The new Latin American neo-patriotic far-right: reactionary internationalism and its challenge to the international liberal order

La nueva extrema derecha neopatriota latinoamericana: el internacionalismo reaccionario y su desafío al orden liberal internacional

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Abstract

This work argues that the new far-right, which we characterise as neo-patriotic, emerges through a combination of agency and structural factors amid a crisis of globalisation, understanding it as a crisis in the hegemonic order. The crisis of globalisation opens opportunities for the rise of a new far-right which redefines the popular, the national, and the international based on Schmittian friend-enemy distinctions, as an autonomous categorisation, which gives political meaning to their identity as a political actor. A key element of this identity is a reactionary internationalism based on the defence of tradition against cosmopolitan globalism. Thus, the reinstatement of a traditionalist "Arcadia" gives meaning to the process of re-politization and challenges to the liberal international order, its national, regional, and global dimensions, universalist and globalist discourse, and its teleologies of progress. In sum, these actors do not merely question globalisation as an established order but fight for the construction of an alternative international order of a reactionary type.

Keywords: Far right; International order; Crisis of globalisation; Reactionary internationalism.

Resumen

Este trabajo argumenta que las nuevas extremas derechas, que caracterizamos como neopatriotas, emergen por una combinación de factores de agencia y estructura en el marco de la crisis de la globalización, entendiendo esta última como orden hegemónico. La crisis la globalización abre oportunidades para el ascenso de una nueva extrema derecha que redefine lo popular, lo nacional y lo internacional a partir de la distinción schmittiana de "amigo-enemigo" como categorización autónoma, dando sentido político a su identidad como actor político. Elemento clave de esa identidad es un nuevo internacionalismo reaccionario basado en la defensa de la tradición frente a la globalización y el cosmopolitismo. Así, la reinstauración de una "Arcadia" tradicional da sentido a un proceso de repolitización y contestación del orden liberal internacional, en sus dimensiones nacional, regional y global, de sus discursos universalistas y cosmopolitas, y de sus teleologías de progreso humano. En suma, estos actores no solamente cuestionan la globalización como orden establecido, sino que pugnan por la construcción de otro orden internacional alternativo de signo reaccionario

Palabras-clave: Extrema derecha; Orden internacional; Crisis de globalización; Internacionalismo reaccionario.

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Introduction

This article analyses a new type of far-right movement, which we call "neo-patriotic", in its Latin American expression. The case of the "Trump of the tropics" – Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro – exemplifies the most defining traits of the type: a marked nationalist and anti-globalist ideology, and discourses and practices that aim to challenge institutions and norms as a way of battling globalization as a hegemonic order[1]. By contesting institutions and norms, these movements aim to propose an alternative (re)founding and (re)construction of an "Arcadia"[2], in which traditionalism is the central theme. This return to the lost values of tradition implies a new reading of popular, national, and international practices and marks the surge of a new reactionary anti-cosmopolitan internationalism which questions the liberal international order.

According to Orellana and Michelsen (2019), reactionary internationalism supposes a reconceptualization of internationalism departing from discourses and actions that challenge liberal themes, norms, and practices. This in turn leads to a new institutional matrix based on transactional logics of power and identity of an ultra-conservative type. This new shared political identity leads to convergence and fuels the articulation and coordination of the political action of these ultra-conservative neo-patriotic forces, who fight for an alternative world order. Additionally, we argue that this reactionary internationalism is a new expression of what Carl Schmitt (SCHMITT, [1932] 1991) called the "friend-enemy" distinction[3]. By establishing a common enemy, this distinction sustains the collective action of these new conservative neo-patriotic movements. Following this "friend-enemy" logic establishes that anything that threatens to disintegrate pre-existing identities based on tradition is an enemy.

This interpretation of neo-patriotic conservative movements and their challenges to globalisation and the liberal international order draws from the theory and methods of Neo-Gramscian international relations critical theory. Neo-Gramscian critical theory provides a comprehensive explanation for the surge of these actors and their subsequent political dynamics, in terms of structure; and a causal explanation, in terms of agency, of the crisis of globalization understood as a historical and hegemonic bloc. We complement this analysis with theoretical approaches related to the historical institutionalism tools of Political Science, aiming to understand the initial construction of these political identities and how it conditions future action. We draw from Carl Schmitt's theories to understand the constitutive centre of international traditionalism based on his characterisation of the political, and contemporary advances in the literature on conservative populisms and foreign relations.

