

John Tofik Karam

THE LEBANESE DIASPORA AT THE TRI-BORDER AND THE REDRAWING OF SOUTH AMERICAN GEOPOLITICS, 1950-1992

Abstract

Economic and political dynamics of diaspora are relevant to understanding not only the homeland but also the making of a regional order farther afield. Between the 1950s and the early 1990s, Lebanese at the urban tri-border between Brazil, Paraguay, and Argentina imported and exported merchandise as well as publicized liberationist ideals from the Arab and Islamic worlds. This article shows that their economic and political networks helped to draw Paraguay within the expansive orbit of Brazil and away from Argentina's historic sway. Shaped by, and helping to shape, competing state and national interests through "everyday geopolitics," Lebanese traders and activists unevenly linked Paraguayan commerce to Brazil's growing consumer and industrial base and reinforced the hierarchical alliance between these respective authoritarian and democratic regimes. In bringing the once Argentine-dominated Paraguay into Brazil's sphere of influence, this Lebanese diaspora helped to redraw a South American order.



Diasporic traders and activists give shape to not only the homeland but also the places their far-flung networks reach. However, over the last quarter-century, the "veritable explosion of interest" in diaspora¹ limited the study of its economics and politics to the homeland. Whether examining kin relationships, remittances, or long-distance nationalisms,² political scientists and sociologists drew upon a conventional definition of diaspora as primarily oriented toward "a real or imagined 'homeland.'"³ Their lines of inquiry hardly engaged with more interdisciplinary studies of cultural and intellectual exchanges across diaspora which de-emphasized the homeland orientation in efforts to theorize alternative geographies, such as the Black Atlantic,⁴ the Latino Americas,⁵ the Pacific Rim,⁶ as well as the Indian Ocean.⁷ By following this analytical shift away from the homeland, I aim to reconceptualize diasporic trade and activism in the making of a regional order farther afield.

John Tofik Karam is Associate Professor of Latin American & Latino Studies at DePaul University; e-mail: jkaram2@depaul.edu

This economic and political “de-centering” of the homeland in diaspora studies is key to understand Muslim Lebanese who, since the early 1950s, settled at the so-called “tri-border” where Brazil, Paraguay, and Argentina meet, called the *tríplice fronteira* (in Portuguese) or the *triple frontera* (in Spanish). By the 1980s, they headed business associations and participated in the transition from military rule in the two main cities at this border: Brazil’s Foz do Iguaçu and Paraguay’s Ciudad Presidente Stroessner (renamed Ciudad del Este after 1989). However, from the 1990s to today, mostly Argentine- and U.S.-based scholars and analysts questioned their business dealings and political loyalties.⁸ Fixated on the unresolved 1992 and 1994 bombings of an Israeli embassy and a Jewish community center in Buenos Aires,⁹ these authors solely viewed Muslim Lebanese in terms of their putative ties to political forces in the Middle East that would allegedly plan such attacks. Instead of only considering such a homeland orientation, I ask how this diaspora at the tri-border also participated in South America’s regional order.

Between the 1950s and the early 1990s, Lebanese in Foz do Iguaçu and Ciudad Presidente Stroessner imported and exported merchandise as well as publicized liberationist ideals from the Arab and Islamic worlds. This article shows that their economic and political networks helped to draw Paraguay within the expansive orbit of Brazil and away from Argentina’s historic sway. In unevenly linking Paraguayan commerce to Brazil’s growing consumer and industrial base since the 1970s, Lebanese in Ciudad Presidente Stroessner imported luxury items from Panama to be sold to (non-Arab) Brazilian consumers, while their counterparts in Foz do Iguaçu exported Brazilian-made manufactures to (non-Arab) Paraguayan traders. Similarly reinforcing the unequal alliance between democratic Brazil and authoritarian Paraguay in the 1980s, Lebanese merchants’ public support of Arab or Muslim liberationist causes fit into the democratic status quo in Foz do Iguaçu as well as its delay in Ciudad Presidente Stroessner. In bringing the once Argentine-dominated Paraguay into Brazil’s sphere of influence, Lebanese at the tri-border helped to redraw a South American order.

My article grasps this diasporic formation of regional hierarchy through what I call “everyday geopolitics,” the ways in which quotidian economic and political practices are shaped by, and help to shape, competing state powers and foreign policy interests in boundary-making. In a discursive line of inquiry, geographers Geraoid Ó Tuathail and John Agnew reconceived geopolitics as state policy and mass media because “simply to describe a foreign policy is to engage in geopolitics, for one is implicitly and tacitly normalizing a particular world.”¹⁰ Their focus on the texts and images used by state, military, and media powers in the making of space was complemented by more recent calls to ethnographically examine actual “social practices” of persons on the ground that engage with and possibly

rework top-down boundary-making.¹¹ In employing discursive and practical approaches, my article asks how Lebanese trade and activism intersected with the developmentalist and security visions of the tri-border shared by military governments in Brazil (1964-1985) and Paraguay (1954-1989), much to the detriment of Argentina. As both regimes oversaw the building of the world's largest hydroelectric dam on their sides of the tri-border in the 1970s and '80s,¹² Lebanese guided the commercial and civic flows that unevenly converged with multiple state agendas to realign the regional order.

Based on fifteen months of archival and ethnographic research on Brazilian, Paraguayan, and Argentine sides of an urban borderland, I show that state powers remade space to attract such flows from farther afield.¹³ Formed by the Paraná River between Brazil and Paraguay as well as the Iguaçú River between Brazil and Argentina, this *tríplice fronteira / triple frontera* mitigates national interests of development and security as well as transnational flows of persons, goods, and ideas.¹⁴ On the national scale of analysis, my article begins well before the Brazilian and Paraguayan states' 1965 opening of the *Ponte da Amizade* (Friendship Bridge) between Foz do Iguaçú and Ciudad Presidente Stroessner, and concludes shortly after the Brazilian and Argentine states' 1985 inauguration of the *Ponte Tancredo Neves* (Tancredo Neves Bridge) between Foz do Iguaçú and Puerto Iguazú, the tri-border's least important town on Argentina's side where few Arabs settled. On the transnational scale, I attend to migrants from the Bekkaa Valley and South Lebanon, their commercial networks to Panama and the Brazilian coast, as well as their political rapprochements toward Arab and Islamic worlds. In looking at the role of state powers in the building of the bridges that came to be crisscrossed by Lebanese traders and activists, this article reveals the intertwined histories of the national and transnational. Just as national states opened up new cross-border communication routes and relations, the transnational trajectories of migrants enabled the regional ascent of Brazil.

ARAB MIGRANT HISTORY OF A SOUTH AMERICAN BORDER

Initially stemming from two villages in the Bekkaa Valley, Balloul and Lela, migrants unevenly spread across what was then called the "region of the three borders." As his father had done in the 1890s, Ibrahim Barakat left Balloul in April 1950. After passing through the Brazilian port of Santos, he reached the city of São Paulo and "peddled with some friends...." Ibrahim's sales routes eventually led him to the western edge of the state of Paraná. According to his son, "My father said that at the time, there was not any cloth or clothing. In two or three weeks, he sold everything and, it was like this, he remained traveling between São Paulo and Foz do Iguaçú."¹⁵ Ibrahim set up a

shop of clothing and accessories on *Avenida Brasil* (Brazil Avenue), the main thoroughfare in Foz do Iguacu, western Paraná's then isolated city founded on Brazil's side of the border only in 1889.¹⁶ Lebanese traders connected this peripheral territory to Brazil's manufacturing base in São Paulo, the then economic center of the nation.

In 1951, Ahmed Hamad Rahal left Balloul with a similar trajectory. Arriving with empty pockets in São Paulo, his peddling routes became more lucrative as he refilled his trunks with larger amounts of clothing and accessories sold across Paraná. When he first reached Foz do Iguacu in the early 1950s, this Rahal encountered a few other Arab families, including the Barakat's. A decade before the building of the bridge between Foz do Iguacu and Ciudad Presidente Stroessner, Rahal traveled by boat to sell his wares to hamlets on the Paraná River between Brazil and Paraguay. In 1953, his brother, Mohamad, arrived in Foz do Iguacu. His wife followed three years later. By 1958, with the start-up capital saved through petty commerce, the brothers, Ahmed and Mohamad Rahal, opened a store, *A Casa das Fábricas*, on Avenida Brasil, and later on, founded a commercial export firm that catered to Paraguayan clients.¹⁷

Also from Balloul, Mohamed Ali Osman migrated to join his brother who was living near the city of Londrina in northern Paraná. In the early 1950s, a *patrício* (countryman) gave this Osman a trunk full of clothes, and as he remembered, "I went off peddling... I would sell on the farms, plantations, and in the coffee fields of the region." This Osman soon after started a business buying and selling coffee beans and other grains. In 1959, his younger brother, Mustapha, also arrived and peddled in the northern part of the state. With their savings, the two brothers headed further west to Foz do Iguacu and opened a *lojinha* (little store) of cloth and knickknacks (*armarinhos*) on Avenida Brasil. As examined later, the Osman brothers went on to establish a commercial export firm, *Têxtil Osman Ltda.*, whose customers included many Paraguayans. Lebanese traders not only connected Brazil's economic center to its own periphery, but also began to extend such influence into then Argentine-dominated Paraguay.

