any other degree in any other institution and no materials previously written and/or published by another person, except where appropriate acknowledgment is made in the form of bibliographical reference.

I further declare that the following word count for this thesis are accurate:

Body of thesis: 31,984 words

Entire manuscript: 34,805 words

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Diana Roca Molina', written in a cursive style.

Signed: Diana María Roca Molina

A mi mamá y mi papá, porque este corazón es cosecha de su amor y ternura.

A mi abuela, mi raíz que me ha sostenido, acompañado y que me sienten desde la distancia.

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Abstract

This thesis examines the role of emotions in sustaining the 2023 National Strike in Guatemala, initiated by indigenous authorities to counteract legal pressures against president-elect Bernardo Arévalo. The strike, lasting 105 days, united diverse sectors, including urban and rural civil society, and emphasized the centrality of indigenous peoples in national politics. Through interviews conducted post-strike, the research explores how emotions such as fear, anger, hope, and solidarity influenced the organization and maintenance of the strike. Utilizing James M. Jasper's (2018) typology of emotions in social movements, the study highlights the visibility and invisibility of these emotions and their implications for democratic engagement. The findings underscore the need to incorporate a gender perspective, recognizing emotions and bodily experiences as crucial for reimagining alternatives and different futures, as advocated by queer-feminist and community feminist theories. This research contributes to a broader understanding of the emotional dynamics in social movements, emphasizing care and the body as pivotal elements in fostering inclusive and resilient democratic practices.

Esta tesis examina el papel de las emociones en el sostenimiento del Paro Nacional 2023 en Guatemala, iniciado por las autoridades indígenas para contrarrestar las presiones legales contra el presidente electo Bernardo Arévalo. La huelga, que duró 105 días, unió a diversos sectores, incluida la sociedad civil urbana y rural, y puso de revelo la centralidad de los pueblos indígenas en la política nacional. A través de entrevistas realizadas después de la huelga, la investigación explora cómo emociones como el miedo, la ira, la esperanza y la solidaridad influyeron en la organización y el mantenimiento de la huelga. Utilizando la tipología de James M. Jasper (2018) de las emociones en los movimientos sociales, el estudio destaca la visibilidad e invisibilidad de estas emociones y sus implicaciones para el compromiso

democrático. Los hallazgos subrayan la necesidad de incorporar una perspectiva de género, reconociendo las emociones y las experiencias corporales como cruciales para re-imaginar alternativas y futuros diferentes, como defienden las teorías queer-feministas y feministas comunitarias. Esta investigación contribuye a una comprensión más amplia de la dinámica emocional en los movimientos sociales, haciendo hincapié en el cuidado y el cuerpo como elementos fundamentales para fomentar prácticas democráticas inclusivas y resistentes.

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Introduction

On October 2, 2023, indigenous authorities in Guatemala initiated an indefinite national strike. Blockades were set up at various points across the country to counter legal pressure against the president-elect, Bernardo Arévalo, and his party, who were set to take power in January 2024. In Guatemala City, dozens of indigenous authorities from different communities set up an encampment in front of the Public Prosecutor's Office (MP). During the first three weeks of the national strike, the main blockades reached over 140 points nationwide, the strike lasted 105 days, when I mention strike, I am referring to the resistance in front of the MP. Students, university professors, healthcare workers, public school teachers, market vendors, and various groups from urban and rural civil society joined indigenous authorities at the barricades. The indigenous authorities declared that the protests would continue until the resignation of Attorney General Consuelo Porras and Special Prosecutor Rafael Curruchiche, the main actors manipulating and attempting various coups to prevent Bernardo Arévalo from assuming power. This national strike emerged after months of increasing criminalization, legal tactics, and institutional intimidation to suppress dissent in Guatemala's elections. This occurred in the context of over seven years of democratic regression, leading to increased persecution, criminalization, and harassment of judges, prosecutors, journalists, and anti-corruption activists, resulting in forced or voluntary exile for many.

With a total of 105 days, the indefinite national strike, particularly the encampment in front of the MP, ended when Bernardo Arévalo took power in the early hours of January 15, 2024. This strike was historic, marking a significant moment in Guatemala's history owing to its diversity, scale, duration, and plurinational essence. It was the longest and uniqueness strike called by indigenous authorities that lasted 105 days and united historically antagonistic sectors, positioning indigenous peoples as central actors in the national political scene. This national strike succeeded in uniting the 22 Mayan peoples and forging alliances with the urban Ladino/Mestizo sectors and even the highest economic elites.

Witnessing this national strike from a distance and observing its unfolding sparked my interest in writing about the emotions I experienced during that time. Given the large-scale nature of the strike, seeing the reactions of my friends, family, and

others on social media stirred my curiosity to look into emotions experienced by people. As emotions vary by context and time, I conducted a series of interviews after January 15, following the end of the national strike. These interviews aimed to understand how emotions influenced the organization and sustenance of the national strike. Emotions, as physical and mental processes that manifest abruptly and briefly, play a crucial role in social movements (Marina, 2005). To better understand emotions within social movements, the visibility and invisibility of these emotions, and the need to imagine other features, I analyzed emotions based on the typology provided by Jasper (2018). This study attempts to recognize emotions as public elements to raise awareness about domination, exclusion, and marginalization. Emphasizing the need to focus on emotions and experiences that pass through the body as important elements to reimagine futures as queer-feminist theories of democracy and also community feminists suggest.

Chapter 1: Methodology in Motion

This chapter describes the methodology used in this research and its evolution throughout the research process. I start by discussing my position as a researcher in personal, academic, political, geographical, and social terms, providing context for the decisions and changes made in this research. My position also helps me understand the discussions surrounding identity in Guatemala and how this can be observed in the research results, thus allowing me to know the importance of this research.

Escribo desde mis raíces¹

Beginning with the fact that I am a middle-class mestiza Guatemalan, a student of the Erasmus Mundus Master's program in Women's and Gender Studies (GEMMA), and a migrant already places me in a position of privilege, taking into account that it is estimated that in 2023, 55.1% of the population lives in poverty and that only 5% of the population will go to university and less than 1% will go to a master's program, all of this data in relation to the Guatemalan population. Identifying myself as a mestiza in the context of Guatemala is because I find in this category an opportunity to recognize my family's history, acknowledging the inequalities and colonial history of the country, and as a stance in a decolonial, anti-racist, anti-capitalist, and anti-patriarchal process.

Considering that identities play an important role in this research, and the terms ladina, mestiza and the indigenous communities (recognizing their diversity) are mentioned several times in the results, it's necessary understand this identity discussion, it is essential to start by indicating that the term ladina has colonial roots in the Central American region (Solis Miranda & Milán Lemus, 2021). Isabel Rodas (2006), who has focused on researching the topic of identities and their constructions, mentions that these terms were introduced in Latin America as descriptors of colonial societies from the 16th century to classify social groups based on their origins. Later, in Guatemala, the concept of ladina was used to construct spaces of citizen privileges restricted by the country's economic structure (ibid.: p.2).

¹"I write from my roots"

This term evolved differently in Guatemala than in other Latin American states, Rodas (2006) emphasized that this concept was "re-functionalized" by the work of cultural anthropology and became a descriptive category of the social. This resulted in Guatemala's identity being defined based on cultural traits such as ancestry and language use. This differs from other Latin American countries such as Mexico, where there is no idea of ladino, since the ideal of mestizo identity constructed in the 19th century consisted of fusing the indigenous and Spanish elements of the population to form a single race and national culture, the mestizo, which was proposed as a synonym for "Mexican". This notion was long cherished by the liberal elites of the nineteenth century and became one of the central public policies of the post-revolutionary state in twentieth century Mexico, to create this national identity (Gall, 2021).

In Guatemala, social, political, and development actors have instrumentalized these concepts over the years, merely reproducing the ideological functions assigned to them in the 19th-century National State (2006). Solís and Milán (2021) indicate that with demographic changes and a mixture of ethnic groups, the term ladino came to designate various mestizo populations. As mentioned earlier, these categories were developed so that people could identify themselves and their community and recognize the other. However, they were also designed to establish a standard and colonial aspiration, such as the category criollo (creole) which aspires to whiteness and economic privilege, pillars of their power. For some authors and the people interviewed, the mestizo category is a counterposition to the ladino category. The Ladinization project left aside indigenous recognition and promoted population homogenization as a project on the part of the state to create a single national identity. In summary, "ladino" in Guatemala historically aimed to deny mestizaje and the country's historical processes, while "mestizo" acknowledges and embraces this mixed heritage. This distinction is crucial for understanding the complex identity dynamics at play in Guatemalan society and their implications in the context of this research.

The new discussions for new mestizo identities, like Miranda and Milán (2021), recognizing that we are also the other. While in different parts of Latin America, it is more common to hear that we are all mestizos, in Guatemala it is a political challenge

to revise the changes in the meaning of the term *mestizo*, as it implies questioning the social structures that have been constructed around the term (Solis Miranda & Milán Lemus, 2021). González (2004) argued that categorizing people by race perpetuates the devaluation of non-white and uneducated individuals, dehistoricizes societies, and diminishes the historical presence and actions of minority groups. This mentality reinforces the inferiority of certain social groups.

Rodas (2006) highlights the lack of research in Guatemala on how these classificatory categories shape collective identity and how social actors internalize and externalize them. This creates a research gap on how state institutions spread this terminology across the country. For indigenous identities, it is crucial to respect self-identification, officially recognized in Guatemala since the 1996 Peace Accords as Mayan (22 ethnolinguistic groups), Xinka, and Garifuna.

As a *mestiza* from the middle class, I grew up in an environment rich with social interactions and have been involved in social and political collectives since adolescence, focusing on organized youth and political activism. During the 2023 National Strike, I was studying abroad in Granada, Spain, and followed the events through social media, friends, and acquaintances.

I have access to private education in Guatemala, a privilege shared by less than 1% of the population, according to the 2018 census. Currently, I am conducting this research in Europe. The conditions under which I left Guatemala were far from optimal. The government of Giammattei (2020-2024) was violent and criminalizing in many ways, leading to the persecution and criminalization of many of my friends involved in activist collectives. Many were forced into exile for security reasons, and others out of exhaustion, and lack of hope. I also sought an opportunity to leave the country out of fear and exhaustion. Winning a scholarship to study abroad was a relief, knowing I would not have to vote in the 2023 elections, where there was widespread speculation that Zury Ríos, the daughter of a dictator responsible for genocide, might win.

Migrating to the global North and studying in a different language is a significant part of my context as a researcher. Like most of my life in the past two years of graduate school, this thesis is an exercise of translation. I acknowledge that there are

meanings that need to be clarified in this translation. Throughout this thesis, some words remain in Spanish because I refuse and resist colonial translation practices (M. Lugones, 2010, p. 750) that pretend that theories and words can be carried from one language to another without losing meaning. I use Spanish words when I consider that their definition is significant and translating them into English would result in losing what the interviewees wanted to convey. The following concepts were also discussed in English, since this is a thesis written in English and recognizing that, for the most part, to generate knowledge that is valid in the academy, it must be in this language. As a researcher and activist, witnessing this National Strike from a distance and being able to observe how it was happening awakened my interest in writing about the emotions that were happening at that moment.

My main interest in this research is to show the importance of understanding emotions within social movements and how the “politics of in_visibility are at the core of gendered political power structures, modulated by affect and emotions”, as recommended by Sauer (2023, p. 829). Therefore, I seek to recognize emotions are necessary elements for social organization in Guatemala, to better understand how they are organized and in the same way to be able to imagine new futures. This study articulates a contextualized amalgamation of methodologies: interviews, affective research, and situated knowledge. By employing this diverse methodological approach, emotional dynamics were explored as sociocultural constructs, focusing on analyzing who (the subject) is feeling what emotions, towards whom (directionality), and how these emotions interact, acknowledging that individuals often experience multiple emotions simultaneously.

The study combines the sociology of emotions and social movements, emphasizing the social and cultural construction of emotions. Despite the theory created by Jasper its origins in Anglo-Saxon contexts, the analysis of emotions in various Latin American movements has provided valuable insights into collective action dynamics in the region. Emotions are wielded as political tools by individuals driving these movements, fostering empathy and solidarity with their causes.

This research focuses on emotions within activism, particularly with a gender lens, to understand the evolving emotional culture among a new generation of activists challenging traditional gender norms. The motivation behind this study stems from the

need to document and analyze social movements in Guatemala, where there is a lack of research on the emotional aspects, one of the motivations of this thesis is to document the dignity of this resistance, its strategies, organization, and sustainability, to make visible the struggles of populations and individuals who have historically been marginalized, stigmatized, or in(visible). Academically, the National Strike is very recent and there are few studies on the subject, this research seeks to put on the table, emotions as an important factor to investigate and deepen in the future. In the same way, I consider that a country like Guatemala where plurinationality is not recognized by the constitution as it is in Ecuador and Bolivia, but in practice Guatemala is a de facto plurinational society, although deeply divided by racist structures that exclude indigenous peoples, can provide many lights and perspectives to this theory.

As Sauer indicates, “emotions and affect are means of boundary drawing and hierarchization along the lines of gender, class, and ethnicity” which leads to the exclusion of people who exhibit emotionality from the political arena, namely women, non-heteronormative, racialized or classed people (2023, p. 821). This divide of politics and emotions is thus “a mechanism of political domination that limits political spaces of action, building the androcentric, heteronormative, classist, and racist foundation of liberal democracy” (Sauer, 2023, p. 821). Recognizing the significance of emotions in political contexts is crucial for fostering more equitable and inclusive spaces. A worldview centered on human beings and their bodies, embedded within a natural and social environment, as exemplified by the concepts of Buen Vivir (Gregor Barié, 2014) in Ecuador and Bolivia, underscores the importance of self-reflection on actions, emotions, and ideas in activism. Given the historical significance of such moments, it is essential to understand the role of emotions in social movements and their potential to drive societal transformation and envision alternative futures, as confirmed by Sauer (2023).

Crafting the Study: Methodology, Design, and Conversations with Friends

This research resulted from a dialogue among many people, especially the eight individuals I interviewed. I planned to focus this research on the first 18 days of the strike in Guatemala City. However, upon starting the interviews, I observed that

people found it challenging to focus specifically on the initial days and instead spoke about the entire experience of the National Strike (105 days). Therefore, the focus was changed to interviewing Guatemala City activists at the National Strike, by activists I mean people who have been actively participating in the national strike in Guatemala City.

The eight interviewees ranged between 20-35 years old. Seven identified as mestizo/ladino and only one identified as indigenous. All individuals were from the working middle class and had access to a higher education. It is also relevant to mention that several interviewees have been persecuted and criminalized by the Government of Alejandro Giammattei, and all have Guatemalan friends outside the country due to forced or voluntary exile. This is of utmost importance to understand the context and position from which these individuals speak, and from which I speak, which is a context equal to that of the people interviewed, considering that I am part of those people who are outside the country.

As mentioned earlier, this research resulted from many voices and conversations. An essential factor is that all interviewees are people with whom, as a researcher, I have overlapped with in spaces of political and social organization, and in some cases, we have ties of friendship. Initially, the objective was to interview two groups: those active in civil society for some time and those who typically do not engage in such social movements but are prompted to participate in the National Strike.

I decided only to interview people I knew and who had shared spaces. This was done for several reasons, particularly when considering online interviews. As a researcher, conducting interviews with people I did not know online would be an extractive practice. In their article, María Lugones and Elizabeth Spelman (1983) emphasize the importance of dialogue among ourselves; the author speaks in the plural to refer to each other as researchers, friends, and activists, to engage in genuine and reciprocal dialogue. We need to understand each other's worlds and comprehend them without causing harm, denying, or silencing our own experiences or, worse yet, those of others. To achieve this, they proposed a feminist theory and methodology based on friendship, contrasting this solidarity with the domains and mechanisms of cultural imperialism. The two authors mention that "the only meaningful reason for us

to accompany each other in this research is friendship. We see friendship as the only sensible motivation for undertaking extraordinarily challenging tasks. A non-imperialist feminism requires you to follow us into our world.” (1983, p. 576). In this thesis, I decided to interview known individuals with whom follow-up, care, and not just the colonial way of extracting information could be carried out. The voices that join mine in this thesis are those of eight people based in Guatemala City. They were part of the National Strike, in different ways. I thank them for making this thesis possible. As mentioned earlier, this research was the result of many conversations. I consider it essential to mention it again to acknowledge that it is a collective effort and to name these "we" that were part of vital conversations for the construction of this research. I share Lugones and Spelman's intention: "I don't want to speak for you but with you" (1983, p. 573).

I conducted semi-structured interviews. For this, I developed a guide with different questions, aiming for the interviewees to "generate descriptions in their own words" (Roulston, 2018). To understand the interviewees' descriptions of the emotions provoked by the National Strike. I obtained verbal consent from the participants and obtained permission to record the interviews. As Weiss suggested, I communicated the interview expectations (1994, p. 66) and offered the opportunity to discuss future findings, ask questions during the research, and withdraw consent.

For Jasper, (2018) the most effective approach to gain insight into the thoughts and emotions of participants is through direct engagement and familiarity with the context in which the research is being conducted. To this end, it is advisable to employ open-ended interviews. The author mentions that to carry out this type of study, "we can use any of the same techniques to study anything else. Students of emotion have used every known research method and invented some new ones" (Jasper, 2018, p. 197).

Jasper suggests that semi-structured interviews aim to strike a balance between the comprehensiveness of open-ended interviews and the representativeness of surveys. Researchers can use these interviews to selectively probe specific individuals, revealing hidden emotions and factional tensions beneath official pronouncements. However, similar to surveys, "the more structured the interview, the less likely it is to yield novel insights for the researcher" (Jasper, 2018,

p. 206). The choice of semi-structured interview was based on multiple vital aspects. First, this modality offers invaluable flexibility to explore in a broad and detailed manner the experiences, perceptions, and emotions of participants in the Guatemala 2023 National Strike. In this sense Semi-structured interviews are a valuable method for researchers as they allow for real-time emotional cues pickup such as body language and tone of voice. They also enable researchers to probe into unexpected areas of emotional significance by tailoring questions based on the participant's responses. The flexibility of this method fosters rapport between interviewer and participant, creating a comfortable environment for sharing personal and sensitive emotions. This allows us to explore these aspects more deeply and better understand how emotions influence participation and mobilization and how they interconnect with individual gender experiences (Gravante & Poma, 2024). Thus, the interviews provided a wealth of data and perspectives for further analysis.

Although the participants were known to me during the interviews, their identities were kept confidential for security reasons. The situation in Guatemala, while seemingly more hopeful now, can change rapidly, and we must not compromise on the safety of the individuals involved. Additionally, CEU was founded and funded by George Soros, and there is a neoconservative discourse by powerful elites in Guatemala against programs financed by Soros. Furthermore, some interviewees were subjected to criminalization and political persecution by the Government of Giammattei, necessitating the protection of their identities in this investigation.

Owing to time, budget, and space constraints, these interviews were conducted online. All interviews were conducted between January and March 2024. An important point to consider is that the interviews were conducted after January 15, when Bernardo Arévalo took office, and after 105 days, the National Strike ended.