After fleshing out these theoretic and methodological precisions, we examine the common causes of the surge of these new conservative movements considering structure and agency, to then analyse their reactionary internationalism, understood as a coordinated and global political action aiming to challenge the liberal international order and the proposal of an alternative model. This interpretation leads to the conclusion that, beyond local factors, the crisis of globalisation is a general structural explanation of the origin and identity of these movements, which has far-reaching consequences on their actions. Particularly, their definition of politics and political identity is based and framed by their understanding of the conflict against globalisation. Globalisation, its international practices, and cosmopolitanism, are thus defined as existential threats that disintegrate the community and destroy the traditions that define it.

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[1] The concepts of hegemony and globalisation as a hegemonic order refer to the theories of Robert Cox. For a deeper treatment of these concepts see Sanahuja (2020).

[2] A region of ancient Greece evoked by Virgil to refer to an imaginary community which lives in peace and harmony. It opposes the Utopia of renaissance thinker Thomas More, since this latter one is a human creation, whilst Arcadia is the spontaneous fruit of a natural way of life which has not been damaged by modernity or "corruptive civilisation". The Arcadia is thus a concept that resists the idea of progress. In this work we depart from the reference to the concept by Gerardo Caetano in his analysis of new neo-patriotic conservatism in Uruguay.

[3] According to Schmitt, this characterisation of the political is autonomous since it is not derived from other criteria and is irreducible to other categories or synthesis.

Analytical tools to understand the crisis of hegemony and the challenges to the liberal international order

Robert W. Cox's (1981) concept of historical structure – in its triple meaning as ontology, theory and methodology – underlines the relevance of material forces, ideas and institutions as constitutive elements of different international orders, without an a priori dominance of any of them. These are also the explanatory factors for their rise and decline through historical processes of stability, conflict and changes which imply an interaction between structure and agency. As a methodology, it has three applications: social forces, made up of social interactions based on relationships of production; the shapes of the state, which according to Gramscian theory involves both the state apparatus in a strict sense, and civil society; and world orders as particular configurations of the historical structure within a specific historical cycle. Thus, a particular combination of forces which imply material capacities, ideas, and institutions (defined as a mixture of ideas, norms and institutions, and material power[4]) generate persistent social practices that establish a concrete form of structural power which constitutes and shapes the agency of actors and their margins for action.

When a specific constellation of social forces establishes a coherent and established historical structure which develops into "the common sense of the times" – a historical bloc, in Gramscian terms – it becomes a hegemonic world order. This is how we understand globalisation, and the liberal international order that sustains and legitimates it. Hegemony is key to stability, and its rupture implies an opening for structural change. In this sense, initially, we can see that in the international stage this hegemony is exercised by social groups that operate *through* states – rather than being *created by* states. If globalisation is to be understood as a hegemonic world order, the hegemonic role of some can be observed through the role of transnational capitalist elites that, just as the ones that meet in Davos, act through state structures. In the same way, international organisations define and sustain the rules of the hegemonic order, by ideologically legitimating and establishing the legal rules and norms of conduct of this world order, as a way of maintaining stability (SANAHUJA, 2020).

As the next section details, this approach allows us to understand transformations of the international system as a current stage in which the crisis of both globalisation and the liberal international order can be interpreted as signs of a deep crisis in hegemony (SANAHUJA, 2017). This crisis opens fresh opportunities for anti-hegemonic actors and movements. Within this context, we aim to understand the surge of neo-patriotic ultraconservative forces, their discourses, and practices of challenging the institutional and normative foundations of the international order.

Crises of hegemony – and in this case the crisis of globalisation – can be considered critical junctures, in the sense that historical institutionalism applies it in contemporary Political Science. A critical juncture[5] is a foundational moment that implies a crossroads where one historical cycle ends and another is born. It is generated through a change in the historical structure which loses stability and thus allows opportunities for new actors and agency. These windows of opportunity allow for change in the previous structures. Critical junctures thus open unprecedented opportunities for political actors – in this case the neo-patriotic far-right. They are also seen to be critical moments in the makeup of actors, as they define their initial identity (GREENER, 2005, p.62), which is a very relevant aspect to our purposes of understanding reactionary internationalism.

These actors are collective subjects that have an identity, capacity to act strategically, and resources. Identity is an initial element with which they define their interests and objectives for strategic action, mobilising resources, and capacities (ACUÑA; CHUDNOVSKY, 2013, p.36-39). This implies that the constitution of an identity is a key moment in the formation of a new political actor. As we will argue later, the political identity of these neo-patriotic far-right movements is based on the conflict created by a threat of disintegration.