At least in retrospect, these and other migrants were well aware of their role in South America's changing order. According to Mohamad Rahal, Lebanese chose Foz do Iguacu because "we found the tourist potential was significant and the fact of bordering with two other countries was really important. We knew that Paraguay wasn't industrialized, as it still is today, so we were certain that Paraguay would be a great market for industrialized goods."¹⁸ Indeed, migrants first peddled goods from São Paulo and then opened shops with Brazilian manufactures for domestic consumers in Foz do Iguacu and also the incipient Paraguayan market. Abdul Rahal, another member of *beyt Rahal* (Rahal clan) who likewise arrived in the 1950s,

recalled: “I got to the point where I spent five days sleeping, feeling cold in the woods in Paraguay.” As a self-proclaimed pioneer introducing Brazilian goods into the “East of Paraguay,” this Rahal explained that “at that time, around 1959, Argentina was the power over Paraguay. Only Argentine products were allowed.” So when he used his boat to cross the Paraná River hawking Brazilian goods to Paraguayans, Rahal laughed, “it was if they had seen a snake with two heads.”¹⁹ Indeed, in 1960, Argentina was the largest source of imports into Paraguay, while Brazil accounted for less than one percent.²⁰ In recounting their own history, Lebanese in Foz do Iguazu envisioned Paraguay as dominated by Argentina but potentially acquiescent to Brazil.

In post-WWII times, Brazilian and Paraguayan military governments welcomed this possibility at the border. Although Argentina held a “long-run advantage” over Paraguay,²¹ an Argentine official, Isaac Rojas, warned that its historic sway was being eroded by Brazil while Argentina’s *Clarín* newspaper bemoaned the “progress” on the Brazilian and Paraguayan sides of the border.²² In March 1965, Brazilian and Paraguayan leaders inaugurated the Friendship Bridge over the Paraná River.²³ Entirely financed by Brazil,²⁴ the bridge linked the newly constructed Ruta VII highway from Asunción, the capital of landlocked Paraguay, to Brazil’s BR-277 which cut horizontally across Paraná to the port of Paranaguá, near the state’s coastal capital of Curitiba. By conceding a duty-free zone for Paraguay within this port, Brazil’s military government sought to draw Paraguay closer into its political-economic orbit, ensuring the transportation means for Brazilian elites to purchase Paraguayan agricultural goods and to sell Brazilian manufactures.²⁵ Paraguay’s dictator, Alfredo Stroessner, welcomed the bridge and highway in order to reduce the country’s dependence on Buenos Aires and play off the Argentine-Brazilian rivalry.²⁶ In his *marcha hacia el este* (march towards the east), Paraguay’s dictator founded and named after himself “Ciudad Puerto Presidente Stroessner” (President Stroessner Port City) at the sparsely-populated eastern border with Brazil in 1957.

In the early years, this Paraguayan “port on land” was linked into an historically distinct wave of Christian Syrian migrants in Asunción. Well-known for elegant cloth near the *Calle 25 de Mayo* in the Paraguayan capital, Elias Sabah often traveled to the border to purchase fabric from his counterparts in Foz do Iguazu (who brought them from São Paulo).²⁷ As a traveling salesman, Mihail Bazas regularly departed his uncle’s store near the same street in Asunción and followed a route that ended in the Paraguayan border town. Also in the 1960s, Humberto Domínguez Dibb acquired large parcels of land and owned Ciudad Presidente Stroessner’s *Acaray Casino*, undoubtedly due to his marriage to the daughter of the Paraguayan dictator himself.²⁸ As most Christian Syrians remained in Asunción, Muslim Lebanese established the first brick and mortar stores in Ciudad Presidente

Stroessner. In the mid-1960s, a young man from another family in *beyt Rahal* from Balloul opened the *Casa de la Amistad*, named after the recently built bridge. It attracted Brazilian consumers in search of name-brand imports – at this time, whiskey, cigarettes, and jeans – without the high taxes of Brazil’s protectionist economy. As explored later, other Lebanese followed Rahal’s example in the 1970s, importing merchandise through Paraguay’s free-duty zone in the port of Paranaguá, Brazil, and likewise catering to Brazilian consumers who regularly crisscrossed the Friendship Bridge.

As Arabs negotiated these boundaries and flows, however, a shooting occurred at the Israeli embassy in Asunción on May 4, 1970.²⁹ Brazilian, and not Paraguayan,³⁰ media directed suspicion toward Arabs at the then isolated border. In asking if “the guns used by two Palestinians in the attack against the embassy of Israel in Asunción could have been bought in [Foz do Iguacu] Brazil,” a Brazilian newspaper cited the Paraguayan police as a source, but this possibility was not mentioned by the Paraguayan press. Nonetheless, by September 1970, the “Department of Political and Social Order” (D.O.P.S) of Brazil’s Federal Police targeted Arabs on both sides of the Friendship Bridge. Its office in Curitiba solicited the police commissioner in Foz do Iguacu to investigate several allegations.³¹ On a mimeograph entitled “Activities of Arab Terrorist Organizations in Brazil,” D.O.P.S asked whether Lebanese at the border were involved in Palestinian causes and helped plan the embassy attack in Asunción. Three aforementioned Lebanese were named as suspects and alleged *contrabandistas* (tax-evasive “smugglers”). After a month, however, the local officer responded that there was no evidence that linked the shooting in Paraguay’s capital to the border. His report, however, provided details about Lebanese living in Foz do Iguacu and operating businesses in Ciudad Presidente Stroessner, including passport or ID numbers as well as home and business addresses. In using an unrelated incident in the Paraguayan capital to gather intelligence, the Brazilian state and media sought the compliance of Lebanese merchants in wider plans to remake the Brazilian-Paraguayan border.

Not long after, Lebanese presided over business associations in Foz do Iguacu and Ciudad Presidente Stroessner. In 1974, Fouad Mohamed Fakih was elected president of the “Commercial and Industrial Association of Foz do Iguacu,” known by its acronym, *Acifi*. Founded by lumber traders in the 1950s,³² *Acifi* shifted to commercial exporters’ interests with Fakih’s mandates over the next six years. Having departed Balloul and visited the Colombian coast where relatives settled, Fakih catered to Brazilian and Paraguayan clients, surmising that Foz do Iguacu had “a very promising perspective” because “it bordered on two countries.”³³ Meanwhile, Hussein Taigen founded and was appointed as president of the *Cámara de Comércio* (Chamber of Commerce) of Ciudad Presidente Stroessner.³⁴ Also stemming from Balloul, Taigen migrated to Colombia in the early 1960s, and after

return-trips to Lebanon, he settled in the Paraguayan border town. Using his contacts from Colombia, Taigen specialized in consumer imports in his well-known store, *Casa Colombia* (Colombia House). This rise of an Arab commercial class on both sides of the Friendship Bridge took shape just as Brazilian and Paraguayan states signed the “Itaipú Treaty” in 1973, setting the stage for the construction of the world’s largest hydroelectric dam and ushering in a time of uneven astronomical growth.

REALIGNING SOUTH AMERICA'S ECONOMIC ORDER THROUGH DIASPORA

Criticized as a “pharonic” undertaking,³⁵ the Itaipú dam project between Brazil and Paraguay signaled a changing economic order. For much of the twentieth century, Argentina was Paraguay’s largest trading partner, but by 1982, Brazil surpassed it in terms of imports and exports.³⁶ Eroding Argentina’s historic sway, the construction of the Itaipú dam between Brazil and Paraguay resulted in a lopsided population explosion at the tri-border from 1970 to 1980: while the Argentine town of Puerto Iguazú grew from 2,998 to 9,151, Brazil’s Foz do Iguazu jumped from 33,966 to 136,321 and Paraguay’s Ciudad Presidente Stroessner increased seven-fold from 7,085 to 49,423.³⁷ While the Argentine town across the Iguazú River remained in isolation, Lebanese on the other sides of the border benefitted from and strengthened South America’s novel hierarchy. In Ciudad Presidente Stroessner, Lebanese sold consumer imports to Brazilian middle-classes, while their counterparts in Foz do Iguazu exported Brazilian manufacturers to Paraguayan businessmen. Through importation and exportation, the Lebanese diaspora circumscribed Paraguay within Brazil’s growing consumer and industrial markets.