Initially, the goal was to conduct 15-20 interviews. However, reaching the target became challenging because the interviews began in mid-January, this was because I had limited time due to a last-minute change of subject matter when the strike occurred and at the same time because the interviewees mentioned that they preferred to do the interviews until Arevalo took power. In the end, only eight interviews were conducted. While this is a small number compared to the overall population of active participants in the National Strike, the depth of these qualitative interviews

provided substantial insight into the emotions experienced by those involved. The existing familiarity with the interviewees allowed me for a more profound exploration of their perspectives, enhancing the understanding of their emotional experiences during the strike. To protect the identity of the interviewees, they were asked what pseudonyms they would like to use in this research.

My research focuses on the city of Guatemala due to time restraints and the difficulties to conduct interviews outside of the urban area. So, while I recognize that the National Strike was set in motion by indigenous authorities stemming mainly from the rural areas, my interviewees all stem from the city of Guatemala. Which is why I need to acknowledge the fact that one of my research's limitations is its urban-centric view. Furthermore, as I don't center my attention specifically on the different indigenous groups and their diverse forms of organization, I will refer to their many leaders as indigenous authorities in plural.

One significant constraint is the small sample size, comprising only eight online interviews with leaders who participated in the National Strike. This limited sample size could have restricted the diversity of experiences and perspectives within the strike, making it challenging to fully comprehend how emotions influenced the organization and sustainability of the movement. Additionally, there was a lack of ethnic diversity in the sample, mainly in interviewing ladino/mestizo leaders instead of representatives from diverse ethnic groups, especially indigenous authorities. While this focus may limit the understanding of how emotions manifested across different segments of the Guatemalan population during the strike, it is important to note that this study does not claim to represent all social sectors. Further research is necessary to explore the emotional responses of other ethnic and social groups in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding.

The use of online interviews instead of in-person interviews presented additional limitations. Although online research provided me with valuable insights, I could not capture all the nuances that would have been present during in-person interviews or participant observation. Despite these constraints, I benefited from an understanding of the context and the individuals involved, and I was able to interpret the information and meaning. Moving forward, the next chapter expands on the methodological foundation established in this chapter by delving into the primary

theoretical foundation of this thesis: the sociology of emotions, with a particular emphasis on Jasper's work.

Chapter 2. Mapping Emotions: Theories and Contexts of Social Mobilization in Guatemala

The central theoretical framework that underpins this thesis is the sociology of emotions, specifically as outlined in James M. Jasper's work. Jasper developed a scheme for categorizing emotions based on their duration and connected the sociology of emotions to the analysis of social and protest movements (Jasper, 1998, 2011, 2018). This approach is very appropriate for examining social movements in Guatemala, particularly the National Strike, as it allows for the mapping and understanding of emotions in the context of struggles for recognition and reparation. In the same way, Jasper's classification is useful to understand the multiple effects that activists may feel, overcoming the limit of working with a single and homogeneous category. This is extremely important considering that the interviews were conducted at the end of the National Strike, and the people interviewed show a series of emotional changes during the whole process. In the same way, the analysis of the emotional dimension that Jasper (2018) performs in the study of social movements has been able to develop acquiring greater rigor in understanding what the subject feels, towards whom or in what context, and what impact it has on political action, which provides tools to better understand the organization and sustainability of the National Strike.

Understanding Social Movements and exploring the interplay of emotions

Alice Poma and Tommaso Gravante (2022) assert the transformative role of social movements in shaping alternatives, imaginaries, and cultural shifts within Latin American societies. Their emphasis on the informal networks comprising grassroots groups underscores the localized and broad-reaching impact of these movements.

Within the context of social movements, emotions play a pivotal role, with research by scholars such as Flam (2015), Goodwin et al. (2001), and Jasper (2011) highlighting their relevance across various phases of mobilization. These studies underscore the importance of understanding emotions within the unique dynamics of collective action, and also according to Deborah Gould's research (2022), emotions serve as fundamental components that drive and sustain social movements. She

highlights the intricate connection between emotions and collective action, emphasizing the critical roles that emotions play in mobilization, internal dynamics, and the longevity of movements. Emotions supply the energy and motivation necessary to mobilize individuals and maintain collective action. The interplay between individual experiences and collective emotions generates a potent force that can challenge prevailing power structures.

Importantly, the application of emotional analysis in Latin American contexts has been obtained valuable insights into the diverse facets of collective action, especially knowing that the contexts and history of these countries are very varied, it provides different socio-cultural constructions of how emotions are constructed and their role in social movements. Emphasizing that this approach has Anglo-Saxon origins, with the United States being where the most theoretical and empirical contributions have been generated, examining the emotional aspect, as applied in various Latin American contexts and movements, has demonstrated a effectiveness in comprehending diverse facets of collective action throughout Latin America (Poma and Gravante 2017). Studies examining movements in Mexico, Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Chile have revealed how emotions are constructed differently based on sociocultural contexts, contributing to the distinct nature of protests in each region.

Poma and Gravante (2017) further illuminate the emergence of a new cycle of struggles in Latin America, characterized by the involvement of individual and collective subjectivities such as peasant organizations, indigenous communities, and student groups. Emotions serve as potent political tools within these movements, fostering empathy and solidarity with movement demands. Alice Poma (2024) emphasizes, with respect to feminist movements in the global north, that there are common patterns, such as rage or moral fear; however, the structural and cultural violence that characterizes the Mexican context makes the construction and intensity of these emotions as this example demonstrates the new way of understanding political and social actions can be observed when the subjects that give life to these struggles use emotions as a political tool to create, among other things, empathy, and solidarity with movement demands, as Gravante (2018) shows in his work on the movement that emerged in Mexico in solidarity with the Ayotzinapa victims that was

characterized by slogans such as “their rage is ours” and “their pain is our pain” (Gravante, 2018, p. 23).

Since the 1990s, the work of scholars such as Flam (1990a, 1990b) and Jasper (1998) has been instrumental in advancing theoretical understanding of emotions and social movements. Jasper's theory of action (2018) has been particularly influential in shaping our understanding of how emotions impact mobilization dynamics.

Evolution of emotions and Social Movements Theory

In tracing the origins of the approach to emotions within social movements, it's vital to recognize the contributions of foundational sociological works exploring emotions, such as those by Hochschild (1983), Kemper (1978), Collins (1975). These early works laid the groundwork for understanding emotions as either structurally determined or culturally constructed phenomena. At the same time, I consider it important to mention the contemporary theory on affect where the social context and constructivist models are linked through feminist and decolonial theories, like Ahmed (2014) who explores how emotions are shaped by social norms, Berlant (2011) who discusses the affective dimensions of political life, offer critical insights. Similar, Mussimi (2002) examines the embodied nature of affect, while Sauer (2023) who talks about the (in)visibilization of emotions in politics and proposes the term 'affective democracy', Montgomery and bergman (2017) who explores ways to address tenderness and vulnerability in activism, among others. These approaches are crucial for understanding how emotions are not only personal experiences but are also influenced by broader social, political, and cultural forces, thereby enriching the analysis of emotional dynamics in social movements.

Feminist critiques, notably by Jaggar (1989) and Hochschild, challenged conventional dichotomies between mind and body, public and private, revealing the negative unfair association of women with emotions. This critique emphasized the exploitation of emotional labor, particularly among women, and highlighted the gendered nature of emotional expression and suppression. When it comes to emotional labor, Hochschild demonstrates that protesters can manage their own emotions through surface and deep acting. "Lacking other resources," according to Hochschild (1983, p. 163), "women create a resource out of feelings," due to the

emotional management skills that are typically expected of them during their childhood gender socialization, also Jasper (2011, p. 49) mentions that “these dichotomies that feminists attacked were sometimes a target because women were discouraged from feeling certain emotions, especially anger”.

In addition to this, Sauer (2023) argues that the surge of right-wing authoritarian parties poses a threat to liberal democracies by exploiting exclusionary and often racist sentiments to provoke fear in the population, particularly targeting migrants. To counter this, the concept of 'affective democracy' and feminist theory proposes a revisioning of democracy as an inclusive space for emotions and visibility. It is crucial to recognize the intertwining of gendered power structures with the politics of invisibility, as emotions, care, and affect play a significant role in shaping democratic publics. Korstenbroek (2022) suggests creating an empathetic counter-public to combat right-wing populism, advocating for anti-discrimination training and community-based fora to foster empathy. Democratization efforts should start in everyday life, with neighborhood communities serving as platforms for 'affective democracy' to address conflicts like migration sensitively. Moderation is essential in managing these learning processes, focusing on commonalities and coexistence rather than blaming migrants for perceived insecurities (Sauer, 2023, p. 825).

Building on these ideas, the integration of emotions into the study of protests has been instrumental in understanding the motivations and dynamics of social movements. Scholars like Flam (2005), Jasper (2018), and Goodwin (2001) have explored how emotions, both at individual and collective levels, drive activism and shape movement cultures. Jasper's work, particularly *The Art of Moral Protest (1998)* introduced a culturally oriented view of protests, emphasizing their role as expressions of moral convictions and sensitivities. This body of literature underscores the importance of considering emotional and affective dimensions in the analysis of social movements, thereby enhancing our understanding of their complexities and impact.

Central to Jasper's framework is the notion of collective emotions, which reinforce solidarity and contribute to the pleasure of protest. These emotions, categorized into impulses, reflexes, affective bonds, moods, and moral emotions, shape the emotional culture of movements and influence their trajectory (1998, 2018). The definition of these categories is provided in the following section; however, it

should be noted that this theory was chosen because it was possible to quickly identify some of these categories in the experience of the interviewees.

In conclusion, incorporating the emotional dimension into the study of social movements is necessary as Deborah B. Gould (2022) argues for understanding the emotional dynamics within social movements is essential for comprehending the motivations behind individuals' participation in protests and other forms of collective behavior also adding that emotions can influence the intensity and longevity of social movements, impacting their effectiveness and outcomes, as evidenced by the experiences of protests in Latin America and beyond, can provide insights into the sustainability and success of such movements.

Theory of action

Jasper's book, *The Emotions of Protest* (2018) presents a comprehensive typology of emotions crucial for systematically analyzing the emotional dimension of protests, emphasizing the importance of understanding emotions as integral to political action. Considering the term "emotion" as a single psychological state, it is necessary to identify the characteristics of the emotions that people feel and distinguish, for example, between emotions of different durations, intensities, and meanings depending on the context in which they are felt and expressed (Poma & Giannini, 2021).

Central to Jasper's framework is the concept of "moral batteries," which consists of pairs of opposing emotions that can strengthen each other, providing a nuanced understanding of emotional dynamics within protests. In addition to moral batteries, reciprocal emotions play a pivotal role in social movements, fostering solidarity and commitment among members. These emotions, rooted in bonds of friendship within the movement, serve as motives for mobilization and influence strategic decisions. Understanding reciprocal emotions is particularly relevant in the context of the National Strike, where collective sentiments shape future actions.

Moreover, the concept of moral shock, as elucidated by Jasper (2018), highlights the emotional response to events that challenge fundamental values, prompting individuals to reassess their beliefs and perceptions of the world, As happened during the National Strike when the indigenous communities were filled with indignation and tired of the situation and called for a strike because the Public

Prosecutor's Office illegally took the boxes containing the ballots. This process involves a range of emotions, from surprise to indignation, contributing to the formation of collective identity and solidarity.

Jasper's typology of emotions, encompassing reflex emotions, urges, moods, affective, and moral commitments, provides a valuable analytical framework for dissecting the emotional landscape of the National Strike. By delineating distinct emotional states and their implications, this typology facilitates a nuanced understanding of the diverse emotional experiences within the movement, shedding light on underlying motivations and dynamics.

- **Reflex Emotions** are automatic responses to events and information, often considered as the paradigm of all emotions. These emotions vary greatly depending on temporality and political context. These can also become moral emotions.
- **Urges:** Urgent bodily needs that displace other feelings and attention until they are satisfied, including lust, hunger, substance addiction, urination or defecation, exhaustion, or physical pain. These factors are relevant when generating emotions.
- **Moods:** Energizing or de-energizing feelings that persist across contexts and are usually not directed at direct objects; they can be modified by reflex emotions, as occurs during interactions.
- **Affective Commitment:** Relatively stable feelings, positive or negative, towards other people or things, such as love and hatred, liking and disliking, trust or distrust, respect, or contempt.
- **Moral Emotions:** Feelings of approval or disapproval (even of ourselves and our actions) based on moral intuitions or principles, such as shame, guilt, pride, indignation, outrage, and compassion. (Jasper, 2018, p. 13)

The present research uses Jasper's typology to systematically categorize the emotions reported by interviewees, aiming to grasp their impact on the organization and sustainability of the strike. Unlike previous studies focusing on specific emotions or emotion types, this research seeks to explore all emotions articulated by participants, delving into their multifaceted roles and influences.

Jasper's typology (2018), developed over three decades of dedicated study to protest emotions, serves as a comprehensive and updated framework for this analysis. While rooted in an Anglo-Saxon context, its applicability has been demonstrated in various Latin American settings, underscoring the need to consider sociocultural nuances in emotion research. Emotions, shaped by historical and cultural contexts, exhibit distinct patterns across regions, necessitating localized investigations to deepen our understanding of their construction and significance.

Although Jasper's typology originates from the United States, its utility transcends borders, offering valuable tools for cross-cultural emotion studies. By recognizing the potential variations in emotional experiences across contexts, researchers can employ Jasper's framework as a flexible and adaptable tool for classification and analysis, contributing to a more nuanced comprehension of emotions within diverse sociocultural landscapes. This theory made it easier for me as a researcher to classify the emotions that the interviewees mentioned, and to be able to probe beyond what they said, understanding better what the interviewees felt, towards whom and in what specific context of the strike, in order to understand what impact, it has on political action.

Gender and emotions

In a similar vein, a crucial application of this methodology involves scrutinizing the interplay between emotions, gender dynamics, and political engagement within women's or feminist collectives (Poma & Gravante, 2017; Taylor, 1989; Taylor & Whittier, 1992), or within contexts where women wield significant influence, such as the LGBTQ+ movement (Gould, 2009). These inquiries draw heavily upon the theoretical underpinnings advanced by Hochschild (1975, 1983), who asserts that emotions are sociocultural constructed and can vary based on social situations and historical periods, thus moving beyond essentialist and universalist viewpoints.

Furthermore, as Alice Poma (2024) elucidates, while certain gender-related patterns may emerge in the findings of research across diverse nations, the process of emotional construction evolves in tandem with sociocultural milieus; for instance, the conceptualization of fear, the appropriation of anger, or the negotiation of shame among female activists may exhibit variations contingent upon whether the analysis is situated in the United States, Europe, Mexico, India, China, or any other locale. This

variability also extends to considerations of gender, race, and class, particularly within the framework of Guatemalan identity, notably encapsulated in the constructs of ladino/mestizo and indigenous peoples (a topic slated for further elaboration in the forthcoming methodology chapter). The present investigation constitutes an exploratory analysis of the emotional dimensions of Guatemalan social movements, with an understanding of the necessity for extensive temporal and informational commitment to adequately elucidate the intricate nature of this subject.

Similarly, Sauer (2023) lays out a blueprint to integrate emotions and affects into democracy with her concept of “affective democracy”. Sauer argues that “politics of in_visibility are at the core of gendered political power structures, modulated by affect and emotions”, which is why “acknowledging affect, emotions, and care as elements of democratic publics” is imperative “to sensitize for domination, exclusion, and marginalization” (Sauer, 2023, p. 829). Bringing affective democracy into this research, and following Sauer’s guide to democratization, I focus on the emotions and vulnerability people felt during the National Strike, emphasizing how emotions like solidarity helped to ensure the long-term sustainability of the movement.

Writing is the beginning of historical memory

The literature on the National Strike in Guatemala, while still emerging, offers valuable insights into the socio-political dynamics and implications of this significant event. This review synthesizes findings from a selection of recent articles to provide a comprehensive understanding of the strike's context, development, and impact. A bibliographic search was conducted to conduct this review, which was obtained five articles: two in English, two in Spanish, and one in both languages. The subsequent section provides a summary and discussion of these articles, highlighting their relevance and contributions to this research.

It should be noted that in this literature review, the majority of the texts were written in 2023 and published in 2024, and in some cases, the authors (Masek, 2023; Schwartz & Isaacs, 2023; Vásquez Monterroso et al., 2024) mentioned that, at the time of writing, it was still unclear whether Bernardo Arévalo and Karin Herrera, would assume power. It is essential to highlight that during the time when the Strike was still

happening, the struggle for democracy and the attempt to prevent the presidential and vice presidents from taking power were present.

A pivotal contribution to the literature comes from a book published by the "Unidad de Investigación Profesional" of the Universidad San Carlos de Guatemala (Vásquez Monterroso et al., 2024). It is worth noting that this university is the only public one in the national territory, and, as mentioned in the introduction, there is silence and complicity on the part of Rector Walter Mazariegos with what is referred to as "the pact of corrupts." This is why the university did not participate institutionally in the National Strike and was in fact part of one of the initiatives to prevent winning candidates from taking power. In the introduction to this publication, the authors mention that this book is an attempt at moral and symbolic reparation for the serious faults committed by the university in turning its back on the popular sectors to which it is politically indebted, participating in, and identifying with the anti-democratic actions promoted by powerful political and economic actors. Several researchers from outside Guatemala participated in this study.

This work offers diverse perspectives on the October 2023 mobilization, emphasizing the reappropriation of public space and the historical context of protests in Guatemala. Ana Lucía Ramazzini (2024) highlighted the reappropriation of public space as a challenge to hegemonic power, which provides tools to better understand the reappropriation of public space and performativity in the streets, a topic that is often mentioned in the interviews and in this research. Ramazzini (2024, p. 26) presents how this National Strike constituted an active strategy where action and discourse confronted hegemonic power, to which the author refers that hegemonic power defines and organizes the use of public space to maintain control over the behavior and interactions of the population, converting the space under policies of control and regulation. By occupying the streets during the National Strike, the demonstrators challenge this hegemony, reclaiming public space as a place to express political demands and resistance.

Within this book, *October 2023: political crisis and mobilizations* (2024), there are several articles that point to the importance of continuing to carry out extensive discussions and research processes on the significance of the October 2023 mobilization, as well as the importance of analyzing aspects related to perceptions

and attitudes of the different actors involved, motivations of the population that participated or refrained from participating, the impact of the crisis on mental health, the experiences of specific sectors or groups, ideologies, discourses, imaginaries, or representations. It is essential to highlight the aspect of mental health, considering that the present research was based on how participants talked about emotions and experiences of emotion on.

Schwartz and Isaacs' (2023) analysis of the political context leading up to the 2023 elections sheds light on the challenges to democratic governance in Guatemala. Despite efforts to manipulate the electoral process, the unexpected victory of Bernardo Arévalo signals a moment of resistance to authoritarianism. However, significant obstacles remain, including the persistence of criminal oligarchies and institutional weaknesses, which can be reflected when interviewees mentioned that they felt hopeless about the future.