This initial element, which constructs an identity, is of a contingent nature (MAHONEY, 2000). Identitarian initial definitions possess a relational component, since the ideological configuration they adopt allows for differentiation

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[4] There is no established analytical preference between them.
[5] See, for instance, Collier and Collier (1991) and Capoccia and Kelemen (2007).

and competition against others (GARCÉ, 2012, p.45). Thus, the creation of a political identity implies a symbolic struggle, a fight for meaning, which is functional to a strategy of political contestation. Contestation is conceptualised as a strategy of normative and institutional action, which departs from questioning the current order with a strong performative capacity, since they come to define the actors analysed here. It can be defined, thus, as the social practices that express a rejection of norms (WIENER, 2017, p.112). This contestation happens in international organisations as ideological disputes centred around norms and mechanisms that legitimate the origin, process and results of these organisations and institutions (HOOGHE; LENZ; MARKS, 2019).

What follows presents our argument through two sections: a briefer one which analyses the surge of the neo-patriotic far-right, and another that explores its international strategies.

The rise of a neo-patriotic far-right

Neo-patriotic far-right movements emerge due to a combination of agency and structural factors amid a crisis of globalisation, understood as a historical bloc and hegemonic order. The global financial crisis of 2008 arrived in Latin America with the end of the commodities cycle. The crisis is part of a shift in the structure of the international political economy alongside a new technological and productive revolution which puts globalisation into question as a historical epoch – at the very least in the way it was configurated in the mid-1990s.

Realist analysis propose that we understand the crisis as a matter of polarization, geopolitical games, and a supposed Thucydides' trap between global powers. However, we are faced instead with a new "great transformation", in the Polanyian sense of the word. This transformation places the liberal international order in check, affecting its economic and social basis, and questioning the system's legitimacy (IKENBERRY, 2018, p.10). In this stage the dissatisfaction of losers, or self-perceived losers, of globalisation opens fertile ground for far-right movements to find a social base for their political project. As a Polanyian "countermovement", they manage to present themselves as agents of social protection and thus mobilise popular sectors, the middle and mid-bottom classes, both urban and rural, that see themselves affected by increased labour precariousness and uncertainty due to socioeconomic changes. These scenarios facilitate challenges to globalisations' teleologies of human progress and other processes of re-politization that translate into a rejection of cosmopolitanism, social diversity, and multiculturalism.

The neo-patriotic type describes a broad swath of parties and far-right political movements that reclaim nationalism and as a consequence oppose multilateralism and any form of global or regional norms that limit national sovereignty in the world stage. In economic terms, these groups do not follow a homogeneous pattern. Whilst some oppose economic liberalisation and, in some cases, challenge transnational capital, others establish alliances with neoliberal actors. The latter is the case of Brazilian neo-patriots, who have managed a coexistence – though not always in harmony – between the rationales of neoliberalism and nationalism. The construction of an identity is rooted in cultural traditionalism, including social practices and gender issues, and in some cases even legitimated through religious allusions to "natural law". This identitarian element is key to their constitution as political actors, becoming articulated in discourses and strategies that operate through different degrees of fear and hate of the "other", who is seen as threatening to break up society. The "other" sometimes takes the shape of a terrorist, and in other cases the shape of a common criminal. What is more relevant for this analysis, the "other" is also coded as an agent of globalist cosmopolitanism that is subverting and corrupting traditional values that give meaning to society. This threat of disintegration is often expressed through "culture wars", where neo-patriotists become alienated from cultural diversity and multiculturalism, and – to different degrees – mount a vindication of nativism, xenophobia, anti-immigration, and in some cases even overt supremacy. This goes in line with their rejection of sexual diversity and gender equality, which is defined as "gender ideology" and which they argue threatens the traditional family unit and (an essentially hetero-patriarchal) social order. Whilst true that their discourse and practices often follow of populist logic, it is worth noting that these political

movements develop within two cleavages that, we'll show, come to define the "friend-enemy" distinction: the traditional left-right cleavage, in which they adopt far-right positions; and the cosmopolitan-nationalist cleavage, this being a novel one which comes to distinguish the neo-patriotic far-right from other conservative movements such as liberal-conservatives, who show favour to globalism.

The rise of the neo-patriotic far-right in Latin America is, as argued, a global phenomenon, beyond the national specificities that originate from a crisis of hegemony. These movements question both the cosmopolitan left and the liberal and globalist right. Their ascent implies a process of re-politization and contestation of the norms and institutions of the liberal order, under a nationalist rhetoric that mobilise those who have been negatively affected by the processes of globalisation (ZÜRN, 2014).