In the mid-1960s, Lebanese opened businesses on or near the *Avenida San Blás* in downtown Ciudad Presidente Stroessner, which is the end of the Paraguayan highway of Ruta VII before the Friendship Bridge. Early migrants emphasized that they catered to “Brazilian buyers” (*compristas brasileños*) who crisscrossed the bridge to purchase and carry away higher-end consumables that would be far more costly in Brazil. Take for example Faisal Hammoud who, alongside his brothers, Sadek and Sharif, established the *Monalisa* store that specializes in imported spirits, perfumes, cosmetics, as well as electronics. Faisal departed Balloul for São Paulo in 1968 and first worked as a loader in a factory before setting out for Ciudad Presidente Stroessner with the equivalent of five dollars in his pocket.³⁸ After some moderate success with a small store in the early 1970s, the Hammoud brothers began construction of their six-story complex that attracted mostly Brazilian customers. Also migrating from Balloul to Ciudad Presidente Stroessner in the early 1970s, the Mannah brothers, Mohamed and Atef,

opened *La Petisquera* (The Morsel-Maker), which specialized in imported spirits, highbrow foods, perfumes, and cosmetics. They became well-known and trusted by their mostly Brazilian clientele because “the source of its products is always legitimate.”³⁹ Five Hijazi brothers likewise departed Kabrikha in South Lebanon in the first half of the 1970s, and eventually opened *Mundo Electronico* (Electronic World), specializing in electronic imports of “North-American, Japanese, German, and Panamanian origins.”⁴⁰ Located within a stone’s throw of the Friendship Bridge, these and other Lebanese-owned businesses in the Paraguayan border town carried several lines of imported goods that served an expanding consumer market in Brazil.

Lebanese commercialized higher-end products in Ciudad Presidente Stroessner for Brazilian middle-classes through state powers, specifically the “complementary forces” of “Paraguay’s liberalization policies” and “Brazil’s protectionist policies.”⁴¹ Beginning in 1971, the Paraguayan state simplified customs procedures and lowered import tariffs for businesses specifically in Ciudad Presidente Stroessner.⁴² The subsequently cheaper price tags on luxury imports – especially whiskey, perfumes, and jeans in the 1970s, and electronics in the 1980s – attracted increasing numbers of Brazilian “tourist-shoppers” (*turista-compristas*) who crossed the Friendship Bridge in order to evade steep Brazilian tariffs “...that reached up to three hundred percent of the imported item’s value.”⁴³ Having migrated from Bint Jbail in South Lebanon to South America in the 1960s, Mohamed Jebai claimed to have been urged by Paraguay’s dictator to set up a business in the border town because of its “free trade policy.”⁴⁴ Although others gossiped that Jebai got his start in commerce only after accepting Stroessner’s wife as his business partner, this Lebanese stated that he began importing electronics from Southeast Asia in the 1970s. With dizzying sales to a mostly Brazilian clientele through Paraguayan laissez-faire tariffs and policies, Jebai used his profits to build Ciudad Presidente Stroessner’s largest shopping and residential complex. According to one of its managers, this *Galeria Jebai Center* grew to have around 400 stands, roughly forty percent run by Arabs.⁴⁵ Jebai and other Lebanese businessmen in Ciudad Presidente Stroessner gained the tacit or direct approval of Paraguay’s dictatorship in importing merchandise for Brazilian clients.

Whether importing from Europe, North America, or Southeast Asia, Arabs in Paraguay agreed that Panama’s free trade zone in Colón was a key shipping point in the 1970s and 1980s. One migrant related that contact began when the aforementioned Hussein Taigen visited relatives along the Panamanian and Colombian coast. A *primo* (cousin) allegedly asked Taigen *llevar en su mala* (to carry in his baggage) some items *para vender* (to sell) in Paraguay. Aside from this apocryphal tale, other Lebanese from Balloul were listed as merchants in these and other small towns on Colombia’s coast just before the mid-twentieth century.⁴⁶ Those arriving at the Brazilian-

Paraguayan border around that time maintained contact with their relatives in Panama and Colombia, both on the island of San Andrés as well as in the coastal cities of Barranquilla, Maicao, and Santa Marta. Whether precipitating or giving rise to the commercial flows from Panama, Lebanese and others in Ciudad Presidente Stroessner during the early 1970s explained that their requisitioned cargo would first take the oceanic route from Panama's free trade zone to Paraguay's customs free zone within the Brazilian port of Paranaguá. Next, it would be transported over the BR-277 highway until it reached the Paraguayan customs terminal beside the Friendship Bridge. Here containers with cargo were weighed and, depending on the country of origin, customs officials calculated a one-time tax to be paid by the importers. As recalled by Taigen, the tax varied between seven and ten percent in the 1970s and most of the 1980s.⁴⁷ In commercializing imports in Ciudad Presidente Stroessner, the Lebanese diaspora transformed Paraguay into a cheaper source of merchandise for mostly Brazilian consumers.

Becoming the country's second largest city in the 1970s, Ciudad Presidente Stroessner showcased Paraguay's commercial sector that surpassed agricultural and industrial percentages of the country's GDP from 1982 onward.⁴⁸ At this time, the seven hundred shops in Ciudad Presidente Stroessner were headed by "Arab, Chinese, and Korean immigrants."⁴⁹ Aside from *La Pestiguera*, *Monalisa*, and akin establishments carrying high-end merchandise, most businesses rented small spaces or stands in ten or so shopping complexes – including the *Jebai Center*, the *Galeria Rahal*, and the *Hijazi Center*, founded by the aforementioned migrants from the Bekkaa and South Lebanon. They sold everything from "sophisticated electronics" to the "famous Chinese ointment" (tiger-balm).⁵⁰ Charging half their price in Brazil, these and other Lebanese merchants became known for Sony videocassette recorders, Olympus cameras, and Toshiba or Brother word-processors by the 1980s. They also carried carpets from Iran, perfumes from France, as well as spirits from Scotland, sold at a fraction of their price in Brazil.⁵¹ Traveling from across Brazil during the 1980s, "housewives, senior citizens, students, liberal professionals, as well as idle folks" were said to cross the Friendship Bridge to "make a Brazilian party in Ciudad Presidente Stroessner."⁵² Lebanese merchants played a key role in the expansion of Paraguay's commercial sector that served Brazilian middle-classes.

Although state policies enabled this Lebanese-driven trade, dissonant views came to be expressed about their place in Ciudad Presidente Stroessner. Paraguayan elites, including Humberto Domínguez Dibb and his *HOY* newspaper, criticized a tax-evasive practice whereby importers paid off Paraguayan customs officials to reduce the weight of their cargo and thus decrease the amount of tax they would be charged.⁵³ This *subfaturamento* (under-billing), according to Dibb, was the "most important economic crime ever committed in the history of our country."⁵⁴ Meanwhile in Foz do Iguaçu,

a city official complained that tourists use the Brazilian city as a temporary “stop” to shop in Paraguay.⁵⁵ His criticism was echoed by an Osman family member who surmised that “the millions of dollars that enter Paraguay could stay in Foz do Iguacu.”⁵⁶ Indeed, most Brazilians viewed Ciudad Presidente Stroessner, and Paraguay, as “parasitical,”⁵⁷ despite claims that the money spent in the Paraguayan border town returned to Brazil.⁵⁸ Speaking on behalf of Ciudad Presidente Stroessner’s chamber of commerce, Taigen used this logic when he stated to a Brazilian newspaper that “we sell imported products from five continents for Brazilians in *cruzados* [Brazil’s then currency]. This cash is deposited in bank establishments in Foz do Iguacu or used to acquire Brazilian merchandise for consumption or commercialization within Paraguay.”⁵⁹ Although state policies created this very crossroads, Lebanese traders in Ciudad Presidente Stroessner, like the entire border town, were mistrusted by Arabs as well as other elites, in Brazilian and Paraguayan public spheres.