In contrast, Víctor Hernández Huerta's (2024) essay focuses on the irregular electoral practices observed during the 2023 elections, highlighting the role of institutional weaknesses in undermining democracy. Similarly, the article "Guatemala: A Vote for Turning the Tide" emphasizes the importance of robust legal mechanisms and grassroots activism in defending democracy against autocratic advances. Furthermore, Vaclav Masek's (2023) article delves into the indigenous-led aspect of the National Strike, emphasizing the historical and political significance of indigenous resistance in Guatemala. This perspective underscores the importance of indigenous experiences in shaping the trajectory of the strike and advocating for plurinational democracy.

Overall, the literature review underscores the critical role of ongoing research and analysis in understanding the National Strike in Guatemala. By synthesizing diverse perspectives and insights, it provides a comprehensive overview of the strike's significance and legacy, highlighting the complex interplay between democracy, indigenous communities and forms of organization, and resistance to authoritarianism. Moreover, it emphasizes the need to integrate an understanding of emotions analysis with a gender approach in social movements is crucial due to the significant role emotions play in shaping collective action and the formation of social ties within movements (López Véliz, 2021). Therefore, integrating emotion analysis with a gender

approach not only enriches the understanding of social movements but also contributes to more inclusive and effective activism.

In conclusion, the exploration of emotions within the framework of the sociology of emotions, particularly through the work of Jasper (2018), provides valuable insights into the dynamics of social movements and, in this case, tools to better understand emotions in the context of the National Strike in Guatemala. Understanding the duration and impact of emotions within social struggles for recognition and redress, we gain a deeper understanding of the inherent complexities of movements for social change. The literature review on the National Strike conducted in this chapter has highlighted the need and academic interest in the National Strike and underscores the importance of further research in this area. Moving forward, it is essential to integrate this understanding of emotions into the analysis of the organizational aspects of the National Strike, as explored in the following chapter.

Building upon the foundations, concepts, and tools established in this chapter, which examined the role of emotions within social movements, particularly in the context of the National Strike in Guatemala, the following chapters put these concepts into practice: Chapter 3 then delves deeper into the organizational dynamics of the National Strike. The aim is to transition from understanding the emotional landscape of the strike to its organizational structure, analyzing the complexities of how emotions influence the formation, leadership, and execution of this National Strike. The following chapter provides a brief introduction to both the social and political contexts of the National Strike.

Chapter 3. Defending the People's Choice: The Organization and Emotions Behind the National Strike

This chapter discusses the influence of emotions on the organization of the National Strike in Guatemala using the interviews I conducted. To achieve this, I first provide an overview of why this happened in Guatemala, using the ideas drawn from the analysis in the texts mentioned in the previous chapter that have been written about the National Strike, exploring the contextual background that led to the National Strike, including key events and factors, and delving into the interviewees' feelings in this context, I discuss the interviewees' responses regarding who the crucial actors and the most critical leaders were in this national strike and expressed their emotions about the beginning of this strike. Finally, I explore how this strike was organized and the influence of the interviewees' emotions. I conclude by discussing some dichotomies found and the invisible and visible aspects of this social movement.

First, it is necessary to understand that this Indefinite National Strike is not a temporary issue for the Guatemalan society. This Strike was the last line of defense to preserve the fragile democracy existing in Guatemala. In the same way, the National Strike, beyond being a conjunctural event, was the last line of defense for the Guatemalan population to talk about the scarce democracy that remained, putting the body in this resistance was an act of faith, because if it was not possible to take power (Arévalo and Herrera), everything was lost.

Historical Memory Shaping Today's History

“Mientras haya pueblo habrá revolución”²

- Oliverio Castañeda De León (Student leader assassinated in 1978)

Historically, dictatorships have dominated Guatemala (Monterroso et al. 2024, 50), especially in the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century. It is important to mention that they were interrupted by the 1944 revolution, led by Francisco Javier Arana, Jacobo Árbenz, and Jorge Toriello Garrido, which gave way to a brief

² "As long as there are people there will be revolution"

democracy that was overthrown by the counterrevolution of 1954. This brief democracy is important for this research since the government of the first democratically elected president in Guatemala's history, Juan José Arévalo is the father of Bernardo Arévalo, president-elect. Years later, the counterrevolution led to the establishment of a military dictatorship and a long internal armed conflict. The 1996 Peace Accords ended the conflict and offered democracy but only ensured that an oligarchic and criminal group of people remained in power and did not open promised opportunities.

In recent years, Guatemala's political and social context has changed at an accelerated pace. In April 2015, investigations by the Public Prosecutor's Office (MP) and the International Commission Against Impunity (CICIG) revealed several corruption cases in which the government was implicated. These cases caused the population to be filled with indignation, and during April and September 2015, a series of large-scale social mobilizations took place at the national and international levels. This process led to the resignation of the president and vice-president at that time. Additionally, this event generated new leadership, activism, and social organizations.

From 2015 to 2023, these setbacks have included the co-optation of public works, the targeting, persecution, dismissals, accusations and trials of anti-corruption journalists, activists, and judges (Human Rights Watch, 2023). According to Maldonado (2022), Guatemala faces challenges in protecting the rights of migrants, human rights defenders, women, girls, and LGBT+ individuals, with at least 86 judges, prosecutors, journalists, and citizens persecuted in 2022 alone.

María Aguilar and Irmalicia Velásquez (2024) highlight that from January 2020 to January 2024, President Giammattei promoted political and legal chaos, keeping the country in a permanent crisis. He instrumentalized institutions like the MP to avoid respecting the 2023 general election results. Aguilar and Velásquez assert that "Giammattei goes down in history as another cog in the 'pact of corrupts' that helped undermine the little democracy remaining in the country in exchange for privileges for himself and his inner circle" (2024). This pattern reflects a global trend of illiberal democracies using similar tactics to consolidate power.

President Alejandro Giammattei used many different tactics to deepen his authoritarian rule since 2020: he manipulated and distorted the electoral context,

abused the legal and judicial institutions, and ultimately criminalized public authorities, judicial officials, journalists, and activists. Many of whom had led the struggle against corruption and human rights abuses, and who were later detained or forced into exile (Schwartz and Isaacs, 2023).

This context in Guatemala has created emotional and physical exhaustion in the entire population, especially in the last few years. Colocha, part of the organized neighbors of Guatemala City told me:

Practically in 2023, I would say that speaking with civil society organizations, women, feminists, indigenous people, youth, and the Guatemalan society, middle class, let us say, from the capital, it was a year in which our mental health was really at stake. There was constant news of attacks trying to stop elections in one way or another. We know that it was politically an electoral year and an important year. Still, there was strong negativity in the air towards having a new period of government co-opted by the Pact of Corrupts again, right? Therefore, there is a great deal of hopelessness.

Guatemala's 2023 elections were expected to be a major milestone in the rise of authoritarianism, as Colocha mentions, there was no hope for the future. As Schwartz and Issacs point out, “despite multiparty competition, the ruling regime undertook anti-democratic maneuvers to subvert meaningful contestations. Before voters went to the polls in the June 25 first round, the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE), the Attorney General’s Office (MP), and the courts manufactured electoral violations to disqualify anti-establishment candidates from across the political spectrum” (2023, p. 21).

In the first round, 22 candidates competed in the presidential election. In eighth place in electoral polls, Bernardo Arévalo of *Semilla* (seed), a party that emerged from the mobilizations in 2015, was not expected to win these elections. Two candidates advanced to the second round, with 60% voting between them. Surprisingly on one side was Bernardo Arévalo and Sandra Torres with the National Unity of Hope (Unidad Nacional de la Esperanza, UNE), who was running for the third consecutive time (Human Rights Watch, 2023).

During the interval between the initial and subsequent rounds of the election, various attempts were made to undermine the legitimacy of the process by alleging

fraud. Despite these claims, numerous individuals supported the vote and the role of polling station monitors in the subsequent round of elections, demonstrating their commitment to the democratic process and ultimately bolstering the candidacy of Semilla. For the first time in history, Semilla managed to have monitors in most polling centers, people who woke up early, and witnessed this victory. In several of the interviews conducted, it is mentioned that there were monitors who sympathized with Semilla and others who did not, but they knew it was the only chance to regain democracy, creating an atmosphere of excitement about defending the vote. Barrilete, an indigenous woman who migrated to Guatemala City, explains:

People disconnected from their political parties and became polling station monitors for Semilla. Everyone was a Semilla at that moment.... This is a beautiful thing. I spent five years as a member of another political party, and in those five years that I was a member of that party, during elections, I had never felt the excitement I felt when defending Semilla's vote. I thought, 'But this did not happen to me at that party,' and there was a party identity there, you know? And with Semilla, there was no party identity, but there was a commitment to say - Okay, if it is about defending the vote, we will defend it, and we must be here.

Among the recommendations for Semilla's polling station monitors, it was advised that when ballot counting began, they should remain composed and avoid making gestures, maintaining a serious demeanor without expressing any emotion. Despite this, the polling station boards were visibly excited as Semilla was winning, underscoring that the moment was about defending the legitimacy and dignity of the vote. Barrilete said that "it was about defending the vote, I mean, the dignity of the vote, legitimate".

In the second round, there was a sense of responsibility across all generations to vote. Especially among young people and many senior citizens from the generation of the presidential candidate's father who lived through the revolution of '44 came out to vote. Since I started voting, and from what my family and grandparents talked about, this was the first time there was a sense of hope in Guatemala amid the electoral process, it has always been felt that in Guatemala people vote for the least worst, but this time it was different. As Barrilete points out:

So, there was this whole generation too, the generation of Arévalo's father, who was very hopeful about this, and they spread that hope. I think there was a mix of generational emotions that allowed for the defense of that vote that got us to where we have reached today. However, to make this distinction. That it was in defense of democracy, of the community, that there could be more openness with the government, and the recovery of spaces that have been lost since the agreements, well, spaces that were created especially from the peace agreements, and ended in these eight, ten years, I mean, it has been a setback.

As Schwartz and Isaacs' investigation reveals, the government in power mobilized judicial instruments to audit the elections, but when no evidence of fraud was found, they sought the help of a corrupt judge to call for Semilla's disqualification and the criminalization of its party leaders, as well as the criminalization of the officials responsible for the election's approval (2023, p. 22). Nevertheless, this did not deter the political campaigns, as "in two months, Arévalo went from scant name recognition to earning more votes than any presidential candidate in Guatemalan history" (2023, p. 22).

This attempt to annul the elections stirred indignation and anger among the citizenry, especially the working class who felt cheated. Especially since the MP had been repeatedly manipulating the electoral process by blocking the running of three popular candidates, including the well-liked indigenous leader, Thelma Cabrera. Despite the irregularities that were widely observed and documented by social organizations and international observers, the electoral elections were not disregarded, and efforts were made to impede the assumption of the presidency by Bernardo Arevalo. Following the victory in the August 2023 elections, the presidential inauguration in Guatemala was held in January 2024, thereby providing a four-month window of uncertainty.

The call for the National Strike

"A nosotros no nos interesa defender un Estado-Nación.

Nosotros estamos defendiendo al pueblo y a su opinión" -Colocha³

³ "We are not interested in defending a Nation-State. We are defending the people and their will"

On September 30, 2023, indigenous authorities in Guatemala called for a national strike. This came after agents of the MP raided the TSE installations and took away boxes containing the original election documents, which are the responsibility of the electoral authorities. The seizure of these documents has raised concerns that it could be an attempt to undermine the constitutional order of Guatemala. Sieder (2017) explains that the *48 Cantones de Totonicapán* is a long-standing indigenous governing council with its own organization, elections, participation, and justice system. The call for the strike was successful, and on October 2, the country saw widespread social mobilization, including road blockades, border closures, and marches.

All the people interviewed suggested and acknowledged the importance of indigenous authorities in this strike, and their role was fundamental to this movement. The indigenous authorities recognize that people from Guatemala City and different sectors responded to the call. In the National Strike, several noteworthy achievements were highlighted in this investigation, but one of the most significant was the recognition by the Ladino-Mestizo community of the indigenous authorities of their leadership and importance at the national level, socially, economically, and politically, as well as the acknowledgment that they have traditionally been overlooked and denied the recognition they merit on both the social and political fronts, this is extremely important because it also implies a recognition of other forms of political organization within the country.

Furthermore, when I speak of recognition, it is necessary to understand the political, historical and social role of this type of organizations, alternatives to the State, and to give them "power". All interviewees point out that everything done during the Indefinite National Strike was consulted with Indigenous Authorities. Antonio, a young man who has spent years organizing in social collectives in Guatemala City, mentioned, "It put the role of the ancestral authorities in the imaginary, I think, of the country." According to most of the interviewees, the recognition and response to the call of the indigenous authorities is a step towards addressing the racism that this population has historically suffered in Guatemala, which was mentioned many times during these days of resistance.

The theory of recognition, as expounded by philosophers such as Axel Honneth (2017), can provide insight into the dynamics at play in this context. Honneth (2017)

posits that recognition is vital for the development of both individual and collective identities, and that social recognition is a fundamental requisite for social justice. In the context of the Indefinite National Strike, the recognition of Indigenous Authorities not only grants them increased legitimacy and authority but also serves as a form of historical and social reparation, addressing the deep-seated wounds inflicted by centuries of exclusion and discrimination.

Nancy Fraser (1990) explored the concepts of visibility and invisibility, examining how certain groups and their experiences become visible or remain hidden within the public and political spheres. In the case of the Indefinite National Strike, the visibility of Indigenous Authorities and their demands represent a significant shift in the dynamics of power. This visibility challenges the dominant narratives that have historically marginalized these communities and allows their voices and experiences to be recognized and valued in public discourse.

The interplay between recognition and visibility is essential to comprehending the intricacies of social resistance in Guatemala. The recognition of Indigenous Authorities, by making them visible in the national consciousness, contributes to the decolonization of public spaces and the construction of a more inclusive and equitable society. This process of visibility is crucial in challenging existing power structures and promoting significant social changes that address the needs and demands of all communities, particularly those that have historically been marginalized.

The first days of the indefinite national strike were marked by a united call demanding the resignation of four officials accused of undermining the 2023 electoral process. The main demand was the resignation of Attorney General Consuelo Porras, Prosecutor Rafael Curruchiche, and Judge Fredy Orellana for attempting against the electoral process. The strike initiated by the 48 cantons succeeded in uniting the 22 Mayan peoples, creating alliances with urban ladino sectors, including the highest economic elites. Joining forces were the 48 Cantons of Totonicapán, Xincas authorities from Escuintla, Santa Rosa, Jutiapa, and Jalapa, as well as indigenous authorities from Sololá. The main slogan emphasized "the defense of democracy and respect for the popular vote," declaring an indefinite national strike and calling on all citizens and organizations to join the protest.

At the start of the National Strike, Arévalo expressed his intention to join protests at the MP. However, indigenous authorities were adamant that their demonstrations were not to be associated with any political party or the election of a new president. In the interviews it was mentioned that the position of the indigenous authorities was that they (indigenous peoples) were not interested in defending a nation-state. They were there to defend the people and the vote that had been taken. This reflects the deep commitment and solidarity that fueled the movement, emphasizing a collective empowerment rooted in defending the voice and decision of the people. These emotions were essential in the National Strike, as they fostered a sense of unity and purpose, driving people to mobilize and defend their rights and autonomy. The insistence of indigenous authorities to separate their cause from political affiliations reveals a deep dedication to the principles of democratic participation and the protection of communal integrity.

During the initial week of the National Strike, emotions intensified as blockades spread across the country, garnering widespread support and solidarity at the encampment of the Public Prosecutor's Office. Indigenous authorities urged urban residents to organize protests from their own neighborhoods, leading to decentralized actions. On October 7, a week after the strike began, city residents joined in, escalating blockades to 87 nationwide. The following Monday, October 9, saw 147 blockades, effectively paralyzed the capital and marking a significant historical moment as indigenous authorities mobilized the city to defend democracy. In the interview with Jorge, a neighbor of zone 2, said "It still seems incredible that everything arose spontaneously, that it does not stop".

Tensions peaked on October 10 when President Alejandro Giammattei ordered the eviction of blockades using police force, coinciding with infiltrators inciting violence. Despite police attempts to clear roadblocks, the strike persisted with 125 blockades nationwide. False information about food shortages circulated, causing panic. Protests in support of the MP and alleged electoral fraud emerged, with the first death recorded on the fifth day in San Marcos. Negotiations ensued between authorities, strike organizers, and the Organization of American States (OAS), while attempts to dismantle blockades continued. By the 18th day, only one blockade, in front of MP remained in the city.

On October 20, during the commemoration of the 1944 revolution, calls for marches in support of Indigenous Authorities gained momentum. Bernardo Arévalo, president-elect, and Jacobo Árbenz Villanova, sons of 1944 Revolution leaders, marched alongside the population. The strategy shifted, focusing solely on the capital city, with the encampment in front of the MP and with blockades ending nationwide. However, indigenous authorities remained organized, awaiting the removal of Consuelo Porrás, head of the MP.

This pivotal moment exemplifies how the emotional states of the participants, fueled by historical memory and solidarity, played a crucial role in the evolution of the strike. The collective emotions of pride, determination, and a sense of historical continuity galvanized the participants, strengthening their resolve. The emotional connection to the 1944 revolution and the presence of figures like Arévalo and Villanova provided a powerful symbolic reinforcement, helping to maintain momentum and unity. By focusing the protest efforts in the capital, the movement leveraged these emotional dynamics to sustain pressure on the authorities. This underscores the significant impact of emotions in shaping the strategies and outcomes of social movements, demonstrating how deeply intertwined they are with the participants' motivations and actions.

The visible and invisible actors

“Como que me queda clarísimo que el cambio....

va a venir de los pueblos organizados”⁴ -Tomás

This section provides a brief summary of the roles played by various actors during the national strike, followed by an analysis of the emotions they evoked in the next chapter. Most interviewees emphasized that there was a *hartazgo*; this word has no specific translation but could be understood as tiredness, weariness, boredom, weariness, annoyance, or tedium. In this context, tiredness and weariness are profound and politicized. Indigenous authorities and various sectors of the population had already exhausted several institutional channels to have the vote respected. However, they were not being heard, which is why they took this "more drastic" action. The interviewees also acknowledge that the indigenous authorities had earned the

⁴ "It is very clear to me that the change....is going to come from the organized peoples" -Tomás

legitimacy to do so, Antonio, points out that "we (in the city) were never able to do, I mean, to stay in one place for more than a day, so they did."

While the National Strike was taking place, several important actors stood out, including indigenous authorities, sellers' markets in Guatemala City, organized neighbors, public and private transportation drivers, university students, journalists and media, religious communities, public and private institutions, international organizations and representatives, and political parties.