Their challenge of the norms that constitute the liberal national and international order, implies a support for institutional transformations, in the form of the modification of several rules of the game. This approach has a distinct illiberal characteristic which can be observed, for instance, in the internal deterioration of democracy and the rule of law in Hungary and Poland. In the international stage, the coordinated action of neo-patriotic movements in multilateral settings has led to a reactionary backlash, leading to backsteps in matters of gender, the environment, human rights, and global health. This latter aspect has been exacerbated by the frequent challenging of the scientific and public policy responses to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Challenges also include a sociocultural component (KRIESI et al, 2012) in the form of a backlash by those who feel threatened by the advance of globalisation, cosmopolitan values, and societies open to cultural and sexual diversity, as well as discourses that promote or recognise diverse identities. These backlashes are organised through social movements, parties, and leaderships with authoritarian characteristics and populist rhetoric (NORRIS; INGLEHART, 2019). As argued, structural transformations in production matrixes have promoted broader economic uncertainty and led at the same time to a stop in demands and social expectations, feeding a conservative reaction and nationalist narrative leading to a sociocultural reactionary movement with communitarian and traditionalist values (INGLEHART; NORRIS, 2016).

Having considered the rise of the far-right in the context of an opportunity opened by a crisis of hegemony, we will now turn to the question of reactionary internationalism and traditionalism. Specifically, we will analyse how these actors become involved in a dispute for meaning, and attempt to redefine the popular, the national, and the international through Schmitt's "friend-enemy" distinction[6]. This distinction provides autonomous categorisation and political content to their identity as a constitutive part of their actions. At the same time, it allows for international coordination of a defence of tradition. The return to a traditionalist "Arcadia" gives meaning to their re-politization and challenge of the liberal international order in its national, regional, and global dimensions, its universalist and globalist discourse, and its teleologies of progress. In this way, we argue that these actors not only challenge an established order, but further fight for the construction of a deeply conservative alternative.

Reactionary internationalism and the role of tradition

The literature on new far-right movements, populism, and their foreign policies displays a wide array of approaches and differently delineated objects of study. However, these different approaches all share common traits, such as some common theoretical underpinnings. The two most common being the use of role theory[7] and the view that populism is a "thin-centred ideology". The latter allows for the conceptualisation and identification of common traits among different types of movements and populist leaders, from both the right and the left, as well allowing for further

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[6] Jeffrey Alexander (2018) argues that Steve Bannon's narrative constructions departs from binary simplifications of political conflict, with a focus on the cultural dimension. One group is constituted by the "real ones" part of "real America" (nationalists, whites, and Christians), in opposition to the "others".

[7] The analysis of Bolsonaro's foreign policy by Guimarães y Oliveira (2020) is an example of this.

analysis of how populism can relate to other ideological elements, such as nationalism (MUDDE, 2004; 2016). These approaches are close to those which see populism as a political style (MOFFITT, 2016). In all cases, anti-elitism (NORRIS; INGLEHART, 2019) and anti-pluralism (MÜLLER, 2016) are underscored as central characteristics.

An exploration of the nexus between populism and foreign policy proposes that the anti-elitism that marks internal political contest unfolds into a confrontation against international elites. These movements define themselves as representatives of "the people" and defenders of the national interest, resisting and confronting international institutions and their technocratic elites (CHRYSSOGELOS, 2018). Other research focuses on the influence on foreign policy exerted by radical right populist parties when they are members of coalitions (VERBEEK; ZASLOVE, 2015) or even as members of the opposition (LIANG, 2007). Another approach focuses on the role of political leaders, and their influence on foreign policy (DREZNER, 2017).

Studies of Latin American instances of this phenomenon highlight anti-elitism and the revindication of "the people" and "popular will" as common traits in foreign policy (WEHNER; THIES, 2020). Other case studies focus on Western countries (BALFOUR et al, 2016; VERBEEK; ZASLOVE, 2017), and emerging economies such as India (PLAGEMANN; DESTRADI, 2019), Turkey (COP; ZIHNIOĞLU, 2015; ÖZPEK; YAŞAR, 2018), and Brazil (CASARÕES, 2020; GUIMARÃES; OLIVEIRA, 2020).

Regarding the effects of these actors on the system, some of the works conclude that they have not generated a radical reconfiguration of global policy as promised by the rhetoric of anti-globalist populism (DESTRADI; PLAGEMANN, 2019, p.729). It is true that we cannot at this stage speak of achieved profound transformations, but we can identify actions and discourses in neo-patriotic far-right movements that aim to substantively transform the system's structure.