On the other side of the border in Foz do Iguacu, however, Lebanese were positioned differently. After the construction of the Friendship Bridge, they moved from *Avenida Brasil* in the city centre to the neighborhoods of Jardim Jupira and Vila Portes next to the bridge itself. Mentioned earlier, Ahmed and Mohamed Rahal used profits from their downtown store to open *Exportadora Tupy* (Tupy Export) in Jardim Jupira in 1968.⁶⁰ They commercialized several lines of merchandise produced by Brazilian industries for Paraguayan clients. Abdul Rahal likewise established the *Exportadora Líder* (Leader Export) that allegedly earned “12 million *cruzados* a month selling processed foods and cleaning supplies to Paraguay.” According to this Rahal, “Early on, we would sell only to buyers in the Paraguayan capital of Asunción ... [but] Itaipú brought the clientele almost to within our stores.”⁶¹ Having migrated from the village of Lela in 1967, Akra and Mohammad Omeiri similarly opened up the *Exportadora Real* (Royal Export), which a Brazilian newspaper later characterized as “an example of the initiative of immigrants in commercial dealings with Paraguayans.”⁶² While their counterparts on *Avenida San Blás* on the Paraguayan side sold consumer imports to Brazilian middle-classes, these Lebanese on the Brazilian side of the bridge sold Brazilian manufactures to Paraguayan businessmen.

Called the *comércio de exportação* (commercial exportation), this Lebanese-led exportation of Brazilian goods to Paraguay was enabled and approved by the Brazilian state. After the military took control in 1964, “the rapid growth and diversification of exports was deemed essential” and the government expanded its “export incentive program.”⁶³ It was “Law-Decree Number 491” of March 1969 that provided “fiscal incentives” for the “exportation of Brazilian manufactures.”⁶⁴ By granting tax-exempt status for exporters of Brazilian manufactures, this federal legislation enabled firms to

widen profit margins by commercializing Brazilian goods abroad.⁶⁵ Lebanese-owned firms mentioned above were among the first of many *exportadoras* that opened next to the Friendship Bridge crisscrossed by Paraguayan clients and the trucks with Brazilian cargo. By 1976, so many Lebanese ran businesses in the neighborhood next to the bridge that one of its streets was renamed the *Avenida República do Líbano* (Republic of Lebanon Avenue).⁶⁶ According to non-Arab members of the military government's political party who authored the legislation, "one finds innumerable Lebanese established there, constructing new buildings..." and "they came here when the city still did not offer the best conditions of prosperity, helping the construction of our development..."⁶⁷ In the late 1960s and 1970s, Lebanese exporters in Foz do Iguaçú advanced Brazilian state objectives.

Not unlike their diasporic counterparts in Paraguay who drew upon their ties to Panama's free trade zone, Lebanese in Foz do Iguaçú utilized their trading networks to São Paulo and other coastal Brazilian industrial centers. In the mid-1970s, the Rahal brothers' *Exportadora Tupy* became a beer and soft-drink distributor for Brazilian and multi-national companies in São Paulo, starting out "with two trucks and a thousand bottles" that they refilled in Foz do Iguaçú and delivered to Paraguayan customers.⁶⁸ Founded by their cousin Abdul Rahal, the *Exportadora Líder* became the distributor of the São Paulo-based textile company, Alpargatas, allegedly selling 30,000 pairs of blue jeans every month to Paraguayan businesses in the early 1980s.⁶⁹ The Omeiri's *Exportadora Real* became "the largest reseller of Cònsul," a household electronics manufacturer in São Paulo, distributing refrigerators, stoves, and the like across Paraguay as well as other "Latin American countries."⁷⁰ Mohammed Osman's *Têxtil Osman Ltda.* represented Kraft Foods Inc. and "various Brazilian brands with the exclusive right to exportation across Latin America."⁷¹ The non-durable and durable goods commercialized by these and other Lebanese *exportadoras* were shipped from coastal Brazilian industries across the BR-277, stored in commercial exporters' warehouses in Jardim Jupira or Vila Portes, and after being sold, transported across the Friendship Bridge. Lebanese businessmen would then send a copy of the sales receipt and the tax exemption form to federal and/or state fiscal powers. In widening their profit margins through Brazilian state objectives to increase the commercial exportation of Brazilian manufactures, Lebanese in Foz do Iguaçú drew Paraguay within the expansive reach of Brazilian as well as São Paulo-based multi-national corporations.

According to *Acifi* and the city government, Foz do Iguaçú's number of commercial establishments increased ten-fold from 1975 to 1987, and in 1986 alone, the 300 "export businesses" represented one-hundred million dollars of external sales to Paraguay.⁷² Almost all of this export-commerce was based out of the neighborhoods of Jardim Jupira and Vila Portes, whose many

Lebanese-run stores carried canned foods, grains, textiles, household appliances, and heavier machinery.⁷³ In 1987, the former president of *Acifi*, Fouad Fakih, noted that “Paraguayans are responsible for seventy-five percent of all this [commercial] movement...”⁷⁴ Fakih continued: “Paraguay doesn’t produce practically anything and its population can’t afford to buy what is sold in Ciudad Presidente Stroessner, expensive products directed toward [Brazilian] tourists.” As a result, he concluded, Paraguayans shopped for clothing, foodstuffs, as well as home appliances in Foz do Iguaçú. Indeed, for several months in 1985, commerce in Foz do Iguaçú nearly ground to a halt when Paraguayans’ purchasing power was limited due to the suddenly devalued Paraguayan currency (the *guaraní*).⁷⁵ This cross-border trade was evident when Mohamed Osman received a blank check from a Paraguayan client who asked him to fill in the cost of her purchase. “It’s trust,” Osman noted.⁷⁶ As they had done since their peddling days, Lebanese increased the sales of Brazilian industrialized goods to Paraguayan traders and consumers, and economically reinforced Brazil’s influence over Paraguay.

Although spatially enabled by state policies, Lebanese commercial networks based in Foz do Iguaçú drew increased scrutiny. Brazilian fiscal authorities suspected export firms of tax-evasion, reflecting that “merchandise marked for exportation [to Paraguay] is diverted ... [and] sold to local [Brazilian] customers ... Without the payment of federal taxes, Brazilian merchandise ... is worth 50 percent less than its price in the domestic market.”⁷⁷ Akin claims of tax-evasion were voiced by Paraguayan elites in Asunción. Mentioned earlier, Dibb’s *HOY* newspaper complained that Brazilian-made products were brought into Paraguay “without paying any taxes,” thereby out-pricing Paraguay’s national industry.⁷⁸ In response to being questioned by Brazilian and Paraguayan state authorities, Lebanese in Foz do Iguaçú spoke of their businesses as not only providing manufactured goods that Paraguay lacked, as remarked earlier, but also strengthening Brazil’s own development. Arriving in Foz do Iguaçú in 1961 and naturalizing as a citizen in 1975, Ibrahim Barakat’s son, Mohamed, characterized Lebanese-led commercial exportation to Paraguay as “the Arab contribution to Brazilian development.”⁷⁹ Like their counterparts in Ciudad Presidente Stroessner, Lebanese in Foz do Iguaçú were suspected of unseemly business practices at the same time they strengthened the realignment of Paraguay toward Brazil’s economic orbit.

REIMAGINING SOUTH AMERICA'S POLITICAL ORDER THROUGH DIASPORA

As Argentina was displaced by Brazil as Paraguay's economic patron, a complex political transition took shape. Reinstating civilian government in 1983 and 1985, Argentina and Brazil supported conflicting blocs in authoritarian Paraguay whose ruling party, the *Partido Colorado*, stayed in power after the 1989 fall of the dictatorship. Argentina backed Paraguayan forces that were opposed to the political party of Stroessner's regime while Brazil's military or civilian government "...naturally chose the side of Stroessner and his Colorado Party in its attempt to separate Paraguay from Argentina."⁸⁰ For the National War College (ADESG) that defined Brazil's security policies during military rule and beyond,⁸¹ "the government of President Alfredo Stroessner and the *Partido Colorado* are sustained by Paraguay's alliance with Brazil."⁸² In the 1980s, ADESG noted that favorable Brazilian economic policies helped Paraguay reduce its "dependence on Argentina" and, in return, the subsequent growth of Ciudad Presidente Stroessner "brought benefits to Brazilian border cities, namely Foz do Iguacu." At this time, Lebanese at the border took up the causes of Libya or Iran, and Palestine, as well as publicized critiques of U.S. intervention in the Middle East and Latin America. Though converging with civilian rule in the Brazilian domestic sphere, their liberationist stance acquiesced to Paraguay's authoritarian bloc that remained in power even after 1989. Upholding the democratic status quo in Foz do Iguacu and its authoritarian delay in Ciudad Presidente Stroessner, the Lebanese diaspora reinforced the novel political hierarchy between Brazil and Paraguay.