Prior to delving into the discussion of the most influential actors during the National Strike, it is essential to acknowledge the individuals who were silenced during this period of resistance. For 105 days, LGBTQ+ people and activists were frequently targeted, vulnerable, and subject to attack. As a historically conservative country, Guatemala has a narrative, which has been managed by the entire system of corruption from public officials to private companies. that was used against the political party Semilla and the presidential elect. To prevent the presidential elect from winning in the second round of voting, one of the tactics employed, by the MP, president Giammattei and other public officials, was to target and instrumentalize the LGBTQ+ community. During the National Strike, this group was compelled to "nullify" their presence within the resistance, as their votes or support for Semilla was deemed counterproductive, as emphasized by Barrilete and Tomás. This topic is discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

During the Strike, there was a national recognition of the mobilization of indigenous authorities, which in Guatemala's history implies that the Ladino/Mestizo population recognizes different types of leadership, and forms of indigenous political organization. According to the interviewees, the 48 Cantons of Totonicapán were the organization with the most visibility and were mentioned the most. However, they also emphasized that indigenous authorities from different territories participated in sustaining the national strike, each with different forms of social, political, and economic organization. Throughout the interviews, participants emphasized the pivotal role of the indigenous authorities, acknowledging that the movement wouldn't have been possible without them. The authorities served as guides for the organization, particularly during moments of indignation when others felt lost. Antonio expressed this emotion, noting that the call to action emerged from indigenous

leadership and collective indignation. People from the city (mostly ladinos/mestizos) looked to the indigenous authorities to set the path for the movement, especially as they hadn't anticipated it would last so long.

In some interviews, indigenous authorities were discussed as somewhat essentialist and romanticized. One of the greatest lessons that indigenous authorities gave in this National Strike was peaceful resistance, without violence or weapons. However, it is imperative to acknowledge the consequences of generalizing or romanticizing these struggles. Such viewpoints can inadvertently oversimplify and disregard the intricate dynamics and wide-ranging experiences of indigenous communities. Throughout history, these communities have endured considerable oppression, and their resistance, whether peaceful or otherwise, is a dignified response to enduring injustices.

By generalizing or romanticizing their struggles, there is a risk of dismissing the harsh realities and diverse tactics that indigenous peoples have utilized in their pursuit of rights and acknowledgement. This can result in an incomplete comprehension that neglects to consider the broad range of their experiences and the multifaceted nature of their resistance. Recognizing this intricacy is vital for cultivating a more refined and respectful understanding of their ongoing struggles.

By assigning characteristics and generalizing struggles, the diverse expressions of resistance that indigenous communities might have been limited, which infantilizes these communities by dictating what they can or cannot be, thereby stripping them of their autonomy and agency. Essentializing this struggle and emphasizing its peaceful nature while attributing it to indigenous people is problematic. As Colocha points out in the interview, "One of the greatest lessons that indigenous peoples have taught us all is that it is possible to resist peacefully, without violence, without weapons, and without absorbing hatred." This generalized portrayal of how indigenous communities, and in general persons resist is harmful and problematic, as it disregards alternative forms of resistance that currently exist and denies the potential for using more violent means of resistance. It is crucial to recognize that resistance against colonization is always legitimate and necessary.

Another actor highlighted in the interviews was the Ladino/Mestizo population in Guatemala City. Considering that most of the interviewed individuals identified

themselves with this identity, this topic is relevant for analysis because of the different perspectives presented by the interviewees. What is most emphasized in the interviews is how one can see the difference between the organization of indigenous authorities and the Ladino/Mestizo population, which can be observed in the differences between the protests of 2015 and those of the National Strike. Several of the interviews criticize 2015 for being resistant to ephemeral emotion, which is very circumstantial. This critique refers to the fact that 2015 was a pivotal moment, marking the beginning for many people to organize politically in collectives and engage in more political discussions. In 2023, some of the interviews points out that it felt different because there was already more interest, and more people were politicized and organized, which helped generate more attention to what was happening, and more information circulated about the situation.

It can be observed that when the Ladino/Mestizo population calls for taking to the streets, it is on Saturdays because those are the days when the middle and working classes can go out. Barrilete and Colocha agree that this differs from how indigenous authorities in 2023 said they would take to the streets and did so every day for 105 days.

Fátima underscores the recent challenges in maintaining strong leadership in Guatemala City, particularly reflecting on the absence of effective leadership despite widespread indignation expressed in 2015. However, the emergence of the Semilla Movement, led by prominent figures from the city's university and student sphere, marked a significant departure this time. The presence of indigenous authorities underscored the historical continuity of their organizational practices and their bravery in confronting corruption and impunity. This call for citizen unity resonated deeply, evoking a collective desire to remove obstructive public officials from power. Fátima emphasizes the need to support historically invisible leaders and acknowledges the city dwellers' role in effecting meaningful change in their territory. She points out the necessity for city dwellers to learn from the organizational capacity demonstrated by indigenous authorities, who traveled kilometers to rally support for the National Strike. Fátima points out that it is necessary to make this self-criticism (referring to the citizens of Guatemala City):

It was necessary for people who do not inhabit this territory (the indigenous authorities) to come so that things would change in some way, and what are we going to do as city dwellers to be able to drive these changes

Several interviewees view 2015 as a pivotal moment for challenging privileges in Guatemala City, with the emergence of the Semilla political party playing a crucial role, particularly in harnessing the active involvement of young people in political campaigns and leveraging social media platforms. Fátima stresses the importance of recognizing the ongoing activism that has persisted since 2015, spanning social media, streets, collectives, and various groups.

It is essential to recognize the presence and role of Ladinos/Mestizos within this research and their participation in the National Strike, as it is the primary focus. The interviews show that the dynamics between indigenous peoples and Ladino/Mestizo capital dwellers in the National Strike reveal tensions and significant differences. There were a few confrontations underscore the critical aspect of coexistence within shared urban spaces. Recognizing these differences is essential for understanding the complexity of interethnic relations and, at the same time, for understanding how these two identities learned to coexist in the city's territory within the National Strike framework. Through the interviews, it can be observed that the National Strike was not exempt from tensions among different actors, both in community kitchens and organizational spaces. These tensions generated frustrations, fatigue and some of the people interviewed point out that they took a break from the strike. I consider it important to delve into these tensions and how they may affect national strikes. Although I cannot fully cover this in this research, it is an area that could undoubtedly be expanded in future studies.

This is why I consider it relevant to establish the criticism from Barrilete towards the city and its organization, highlighting that this interview is the only one conducted with a person who identifies as indigenous. Barrilete indicated that even though after 2015 many people started to organize and create collectives within the city, there is a weak point that the National Strike demonstrated, which is that the city does not know how to organize itself and needs reinforcement in that aspect.

But we (the city) don't know how to organize ourselves, there's a big challenge there, and the city also needs to get it out of its head, especially the NGOs, that

they can't keep thinking, "we have to keep educating and training the indigenous people because they don't know about politics." This time, it's the other way around. In reality, the focus of strengthening and politicization should be on the city because it is not politicized. The city believes that because it is a city, it is civilized or politically engaged, but it is not; they did not demonstrate it.

Most interviewees agreed with this criticism and points out the importance of indigenous authorities as leaders of the National Strike. However, they recognize their organizational and leadership knowledge of the indigenous communities, recognizing that the city does not possess this knowledge and that the city does not have this knowledge.

Also, in relation to Guatemala City, another criticism that was made was how long it took them to react and participate in the National Strike. Since it was not until after a week that the people in the city indeed joined the strike, which some of the interviewees also highlighted, is due to the "capitalist logic of production within the city". The interviewees agreed that the dynamics of the city are driven by production and capitalism, which do not allow people to meet, get to know each other, or organize politically. Colocha argues that privileged Ladino mestizo groups in the capital could only protest on certain days or at specific times due to work commitments, because even though many sectors went on strike, other sectors did not, and there were people with jobs on the line who did not stop. This is completely different from the communal logic of the indigenous communities.

Another relevant actor for organizing the National Strike within Guatemala City is market sellers and individuals owning daily consumption stores, who were especially important in the first few weeks of resistance. Most of the markets in the city organized several marches through Zone 1, stopping in front of the National Palace, Congress of the Republic, and Constitutional Court to reach the MP. Their marches stood out because they paralyzed all the blocks for a few minutes. With vehicles and signs, they made it known which markets they were showing support from. Their slogans included "United Markets will never be defeated."(Coyoy, 2023).

The participation of market vendors in the national strike is deeply intertwined with the forced internal migration prevalent in Guatemala, as discussed by Barrilete, who has experienced it firsthand. According to the 2018 Census, 10.2% of the total

population of the country inhabited a department different from their birthplace, indicating a widespread issue relevant to strike participants. Barrilete highlights that many indigenous individuals work in urban areas, particularly in stores, markets, and businesses, drawing upon their unique social and cultural backgrounds. This diversity facilitated organization across various parts of the city, as seen at the Boca del Monte point, where collaboration between a store owner from Quiché and a truck owner of Ladino-Mestizo descent exemplifies the fusion of identities in support of the strike.

As Barrilete indicated, organizing and coordinating the strike points was challenging, leading to frustration among participants who expected quick results, such as the resignation of Consuelo Porras. Despite the initial setbacks and the lack of immediate resignations, the movement adapted its strategies and achieved other objectives, as discussed in Chapter 5.

Interviewees again highlighted the crucial role of indigenous authorities in calling for the National Strike, providing the necessary push for civil society and market vendors to mobilize. Fátima emphasizes that we needed a push" as a civil society also noted that the city and various sectors needed guidance, which the indigenous authorities effectively provided.

Antonio and Colocha were deeply moved by the sight of organized market vendors marching together, describing it as an emotional and hopeful moment. This new form of organization saw markets workers bringing food pots to sustain the resistance, a topic explored further in Chapter 6, in this chapter delves into the emotional factors sustaining long-term participation, the strategies used to maintain interest and commitment, and the impact of emotions on the National Strike's outcomes. The unity of Guatemala City's markets was surprising, as they have rarely joined other social and political struggles. Interviewees noted that this level of organization was unprecedented and significant, given that markets are a vital part of the city's economy and daily life. As the strike progressed, the interviewees revealed that as the strike days passed, more political "battles" were observed within the city's territory regarding the organization of which markets participated and which did not, considering that market vendors were organized depending on where their market was located. The decision to participate as market vendors was at the community level and not all markets joined.

As well as the organization of the markets, the neighborhoods of Guatemala City were also organized for the first time without precedent and played a critical role in carrying out the blockades around the city. Guatemala City is divided into zones containing organized neighborhoods. In some of the city's neighborhoods, groups of individuals self-organize and identify themselves according to their respective neighborhoods. Many of them were organized for the first time, following the call of the indigenous authorities, as reported by most interviewees. In addition to this, there is the support of several religious communities, which have historically played a vital role in the country's social struggles. The participation of these two actors was further studied in the following chapter to understand their primary motivations for participating in the National Strike.

The identity of the above-mentioned actors played a critical role in the organization of the National Strike. It is necessary to briefly explain this element in this research because from this, we can understand where people were named within the National Strike and why some identities were not mentioned. Barrilete points out that at the MP, people were not named simply as Guatemalans; the concept of identity changed during the National Strike:

It was interesting at the MP to see how people also started naming themselves from other identities, not even from being Guatemalan per se, like I am from the Reds group' (Reds is a soccer club). I mean, a caravan of Reds arrived, a caravan of bikers arrived, a caravan of whatever, then the comrades of a transgender organization arrived, for example, others arrived to bring food and said, 'Well, look, this is a small contribution from the churro group from a random fair.' Can you imagine everyone naming themselves based on their work identity? I mean, it was not even like, 'I am Guatemalan, and that is why I am here,' not even from an ethnic identity, but from the identity they identified with, from being an informal street worker to an office worker who came by every day after work for a beer.

This perspective sheds light on how the National Strike serves as a platform for individuals to embrace and express diverse aspects of their identities beyond traditional national or ethnic categorizations. Moreover, the connection between affective dispositions and identity formation is evident in how individuals' emotional

connections with specific social groups or activities influence their self-identification and participation in the strike. Emotions such as pride, solidarity, or belonging likely played a significant role in shaping the identities individuals embraced during this collective action, highlighting the intricate relationship between affective experiences and identity formation in social movements.

Sauer (2023, p. 824) argues that “affect and emotions are characterized by several processes of in_visibilization, of making people intelligible or non-intelligible, (...) it is a process of power, which has the potential to create hierarchy and oppression. People may not want to recognize (or want to ‘hide’) affect and emotions, aiming to keep or make them invisible; others may want to deploy emotions. Nevertheless, societal rules determine how and which affect and emotions are allowed to be felt, shown and to become visible, and which should be invisibilized. What is appropriate to visibilize and what not is a matter of social convention and may change over time – and these conventions of visibilizing and invisibilizing make affect ‘stick’ to people” (Ahmed, 2019, p. 29 as cited by Sauer, 2023, p. 824).

Despite the processes of (in)visibilization affects and emotions, can be seen with the identities and forms of belonging. Tomás notes that during the National Strikes, people associated with LGBTQ+ or feminist causes did not always identify with these labels. This sometimes led to these demands and sexual identities being overlooked. Barrilete emphasizes that this did not mean sexual dissident identities were absent; rather, the National Strike encouraged people to adopt different identities. Consequently, even though the LGBTQ+ community did not name itself out of security concerns, the strike was seen as a plurinational space that respected diversity, with gender diversity implicitly present.

Understanding the historical position of LGBTQ+ individuals within the context of the National Strike and in Guatemala generally requires recognizing the country's conservative and religious nature. For example, Law for the Protection of Life and Family 5272, introduced in Congress in 2017 and approved on March 8, 2022, before being declared unconstitutional, is often viewed as a "smokescreen" (Quintela, 2019). The law criminalized spontaneous abortions, prohibited teaching about non-heterosexual relationships in schools, and sanctioned discrimination based on sexual

orientation, among other measures, highlighting the challenges faced by the LGBTQ+ community in Guatemala.

In the interview with Tomás, this issue was discussed, and how corrupt and conservative governments use the LGBTQ+ community to legitimize their discourses and the National Strike was not an isolated case:

I am going to talk about the LGBT community, about queers specifically. I think we (queers) have spent eight years being at the center of the narrative hurricane so that corrupt governments can build legitimacy. So, there was a lot of fear among the queer community about being visible as queers because it would delegitimize the movement. There are people who might be very supportive and willing to join in, but when they see a flag, they think, 'Oh, that is that globalist agenda,' and they pull back. I find it extremely unfair because LGBTQ+ individuals have been there at every juncture. We have been part of collectives and part of mobilizations. We have helped sustain care and life and have been at the forefront. The dignity we must come and say, 'Well, I am going to invisibilize this part of myself and not introduce this demand for the sake of this movement,' is unfair and very sad. However, I think there is a depoliticization in that sense, and obviously, it is not voluntary, but there is a depoliticization because of violence.

This theme was explained several times during interviews. Barrilete discussed in the same way that throughout history, in all struggles and rebellions there will always be a social group or subject that must sacrifice itself. Based on this Alejandro talked about how the LGTBQ+ community organized and led many spaces without naming themselves from there:

"They are going to erase us from history... we are not going to appear. Like Bernardo or Karin (president and vice-president elect) did not mention us in their speech (at the inauguration), but we were always the ones there, putting our bodies on the line and leading. Whoever was moving on Calle Martí, if you want to see it, we were the ones leading it, but yeah, they are going to erase us from that history.

As Alejandro, Barrilete, Antonio and Tomás talk about this issue, they point out that it was frustrating. Although it sounds contradictory, the space of the National Strike

was a space where all identities were welcome, but some had to be cancelled for security reasons. Therefore, it could not be said that all were welcome, only those that were somehow convenient to be seen, the people interviewed mentioned that this contradiction made them want to participate more, knowing that the government that was going to take power in a certain way is less conservative on these issues.

As in all social movements, and Barrilete would say, in this "revolution" that occurred in Guatemala during late 2023 and early 2024, many visible and invisible actors and issues shape the course of events. Another critical issue that was sidelined to avoid "dividing" the National Strike is the topic of genocide in Palestine. Some of the interviewees agreed that it was not possible to pay so much attention to this issue, where the Giammattei government signed against the ceasefire in Palestine twice, since both events happened simultaneously, and at the beginning of October, the civil society of Guatemala could not organize itself because it was in the most intense days of the National Strike.

Similarly, there was a narrative from a right-wing group that was against the National Strike, starting with bad intentions and dividing the movement by claiming that because some of the groups supporting the National Strike also supported Palestine, and because Arévalo supported the Strike, he was pro-Palestinian. The narrative was then divided. In the interview with Tomás, he talked about this fear:

For the inauguration in the square, some people brought Palestinian flags; when I saw that, I first understood the interconnection of our struggles; it was more like because Guatemala is freeing itself, it will be able to be part of a global conversation about the Palestinian genocide. There is an intertwining of our struggles, like I am because you are, and as Guatemala managed to be, it will be able to advocate for Palestine, and we have seen that. Let us say if before, we could not speak because we had that fear... So, let us say it is not just going to invisibilize the issue that we could not talk about; we could not show international solidarity, but yes, we had a reason to keep quiet because if we had known this, it would have divided the movement.

I consider it relevant to emphasize this topic in this research, considering that while this thesis is being written, the genocide against the Palestinian population continues, and because Israel played an essential role in supporting the genocide in

Guatemala in 1981-1983 towards the Ixil indigenous communities, who were also part of the National Strike. This is in line with the strategies used by Zionism, which are based on manipulating memory and trying to compare the violence of the past with the reproductions of that violence in the present. This issue was mentioned by some of the people interviewed, Tomás argues that beyond making the issue invisible, it was not possible to talk about it, nor was it possible to show international solidarity, he indicates that "we were right to keep quiet" because talking about the Palestinian issue would have divided the National Strike.

To conclude this chapter, I return to the words of Tomás who spoke about the feeling that the National Strike generated, as relating to the "imagined community" concept of Benedict Anderson (1991). Anderson's work showed that a nation is not just a geographical or political entity but a socially constructed community; this idea is well established and has been further explored by many other scholars, demonstrating its wide acceptance and influence. An imagined Community is envisioned by individuals who identify as community members. Through this concept, Tomás shows the feeling that the National Strike generated:

There was a sense of collectivity, and I suspect that something like what Anderson calls an 'imagined community' was felt as if experiencing a real democracy or a sense of nationhood. When nation-states are formed, there is what this author Anderson calls an imagined community. You do not know who each Guatemalan is, but you imagine that they are already a community. Well, nationalism really fails in many countries, with this idea of really making you feel part of a community. However, I believe that during the Strike, there was a sense of community and an intuition that there would be someone else out there who was my peer, and in that sense, responsibility arose. I believe that me, it is more important, and it is that a Plurinational State was de facto experienced, and socially, a democracy was experienced.

This National Strike is not an isolated event, but a part of the historical process of struggles and social movements. For some interviewed individuals, it was the second part of what happened in 2015, a second "breaking point" for Guatemalan society, which stood out for its organization, articulation, and solidarity—qualities lacking in 2015. Colocha says that beyond being a continuation of 2015, this National

Strike was an opportunity to make several changes: "I do believe it was about reclaiming dignity and reorganizing the country." For her, the greatest conclusion is this emotional state in which she felt a unity as a country reclaiming dignity.