In this sense, the work of Feliciano de Sá Guimarães and Irma Dutra de Oliveira e Silva (2020) presents key elements to understand the processes, aside from a narrower focus on results. In their study of Jair Bolsonaro's government in Brazil, they develop an explanation of how populist far-right governments exchange information, spread their view of the world, and construct international identities by cooperating. De Sá Guimarães and Dutra de Oliveira e Silva find that these governments relate through a common conservative identity and develop three interrelated conceptions of their national roles. The first is anti-globalism, as a challenge to international institutions. The second is nationalism, constructed from sovereigntist, and one could add nativist, narratives. The third implies a role established through friend-enemy narratives. This argument, also drawing and challenging other literature mentioned above, proposes that this group of identities makes up the "thick conservative identity" of these actors.

As previously mentioned, these actors that emerge from a crisis of globalisation find themselves in their foundational moment as it relates to their identity. We argue that these actors are forging their political identities within this critical juncture that auspices a change in the historical cycle and consequently allows more space for these actors and their agency, as well as projects that question the hegemonic order. Thus, these movements share as a central element this conception of politics, which fits well with Schmitt's theory of a structure around the friend-enemy dichotomy. Sovereigntist nationalism, anti-globalism, and anti-elitism are constructed from this dichotomy, also redefining the popular, the national, and the international. These redefinitions are not clearly differentiated given that they are deeply related, but they all share their basis on the matrix of the friend-enemy dichotomy.

The popular, for instance, is redefined by neo-patriots along the lines of who belongs to "the people" and who does not. Those cast outside of the definition of "the people" are those who threaten to break up society, both within the borders of a country and as an outside influence. This anti-elitist rhetoric underpins the populist nature of these actors who, nevertheless, are defined by their far-right ideologies and their nationalist and anti-globalist perspectives. It is from this that their self-definition as the true representatives of a diffuse "people" or community, who are mostly disorganised masses with whom the leader relates in a direct fashion without mediation or institutions (WEYLAND, 2001), in order to

recuperate their original essence. It is worth reminding that neo-patriotic far-right movements are collective actors with diverse degrees of political organisation (ASLANIDIS, 2015), who display a confrontative and polarising political style.

In his analysis of Bolsonaro's foreign policy, Guilherme Casarões (2020) highlights the presence of a friend-enemy dichotomy also showing an array of populist traits. For instance, a degree of personalism accompanied by a strongly ideological view of foreign policy[8], which does away with international mediators (Itamaraty)[9] and professional diplomats who are perceived as a technocratic elite. Communication with the masses is direct, prioritising the use of social media.

As Casarões (2020) rightly points out, this style of foreign policymaking rejects any involvement with civil society, progressive political leaders, and multilateral organisations, which are all accused of being part of a supposed globalist elite propagating cultural Marxism. Placing elites as the enemy of the popular is part of a strategy to construct an idea of "the people" and what is national, as an imagined community (ANDERSON, 1991). The appropriation of national symbols in public spaces by far-right activists is an example of this strategy in play. This is also seen in online news sharing, where the use of a nationalist aesthetic is reaffirmed, and a reassessment of the country's history appears. The country's history is now presented as the original Arcadia symbolically legitimating this contest for meaning. These practices are often promoted through the sharing of fake news[10].

The "people" which neo-patriots allude to in their rhetoric is often by definition homogenous but is also diffuse as an actor. Sometimes, the "people" assumes the archetypal image of the common man (and here we mean male, defending a traditional patriarchal view of the social order), who defends "common sense" and the plebeian condition[11]. The supposedly "corrupt" national and international elite defends "the new world order", challenges national sovereignty and attempts to impose values contrary to traditional ones. An example of this rhetoric is given by Senator Guido Manini Ríos[12], who opposed the prosecution and punishment for crimes committed by the military in the last Uruguayan dictatorship (1973-1985):

> Imposing those treaties [The American Convention on Human Rights] over our Constitution means accepting governance from the outside (...) Those who exhibit with pride their condition of stateless sepoys[13]. Some Uruguayans willing to bend the knee will be happy with this type of dependence, but this is not our case. This is why we vindicate our national sovereignty (REDACCIÓN 180, 2020, own translation).

This type of leadership proposes that foreign policy must reflect the deepest values of "the people" (CASARÕES, 2020). To connect with "the people", foreign policy needs enemies, who have to be discovered, denounced, and fought in the context of a permanent sensation of a global complot against the leader, who is accosted by the system (CASARÕES, 2020).