Defly appealing to pro-democracy and authoritarian forces on Brazil's side of the border, mostly Lebanese founded associations *not* in Ciudad Presidente Stroessner, but rather in Foz do Iguacu: in 1962, they inaugurated the *Clube União Árabe* (Arab Union Club), a country club for mostly Lebanese and some Palestinian families; in 1978, they established the *Sociedade Islâmica Beneficente* (Islamic Charity Society), which came to attract mostly Shia Lebanese who hosted religious observances as well as championed the Iranian revolution and Palestinian liberation; in 1981, Sunni Arabs created the *Centro Cultural Beneficente Muçulmana* (Muslim Charity Cultural Center) that soon after constructed a mosque on land donated by Foz do Iguacu's city government; and in the same year, the *Centro Cultural Árabe-Brasileiro* (Arab-Brazilian Cultural Center), began to publicly advocate for Libyan and Palestinian causes. These institutions were based on Brazil's side of the border not only because Arabs who owned businesses in Ciudad Presidente Stroessner actually resided with their families in Foz do Iguacu. More importantly, Arabs chose to mobilize in Brazil and not Paraguay due to the Brazilian military government's political opening (*abertura política*) and concomitant support of authoritarian rule in Paraguay. The Brazilian

regime's last two heads of state, Ernesto Geisel (1974 – 1979) and João Figueirido (1979-1985), both politically liberalized Brazil and renewed ties with Stroessner's dictatorship.⁸³ Accordingly, Lebanese contributed to civil society in Foz do Iguacu as well as its concomitant delay in Ciudad Presidente Stroessner.

This lopsided institutionalization of the Lebanese diaspora at the tri-border was evident at an event in Foz do Iguacu in June 1981.⁸⁴ Organized by the "Arab-Brazilian Cultural Center," the occasion honored the visit of the Libyan ambassador and was covered by Foz do Iguacu's pro-democracy, leftist newspaper, *Nosso Tempo*.⁸⁵ The Lebanese speakers at the event condemned "capitalist exploitation" and praised the socialist pretension of Qaddafi's Libya, rebuked "North American imperialism" and Zionism, as well as exalted liberation struggles in El Salvador, Libya, Nicaragua, and Palestine. What drew the attention of the *Nosso Tempo* journalist, however, was not the three hundred guests who were almost entirely Lebanese from Foz do Iguacu and Ciudad Presidente Stroessner. Rather, it was the presence of military or state officials from each side of the tri-border who were "committed to the rightist, reactionary ideology of the three countries," including Foz do Iguacu's Army Commander and Federal Police chief, Ciudad Presidente Stroessner's appointed mayor, as well as the Argentine consul in Foz do Iguacu. For *Nosso Tempo*, Lebanese attendees celebrated the liberationist causes of the "Arab homeland" while they remained silent about political oppression in South America. However, this leftist newspaper overlooked the fact that the actual event – held in Foz do Iguacu and not Ciudad Presidente Stroessner – reflected the wider symbiosis between a politically-liberalizing Brazil and an authoritarian-entrenched Paraguay.

Based in Foz do Iguacu, Lebanese-led organizations constructed political or religious homelands not limited to Lebanon. Although the *Centro Cultural Árabe-Brasileiro* sponsored Arabic language courses and Ramadan food distribution drives,⁸⁶ it became known for its public support of Muammar Qaddafi as leading the liberation of the Third World. In the center's marches and statements, Sunni Lebanese stressed that Qaddafi stood in solidarity with the Sandinistas against the U.S.-backed Somoza regime in Nicaragua and supported the people's struggle in El Salvador.⁸⁷ It distributed the Portuguese translation of Qaddafi's *The Green Book* and hosted annual commemorations of the 1969 defeat of the U.S. as well as Qaddafi's victory.⁸⁸ While this Lebanese-led center idealized Qaddafi and the Libyan revolution, the *Sociedade Beneficente Islâmica* championed the Iranian revolutionary government and Palestinian self-determination.⁸⁹ Probably due to Qaddafi's role in the disappearance of Musa al-Sadr, a popular Shia leader in Lebanon during the 1970s, most Shia Lebanese steered clear of the *Centro Cultural Árabe-Brasileiro* but framed diasporic sentiments in parallel ways. Take for example the *Sociedade Beneficente Islâmica*'s public characterization of the

“International Day of Jerusalem” not only as a date to remember Palestine’s capital but also as the “day of the oppressed against the oppressors,” which were identified as Israel and the U.S..⁹⁰ Although respectively adopting Libya and Iran as points of reference, each Foz do Iguaçu-based diasporic organization constructed a homeland in liberationist terms.

These associations also cultivated ties with Brazilian pro-democracy forces, including *Nosso Tempo*, the aforementioned non-Arab, non-Muslim newspaper founded with a “critical editorial line” in 1980 and harassed by military rulers.⁹¹ After it featured Shia Lebanese who felt more “united” and pious after a visit from Brazil’s Iranian ambassador in 1984,⁹² one of *Nosso Tempo*’s co-founders was invited to visit Tehran in order to observe a “week of war” with Iraq. In concluding a two-page article about his time in “the land of the Ayatollahs,” the journalist criticized Iran as “just one more country of the Third World serving the interests of imperialism that needs wars in order to sell people-killing machines.”⁹³ In the same year it rebuked the Iranian revolutionary cause idealized by many Shia Lebanese, *Nosso Tempo* and other pro-democracy activists were invited by the “Arab-Brazilian Cultural Center” to participate in Libya’s “revolutionary congress.” The Brazilian delegation included a few Sunni Lebanese migrants, *Nosso Tempo*’s editor, as well as members of the *Partido do Movimento Democrático Brasileiro* (PMDB, or Party of the Brazilian Democratic Movement).⁹⁴ With official support from PMDB leaders, the *Nosso Tempo* editor remembered that he and other Brazilian leftists greeted Qaddafi as a critic of U.S. imperialism, and saw in Libya “...a society more egalitarian than our own.” Whether dismissed or embraced, Lebanese diasporic politics sought the support of Brazilian pro-democracy forces for liberationist causes in Arab and Islamic homelands.

At the same time, Lebanese-led associations remained silent about the Paraguayan dictatorship. Just before the “International Congress in Solidarity with the Libyan Revolution,” *Nosso Tempo* planned the *Jornada de Solidariedade ao Povo Paraguaio* (March in Support of the Paraguayan People).⁹⁵ It was held in Foz do Iguaçu in August 1984 and was repeated the following year. Besides *Nosso Tempo*, the organizers included students and activists who criticized Stroessner and the Brazilian state’s official support of him. Conspicuously absent among three-hundred participants were Lebanese from Foz do Iguaçu or Ciudad Presidente Stroessner as well as their associations such as the *Centro Cultural Árabe-Brasileiro* and the *Sociedade Beneficente Islâmica*. Although the idealizer of the Paraguayan solidarity campaign, *Nosso Tempo*, attended to Arab and Islamic liberationist causes, Lebanese merchants steered clear of a leftist Brazilian protest against Stroessner which would have brought Paraguayan officials’ retribution on their businesses. Indeed, in 1984 and 1985, Paraguayan secret services gathered intelligence at these Paraguayan pro-democracy events on the

Brazilian side of the border, recording the names of the organizers and speakers.⁹⁶ Given that secret police sought their acquiescence a decade and a half previously, Lebanese avoided criticism of an unequal South American political order. Inflecting Brazil's influence over Paraguay, diasporic activism for Arab and Islamic liberationist causes fit into a democratizing Foz do Iguacu and an authoritarian Ciudad Presidente Stroessner.

Changes in Puerto Iguazú on the Argentine side were concurrently underway. In late 1985, the new civilian presidents of Argentina and Brazil inaugurated the *Ponte Tancredo Neves* (also called the *Puente de la Fraternidad* in Argentina). Built over the Iguacu River, it linked Puerto Iguazú to Brazil's Foz do Iguacu. Although this bridge was touted as an engine for growth, the valorization of the Argentine currency some years later brought far greater numbers of Argentines to shop across the bridge in Foz do Iguacu. As the construction of the *Ponte Tancredo Neves* precipitated the stagnation of the Argentine border town, Foz do Iguacu became the axis between Puerto Iguazú and Ciudad Presidente Stroessner within the urban tri-border region. Although flows of goods and persons generally varied with exchange rate fluctuations between the U.S. dollar and the three South American currencies, Foz do Iguacu became the trinational border's only city with a bridge to the other two sides.⁹⁷ Rather than reassert Argentina's historic sway in the region, the 1985 inauguration of the *Ponte Tancredo Neves* reconfirmed Brazil's ascension at the dawn of a democratic Southern Cone.