The National Strike in Guatemala was a defining moment that marked the culmination of historical struggles and societal movements as well as the beginning of a new chapter in the nation's history. The strike served as a last resort to protect Guatemala's fragile democracy and symbolized the collective act of faith and resistance among the Guatemalan population. Interviews with key participants revealed that the strike represented a pivotal moment, akin to a second "breaking point" for Guatemalan society, characterized by enhanced organization, articulation, and solidarity compared to previous instances. Moreover, the strike fostered a sense of an "imagined community," where individuals experienced a semblance of democracy within a Plurinational State. However, the strike was not only symbolic in nature; it also provided an opportunity for societal reorganization and the reclamation of dignity, potentially paving the way for transformative change within the country.

In this chapter, the significance of emotions in the organization and sustainment of the National Strike in Guatemala has been emphasized. The immediate impetus for the strike, the raid on the TSE by MP agents, sparked a broad coalition of indigenous authorities and societal sectors united by fear, anger, and hope. These emotions not only motivated initial participation but also sustained involvement throughout the strike, revealing the profound impact of collective feelings on social movements. The concept of *acuerpar*, rooted in territorial community feminism, emerged as a central theme, emphasizing embodied support and solidarity, and demonstrating the deep interconnectedness of individual and collective actions in the movement.

The study uncovered the complexities of the movement, such as visible versus invisible resistance and the balance between peaceful and assertive protests. These complexities reflect the diverse strategies used by participants. Building on these insights, Chapter 4 explored the role of emotions and feelings in social mobilization and their impact on democratization and social justice efforts in Guatemala.

Chapter 4: Mobilizing Emotions and the Heartbeat of the National Strike

This chapter explores the emotions of participants in the indefinite national strike in Guatemala, focusing on how these emotions were conveyed through language in the interviews conducted. To begin, I explored the main mobilizing emotions, engaging in a dialogue between the interviews and Jasper's theory (2018). Next, I examined how these emotions evolved over the course of the national strike, identifying critical moments as highlighted by the interviewees. Applying this theoretical framework and conducting research from the emotional dimension is complex due to the ever-changing nature of emotions and numerous challenges, as noted by Poma and Gravante (2022).

The study of emotions within social movements poses significant difficulties. Emotions are subjective and fluctuating, varying greatly among individuals and over time. Societal rules and norms further influence which emotions are expressed or suppressed, adding complexity. To address this, the analysis focused on identifying explicit and implicit emotional cues from the interviews. This approach aims to uncover the underlying emotional currents driving the movement, even though some aspects of emotional expression may remain ambiguous or harder to interpret.

The primary objective of this chapter is to illustrate the crucial role that emotions, both individually and collectively experienced, played in sustaining and directing the national strike. Through this analysis, I found that emotions such as hope, anger, fear, and solidarity were predominant. These emotions not only motivated individuals to participate but also sustained their involvement over the prolonged period of the strike.

Acuerparnos in shared emotions

“Complicidad: Vínculo que surge a partir de la identificación de las luchas comunes de las personas dentro de la organización, es decir, implica todo aquello que compartimos con las demás personas y que se convierte

en el motor de nuestra lucha colectiva". (Instituto 25A, 2021)⁵

In this segment, I delve further into the investigation of the emotions that were evoked by the participants during their interviews, specifically the emotions that were explained. In exploring interviewees' motivations, I was able to find many similar and different emotions that helped me in this analysis. The first motivation that brings with it emotions is *acuerpar*, which can be translated as feel or show support in an embodied way. Rooted in the word for "body," this concept of *acuerpar* or *acuerpamiento*, arises from territorial community feminism, this feminism is a current of feminism based on community building it was born out of Guatemalan and Bolivian indigenous communities, and it is summarized as "being body to body, with each other." According to Lorena Cabnal this *acuerpar* is a personal and collective action of our bodies outraged by the injustices experienced by other bodies "in their plurality of existences" (2019, p. 122). Due to this indignation, the bodies "self-convene to provide political energy to resist and act against multiple patriarchal, colonial, racist, and capitalist oppressions" (Ibid.). Therefore, the *acuerpar* is to inhabit the body (one's own and others) and recognize territory as a link to all living things.

From this concept, one of the main findings in the interviews was that the primary motivation to participate in the National Strike was to *acuerpar* the indigenous authorities, especially the organization of the 48 Cantones, who called for and initiated this indefinite National Strike.

This finding can be observed in several ways. Although *acuerpar* is the primary motivation, the interviewees mentioned reasons why they wanted to *acuerpar*. Fátima indicated that what motivated her to participate was the call made by the indigenous authorities and the importance to *acuerpar* this population, which has historically suffered from racism and exclusion in political and social matters in Guatemala:

They (the indigenous authorities) also made a clear call to all citizens, not just the city but the entire population, to join. So, for me, it was also about responding to that call and not leaving these leaders alone, who have historically been invisible and whose leadership has been overlooked.

⁵ "Complicity: A bond that arises from the identification of common struggles among individuals within the organization, that is to say, it implies everything we share with others and becomes the driving force of our collective struggle."

In the same way, Jorge highlights that the motivation for most of them was to go to *acuerpar*, mentions that people in the city “we were 100% *acuerpando* the people at the MP, the people (the indigenous communities) who spent 105 days outside the MP”. This again highlights the recognition that several people interviewed, who identify themselves as ladinos/mestizos, recognize the indigenous authorities as leaders of the National Strike and *acuerpan* them in the fight. Beyond recognizing their leadership, the fact that the population acknowledged them marks a historic milestone in Guatemala, where they have been marginalized in the country's history and struggles (Fundación et al., 2024).

Analyzing the emotional dimension of the protest implies identifying them not only from their labels, but also from their characteristics; this motivation to *acuerpar* the indigenous authorities was identified from the emotion of not leaving them alone. But another relevant finding from the interviews is that not all the people interviewed *acuerpo* with the same purpose. Tomás argues that his motivation to *acuerpar* this National Strike stems from fear of repression. This form of *acuerpar* comes from the same emotion of not leaving them alone, but with the added factor of fear of repression, several people interviewed agreed that for them it was better to go and *acuerpar* to the indigenous authorities because the more people there were, the less likely they were to be repressed. Tomas said:

There was a sense of *acuerparnos* because it was dangerous, also a bit of -I am not going out alone, that was one of the reasons to join. The first thing, was insecurity but after the insecurity there is a search for *acuerpamiento*, and when there is *acuerpamiento* there is security and there is a sense of belonging.

The fear that existed in the atmosphere of the National Strike is something that several interviewees point out: the fear of repression, criminalization, and the use of violence from the government and the MP, especially because under the Giammattei government this violence, repression and harassment of women activists has increased. Therefore, fear was palpable and constant, Jorge said:

If these people are doing all this, I mean, if they are going on strike, what prevents me from being able to go and *acuerparlos*? Because I had in mind that it was going to become very violent, that there would be many police, that there would be much repression.

In the same line, Colocha also indicated that it was necessary for her to go and *acuerpar* with the authorities and indigenous communities because she is aware of how violent the city can be. To understand this it is important to go back to what is meant by *acuerpar* because is not only about supporting each other due to the indignation that our bodies feel; as Cabnal (2019) says, it is also about supporting each other because of the fear and violence that exist in our countries and territories, especially in this case, how hostile Guatemala City can be, in terms of violence and racism. In Guatemala, fear of repression and criminalization has intensified in recent years, as public institutions and the judicial system have been used to fabricate cases against activists, judges, and journalists. This has led to numerous exiles and unfounded sentences, contributing to a pervasive atmosphere of fear.

The motivation of *acuerpar* leads us to introduce the concept of 'reciprocal emotions,' a very relevant concept in Jasper's theory on social movements (2018). This motivation leads us to the emotion of fear, and how these emotions can motivate action and strengthen commitment when the protest benefits the group and influences strategies (Poma & Gravante, 2022). Reciprocal emotions can also influence the reinterpretation of the protest's impact or become the result of the protest. Reciprocal emotions become the result of protests and can impact future actions (this impact is discussed in chapter 5). Jasper's perspective is that groups become stronger when they exhibit reflexive emotions in response to particular events and when they possess affective loyalties that are mutually beneficial (Jasper, 1997). This can be observed with the motivation of *acuerpar* out of fear upon observing the interviews. It is also necessary to analyze these reciprocal emotions shared among some participants and explore where they come from, because Jasper argues that they can motivate or strengthen their commitment. It is essential to understand that emotions come from different reasons, as observed in the results, where the interviewed participants mobilized based on wanting to *acuerpar* indigenous authorities. However, some of them did so out of fear of the use of force and the repression, and from the history that Guatemala City has towards indigenous peoples, their main motivation was to *acuerparlos* them, and the interviewees emphasized that the more people there were, the less likely there would be a big repression.

Another reciprocal emotion observed in the interviews was indignation; in some cases, it was mixed with anger toward the current situation. Fátima highlights these two emotions as her main motivators:

What also motivated me was the anger and indignation that, as citizens, we have already done so many things to defend democracy. Thus, it stems greatly from indignation and anger that popular sovereignty is not being respected.

One of the most critical demands of this national strike, on the part of the indigenous authorities who made this call, is the need to defend popular sovereignty beyond a system that has historically oppressed indigenous peoples and minorities. These two emotions are not opposed but complementary to the mobilization of some participants. Colocha points out that in her neighborhood in zone 5 of Guatemala City; all the neighbors they knew and participated in the National Strike in this territory were people who felt indignation about what was happening. The present occasion marks the first time we have observed neighborhoods in Guatemala City organizing on their own.

As outlined above, these reciprocal emotions are complemented by other emotions and this package can be called a moral battery (Jasper, 2011). Most interviewees felt indignant in the situation, but at the same time, they felt hope and joy. As Fatima said, the primary motivation was to see the transition of the government:

I think what motivated us, and motivated them, was to see the transition, so another goal was added, let us say, that internally, it was said the strike would end when Bernardo (president-elect) took office.

It is a motivation for something to be different, for there to be a change, or, as the Semilla (seed) party (winning political party) put it, the arrival of “a new spring.” It is an emotion that is necessary to name because it builds a collective imagination. As Jorge explained, participating in the National Strike was a way to feel represented in politics:

I have never felt represented in political environments... putting aside the party and not getting involved with the Semilla Movement, but they were people I knew I could trust for my present and future, as it would be better. Obviously, in their government plan, they do not have anything about LGBTQ rights,

marriage, or anything like that, but I know it is a step toward improvement: right? Towards something that we can do very well in the future.

The sociocultural context is important for understanding the construction of emotions; in this case, what Jorge said about the representation of people from the LGTBIQ+ community in the Guatemalan congress has been very little, and the political party of Semilla gave some people from the community hope that, at least during this government, they were going to try not to have setbacks on this issue, as had happened before.

The people interviewed argues that when they were at the MP, or at different blockades in the city *acuerpando* the National Strike, also reflected on the importance of reclaiming public space, Colocha argues that it was like a civic celebration for her, and that the city felt diverse and joyful. In the next chapter I discuss the issue of the recovery of public space and the taking of the streets. However, another of the motivations that caught my attention is the interview with Jorge, in which he said that faith and religion as the first motivation to participate. He describes like this:

I believe that what always moves me is faith and hope. I might not show it much, but I have much faith. During those days, I said my faith moved me to service. And then, it was like saying, I believe in this God who is in the streets, I believe in this God who resists, in this God who is diverse and who is in the people who are here, who is in the authorities, and who is manifesting through the authorities who are mobilizing many people and who are calling for action.

Fátima also emphasizes that service and faith were fundamental to sustaining this national strike. When mentioning faith, this person refers to religious faith, and points out that there were masses and services of believers, Catholics, evangelicals, and indigenous invocations in front of the MP, the place where the National Strike was held for 105 days. This created an inter-religious and respectful environment and, at the same time, politicization. This is important to highlight in the sociocultural context, as Guatemala is a highly religious and conservative country. However, in the National Strike, it was possible to observe how the faith of different religions and beliefs mobilized several people and sustained them to continue in the fight. I believe that the topic of faith and service as the main motivators for organizing is an extremely complex and deep topic in Guatemala that requires further research.

Analyzing shared emotions during the National Indefinite Strike in Guatemala offers profound insight into the impulses that led participants to join the movement. Firstly, *acuerpar* was highlighted, reflecting a solid emotional bond based on identification with everyday struggles within the organization. This solidarity, Tomas points out, a popular solidarity became the main engine of the collective struggle and a form of sustainability, and more discussed in the next chapter, which demonstrates the importance of solidarity among participants as a driving force for social change and sustainability of the National Strike.

From this, we can classify *acuerpar* as part of affective commitments (Jasper, 2018), as it is an emotion that, as described in this typology, is generally more stable and characterized by a more elaborate cognitive process than the previous categories. Affective commitments, which constitute part of our identity and guide our actions, these emotions are not necessarily directed toward another human being; the bond can also involve ideas, places, objects, or institutions. In this case, there is this *acuerpamiento* with the indigenous authorities.

These moral emotions, as described by Jasper (2018), have a long duration, are based on moral principles or intuitions, and are closely intertwined with cognitive processes. They are emotions of approval or disapproval and can be directed toward others and their actions, like the emotion of *acuerpar*. These emotions, linked to our values and beliefs, do not change unless we interpret reality or prioritize changes in our values. Therefore, we can classify indignation and faith as moral emotions.

It also is important to show the effects of fear on the participation of interviewed individuals. Alejandro, a young man who has been politically harassed on behalf of the MP, indicates that he stopped participating at some point because, for safety reasons, his legal team suggested that they needed to lower their profile and stay at home out of fear of criminalization. Tomas points out that he went out with his mom in zone 10 (one of the "business" neighborhoods of Guatemala City that was organized for the first time), and they were almost run over because they and other people were blocking the street, as part of the National Strike. As a result, their mom stopped going out, and when Tomás did go out, it was more for cultural activities, that took place as part of the national strike, with "their tribe, their people." At the same time, Tomás decided to reintegrate into a collective dedicated to political communication,

emphasizing that this was because it wasn't easy for him to go out into the streets, stating, "I am going to put myself to use for something I'm good at - and it's a bit like thinking about it narratively." Another way in which this fear is influenced, as mentioned in the previous chapter, is to nullify certain identity struggles, such as being part of the LGBTQ+ community.

Finally, the participants observed a strong sense of hope, faith, and commitment to community services. Belief in a higher purpose and desire to contribute to society's welfare were powerful drivers for joining the strike. These positive emotions counterbalanced indignation and fear, giving participants strength and determination to face the challenges that arose during the movement.

In summary, the analysis of the mobilizing emotions shared by interviewees during the Indefinite National Strike in Guatemala revealed a complex interplay of feelings, including indignation, fear, hope, faith, and service (that I can also describe like devotion and altruism). These emotions acted as catalysts for collective action and for sustaining the National Strike, reflecting the diversity of motivations and perspectives among participants, demonstrating the emotional richness and depth of their commitment to the cause.

The evolution of emotions

*"La huelga nacional llega cargada de la energía de unidad, justicia, rabia y la necesidad de cambio. Que el fuego que hoy nos mueve permanezca encendido"*⁶.

Vania Vargas, 2023

This section aims to identify and briefly analyze how interviewees' emotions changed during the National Strike. It identifies the key moments that triggered these emotional changes and examines them in the previous section. Initially, this research focused on the first 18 days of the National Strike, but during the interviews, it was challenging to discuss experiences and emotions focused only on the first 18 days after the strike had come to a successful close. Consequently, interviewees often spoke about their emotional evolution from the beginning of the electoral process to the inauguration and beyond. This highlights the need to deconstruct the temporality

⁶ "The national strike comes charged with the energy of unity, justice, anger, and the need for change. May the fire that moves us today remain lit."

of the National Strike, acknowledging its historical context. Although the strike ended on January 15, 2024, its impacts and achievements continue.

In fact, as Colocha highlighted the whole year 2023 was very emotional and exhausting, starting with the beginning of the electoral process, when there were constant attempts of attacks to stop and hinder the electoral process by public institutions. From these, identified key moments that triggered significant emotional changes in the participants' experiences, especially when they were asked about their most tense moment and the one they enjoyed the most during their participation in the National Strike. Likewise, the emotions that motivated the participants and those left behind by the national strike were analyzed. It is necessary to show each person's favorite moments, as this helped to understand the emotions produced and to name those everyday acts that took place within the National Strike, which may have gone unnoticed but were necessary to someone.

In general, interviewees' favorite moments were in the reappropriation of public space and the creation of spaces of joy. Fátima emphasizes that seeing all the people dancing marimba at the MP encampment was very emotional for her.

I said, "Oh, how beautiful this is, I mean, this is how reality should be." If we could live like this, regardless of our skin color or ways of thinking, why is it so hard to achieve this right? So, I think my cycle, let us say, in the resistance of the MP, ended very nicely, with much gratitude and tears.

As indicated by Ender and Varga, throughout history, music has been a powerful tool for social change, utilized by various gender groups to address social injustices and promote unity; activist musicians have played a crucial role in challenging oppression and fostering collective action (2022). Additionally, music has been recognized as a means of social transformation, contributing to social cohesion, identity construction, and educational sensitization, as evidenced in studies conducted in El Retiro, Antioquia (Hess, 2019). This experience relates to Jorge and Alejandro, as both involve using dance as a means of resistance. In this case, it was a zumba class where more than 300 people participated, and they described this activity as "utopian," seeing people laughing and sharing in the middle of the street.

Colocha's favorite moment felt "ecstatic", was when a bicycle route was made to visit several of the points that had been taken. Several families, friends and children

participated in this event. She indicated that approximately 300-350 people participated and had to change the route because they expected fewer people. She also noted that this was impressive because the city was empty. It is worth mentioning that this activity disrupts the norms of Guatemala City, as biking is an act of resistance in a city where public transportation is precarious, and vehicle traffic is constant (Acosta, 2022). Luna also said that she has had a bicycle for a few years but that she is always afraid to go out on the street because of the traffic and getting run over, since there are no bicycle lanes, "but biking on a bridge in Guatemala and riding those kilometers on an empty bridge was really nice".

Tomas also explained that biking around the city was one of his favorite experiences, and also adds that as a trans person living in Guatemala City, having spaces of enjoyment that do not have to do with being locked up and that are not private and simply existing in community, he said "I never hide that I am trans, I never carried a flag, but it was not a problem either". Tomás indicates that for him his favorite moment was being able to inhabit the city as a queer person. This may seem contradictory to what was points out above about nullifying gender identities and sexual orientations, but Tomás mentions that he felt comfortable living in the city, but at no time were sexual dissidences named, they were part of the National Strike but without naming themselves.

Antonio described his favorite moment as the first day at the MP, when Mayan spiritual invocations were made, and an altar was set up. This space was maintained for 105 days of resistance and became an interreligious site where Catholics, evangelicals, and indigenous authorities coexisted. Daily prayers and the presence of the authorities kept the spirit of resistance alive. He vividly recalled when the Ixil authorities arrived and insisted on having fire there, as it represents divinity and the energy of ancestors. They set up an altar with candles and made an invocation, emphasizing that their presence was driven by a sense of divine purpose and duty to serve as authorities, refusing to remain indifferent to the events unfolding.