The national and the popular, in this formulation, are interlinked. Together, they are threatened by disintegrating forces inside and outside the nation state. The neo-patriotic far-right assumes identitarian elements which imply an uncritical acceptance of subordination under a homogeneous and unitarian conception of the community. This community thus possesses an identity derived from a recreated historical narration, which functions as a legitimating

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[8] This contrasts with the pragmatism of Gertúlio Vargas's foreign policy. Vargas was another populist leader who governed Brazil in 1930-1945 and 1951-1954.

[9] It must be pointed out that Bolsonaro was elected representing the Social and Liberal Party (PSL). He then abandoned the party due to a fight for control over party funds and candidate nominations. Bolsonarists attempted to forge a popular far-right movement under the banner of a new *Aliança pelo Brasil* party. They were not successful in this endeavour since they failed to reach the necessary support to initiate the legal process of constituting a party.

[10] The use of data mining and analysis to develop electoral strategies for these leaders deserves separate treatment. The case of Cambridge Analytica is paradigmatic in this regard.

[11] Bolsonaro is perhaps the main example of this plebeian condition, given his socio-economic origins and discrete political and military career. Other leaders who fit the profile, such as Donald Trump, are part of the elite but still adopt an anti-elitist rhetoric.

[12] Retired general and ex Commander in Chief of the Uruguayan Army (2015-2019). Manini Ríos now leads Cabildo Abierto, the Uruguayan expression of a neo-patriotic far-right movement, which retakes ideas, discourses, and practices form the conservative, Christian, and rural right of the country.

[13] *Note from the translator:* Manini here uses the Spanish words "cipayismo apátrida". In a Latin American context, the word "cipayismo" refers originally to the Sepoys, who were Indian soldiers who worked under British or European orders. The meaning of the word in common and political parlance is thus someone who prioritises and follows global powers, most frequently the United States.

teleology, and a constructed – or directly invented – tradition. The pre-existent core values in its members are derived from these principles and are shared as a way of generating adhesion and unity. In this way, a patriotic cultural attachment is formed, in some cases with ethnic underpinnings. It is from here, that the criticism of the negative impacts of the dominant liberal paradigm in modern societies is born, signalling that this liberal view estranges individuals from tradition, and thus their values.

Ben Teitelbaum (2020) classifies the ideological foundations of these movements as based on tradition, based on their rejection of modernity and their condition as a "countermovement" facing globalisation. We prefer to classify them as reactionary. Teitelbaum points to key aspects such as a rejection of modernity and the values of the enlightenment, a philosophical opposition to materialism and open questioning of globalisation. This gives space to religious elements, the justification of hierarchies, and further an analytical framework that allows for blame to be attributed to modernity in the corruption of the values of tradition – these values are present in the Arcadia they wish to return to. Several figures such as Alexandr Dugin, advisor to Vladimir Putin, Olavo de Carvalho, Bolsonaro's guru, and Trumps' ex-advisor and current far-right global promotor Steve Bannon[14], are often named as the producers of ideas for these traditionalist currents. Their philosophical foundations usually vindicate religious thinking, often Judaeo-Christian. They draw from the conservative thinking of Oswald Spengler (1880-1936), René Guénon (1886-1951), Julius Evola (1898-1974), and as we will discuss further on Carl Schmitt (1888-1985). From Spengler, they take the diagnosis of a threat against Western culture; from Guénon, his confrontation to the humanist and scientific model of the enlightenment and its challenge to the "truth"; Evola left a legacy of religious vindication and a reaction to modernity.[15] Globalism, as conceptualised by these thinkers, is a threat to tradition.

The reactionary thinking of neo-patriots tints their view of the world stage and foreign policy with a strong nationalism, leading to challenges to their country's subjection to international laws and institutions, as well as global accords. Their foreign policy is conceptualised as a defence of the national, often defined in strongly ideological terms not so much on the rational analysis promoted by realists. This is the case of the "cruzados" or crusaders[16] of Brazil, who group under chancellor Araujo, against the more pragmatic focus of the finance minister Paulo Guedes or the vice-president general Hamiltom Mõurao. However, they still think in terms of geopolitics, prioritising security, and thus frequently opt for isolationism or retrenchment instead of a politics of hegemonic power. They oppose globalism because they identify it as a threat to hierarchies and community, with international and regional groups being the most threatening variant – it is here that we see the influence of Schmitt on their political thought.