Taking advantage of this political opening in the second half of the 1980s and early 1990s, Lebanese continued to mobilize, not in the Argentine border town of Puerto Iguazú where few settled, but rather in Foz do Iguacu and Ciudad Presidente Stroessner. Many of their public protests and declarations were made in support of Palestine and against Zionism.⁹⁸ In Foz do Iguacu, Mohamad Barakat, one of the main organizers of the Arab-Brazilian Cultural Center and the Brazilian delegation to Libya, joined PMDB, the political party opposed to authoritarian rule. Three years after this party took over the Brazilian state, Barakat ran for city council in Foz do Iguacu.⁹⁹ Due to his influence within local party ranks, the PMDB-ruled city government officially recognized 29 November as the "Day of International Solidarity with the Palestinian People" and supported Barakat's repudiation of the victorious presidential candidate, Fernando Collor de Mello, due to his remarks against a Palestinian state.¹⁰⁰ Meanwhile in the Paraguayan border town that was renamed Ciudad del Este in 1989, Hussein Taigen allegedly gave moral and financial support to the *Partido Revolucionario Febrerista*, opposed to Paraguay's crumbling dictatorship. Yet he chose not to run for city council when elections were held after the military coup due to the fact that the regime's official Colorado Party stayed in power. Around this time, Taigen and other Lebanese from the Paraguayan side of the border were

regularly featured in the aforementioned news coverage of the marches and rallies for Palestinian liberation held in Foz do Iguacu. Whether feigning or showing support for the Colorado Party, Lebanese in Ciudad del Este championed Palestinian self-determination and complied with authoritarian Paraguayan politics. In protesting for Palestine, Lebanese diasporic activism mitigated both Brazil's democratic status quo as well as Paraguay's enduring authoritarianism.

Among Arabs themselves, however, some dissonance emerged between these political stances and economic interests, specifically in response to Israel's 1992 assassination of Hezbollah's Secretary General, Abbas al-Musawi. Soon after the Israeli offensive in Lebanon, a local Brazilian newspaper reported that "dozens of commercial establishments of Ciudad del Este in Paraguay and in the neighborhoods of Vila Portes and Jardim Jupira of Foz do Iguacu closed ... in protest."¹⁰¹ "Palestinians" and "various Muslim leaders" were said to have led the commercial protest and called for three days of mourning in a local mosque. Although morally condemning such violence in the homeland, the aforementioned president of Ciudad del Este's chamber of commerce, Hussein Taigen, also regretted that the protest "diminished the flow of merchandise at a difficult time for storeowners."¹⁰² Based in a democratic Brazil and an authoritarian Paraguay, Lebanese at the border did not necessarily support protesting against Israel if it undermined business.

Coming as a shock to these commercially minded Lebanese Brazilians and Lebanese Paraguayans a month later, a violent blast occurred in the Argentine capital of Buenos Aires, nearly 1,500 kilometers from the bridge between Puerto Iguazú and Foz do Iguacu. On March 17th, 1992, a vehicle loaded with 220 pounds of explosives blew apart the five-story Israeli Embassy in the *porteño* neighborhood of Retiro.¹⁰³ Media and state powers quickly focused on a statement issued by the amorphous "Islamic Jihad" in Beirut, taking at face value the claim that their group authored the attack in retribution for Israel's assassination of Hezbollah's Secretary-General.¹⁰⁴ Less than ten days after the blast, the Argentine police asked Paraguayan forces to search for "two Arab citizens" (*dos ciudadanos árabes*) suspected of sympathies for the Islamic Jihad within Ciudad del Este.¹⁰⁵ Claiming their names were withheld due to the secretive nature of the investigation, a Paraguayan news article stated that, "the Arabs who are wanted may be sympathizers of the Islamic Jihad, the pro-Irani terrorist group that claimed authorship of the explosive attack in a statement released in Beirut, according to information compiled by the police forces of Argentina, Paraguay, and Israel." Backed by Argentina and Israel, Paraguay's Federal Police chief stated: "In Ciudad del Este, there are people of Arab and Lebanese nationality, and for this reason, we are carrying out secret intelligence work, if by chance there's a relation...." The same chief revealed that "work is in

progress to track Arab and Lebanese citizens in Ciudad del Este.” This profiling of Palestinians and Lebanese in the Paraguayan border town came to be justified by vague suspicions that two Arabs “may hold sympathies” for a group that claimed to plan the attack against the Israeli embassy in Buenos Aires.³² Although the Argentine side of the *tríplice fronteira* was all but ignored by Lebanese-led political and economic networks in Brazilian and Paraguayan border towns, the 1992 bombing of the Israeli embassy suddenly transformed Argentina into a reference point for this diaspora.

In response, Lebanese in the Ciudad del Este remained silent while their colleague in Foz do Iguaçu, Mohamed Barakat, issued a bold statement. As a substitute member of the city council speaking to a local Brazilian newspaper, Barakat characterized Israel as “anti-human” and “racist,” and condemned the violence that it sponsors in Palestinian streets and homes for more than 50 years.¹⁰⁶ In focusing on Israel’s assassination of the Secretary-General of Hezbollah and its victimization of Arab civilians, Barakat’s lack of empathy for the victims of the bombing is palpable, but the real targets of his criticism were three Brazilian governors who previously condemned the attack against the Israeli embassy in Argentina. Barakat criticized these Brazilian leaders who “never took a stand against the acts of barbarism practiced by Zionists. If in some moment they had done so, we could even accept the collective statement signed by these governors. But no, when massacres happened to the Palestinian people, they were silent.”¹⁰⁷ Voiced by a Lebanese Brazilian politician in Foz do Iguaçu, this diasporic critique of Zionism and three Brazilian governors were part of the uneven dawn of the tri-border’s democratic order. In failing to address the concurrent profiling of Arabs in Ciudad del Este, Barakat inflected Brazil’s political rise that entailed democratizing within its own borders as well as acquiescing to the authoritarian status quo in Paraguay.

IN LIEU OF A CONCLUSION

The still unresolved 1992 bombing of the Israeli embassy in the Argentine capital of Buenos Aires is the moment where this work ends and where most writings about Arabs at the tri-border begin. Since two of my recent articles address the victimization of these migrants at the tri-border during the 1990s as well as their post-9/11 mobilizations,¹⁰⁸ suffice it to conclude that the much longer history of Lebanese commercial and associational networks as well as their engagement with South American state powers recounted here is nearly absent in popular and scholarly representations of “Arabs at the tri-border.” Disturbing and predictable, Arabs in the Americas are today denied any past other than that marked by counterterrorist claims.

Writing about Muslim diasporas at the start of the war on terror, Engseng Ho surmised that the task to fill a void in knowledge about “non-Western” societies begun by Eric Wolf’s *Europe and the People Without History* decades earlier remained incomplete.¹⁰⁹ Now with the passing of the ten-year anniversary of 9/11, there is an equal urgency to fill such a gap. Drawing upon archival and ethnographic research from Brazil, Paraguay, and Argentina, this article excavated the half-century-long presence of Muslim Lebanese at the tri-border. I showed how their diasporic trade and activism are key to the reimagining of the homeland as well as the remaking of the places their far-flung networks reached. To recount the history of Lebanese businessmen and politicians at the tri-border is to chart the geopolitical rise of Brazil over the once Argentine-dominated Paraguay and reordering of South American inter-state relations in the second half of the twentieth century. In this way, my work builds on what Arjun Appadurai calls a “new architecture of area studies,”¹¹⁰ envisioning South America not in terms of given or fixed boundaries but rather through a diaspora’s economic and political histories.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This article is based on research funded by three DePaul University grants. I am grateful to Rose Palau, Zayda Caballero Rodríguez, and everyone at the Archivo del Terror and the Biblioteca Nacional del Paraguay in Asunción. In Foz do Iguaçú, I am indebted to Mohamad Barakat, Rogério Bonato, Fouad Fakih, and everyone at the Biblioteca Pública Elfrida Engel Nunes Rios, the Câmara Municipal, and *A Gazeta do Iguaçú*. For moral support and camaraderie, I want to thank colleagues in Asunción, Buenos Aires, and Rio de Janeiro, especially Silvia Montenegro, Paulo Pinto, Adelina Pusineri, and Fernando Rabossi. I want to express my deepest gratitude to Arabs in Foz do Iguaçú and Ciudad del Este for making this research possible. I am also indebted to Akram Khater, Andrew Arsan, and the Khayrallah Program for Lebanese-American Studies for giving me the chance to present this work at North Carolina State University. Finally, I want to thank the reviewers who made this a better piece. All shortcomings are my own.