Jorge also recalled one of the tensest moments, standing face-to-face with the police, feeling both fear and bravery. He described the intense emotions of tension, anger, and tears within the organization during these confrontations. Two interviewees specifically emphasized issues with the police, noting that the police's intent was

always intimidation. Additionally, one interviewee spoke about distancing themselves from the National Strike due to internal dynamics that became violent and authoritarian, with some individuals demanding specific forms of participation, likening it to a "police of social struggles." This caused some participants to withdraw from certain spaces.

The "police of social struggles," as Fátima calls it, highlights the need to recognize violent dynamics within social movements. Fátima perceives that some individuals, in their eagerness to lead, become authoritarian and demand a level of activism that not everyone is willing to engage in. Barrilete also said the difficulty of yielding the floor in the city and recognizing other leadership. Fátima said that the protagonism is seen as creating "activist canons," where a profile of an activist, TikToker, or human rights defender is established. This is viewed as an insult due to the country's historical struggles and the physical commitment required to defend the territory, especially for those who identify as indigenous.

Most of the people interviewed, when asked this question answered positive emotions, contrary to what Barrilete told me about how one of their favorite moments was when they felt fear (due to repression, criminalization or uncertainty) indicating that in the sense that the fear did not feel so raw, because it was not only a body going through it, but it was a collective itself feeling the same, knowing that this was wrong, and that whatever happened, it was a collective that was going to continue to be there.

When analyzing interviewees' favorite moments using emotion classification, we can examine how each of these moments aligns with the different types of emotions identified in the study. The participants experienced a range of affective commitments during the National Strike. Dancing to marimba music on the street evoked feelings of happiness, gratitude, and tears, fostering a deep sense of community connection and appreciation for cultural diversity. Engaging in street zumba classes and cycling through city streets generated moods of joy and shared energy among participants, leaving people with a lasting positive emotional boost throughout the day.

At the MP, spiritual invocations stirred feelings of nostalgia, courage, and hope, showcasing unity among diverse communities and the integration of indigenous spiritual traditions into their resistance efforts. Additionally, reflex emotions such as

fear during tense moments and withdrawal due to certain behaviors were observed among participants, serving as automatic responses to challenging situations.

In considering these favorite moments of the people interviewed, it is possible to observe the variety of emotions generated by the strike, and the importance of retaking the streets, and having spaces of joy. These moments were significant for the participants, providing them with a sense of community, connection, and motivation to engage in social movements.

An examination of the emotions felt by the participants in the National Strike revealed a diverse array of feelings, including both fear and anxiety, as well as hope and gratitude, as we saw above. These emotions are influenced by various factors, including specific events within the strike, interactions with other participants, and observations about social and political changes in the country (see Chapter 5).

The strike represents a moment of transformation and unity for Fátima, motivated by change and hope. They view political transition as an objective and feel gratitude to indigenous peoples for their resistance and resilience. Additionally, they celebrated the accomplishments achieved during the strike and recognized the importance of continuing to fight for their rights. This motivation is driven by the desire to see positive societal change and to continue moving towards a more just and equitable Guatemala.

On the other hand, the feeling left by the National Strike is also related to those motivated by fear, like Jorge, who experienced anxiety and panic attacks during the strike but also found solace in the solidarity and mutual support of the participants. Jorge emphasized that anxiety persists, indicating that anxiety persisted long during the National Strike, and also afterwards.

Antonio, motivated by courage and hope, emphasized the importance of diversity and unity in the fight for rights. The resilience of indigenous peoples inspired them, and they saw the strike as an opportunity to build a better future for all Guatemalans. They experience joy and excitement while resisting dignity and solidarity:

To me, seeing the indigenous peoples there gave me a lot of hope, and I believe it is possible to build a Guatemala where a diversity of organizations and people

can thrive. Something beautiful that stuck with me is that they (indigenous authorities) acknowledged the Ladino Mestizo people, so in that recognition, I identified myself. This breaks certain barriers to discrimination and indifference, which sometimes exist. So I think it was very beautiful to hear that, and it gives me hope that we can walk together and that everything is possible if we respond to a single call and if we are in tune with each other.

The emotions experienced by participants in the National Strike in Guatemala reflected the complexity and intensity of the experience. From fear and anxiety to hope and gratitude, these emotions reflect the diversity of perspectives and experiences of the resistance movement.

This chapter reveals that the emotions expressed by the individuals interviewed were remarkably similar, with the verb *acuerpar* being widely used in Guatemalan society, particularly within social movements. Examining the emotions that motivate support for the National Strike called by indigenous authorities uncovers the potential for paternalistic attitudes, where supporters might unintentionally undermine the autonomy and leadership of indigenous communities by assuming they know what is best. To prevent this, it is crucial for supporters to extend solidarity that respects and amplifies the voices of indigenous authorities, ensuring that their support is empowering rather than imposing. This approach embodies true *acuerpamiento*, as Cabnal (2019) points out, “*acuerpar* is when indignation makes bodies self-convene to provide themselves with the political energy to resist and act against multiple patriarchal, colonialist, racist and capitalist oppressions”.

One of the largest marches in October 2023, during the National Strike, had the slogan, "Let us unite and force the tide that will transform the system", With this, the narrative of water and the need to flow as citizens began to be used. Through this exploration and analysis of feelings and how they have changed, they have become a whole tide of emotions. Some are constant, while others, argues by Jasper (2018), are "moral shocks" and are instantaneous.

It is essential to highlight the constant anxiety emphasized by all the interviewees, not only during the National Strike but also throughout the electoral process and, in some cases, even before. Naming this anxiety as an emotion generated by living in a country such as Guatemala, which is constantly under attack

and violence, is essential. To conclude, it is essential to emphasize faith, services, and religion as components of Guatemalan society and delve deeper into the future, which is a fundamental emotion for many Guatemalans.

Chapter 5. The Heart of Resistance: Factors for the Sustainability of the National Strike

This chapter seeks to delve into the aspects and sentiments that individuals who were interviewed cited as instrumental in maintaining their engagement over time. It involves an analysis of these strategies and concludes with an examination of how emotions influence the outcomes and goals of the National Strike, as well as the perception of the impact of the National Strike by the interviewed individuals.

Popular Solidarity in Action: Sustaining Factors and Influential Actors

Two of the most frequently mentioned factors that interviewees said sustained strikes were solidarity and empathy. As discussed above, these were aimed at responding to the call of indigenous leaders and the *acuerpar*, the National Strike. City dwellers responded by participating in their neighborhoods and markets, organizing, and joining the strike. During this period, the political party Semilla was no longer the main actor; instead, Barrilete points out that "the citizens themselves took on the role of taking to the streets, of indignation and everything, of defense."

Barrilete demonstrates a relevant change in the dynamics of the National Strike, highlighting the active participation and emotional commitment of ordinary citizens. This suggests that citizens saw their participation as an essential duty or responsibility, indicating a high level of commitment to the National Strike. Indignation emphasizes how emotions are an integral part of their participation.

Throughout the interviews, it was observed that solidarity was crucial in terms of food, technical support, and logistics to sustain the National Strike, both in the early weeks and throughout its duration. The interviewees explained that there were donation campaigns, mainly spread through social media and WhatsApp chains, for food, cleaning kits, clothing, and items to make the stay of those spending nights at the MP more comfortable. Tomás mention that he found it difficult to physically participate in the National Strike due to work-related issues, but that did not prevent he and his friend from donating financially or materially to help sustain it: "there was a sense of popular solidarity".

Guatemala has a culture of solidarity and donations, and the population has become accustomed to organizing in response to disasters, including landslides, floods, fires, volcanic eruptions, and the covid pandemic. Tomas related this constant expression of solidarity with the historical absence of the state, indicating that it is a response of the population that already knows how to live without the state, which is why he emphasizes that the National Strike was sustained based on this culture of popular solidarity.

Adding the theme of the organization to the National Strike was crucial for its success. This was achieved through the solidarity and donations received as well as the coordination of individuals from various civil societies and organizations. These individuals helped with organizing donations, classifying them, and carrying out the logistical work necessary for the National Strike. In terms of management, several individuals from civil society, faith communities, and organizations played a key role in obtaining portable bathrooms. Despite receiving payments, the companies were initially reluctant to deliver these bathrooms. Additionally, these individuals helped address the issue of cooking and food, which was discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

The organization of the national strike was sustained by the coordination between indigenous authorities, social organizations, civil society, and individuals who were not accustomed to organizing but did so for the first time. Fatima explained that:

There was indeed an upsurge, a rearticulation, of neighbors from zone 5 and neighbors from zone 15, which was quite unusual. I highlight that a lot, like zone 15, was always seen as... elitist, trying to generalize, but this group of neighbors organized cultural gatherings, and even this famous banner that said, "We love the 48 Cantons," I don't know if you saw it, one that said, "We love the 48 Cantons."

The fact that the people of zone 15, one of the most privileged areas of Guatemala City, recognized that there are different forms of political organization in indigenous communities, like *48 Cantones de Totonicapán*, especially being the main actors of the National Strike; the ladino/mestizo population recognized their capacity for convening, organization, and sustainability.

In the encampment at the Public Prosecutor's Office, indigenous authorities and communities were relieved during the 105 days of resistance, as explained by Gladys Tzul Tzul (2024). With this communal strategy, indigenous communities avoided physical and emotional exhaustion from constantly being on the streets. Tzul (2024) explains that mobilization has been sustained thanks to rotation capabilities, a strategy inherent to the indigenous communal governance system. One day per week, a town presents itself to uphold a peaceful demonstration at the MP in Gerona in the capital. This organization and way of sustaining the national strike has marked a milestone in the political life of the country.

The most important factors in sustaining this strike were the firmness, organization, and conviction of the communities and indigenous authorities. With their indigenous communal strategies—community rotation, community kitchen, among others—indigenous authorities and communities managed to summon the urban population, the popular sectors, and the media to fight for the same cause.

To frame this with feminist-queer theorists that position themselves from an intersectional gender perspective to rethink democracy and to overcome the gender binary, Sauer (2023) relies on Ludwig (2021), Butler (2006), and Tronto (2010). She argues that the body, its vulnerability and its need for care, should be the outset of this rethinking, as the necessity to care and being cared for is usually ignored and obfuscated in the classical theories of democracy (Sauer, 2023, p. 825)

Meanwhile, the Indigenous feminist activists in Guatemala use the concept of *territorio-cuerpo-tierra* (territory-body-earth) “to frame their struggles for justice, end gendered violence, and against extraction in their territories” (Walsh, 2023, p. 854). This approach focuses on healing the racialized and sexualized wounds of the *cuerpo* (body), supporting individual and collective healing through processes that interrogate desire, reconnect with the body, and “recovering the erotic as creative life force, can contribute to healing our broken relationship with the *territorio*” (Walsh, 2023, p. 853). By expanding our understanding of justice beyond that legal frameworks, the ecofeminist approach envisions justice from the *territorio-cuerpo-tierra*, contributing to healing the broken relationship with the *territorio* (Dakshita Arora & Prof. Anjana Das, 2023). This is related with the idea that communitarian feminist from Ecuador and Bolivia propose of the *Buen Vivir* (good living), which reflects a human-centered vision

of the world as part of a natural and social environment. Those countries such as Bolivia and Ecuador this concept is part of their constitutions as well as recognized plurinationality.

The concept queer-feminist democracy of care of and of *Buen Vivir* are related to how the National Strike was lived and sustained from these different practices to the traditional ones, which are aware of the role of emotion and the body, this suggests the importance of a continued conceptualization of emotions, care and the body as important elements in reimagining democracy.

In connection with the creation of communities, one of the most significant achievements of the call for the National Strike is articulation among other peoples and the expansion of mobilization within the national territory. This theme is essential for delving into the National Strike, its organization, and sustainability. Antonio mentions that the strike was made sustainable thanks to indigenous authorities:

I also think that for people in the city and organizations, it was like, well, that this is not sustainable if the indigenous authorities are not involved. So, I believe the call emerged from there, so to speak, and also from the indignation that we all felt; we were just looking for someone to guide us or to set the path for the following days, because we also did not expect it to last more than 100 days.

As Antonio noted, the sustainability of the strike depended on the participation of indigenous authorities, emphasizing that the movement's longevity and direction were strongly based on their leadership and the collective indignation that drove their determination. The indigenous authorities provided crucial leadership and a clear forward path, ensuring the strike's persistence beyond expectations.

In addition to indigenous authorities and market workers, the role of religious communities was fundamental to the logistical, organizational, and sustainability aspects of the National Strike. Several interviewees explained the importance of the plurality of beliefs that converged both at the MP and at other points of the National Strike. The convergence of diverse faith communities provided crucial support and resources, further strengthening the movement's ability to sustain itself over an extended period of time, this created a space of respect and all people felt welcome, thus generating emotions of security and *acuerpamiento*.

However, beyond faith, it is also necessary to name the people who supported this National Strike in a less visible way, highlighting the role of women and sexually dissenting voices. In an interview with Luna and Antonio, they argue how resistance was also taking place in the territories, with women often left behind to manage family and land duties during rotations. Despite the predominantly male composition of indigenous authorities, it was women who continued to sustain vital agricultural and familial responsibilities, underscoring their indispensable contribution to the movement's continuity. This dual role of women, both at the forefront of resistance and in the preservation of their communities' well-being, exemplifies their resilience and pivotal role in sustaining the National Strike:

The indigenous authorities were mostly men, and when you asked them, 'What about your family?' - they would say, 'Oh, they stayed behind, my wife stayed because someone has to take care of the house' - or continue these caregiving tasks that support things like agriculture and family work, which were being sustained by women in the territories.

related to the role of women, it is crucial to talk about the role of the community kitchen at the point of resistance at the Public Prosecutor's Office. This community kitchen was organized both logistically and practically by women and sexually dissenting people. Several interviewees emphasized how the kitchen was a political and caring space. This topic merits a full thesis, as managing a kitchen for over 500 people daily for 105 days requires extensive organization and coordination. This strategy was crucial for sustaining the national strikes, in terms of feeding the people who were in the MP encampment, especially in Guatemala City, because there were other kitchens in other departments. In addition, the role of women and their emotions in reclaiming the kitchen as a political and historical space in Guatemalan social struggles.

Fátima said that for some women, being in the kitchen brought back memories of when they cooked for the guerrillas during the armed conflict in Guatemala; it was part of serving the struggle through food. When asked these questions related to the role of women in the community kitchen, Barrilete criticizes "white" feminism, as follows:

I can tell you that the issue of the kitchen, from my Mayan perspective, I would indeed name it a political exercise of resistance. From feminist comrades,

whether white or Ladino-Mestizo, it's like this imposed gender role and whatnot, like, you must do it. Some also recognize it as a political action of resistance and from the care of the body and the body of others. But I do think it was very marked and a very important political role for everyone in the kitchen.

Barrilete's critique of "white" feminism highlights the tension between different feminist perspectives within the movement. She emphasizes that, from her indigenous perspective, the community kitchen is seen as a political act of resistance rather than an imposed gender role. This critique opposes the view that such roles are merely traditional impositions, instead framing them as essential and empowering actions within the community. Understanding these nuanced positions is crucial for appreciating the diverse feminist discourses and their implications within the broader context of the National Strike.

This political exercise of cooking to sustain resistance was done through the care of people who were resisting, sleeping on the streets, and in constant meetings. It is also recognized not as an imposed role but as part of a community organization. There were days when more than 1,200 people were fed three meals. Community cooking was a resistance exercise carried out in the early weeks, mostly by women and sexually dissenting individuals. As discussed in the previous section, there was no recognition of the dissenting population and their key role in the kitchen because of several factors, including security concerns.

The narrative of the interviewed individuals is consistent with how indigenous peoples and authorities came to Guatemala City to teach different ways of organizing. In several interviews, they point out how indigenous peoples taught them to sustain themselves during the strike without relying on traditional systems, as they already had a more community-oriented organization reflected in the community kitchens and shifts between the mentioned communities, which helped prevent political and social exhaustion.

It was also stated in the interview that the indigenous peoples taught them a lesson that their practices or forms of organization were longer, historical and had an ancestral legacy. As noted by the interviewees, acknowledging that we, as a city, do not know how to organize ourselves is a historic change, as it drives the creation of new dialogues not only between collectives or NGOs, but also between city residents

and indigenous communities. Colocha describes that this level of organization is not possessed by the city or the Ladino-Mestizo population because they are nowhere near that level; “we can barely attend neighborhood meetings because we are absorbed by a capitalistic dynamic that doesn't allow us to see beyond our own homes”

The political critique that Colocha makes about how Guatemala City is organized is necessary. It is also crucial to recognize the constant efforts of various organizations and collectives that have worked on these issues, trying to organize in Guatemala City, Guatemala. It is necessary to be critical of this because the generalization and romanticization of organizational forms can also lead to the exoticization of this identity group.

Sustainability Through Feeling: Emotional Drivers of Engagement

The analysis of the factors and actors that sustained the National Strike in Guatemala, especially focusing on people's faith, popular solidarity, and empathy, reveals the intersection of various emotional, cultural, and organizational elements that contributed to sustained resistance over 105 days. These aspects were examined by considering the model proposed by Jasper (2018), which provides a framework for understanding the complexity of emotions and social processes involved in events of this nature.

Solidarity and empathy have emerged as crucial factors that allow the mobilization and sustenance of national strikes. These emotional dimensions align with Jasper's concept of "affective commitments or loyalties," highlighting positive emotional ties to others and to a shared cause. The expression of solidarity through food donations, logistical support, and collective actions reflects an emotional commitment to the community and willingness to contribute to collective well-being. In the same way, this commitment can also be seen in the community kitchen that was held and, in the commitment, to organize, cook, and feed the people who came to support the resistance. Furthermore, faith and conviction in justice of cause played a significant role in sustaining the National Strike. This emotional dimension relates to Jasper's notion of "moral emotions," which encompasses ethical judgments and moral evaluations of individual and collective actions.

The organization and articulation among various social actors, including indigenous authorities, social organizations, and civil society, were fundamental to sustaining the National Strike. This aspect can be understood in terms of "reflex emotions," which encompass automatic and rapid responses to events and information, as well as "emotional energy/mood," which involves an emotional state of excitement and enthusiasm generated by collective action and solidarity. This is reflected in several events within the National Strike, especially when observing the emotions of the participants, both the joy of retaking the public space and the emotions of indignation and anger that united them to take to the streets.

In conclusion, the analysis of the factors and actors that sustained the National Strike in Guatemala suggests a dynamic interaction between emotions, cultural values, and social processes. The combination of solidarity, faith, and community organization played a crucial role in sustained resistance for over 105 days, highlighting the importance of addressing emotional experience and social commitment in their entirety to fully understand the impact of such events on society and culture.

“Putting joy at the center for political sustainability” 17.