These actors construct external enemies, and defend conspiracy theories which, for instance in the Brazilian case, extend to leaders, states, and organisations (CASARÕES, 2020). Bolsonaro's government antagonised Nicolás Maduro's Venezuela, and the São Paulo forum. It also fought the supposed flagbearers of globalism, which includes a broad swath from French president Emmanuel Macron, to Greenpeace, Greta Thunberg, and the Pope. Schmitt's friend-enemy logic of politics, as Casarões (2020) points out, is thus a key pillar in the neo-patriotic view of politics. Emphasising a cultural dispute, which precedes the political one, these movements act through discourse and practices that can be understood, as mentioned above, as a normative and institutional challenge to the liberal international order.

As previewed, we propose that neo-patriotic far-right movements must be interpreted as operating in two cleavages: the left-right, and cosmopolitanism-nationalism. This latter cleavage gives structure to the traditionalist reaction and political antagonism, and thus becomes the backbone of patterns of foreign policy observed in these

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[14] These three examples, beyond their shared traits, have a series of different views on some key subjects, for instance the role of the state or the influence of the United States and China over the world. It must be said, as well, that Bannon plays a key role in the internationalisation of conceptual and strategic aspects of neo-patriotic movements. To understand these messages and strategies, we recommend browsing Breitbart News (2016), which in 2016 become Bannon's way of projecting an alternative right-wing platform supportive of Trump.

[15] Texts published by Brazilian chancellor Ernesto Araújo in his blog include arguments derived from the thinking of Guénon and Evola.

[16] The crusaders or "cruzados" are a group of Bolsonaro supporters in the cabinet, religious organisations, and civil society who support a plan to return to traditional values as proposed by Bolsonaro.

movements. From these two cleavages, a logic of relations – which we call reactionary internationalism – is articulated. The cleavages become the centre points of the constructed identity of these actors, structure actions taken, and fuel cooperation – all in the name of reacting against globalism and defending tradition.

In this reactionary internationalism, politics is conceived following Schmittian logic, and associates sovereignty with authority through a unitary and anti-pluralist lens. It, however, seeks to distinguish politics as previous to what relates to the state. A state, thus, is the "political status" of an "organised people" over a "delineated territory", but the political is not defined departing from the state, but rather a community or original Arcadia based on the supposedly threatened tradition and conservative values.

The friend-enemy distinction thus is key to reactionary internationalism. It gives a political meaning to discourses, actions, and practices, by providing a criterion for differentiation, and thus of order and structured interaction. The friend-enemy dichotomy, as an exhaustive and autonomous definition, is not derivable from other criteria, or reducible in other dichotomies or categories. The definition of enemy generates, through opposition, the definition of friend.

When considering the foundational period of these groups, in the contingent moment of this critical juncture, we must remember that when defining the enemy, they are constructing their own identity. In the neo-patriotic discourse, the enemy is the other, the stranger, and in some cases, the foreigner. There can be foreign enemies with whom an identity, tradition or series of common traditions are shared, but what joins them at the hip is the common enemy. This enemy, present either internally or externally, is not a competitor or adversary, but rather those who threaten disintegration and thus attack tradition.

This political principle of reactionary internationalism permits the creation of international alliances on the friend-enemy axis. This places the idea of a fight, or struggle, in the friend-enemy dichotomy. As Schmitt proposes, these three concepts – friend, enemy, and struggle – take meaning when faced with a threat of disintegration.

As a political alliance, reactionary internationalism is not contradictory to strongly nationalist views of foreign policy nor a state-centred view of international relations. The state realm allows for the combination of the national and the populistic relationship between the leader or leaders and the masses. The concept of the state, in Schmitt's view, precedes the concept of the political and implies a unity of State, people, and a movement under the leadership of a leader who interprets it. In this way, it allows for populist leadership that project the national interest – defined in very ideological ways – in the world stage, operating with "friends" and against "enemies", and feeding into discourse and practice of institutional and normative challenges against actors, norms, and regional and international organisations which are viewed as globalist tools of the liberal international order.

This political logic is expressed as a challenge to the liberal international order, often presented with a conspirative view under the idea of the "new world order". Behind this ambiguous term an anti-elite discourse often personified in George Soros or Bill Gates is mobilised. Reference to Soros as an international influence attacking tradition and a symbol of a corrupt anti-national elite who goes against the interests of the "true people" has been a recurrent feature in Trump's America, Andrzej Duda's Poland, Viktor Orban's Hungary, Santiago Abascal in Spain and Matteo Salvini, in Italy, among others. Thus, Soros and his Open Society Foundation is transformed into one of the enemy icons, threatening to disintegrate tradition by promoting globalism, institutions, agents, and agendas such as immigration, "gender ideology" or climate change. The distrust of multilateralism and the liberal international order as a whole, is expressed through concrete positions. For instance, Brazil's foreign relations minister, Ernesto Araújo, has argued that climate change is an expression of cultural Marxism which seeks to dominate the global economy (EN ÓRBITA, 2019).