REFERENCES CITED

Archives

Arquivo Público do Estado de São Paulo (São Paulo, Brazil)
Arquivo Público do Paraná (Curitiba, Brazil)
Biblioteca del Congreso de la Nación (Buenos Aires, Argentina)
Biblioteca Municipal (Ciudad del Este, Paraguay)
Biblioteca Nacional de Argentina (Buenos Aires, Argentina)
Biblioteca Nacional del Paraguay (Asunción, Paraguay)
Biblioteca Pública Elfrida Engel Nunes Rios (Foz do Iguaçú, Brazil)
Câmara Municipal de Foz do Iguaçú (Foz do Iguaçú, Brazil)

Centro de Documentación y Archivo para la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos - CDyA (Asunción, Paraguay)
Gazeta do Iguaçú, A (Foz do Iguaçú, Brazil)

Newspapers

A Gazeta do Iguaçú (Foz do Iguaçú)
Clarín (Buenos Aires)
Diario ABC Color (Asunción)
El Territorio (Posadas, Misiones)
Folha de S. Paulo (São Paulo)
Hoy (Asunción)
La Nación (Asunción)

La Tarde (Asunción)
Nosso Tempo (Foz do Iguaçu)
Noticias (Asunción)
O Estado de S. Paulo (São Paulo)
O Estado do Paraná (Curitiba)
O Globo (Rio de Janeiro)
Pátria (Asunción)
Revista Paineel (Foz do Iguaçu)
Última Hora (Rio de Janeiro)

NOTES

¹ Rogers Brubaker, "The 'diaspora' diaspora," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 28:1 (2005), 1.

² Robin Cohen, *Global Diasporas* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997); Devesh Kapur, *Diaspora, Development, and Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010); William Safran, "Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return," *Diaspora* 1:1 (1991), 83-99; Yossi Shain, *Kinship and Diasporas in International Affairs* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007); Gabriel Sheffer, ed., *Modern Diasporas in International Politics* (London: Croom Helm, 1986); Gabriel Sheffer, *Diaspora Politics: At Home Abroad* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

³ Brubaker, "The 'diaspora' diaspora," 5.

⁴ Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (London: Verso, 1993); Jacqueline Brown, "Black Liverpool, Black America, and the Gendering of Diasporic Space," *Cultural Anthropology* 13: 3 (1998), 291-335.

⁵ Juan Flores and George Yúdice, "Living Borders/Buscando America: Languages of Latina/o Self-Formation," *Social Text* 24 (1990), 57-84; José Saldívar, *The Dialectics of Our America: Genealogy, Cultural Critique, and Literary History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991).

⁶ Rob Wilson and Arif Dirlik, eds., *Asia/Pacific as a Space of Cultural Production* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995); Arif Dirlik, ed., *What is in a Rim? Critical Perspectives on the Pacific Region Idea* (Boston: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 1998).

⁷ Engseng Ho, "Empire through Diasporic Eyes," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 4 (2004), 210-35. Engseng Ho, *The Graves of Tarim: Genealogy and Mobility Across the Indian Ocean* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

⁸ Philip Abbot, "Terrorist Threat in the Tri-Border Area," *Military Review* (Fall 2004), 51-55; Mariano Bartolomé, "A Tríplíce Fronteira: Principal Foco de Insegurança no Cone Sul Americano," *Military Review* (Summer 2003), 22-35; Cristiana Brafman Kittner, "The Role of Safe Havens in Islamist Terrorism," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 19 (2007), 307-329; Thomaz Guedes Costa, and Gastón Schulmeister, "The Puzzle of the Iguazu Tri-Border Area," *Global Crime* 8:1 (2007), 26-39; Carlos Escudé and Beatriz Gurevich, "Limits to Governability, Corruption, and Transnational Terrorism," *Estudios Interdisciplinarios de America Latina y El Caribe* 14:2 (2003); Rex Hudson, *Terrorist and Organized Crime Groups in the Tri-Border Area (TBA) of South America* (Washington DC, Federal Research Division - LOC e Central Intelligence Crime Center, 2003); Rensselaer Lee, "The Triborder-terrorism nexus," *Global Crime* 9:4 (2008), 332-47; Howard Meehan, *Terrorism, Diasporas, and Permissive Threat Environments* (M.A. Thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2004); William Mendel, "Paraguay's Ciudad del Este and the New Centers of Gravity," *Military Review* (March 2002), 51-57; Mark Sullivan, *Latin America: Terrorism Issues* (Washington DC, CRS Report for Congress, 2005); Mark Steinz, *Middle East Terrorist Activity in Latin America: Policy Papers on the Americas* (Washington D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2003); Ana Sverdlick, "Terrorists and Organized Crime Entrepreneurs in the 'Triple Frontier'

among Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay,” *Trends in Organized Crime* 9:2 (2005), 84-93.

⁹ Edna Aizenberg, “Argentinian Space, Jewish Memory: Memorials to the Blown Apart and Disappeared in Buenos Aires,” *Mortality* 12:2 (2007), 109 – 123; Luis Fleischman, “The Case of the Bombing of the Jewish Headquarters in Buenos Aires (AMIA): A Structural Approach,” *MACLAS* 12 (1999), 119-34; Beatriz Gurevich, “After the AMIA Bombing: A Critical Analysis of Two Parallel Discourses,” in Ruggiero, ed., *The Jewish Diaspora in Latin American and the Caribbean: Fragments of Memory* (Sussex: Sussex Academic Press, 2005), 86 – 112; John Tofik Karam, “Anti-Semitism from the Standpoint of its Arab Victims in a South American Frontier Zone,” *Latin American and Caribbean Ethnic Studies* 6:2 (2011), 139-65.

¹⁰ Gearóid Ó Tuathail and John Agnew, “Geopolitics and Discourse,” *Political Geography* 11 (1992), 194; See also, Gearóid Ó Tuathail, “Thinking Critically about Geopolitics,” in Tuathail, Dasbly and Routledge, eds., *The Geopolitics Reader* (New York: Routledge, 1998), 1-12.

¹¹ Nigel Thrift, “It’s the Little Things,” in Dodds and Atkinson, eds., *Geopolitical Traditions: A Century of Geopolitical Thought* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 380-387; Nick Megoran, “For Ethnography in Political Geography: Experiencing and Re-imagining Ferghana Valley Boundary Closures,” *Political Geography* 25 (2006), 622-640; Max Muller, “Reconsidering the Concept of Discourse for the Field of Critical Geopolitics: Towards Discourse as Language and Practice,” *Political Geography* 27:3 (2008), 322-38.

¹² Andrew Nickson, “The Itaipu Hydro-Electric Project: The Paraguayan Perspective,” *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 2:1 (1982), 1-20.

¹³ Saskia Sassen, *Globalization and Its Discontents* (New York: New Press, 1998); Saskia Sassen, “Spatialities and Temporalities of the Global: Elements for a Theorization,” in Appadurai, ed., *Globalization* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2001), 260–78; Louisa Schein, “Importing Miao Brethren to Hmong America: A Not-So-Stateless Transnationalism,” in Cheah and Robbins, eds., *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling beyond the Nation* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 163-191.

¹⁴ Carmen Ferradás, “How a Green Wilderness Became a Trade Wilderness: The Story of a Southern Cone Frontier,” *PoLar: Political and Legal Anthropology Review* 21:2 (1998), 11-25; John Tofik Karam, “Crossing the Americas: The U.S. ‘War on Terror’ and Arab Cross-Border Mobilizations in a South American Frontier Region,” *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East* 31:2 (2011), 251-66; Sílvia Montenegro and Veronica Giménez Béliveau, *La Triple Frontera: Globalización y construcción social del espacio* (Buenos Aires: Miño y Dávila Editores, 2006); Veronica Giménez Béliveau and Sílvia Montenegro, eds., *La triple frontera: Dinámicas culturales y procesos transnacionales* (Buenos Aires: Espacio, 2010).

¹⁵ Jackson Lima, “Colônia Árabe: 60 anos de Foz do Iguaçu,” *Revista 100 Fronteira*, May 2009, 60-2.

¹⁶ See: José Maria de Brito, *Descoberta de Foz do Iguaçu e Fundação da Colônia Militar* (Curitiba: Travessa dos Editores, 2005 [1907]).

¹⁷ “Rahal: De Mascate a Empresário,” *Nosso Tempo*, 17 February 1989, 8; Jackson Lima, “Os árabes da fronteira.” *Classe 10* (1996, no. 3), 11-13.

¹⁸ “A comunidade Árabe de Foz do Iguaçu,” *Nosso Tempo*, 5 May 1981, 6.

¹⁹ Jackson “Os árabes da fronteira,” 12.

²⁰ Werner Baer and Melissa Birch, “The International Economic Relations of a Small Country: The Case of Paraguay,” *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 35:3 (1987), 606.

²¹ Harris Gaylord Warren, *Rebirth of the Paraguayan Republic* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1985), 134-5.