This research focuses on these phases in Guatemala City, particularly the encampment that took place in front of the MP and the strikes that occurred in the streets of Guatemala during the initial weeks. The previous section discussed some general factors that sustained a National Strike during the 105 days. These first weeks are fundamental to understand the role of Guatemala City and the people who inhabit this territory. This section conducts a similar analysis but specifically focuses on the first weeks of the National Strike, when the streets and public spaces of Guatemala City were occupied, and the strike was carried out unanimously. Ramazzini (2024) argues that the reappropriation of public space, specifically the streets of Guatemala City, is important as a challenge to hegemonic power and highlights the significance of the performativity of bodies in this spatial context.

All interviewed individuals agreed that Guatemala City had been paralyzed for a few days. They also agreed that occupying public spaces was widespread, generating various emotions in participants, especially the feeling that the city became

inhabitable for two weeks, with diverse interventions from different groups emphasizing the playful nature.

For Ramazzini (2024, p. 18), who discusses the difference between the protests of 2015 and the National Strike, it is important to understand the significance of the performativity of bodies in the reappropriation of public space. Sergio Palencia Frener argues that "the heterogeneity of reclaiming the neighborhood and the street as a social space against fear" (Palencia Frener, 2023). In Guatemala City, where there is a shortage of public spaces for recreation and high levels of violence, the fact that the National Strike took place on the streets and included various recreational and political activities gave people a sense of reclaiming the streets as their own.

The interviewees recalled that, in the streets that were occupied, children's days were celebrated, piñatas were broken, zumba classes, children's games, yoga classes, concerts, masses, religious events, bike rides, cinema, knitting activities, dialogue cafes, vigils, open microphones, banner painting, parties, drag shows, and construction of phrases with bodies (to take drone photos from above and circulate them on social media), among other activities. Alejandro, Jorge, and Colocha emphasized that these activities sustained this historical strike in Guatemala City; they were a way to attract more people who were not usually involved. Alejandro points out that sustaining the strike required more than just daily protests; it involved organizing agendas and using the available streets for recreation, which helped maintain morale over extended periods. He emphasized the need to take advantage of the fact that the streets were empty and at his disposal to have recreational processes in a city where there is hardly any recreation to be found.

Guatemala's history and context, especially in recent years, has seen protests as unsafe spaces and, in some cases, violent and repressed by police forces. In previous protests, participants covered their faces for security reasons. Colocha notes that indigenous authorities requested that they not cover their faces, and repeatedly highlighted that the resistance sites were familiar and peaceful environments. These places were filled with joy, where people brought snacks, played games such as the lottery, and created a family friendly atmosphere. She emphasized that all resistance spaces were peaceful and family oriented, in the sense that there were people of all ages participating.

During this period in Guatemala City, there was a prevailing sense of resistance, and an environment that fostered inclusivity for all individuals. Additionally, there were areas where people could engage in political discourse and discuss their current situation. It is worth mentioning that the police attempted to disperse crowds gathered in certain areas.

In an interview with Alejandro, who led one of the occupied points, he indicated that people responded well to the activities and identified the most convenient time to attract more participants. Alejandro noted that people were motivated by a safe, family friendly atmosphere, explaining that it was a way to engage the surrounding community and make the movement sustainable.

Based on what was reported by the interviewed persons, it can be observed how there was a change in how they protested in Guatemala City, as shows by Ramazzini (2024). In 2015, all demonstrations were held in La Plaza, in front of the national palace. For this National Strike in 2023, it was observed that instead of all the people mobilizing to a specific space, the streets, the sense of community, and neighborhoods were retaken, and a more diverse space was felt in many ways (Ramazzini, 2024, p. 23).

Colocha points out that from those days, they (neighborhoods, specifically hers) noticed that they could reclaim joy in their neighborhood, and that this process of taking to the streets helped them recognize themselves as neighbors, and enabled them to discuss the issues they faced in the neighborhood and organize themselves:

We realized that we also needed to reclaim joy, that it was not just about resisting and criticizing the corrupt, but that we could also take to the streets, and from the third occupation... we made a banner, all the neighbors brought paint, brushes, we played the lottery, and offered bread and coffee. Once we held a citizens' café, it was to discuss the situation because there was also a theme of, we need to do cheerful things, but let us not stray from the point. So, the children got to know each other, and I would say that in the end, that space gave us a lot, the ability to say we are neighbors, and we can organize ourselves. Even though we were not necessarily doing anything against the corrupt pact, the corrupt pact and the resistance made us organize here at the neighborhood level.

Saying "reclaiming joy" in a country like Guatemala is a very strong political statement. As noted above, Guatemala is a country where poverty and violence rates are very high. At the same time, in recent years, there has been an increase in the criminalization of people who fight for democracy. Guatemala is a country experiencing constant social, political, economic, and natural crises. Having spaces where joy and enjoyment are the focus is unusual, and as pointed out by the interviewees, the 2023 National Strike restored their sense of community and hope.

In the same way, as Ana Lucía Ramazzini argues in her article (2024), in different streets that had been taken, people invited drivers of vehicles and motorcycles passing by to dance before continuing their way. This caused the song *si no baila no pasa* (if you do not dance, you do not pass) to go viral on social networks.

In all interviews conducted, dancing was emphasized as a form of resistance. People began to take videos and photographs of what was happening at all the occupied points in Guatemala City, which led more people to join. I believe that the use of social media as a crucial tool for rallying support and changing narratives in this National Strike and the way of organizing in Guatemala is essential for further research.

There were many reactions to dancing in the streets; there were negative and violent reactions, and others were very positive. Fátima mentioned that it was youth who led this National Strike in the City, with the idea that politics can no longer come from the pain or uncertainty that the system constantly imposes on us. Similarly, Tomás indicated that seeing people dance and resist joy is a lesson in the dignity of the people, showing that they want to live well and "since this revolution was danced, then that's *chilero* (awesome)."

The diverse and plural bodies of people occupied public spaces in the protests, politically articulated by two specific demands: the resignation of public officials, and the prevention of a coup d'état. Ramazzini (2024) notes that these acting bodies, in many cases, have been prohibited or restricted in certain spatial contexts. For example, from the call to action, logistical organization, and maintenance of the strike, many of the bodies on the streets belonged to indigenous people and women, who have historically been denied rights, mobility, and presence in public spaces in the city. There were also disruptions from the bodies of LGBTQ+ individuals and working-

class people in the economically powerful areas of Guatemala City. Judith Butler (2015) argues that joint action can serve as a way for bodies to challenge both the imperfect and powerful aspects of current politics. This question is embodied through gatherings, assemblies, strikes, vigils, and the occupation of public spaces, fundamentally driven by the precarity experienced by many of these demonstrators.

As Ramazzini (2024, p. 25) said, this allows us to explore the performativity of bodies in political struggles through the various expressions carried out in the streets; a political struggle that, contextualized in Guatemala, also arises from the precarious conditions to which the population has been exposed due to a coup-based structure rooted in corruption and the sustained privileges of those who have governed. Conditions perceived to continue to deteriorate in the face of a threat when election results are not recognized. Butler (2015) discussed the congregation of bodies in public spaces as a plural and performative right to appearance. This right affirms and installs the body in the political field, relying on its expressive and meaningful function to claim the economic, social, and political conditions that make life more dignified and livable.

This can be seen as reflected in Ramazzini (2024) and Palencia Frener (2023) in the reconfiguration of politics, which, in the case of the 2023 National Strike, also shifts from a central place of power, from La Plaza to the streets, crossing the border between the public and the private, because precarious conditions are experienced in neighborhoods and families. This is reflected in the open microphones on the streets, which revealed the precarities derived from the system, particularly in the popular urban sectors, it is worth emphasizing that the installation of open microphones is a practice that has taken place in various movements around the world. Amenta (2019) argues that open microphones play a crucial role in social movements by facilitating more implicit user engagement, reducing cognitive load, and amplify voices, spreading movement messages effectively. These provide a platform for diverse perspectives and opinions like Fátima point out that this could be observed with an open microphone at the MP as an intense political training school:

In university, they do not usually have us reading Maya authors, we do not have that diversity of thought forms, and for me, the MP became like an intense political training school; I mean, it was like going at a thousand miles per hour,

because every day you could hear speeches from people from different territories expressing a political stance.

What Fatima said shows us the transformative impact of the National Strike on the political education and awareness of participants. Fatima points to the lack of exposure to diverse perspectives, particularly from Mayan authors, in traditional university settings, which often results in a limited understanding of political and cultural issues. In contrast, the encampment that took place at the Public Prosecutor's Office during the strike functioned as an intense and dynamic political training ground, reflecting the potential of social movements as alternative educational spaces that challenge and expand conventional academic narratives. This is also emphasized in the interview with Tomás, where he mentions the importance of carrying out these actions collectively, where they weren't just "parties"; political work was also constant:

It was not just about partying; there was also politicization. However, for me, it was crucial to have spaces of joy and collective playfulness for the sustainability of the strike itself. For example, the group made people dance to be able to pass through the blockades, or like the *tambito* [a traditional drum], it's like traffic drums. These moments were much more powerful in sustaining and giving a political sense to the struggle. So, putting joy at the center for political sustainability, I think we already had a certain memory because in 2015 with the 'batucada' [percussion band] of the people and all those things that the group went to dance. However, it seems to me that there is so much dignity in people because that made the protests strictly peaceful.

Several of the interviewed individuals agree that this organic strategy that sustained the National Strike propelled and facilitated care both internally among the participating individuals, and externally, as the government found it impossible to suppress these protests filled with joy and happiness. Political costs would have been impossible to bear if they had repressed the population. All these demonstrations and recognition of the collective demands of the participants regarding public spaces, recreation, and political reflection during the National Strike need to be highlighted. Barrilete mentioned that the recognition of these demands and joy in the fight, without losing sight of the objectives and being critical of these processes, is essential.

Recognizing that from the processes of defense, struggle, and putting one's body on the line, joy was also valid. Those things at some point did bothersome because it was like, "No, this vibe isn't a joke, it's not just fooling around," because some also went beyond - "the objective should not be lost, and I don't know what." However, I think it was the way the city was found to resist joy through recreational spaces. But I feel that not everything can just happen like that; I think we need to be more forceful, clearer, yes, and more assertive. So, I feel that many objectives were achieved that remained anonymous, and they were not those big objectives.

My analysis has shown that the strategies used to sustain the National Strike in Guatemala reveal the importance of the reappropriation of public space, promotion of joy and happiness, deployment of collective performance, physical commitment, and political education as fundamental elements in maintaining and strengthening the resistance movement.

This analysis shows that the emotional dimension of the protest is necessary to base it on the characteristics from which we can identify joy as an emotion reflecting the reappropriation of public space, but also as a moral joy and mood, based on the deployment of collective performances that were held, taking into account that it created an atmosphere of joy and at the same time a space to talk about politics and what was happening at that time in the country.

The reappropriation of public space and the promotion of joy and happiness align with Jasper's notion of "reflex emotions," which encompasses rapid and automatic emotional responses to events and information. These strategies allowed for the transformation of public spaces into places of encounter, celebration, and resistance, generating a sense of belonging and community among participants. The expression of joy and creation of family friendly and peaceful protests also contributed to counteracting the narrative of violence and repression associated with protests in the Guatemalan context.

Also by performing this emotional analysis, can be observed how the constant politicization that took place during these days of the National Strike, facilitated by the open microphones, through the games and other spaces for dialogues, can be understood in terms of "emotional energy/mode" according to Jasper's typology

(2018), which implies an emotional state of excitement and enthusiasm generated by collective action and solidarity. This gendered enthusiasm to create new spaces in the street, and as Tomás mentioned, a feeling of wanting to do more and being able to contribute more was generated. This is how the levels of social creativity never seen in a social protest in Guatemala were generated.

In conclusion, the analysis of strategies to sustain the National Strike in Guatemala highlights the dynamic interactions between emotions, cultural practices, and social processes in the context of political resistance. The combination of the reappropriation of public space, promotion of joy and happiness, collective performance, physical commitment, and political education was fundamental to maintaining and strengthening the resistance movement, emphasizing the importance of addressing emotional experience and social commitment in their entirety to fully understand the impact of events such as this on Guatemalan society and culture.

Visible and invisible objectives and achievements

“Hay objetivos que no hemos querido nombrar o que no hemos querido reconocer”⁷ -Barrilete

The eight interviewees agreed that it was thanks to the National Strike that Arévalo took power, and at the beginning, this was not the objective. In many cases, it was doubtful whether this would be achieved because there were many constant attacks to delegitimize the electoral results. However, as the weeks of the National Strike passed, and the resignations of public officials who were hindering the electoral process did not happen, the objective changed to that beyond the resignations: Arévalo had to take power.

Some interviewees emphasized that the objective of having officials resign was extremely strategic, as it managed to synthesize and condense several demands at the national level. The indigenous authorities emphasized that this resistance was not partisan, although there was a vote of confidence that the party and the new president promised to continue the fight to remove public officials who were required to resign. In an interview with Tomás, he commented that this objective is also a glimpse of the

⁷ “There are objectives that we have not wanted to name or that we have not wanted to acknowledge”

deep crisis that the system is experiencing. Over eight years, there has been total erosion of institutions and constant attacks on them, and when he mentions this, he also shows the weariness of the constant crisis in Guatemala.

The interviewees were asked if they considered that the fact that these public officials did not resign did not affect their participation and emotions within the National Strike. They were also asked whether they considered that another objective had been achieved beyond these resignations. Although the main objectives of officials' resignations were not achieved, participants agreed that many other important achievements and gains had been made. In an interview with Colocha, she mentions that one of the main achievements is the widespread social rejection of these public officials. Despite remaining in their positions, there is a "social punishment," where the interviewee points out that it is no longer possible for these individuals to go out on the streets of Guatemala:

Consuelo Porras cannot walk the streets of Guatemala in peace, ever. They face social punishment, and no one will allow them to be at peace because they are against the people and corrupt them. So, I think that's a political matter, a political and social punishment... For me, that is sufficient. I mean, of course, that I would like to see them suffering. I can tell you that there are people who wanted to see them dead or have something happening to them, but they face social punishment to the extent that they are hiding. During the resistance, there was much talk that Consuelo was protected by military barracks, I mean, she lives in hiding... but she cannot go out into the streets, she does not have a visa, I mean, they face other punishments, and I think that's also part of the gains we had.

Anger, and somehow also collective hatred towards Consuelo Porras, is an emotion that automatically responds to a series of events, a reflex emotion. In the same way, there have also been various international sanctions imposed on both Consuelo Porras, the Attorney General, and other actors who have helped "undermine democracy and the rule of law." These include travel restrictions and asset freezes imposed by the European Union, United States, and Canada. This achievement can be classified as affective commitments or loyalties (Jasper, 2018), as it has had a longer temporality and has been built up through various actions taken by the Attorney

General and the mentioned public officials. Similarly, as Jasper (2018) suggests, these emotions have helped build a collective identity, by framing it as "us" versus "them, the corrupt," and a sense of belonging. This is intertwined with moral emotions stemming from disapproval and, in some cases, hatred towards these public officials. As stated in the previous chapter, one of the main motivations of some participants was their hatred towards the Attorney General.

In the interview with Tomás, another perceived objective that was achieved was pointed out, which helped encompass the objectives noted by other participants. It was the atmosphere felt in the country and Guatemala City during those days. Tomás described the experience of a Plurinational State and social democracy, which emphasized the importance of a collective identity and an imagined community. During the strike, he felt a profound sense of the imagined community, which he had never felt before. He believed that this experience would have positive consequences, similar to the impact of events in 2015. Tomás argues that they experienced a Plurinational State and democracy, and he had never felt the idea of an imagined community intuitively. Tomás talked about this emotion as something deeply felt in his body, but it was difficult to explain. He described daily life in Guatemala as unsustainable due to constant fear and crises, contrasting it with the National Strike, which fostered the feeling of an imagined community. I interpret this as what Jasper (2018) describes as affective commitment, where the strike generated a sense of unity and collective purpose among a large part of the Guatemalan population. As a country that has historically been divided in many ways, Tomás explained that the national strike gave the feeling of this Plurinational State where indigenous communities and diversities in general are recognized, gave the possibility to observe and get excited about alternative futures, and not only unsustainable ones.

These alternate futures are also related to what Barrilete mentioned: She talks about the recognition of the different identities that emerged, which is related to the idea of the Plurinational State and a collective identity that was strengthened:

It was incredible to see this diversity of individual identities but also how it strengthened our collective identity. It was impressive to witness how in the same space you could have a Maya ceremony, mass, a religious service, and

then, a party at night. So, it was like, wow, a mix of inter-religious or different ways of living life; it was amazing, incredible.

Barrilete explained that these days were a mix of expressions of identity and emotions that felt surreal. She emphasizes that seeing these expressions of such different identities in the same place in Guatemala is not common because we are used to a confluence of identities, which was a pleasant surprise for the participants of the National Strike, to see that they could coexist with each other. This brings us back to what Tomás argues in the de facto Plurinational State. Although, as described in previous chapters, sexual dissenting identities were not recognized or named during the resistance, it was observed in the interviews that one of the achievements was recognition, tolerance, and respect for all identities, cultures, ethnicities, genders, and religions within the same space. This may sound confusing, but based on my analysis of what the interviewees said, there was recognition and tolerance of the identities referred to above, but sexual diversity was not recognized or mentioned. Despite this, Fátima emphasized that enduring so many days occupying the streets was an exercise of conviction for a better future.

The people endured, because we wanted to change, and the change had already come. So, I believe it was another successful achievement, and people have incredible convictions. I mean, sometimes I do not understand where that conviction comes from, but then I realize that we endured because we deserve to live a dignified life, which excites us.

An achievement reached, which all interviewed individuals agreed on, and which, as a researcher, I consider one of the most important, considering the country's history, is the social and political recognition achieved by indigenous authorities and communities. As mentioned in previous chapters, people from Guatemala City talked about how indigenous authorities came to teach them how to organize politically, Fátima said that "now they (indigenous authorities) are legitimate leaders throughout the population and in the city of Guatemala." The interviewees explained that this recognition occurred in several ways. Economically, awareness began to be generated about how a large part of the economy was sustained by indigenous communities, which was reflected when there was no longer any market sale and there was a scarcity of food.

There was also recognition of their historical forms of organization, which have historically been overlooked and are now acknowledged. At the time, seeking advice or support from indigenous authorities to carry out various strikes within the Guatemalan territory reflected the leadership they possessed and the importance of their historical struggles. Fátima asserted with great hope that, "from now on, we cannot ignore this aspect, and we have to think about a more plural and diverse Guatemala, and for me, this transcends the resignations." This can also be reflected in the actions of the new president, who, upon taking office, first went to the MP to thank and recognize the indigenous authorities for their fight for democracy. From this, public discussion about racism, which is a historical and structural problem in the country, began.

For the interviewees, 105 days of resistance was an opportunity for political reflection both at a personal level and at the level of the city, neighborhoods, and collectives. There was self-recognition by several individuals and organizations within Guatemala City, as emphasized in the previous chapters, of not knowing how to organize in Guatemala City. Barrilete reflects on how historically it has been considered that indigenous people need "more education" and need a process of politicization, she mentions how these efforts should focus on Guatemala City, where some people at the National Strike recognized that it is the indigenous people who know how to organize themselves and the city has "to learn"

We do not know how to organize ourselves (people from the city); there is a huge challenge there, and the city also needs to change its mindset, especially NGOs that cannot continue to think that they need to educate and train indigenous people because they do not know about politics. This is the opposite. The focus should be on strengthening and politicizing the city because it is not politicized. The city thinks that just because it's in the city, it's civilized or political, but it's not; they did not prove it.