The defence of – a basically Western and Judaeo-Christian – tradition creates a common enemy in transnational elites and their support bases (both leftist cosmopolitans and conservative globalists) who threaten tradition by supporting liberal progressive values. In this way, an anti-establishment discourse, vindicating a homogeneous idea of

"the people" and national sovereignty, is developed. This nativist and patriarchal discourse often revolves around hate, and mobilises those frustrated with current affairs, or who feel that their expectations have not been met, under the leadership of personalities that feel left out from the dominant political and intellectual elites.

The reactionary internationalism of neo-patriotic far-right movements is articulated through actors that make up ideological networks of mutual support, such as Steve Bannon's international activism in attempting to coordinate and bring different movements together. Coordination occurs in regional and international political spaces, such as the European Parliament or the EU Council. In Latin America, this coordination is subordinate to the United States and Trump, Brazil being the most noteworthy case (ACTIS, 2019; CASARÕES, 2020).[17] For instance, appeals to a Western identity and the United States' role in saving the West are frequent and clear in Bolsonaro and the Brazilian "cruzados" (RODRÍGUEZ, 2019).

These actions reprioritise bilateralism over multilateralism, and challenge organisations of regional and international cooperation. The challenge to the institutions of migration and free trade, for instance, questions the international rule of law through which states relate (HOOGHE; LENZ; MARKS, 2019).

The liberal international order and its institutions are seen to be tools of globalist elites. This creates the need to not only oppose and disarticulate them, but to further replace them by modifying norms and practices, rereading international law, and other strategies to challenge normative and institutional foundations. To this end, these groups coordinate discourses and positions in international organisations to defeat the environmental agenda, global health, migration, and human rights, among other subjects (GUIMARÃES; OLIVEIRA, 2020; BELÉM LOPES; CARVALHO, 2020). The shared objective is a reaction against cosmopolitanism and globalisation, to adapt the international to the needs of reconstruction of the lost Arcadia of each country, making use of narratives that rescue myths and construct the imaginary West. Neo-patriots thus construct a discursive enemy and develop a strategy with an objective: to build a new world order, which in this case, means a return to a supposed tradition.

Conclusion

As a crisis of hegemony, the crisis of globalisation is a critical juncture that generates larger incentives and margins for action for groups that emerge in this context. Neo-patriotic far-right movements are finding themselves in their foundational moment, constructing an identity in relation to others, defined as friends or enemies, in the sense of Schmitt's dichotomy as proposed in this paper as a key element of their political identity.

This paper draws from Orellana and Michelsen's (2019) concept of reactionary internationalism, understood as an identity, discourse, and practices aimed to challenge the globalisation of the liberal international order. We add two other elements. First, the emphasis on Schmitt's friend-enemy dichotomy as a tool to understand the construction of political identity, interests, objectives, and strategies. Additionally, this conception of the political has the capacity, in conceptual terms, to provide an irreducible principle to comprehend the political dynamics of these movements in the international stage, as well as their strategies for relating to other actors. The second, a historical approach that conceives this phenomenon as a contingent dynamic. The undergoing crisis of hegemony that characterises the current stage, includes the surge of new far-right movements as a "countermovement" in the Polanyian sense – this countermovement operates within the crisis of globalisation as a new "great transformation". This critical juncture affects the future and potential historical trajectories. In this context, the challenge to the liberal international order at the global and regional stage is the clearest consequence of this reactionary internationalism. We conceive of this reactionary internationalism as operating in two cleavages – left-right and cosmopolitan-nationalist – based on which the friend-enemy dichotomy is

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[17] Some explanations for this alignment depart from role theory (GUIMARÃES; OLIVEIRA, 2020).

created and the objective of a return to a traditional Arcadia is justified. It must be noted, however, that the reactionary internationalism of these neo-patriotic far-right movements is by no means the only consequence of this crisis of globalisation, which has now become accentuated by the Covid-19 pandemic. It is thus worth venturing that, departing from other structural and agency factors, alternative actors that confront the advance of neo-patriots and challenge these reactionary forces and their principles could arise, allowing for new social relations and an alternative world order.

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