To this end, all the people and identities that converged in the spaces, and together politicized as migrants, homeless, workers, religious, among others, were added. It was not necessarily necessary for any organization to do it, the importance of it being a purely organic process, based on the emotions of tiredness and annoyance. Alejandro explained that he felt that people were very upset, and that it

was a common stance to say, "we don't want this shit," he said that strategies were made to make people feel comfortable joining the National Strike, and highlights that this attracted many people who normally would not go out on the streets.

In light of these developments, an important achievement was seen in the need to start organizing and recognizing oneself at a grassroots political level beyond the state. This was evident in the organization of neighborhoods in Guatemala City. It is important to mention here that the same political party has been in power in the Municipality of Guatemala City for over 25 years. Fátima explained how residents and neighborhoods were visibly tired.

So, this also indicates that the residents are tired and seeking a change at the municipal-local level. This highlights the need to rebuild the social fabric that has been deteriorating in recent years and shows that the dynamics of work and capitalism, which sometimes hinder our ability to come together, can be overcome. There was indeed mobilization of the residents and constant support for the national strike.

The atmosphere generated during this National Strike can be classified according to the typology of emotions studied throughout this investigation. Jasper (2018) discussed the emotional dimension; can be observed the multiple interactions that mood has with other emotions. Moods may have resulted from resistance. This can be seen in the perception of the achievements of this National Strike, as although initially all interviewees mentioned "they didn't succeed in forcing resignations," they all agree that other achievements have been obtained that are not publicly acknowledged and it is important to name them.

One of the achievements establishes at the individual level, which I consider significant, is that mentioned by Barrilete. I believe that this achievement may be reflected in other people in Guatemala as well. Further research is required to confirm these results.

Barrilete has gone through a process of criminalization by the state. In the interviews, she explained how this process caused her to pause political life. She was afraid and began to withdraw from the political spaces.

From day one, I was at the MP (on the take) and I swear. I believe that political life exists. I mean, there is life as such, the life we live as human beings, like there is a political life, a sex-affective life, an academic life, a life... an active political life. I feel that they (the authorities/indigenous communities) brought me back to that political life, which I had... which I had somehow been forced to annul. Because they (the government) paused me, I was afraid to say things, to do things, to be in spaces, and then when it was the kitchen... it was the moment where I felt identified, and where I felt that I had to be, and that it had brought me back to political life because I could not find sense in this city, and I could not find a reason to fight. I mean, it was just like.. Is it worth continuing to insist on these things? (I6, 2024)

This achievement of reorienting and redefining one's political life, and the meaning of why one continues to fight, is a blend of many of Jasper's proposed categories of emotions, including moral emotions, affective commitments, and reflective emotions. Barrilete argues this feeling of redirecting her political life many times, emphasizing that "here I have my heart", referring to retaking and politicizing the streets, indicating that now she finds more sense in all of this (politics), emphasizing that she does not believe in the state as an institution, since "they are still quotas within these spaces, within the government".

Emotions and Alternative Futures Post-Strike

In this section, I present the emotions with which the interviewees mentioned that the National Strike had left them. Similarly, it should be noted that this question was among the last questions asked after reflecting on everything that occurred. Most interviewees took some time to respond to this question and expressed a sense of hope resulting from the National Strike. A brief overview and analysis of these emotions are provided, followed by a discussion of the construction of alternatives and cultural changes that could impact the Guatemalan cult as perceived by the interviewees.

The hope mentioned earlier was felt, especially on the day of the inauguration, with a sense of hope for a better future and gratitude towards indigenous communities for their resistance. These emotions are filled with hope and happiness when observing what has been achieved. Simultaneously, there was a sense of relief in

releasing all the tensions that had been built up. The interviewees establish shedding tears after witnessing changes in leadership. The sense of hope expressed by the interviewees resonates with the concept of "emotional energy," or a state of excitement and enthusiasm, as proposed by Jasper (2018). This hope manifests as a feeling of optimism towards a better future, especially evident during the inauguration of Bernardo Arévalo. This energizing emotional state encourages people to move forward and imagine new possibilities for Guatemalan society. Many agreed that there was a lifted mental burden, as anxiety and panic attacks remained constant during the strike. The emotions and energy of feeling supported and celebrating these achievements are also noted. However, there is a contrast to what Barrilete explained regarding collective psychological damage. There was both physical and mental exhaustion, as many individuals experienced somatic symptoms, such as flu-like illnesses, indicating somatization of the stress experienced during the strike.

I also think it is a bodily sensation, you know, the body as well. It is not for nothing that we say 'putting your body on the line,' I mean, the body is there and it feels it, it internalizes it, it lives through it, it accompanies it, and people get sick. Well, I think there is also the satisfaction of having contributed; however, I could, from where I could. Above all, the fact that it brought back my political life is the most significant thing for me.

I felt that all the people interviewed spoke to me with a lot of emotions, and some of them even cried during the interview. However, there was a contrast of emotions between the excitement and tiredness of what this electoral process entailed from the beginning until the inauguration. In the interview with Tomás, he mentions being "in the mood to speak a softer world into existence." For him, the National Strike was a gathering where there was an opportunity to envision a new possible future, but at the same time, they were creating a different present, one that was more livable.

That is what the strike is about, it is about coming together, hitting the streets, and imagining futures, but also living in the present, living here and now with a disruptive, revolutionary logic, as if already living the celebration. It's like something that gets sewn in that celebration. So, it leaves a feeling of warmth, a lot of hope, and I ultimately think that's what most mobilizing is.

As Tomás argues, it is necessary to cultivate these achievements in order to maintain them in the future, by analyzing the National Strike in Guatemala, can be confirmed what Poma and Gravante (2022) points out when they mention the importance of conducting analysis and studies of social movements to understand the processes of construction of alternatives, imaginaries, and cultural and paradigm change in societies, as Tomás emphasized, the National Strike gave the opportunity to think about and live these alternatives for a few days.

Imagining other futures was constant among the interviews, but at the same time, one of the major concerns of the people interviewed was also the issue of future security. While this thesis is being written (May 2024), Attorney General Consuelo Porras remains in office, which could lead to the use of public institutions and the judicial system against the participants of the National Strike, increasing criminalization. Despite this, Luna mentioned that the assumption of power gave them hope of being able to stay in Guatemala and see their exiled friends returning:

When we returned on January 15th, during the second round, I hugged my partner, and they said to me, 'You have to stop looking for ways to leave.' So, in my mind, the thought of 'I have to leave because it's dangerous' no longer exists.

Another emotion that repeats among the interviewed individuals is the happiness of seeing how they can organize themselves, although some mentioned that the feeling left by the National Strike is that there is much work to be done and that the coup plotters will not remain quiet. There is also an emphasis on the need to reorganize strategies to continue reclaiming other spaces.

When conducting these interviews, many of the interviewees indicated that they felt nostalgic: Alejandro explained that talking about what happened left him with this feeling of nostalgia because "what a *chilero* (great) thing we did and what we achieved" indicating that remembering these moments makes him very happy about how the National Strike was organized and sustained all this time. This emotion is related to the "urges" identified by Jasper. This sense of relief and satisfaction suggests a displacement of other feelings and a focus on satisfying basic emotional needs, such as tranquility and happiness.

The people interviewed also speak of the recognition given to indigenous peoples and authorities with an emotion of hope for the future, where "we can walk together" (ladinos/mestizos and indigenous communities) where it is possible to create a Guatemala that advances, embracing the diversity of organizations, peoples and identities as Antonio mentions. Fatima emphasizes that after the Paro Nacional there is an atmosphere of hope and joy, and a desire for things to be different, where they are beginning to discuss racism, recognizing other leaderships, and where it is necessary to continue organizing.

There are many emotions that the participants establish that the National Strike left them, several recognize that having participated in this resistance gives them the feeling of having been part of a historic moment, which was a highlight of their lives in which they enjoyed being in the street, they fell in love, they had discussions and "everything happened." Fatima, a lover of poetry and literature, mentions that many poets speak of people from a revolutionary perspective, glorifying the people and their struggles. She explained with great happiness that she can now say that she has already lived one of these revolutions, and that she gives herself the opportunity to romanticize it because "it is very nice to see that people defend their rights and do not remain silent, and that they will defend to the last for a cause that moves them and a cause that needs to be defended." She indicates that she feels grateful to all the people who mobilized and managed to feel that the population had when they managed to stop the Ubico dictatorship in the 1944 revolution, "now we can say that we achieved it." This emotion of collective victory and being part of history also aligns with what Barrilete mentioned, the feeling of finding meaning in their political life and reclaiming what the state itself had nullified. This sensation of annulment that Barrilete describes relates to structures of feeling or an "affective structure" (Butler, 2006, p. 6) that highlight power and domination, configuring intersectional gendered domination. As Sauer argues, "the "politics of in/visibility," affect and emotions involve ambivalent power relations between the private and the public, the unseen and the seen" (2023, p. 824). Barrilete's experience underscores the transformative potential of reclaiming political agency and visibility within these ambivalent power dynamics.

This feeling of having been part of a historic moment and collective victory aligns with the notion of "moral emotions" proposed by Jasper (2018). These moral

emotions of pride and gratitude towards the community and collective resistance reflect a positive ethical judgment based on moral principles and social solidarity, especially those mentioned by the interviewees.

In conclusion, I would like to summarize some of the interviewees' conclusions regarding the construction of alternatives and cultural changes that the National Strike may have in Guatemalan culture, considering that it is a very recent event. One of the most significant impacts is mentioned by Tomás several times when he talks about how it remains in the collective memory of what the Guatemalan people can do:

Like a historical narrative, a memory of the power we have as an organized people, and as I say, I do not think we yet grasp what results it will yield, but I feel they will be incredibly powerful. In particular, if we continue nurturing it, there is a need for grassroots work and to keep politicizing and nurturing. But that's what really gives me hope because Semilla disappointed us, and I believe it will continue to disappoint us, as it is clear to me that they will not capitalize on this political momentum, but rather normalize everything and play by the rules of institutionalism. That won't solve it, I mean, they won't even be able to fulfill the promises they made, so the hope lies in this movement, in the imagined community.

The conclusions drawn from the interviewees' reflections on the possible impacts of the National Strike on Guatemalan culture suggest profound recognition of the transformative potential of this event in collective memory and the shaping of national identity. The notion of a historical narrative and collective memory emerges as key elements, highlighting the Guatemalan people's capacity for organization and resistance in times of political and social crises.

The expression of hope for the future is based on belief in the powerful potential of the cultural and political changes that may arise from the National Strike, even if they have not yet fully materialized. This hope lies in maintaining and continuously nurturing the political momentum generated by the event as well as the need to continue politicizing and building upon the achievements made. Fátima emphasized there is also mention of the need to continue articulating from joy and healing through the strengthening of civil society and grassroots organization.

However, there is also recognition of the need to maintain a critical perspective on traditional institutions and political actors, acknowledging their limitations and tendency to normalize the status quo. Hope is placed in social organizations and indigenous communities, in people's ability to continue fighting for their demands, and for meaningful change in the Guatemalan society.

The reflections of the interviewees underscore the transformative potential of the National Strike in shaping Guatemalan culture and fostering a collective memory of resistance. This aligns with insights from the literature on emotions and social movements, which suggests that collective experiences of hope, solidarity, and commitment can have a profound impact on the trajectory and outcomes of social movements. Studies have shown that sustained emotional engagement within movements can bolster resilience, mobilize support, and sustain momentum over time (Jasper, 1998). However, sustaining these emotions requires conscious effort and the implementation of mechanisms within movements to maintain morale and cohesion (Goodwin et al., 2000). Despite their potential for galvanizing action, emotions within social movements also carry inherent risks, including emotional burnout, internal divisions, and co-optation by external actors (Jasper, 2011). Therefore, while the National Strike in Guatemala has elicited feelings of hope and determination among participants, its long-term impact will depend on the movement's ability to effectively manage and sustain these emotions while navigating the complexities of social and political change.

Chapter 6: More than conclusions, openings

This thesis has been, for me as a researcher, a political act, aiming to leave a record of the resistance, dignity, and emotions of some of the people actively involved in the National Strike through this research. One objective of this thesis is to document the dignity of this resistance, its strategies, organization, and sustainability, to make visible the struggles of populations and individuals who have historically been marginalized, stigmatized, or in(visible).

The political potential of the National Strike in Guatemalan history, considering the appropriation of public space, necessitates viewing the "strike" as more than just its literal definition of "stopping"; it constituted an active strategy where action and discourse confronted hegemonic power.

The primary aim of this thesis was to investigate how emotions influence the organization and sustainability of the National Strike in Guatemala. Through the interviews conducted, this research sheds light on the fundamental role that emotions play in social movements, especially in Guatemala City, the emotions, such as fear, anger, exhaustion, hope, and popular solidarity, were essential in motivating people to join, support, and sustain their participation in the strike. These emotions provided a sense of purpose and collective identity, fostering this feeling of, as Tomás mentions, a Plurinational State, a democracy. Throughout the strike, participants' emotional landscapes evolved. Initial feelings of anger, exhaustion, and frustration gave way to hope and solidarity as the movement gained momentum.

The fear of repression and criminalization was a recurring theme among the interviewees, highlighting the risks involved in participating in the strike. This fear, rooted in historical and ongoing governmental actions against activists, played a dual role in deterring participation and strengthening the resolution of those involved. Despite these challenges, the National Strike involved the appropriation of public space and streets, which has the potential to have a lasting impact on Guatemalan culture, nurturing a collective memory of resistance and popular organization. This shared history of struggle among interviewees and other activists is seen as the basis for future activism and social transformation.

Identity is a constant discussion in Guatemala and plays a crucial role in the dynamics of emotions within the National Strike Movement, according to the interviewees. It is important to recognize which identities are (in)visible, the reason

and history behind them, and how this influences the emotions of the participants. Considering that the analysis of ambivalent power relations of the in(visibility) of affects and emotions can exclude people from political and democratic spaces, recognizing them and making them visible can also empower and support joint democratic activities (Sauer, 2023). The findings of this research reveal that the gender identities and sexual orientations of the participants were rendered invisible, as a result of the hostile environment where these identities were instrumentalized. Despite this invisibility, as the interviewees stated, their participation in the National Strike was annulled, in the sense of recognition of these identities. One of the interviewees mentioned that their identities were both invisible and invalidated, but also acknowledged that in his case, like a trans person, it was one of the first times they had felt comfortable inhabiting the city as a queer person. As well as the role of women, mostly part of the indigenous communities, in sustaining the National Strike, in their visible and vindicating role in the community kitchen. As well as their invisible role of staying at home while their husbands and family members were in the MP encampment. It is necessary to continue delving into these opposing emotions.

The findings illustrate that emotions are not just byproducts of social movements, but are integral components that drive and sustain them, like Deborah Gould (2022) confirm in her research that emotions are fundamental elements that propel and maintain social movements and that there is an intricate relationship between emotions and collective action, emphasizing how emotions like solidarity, shame, anger, pride, and fear play crucial roles in mobilization, internal dynamics, and longevity of movements. Emotions provide the energy and motivation needed to mobilize people and maintain collective action. The interplay between personal experiences and collective emotions creates a powerful force that can challenge the existing power structures.

This study underscores the importance but also complexity of emotions in social movements. While emotions such as fear can pose significant risks, they can also fortify the resolution of the participants. The emotional dynamics within the movement are fluid and can shift in response to internal and external events, highlighting the need for adaptive strategies to organize and sustain social movements.

The research was constrained by time and geographical limitations, focusing solely on the National Strike in Guatemala City and conducting interviews mostly with people identified as ladino/mestizo, emphasizing that no interviews were conducted

with indigenous authorities, only one was conducted with an indigenous person, that live in Guatemala City. Further research should be done with indigenous authorities, the aim is to better understand the emotions and forms of organization of the people who called the National Strike, which can provide tools to understand in a more complete and holistic way the development of this social movement. Similarly, the role of community kitchens and the diversity of religion in the same space should be explored in depth. These limitations suggest other questions that could be explored, such as how emotions influence indigenous authorities and communities, or more specific groups. Future studies could adopt a broader or comparative approach to address these questions, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the emotional dimensions of the National Strike.

Despite these limitations, this thesis demonstrated the crucial role of emotions in sustaining social movements. Emotions are not merely reactions but powerful forces that shape collective action and drive social change. Recognizing and understanding this can lead to more effective strategies for organizing and sustaining social movements worldwide. The insights gained from this study emphasize the importance of integrating emotional dynamics and their gendered forms into the analysis and practice of activism, ultimately contributing to more resilient and impactful social movements.

The time and variables analyzed for this research, in my opinion, are still too short to establish conclusions; however, I believe it is a precise moment to continue deepening and conducting research on what is happening in Guatemala. That is why I launch these "openings" because more than openings are possibilities that allow us to reflect more deeply.

Future research could benefit from longitudinal studies that track emotional trajectories over extended periods of time. This approach provides a deeper understanding of how emotions evolve and influence long-term participation in social movements. It is necessary to continue deepening research related to social movements and emotions, as these have historically been invisible in politics, with certain emotions being encouraged and made visible, while others are suppressed and kept invisible (Sauer, 2023). Emotions are considered important elements for reimagining other futures and can have both empowering and disempowering qualities. As Sauer emphasizes, it is necessary to recognize and engage with political emotions to create a more inclusive and democratic society (2023).

Emotions are the heartbeats of social movements that drive both individual and collective actions. The National Strike in Guatemala exemplifies how emotions can unite people in a hostile context in the face of adversity, create a sense of purpose, and sustain prolonged struggles for justice and social change. As this research has shown, understanding the emotional dimensions of social movements is crucial for comprehending their dynamics and potential impact.

It is essential to continue exploring the intricate relationships between emotions and activism. Where concepts such as queer-feminist democracy of care and *Buen Vivir* closely relates to how the National Strike was experienced and sustained, emphasizing practices that diverge from traditional ones by recognizing the role of emotions and the impact they can have on our bodies. This approach highlights the need for a continued conceptualization of emotions, care, and the body as essential elements in reimagining differences spaces. By incorporating these aspects, we can develop more inclusive and empathetic democratic processes that honor diverse experiences and foster a deeper sense of community and solidarity.

With this type of social movement or revolutions, as mentioned by the interviewees, we can better support social movements in their efforts to create more just and equitable societies. Specifically, in the National Strike, the appropriation of public space through the organization of political potential in the streets of the city through bodies is a process that retakes the diverse, plurinational, joyful, and neighborly spaces that, in turn, strengthen community democratic ties. This is one of the strongest lessons from the city. Emotions are not merely reactions to external events; they are powerful forces shaping collective futures. Embracing this understanding can lead to more effective strategies for organizing, mobilizing, sustaining, and imagining alternative futures.

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