²² Isaac Rojas, *Intereses argentinos en la Cuenca del Plata* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Líbera, 1969), Around this time, Argentina’s largest newspaper, *Clarín*, featured a series of reports on “Puerto Iguazú” that presents this northeastern corner of Argentina as undeveloped, not only compared to other parts of Argentina, but especially in relation to the Brazilian and Paraguayan sides of the tri-border. See: “Por la Ruta de Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca,” *Clarín*, June 1968.

²³ In response, the Argentine state did not strengthen the infrastructure in the then sparsely populated Puerto Iguazú in the country’s northeast, but rather planned a new highway from Buenos Aires to Clorinda, a city in the northwest, bordering on Paraguay’s capital of Asunción.

²⁴ With roughly five-hundred meters, the bridge was constructed by Brazil’s Companhia Siderúrgica Nacional de Volta Redonda, including the giant metallic arcs that define the bridge, as well as 14,000 tons of cement, 3,000 tons of iron, 60 tons of nails and screws. “Ponte da Amizade: 25 anos unindo Brasil e Paraguai,” *A Gazeta do Iguaçu*, 28 March 1990, 4.

²⁵ Baer and Birch, “The International Economic Relations of a Small Country;” Werner Baer and Luis Breur, “From Inward- to Outward-Oriented Growth: Paraguay in the 1980s.” *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 28:3 (1986), 125-40; Ceres Moraes, “Interesses e colaboração do Brasil e dos Estados Unidos com a ditadura de Stroessner,” *Diálogos* 11 (2007), 55-80.

²⁶ Alfredo da Mota Menezes, *La Herencia de Stroessner: Brasil-Paraguay 1955-1980* (Asunción: Carlos Schauman Editor, 1990); José Luis Simón, ed., 1990. *Política exterior y relaciones internacionales del Paraguay contemporáneo* (Asunción: Centro Paraguayo de Estudios Sociológicos, 1990).

²⁷ “Don Elías Saba,” *ABC Color*, 10 April 1973, 3; “Padre espiritual de este diario: Don Elías Saba,” *ABC Color*, 2 April 1973, 8.

²⁸ Known by his acronym, HDD, Dibb’s “Gran Hotel Casino Acaray” in Ciudad Presidente Stroessner advertised in Foz do Iguaçu tourist brochures as early as 1969. Later on, he was called “one of the richest businessmen of Paraguay” by the Brazilian newsweekly, *Veja*. See: Fidel Miranda Silva, *Historia de Alto Paraná* (Ciudad del Este, 2007); “Roupa suja: Escândalo mistura genro de Stroessner com Somoza,” *Veja*, 18 June 1980, 42; “Já se pode jogar até mesmo no mundo socialista,” *Veja*, 17 June 1981, 117; Advertisement for “Gran Hotel Casino Acaray” *Cataratas: A Rainha do Turismo* 1:5 (1969).

²⁹ John Tofik Karam, “On the Trail and Trial of a Palestinian Diaspora: Mapping South America in the Arab-Israeli Conflict,” unpublished manuscript; “Atentado

hecho criminal perpetrado esta mañana contra funcionarias de la embajada israelí,” *La Tarde*, 4 May 1970, 1-2; “Atentaron contra la embajada de Israel en nuestra capital: Víctimas del mismo fallece una secretaria y otra se encuentra herida,” *ABC Color*, 5 May 1970, 1; “Editorial: Agresión a Nuestra Paz,” *Patria*, 5 May 1970, 3.

³⁰ “‘Fatah’ ataca em Assunção,” *O Estado de S. Paulo*, 5 May 1970, 10. “Oriente Médio-Assunção: Árabe mata mulher de um diplomata israelense,” *Última Hora*, 5 May 1970, 6; “Armas brasileiras no terror árabe: A polícia de Assunção acha que os árabes que atacaram a embaixada de Israel compraram as armas no Brasil,” *O Estado de S. Paulo*, 6 May 1970, 3; “Êstes homens iam matar o Embaixador: Ordem da Al Fatah em Assunção era matar embaixador,” *O Globo*, 6 May 1970, 1, 7.

³¹ “Atividades das Organizações Terroristas Árabes no Brasil,” Sheets 17, 18, 19, Folder 499A, “Delegacia de Polícia de Foz de Iguaçu. Arquivo Público do Paraná.

³² “Fotos e Destaques da Cidade: A Nova Diretoria da Acifi,” *Revista Painel* (November 1974), 4; “A madeira como fator de desenvolvimento de Foz,” *Memoria de Foz do Iguaçu* (December 1982), 14-16; Associação Comercial e Industrial de Foz do Iguaçu (ACIFI), *Relatório de Gestão, 2000/2002* (Foz do Iguaçu: ACIFI, 2003), 2.

³³ Fouad Mohamad Fakhri, “Mensagem da Associação Comercial e Industrial de Foz do Iguaçu (ACIFI),” *Revista Painel* (June 1978), 3; “A comunidade Árabe de Foz do Iguaçu,” *Nosso Tempo*, 5 May 1981, 6.

³⁴ Decreto No. 707, “Por el cual se aprueba el cambio de denominación de la entidad denominada ‘Cámara de Comercio de Ciudad Presidente Stroessner.’”

³⁵ Juvêncio Mazzarollo, *A taipa da injustiça: esbanjamento econômico, drama social e holocausto ecológico em Itaipu* (Curitiba: Comissão Pastoral da Terra do Paraná, 1980)

³⁶ Baer and Birch, “The International Economic Relations of a Small Country,” 606, 613.

³⁷ Prefeitura Municipal de Foz do Iguaçu, *Anuário estatístico* (Foz do Iguaçu: Secretaria Municipal – Departamento de Informações Institucionais, 2001); Centro de Estudios Regionales del Nordeste Argentino (CERNEA), *El Macro Sistema Territorial de la Frontera Nordeste Argentina* (Corrientes: CERNEA, 1978); United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (Cepal), *América Latina: urbanización y evolución de la población urbana, 1950 – 2000* (New York: United Nations, 2000), 40, 116.

³⁸ Ricardo Grinbaum, “A fronteira da muamba,” *Veja*, 26 July 1995, 75

³⁹ “Mesmo no ‘Paraíso,’ Atenção e Cuidado,” *Veja*, 22 July 1987, 52; “Destaque: Mohamed Said Mannah,” *Nosso Tempo*, 29 April 1988; Ricardo Grinbaum, “A fronteira da muamba,” *Veja*, 26 July 1995, 74.

⁴⁰ “Stroessner: audaz y millonario robo,” *HOY*, 30 July 1983, 17.

⁴¹ Reinaldo Penner, “Segundo informe sobre el comercio de productos informáticos en Ciudad del Este” (Ciudad del Este: Paraguay Vende y USAID, 2006), 9.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ Menezes, *La Herencia de Stroessner*, 20.

⁴⁴ George Galsze, *Die fragmentierte Stadt: Ursachen und Folgen bewachter Wohnkomplexe im Libanon* (Opladen: Leske + Budrich, 2003), 149 – 152; Fernando

Rabossi, "Nas Ruas de Ciudad del Este: Vidas e Vendas num mercado de fronteira" (PhD Dissertation, Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, 2004), 60, 214.

⁴⁵ "Ameaça de bomba no Jebai Center: Tensão e medo na fronteira, ponte fechada por 3 horas," *A Gazeta do Iguazu*, 24 July 1994, 1.

⁴⁶ Ahmad Mattar, *Guia Social de la Colonia de Habla Arabe en Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Venezuela y las Islas Holandesas de Curacao y Aruba* (Barranquilla: Empresa Litográfica S.A., 1945).

⁴⁷ "Rodriguez revoga lei de importação," *A Gazeta do Iguazu*, 30 January 1990, 1.

⁴⁸ Baer and Birch, "The International Economic Relations of a Small Country," 604

⁴⁹ "Ciudad Puerto Stroessner: O paraíso das falsificações e da corrupção," *Nosso Tempo*, 20 December 1984, 13; "Pdte. Stroessner: Uma cidade que já foi jardim," *Nosso Tempo*, 29 January 1988, 10-11; "Paraguay: Onde Comprar," *A Gazeta do Iguazu*, 4 December 1988, B1-B2.

⁵⁰ "Ciudad Puerto Stroessner: O paraíso das falsificações e da corrupção," *Nosso Tempo*, 20 December 1984, 13; "Em liquidação: Uísque no mercado negro tem desconto de 30%," *Veja*, 15 July 1981, 27; "Contrabando: Começa a degradingar entrega a domicílio," *Nosso Tempo*, 5 March 1987, 14; "Paraguay: Onde Comprar," *A Gazeta do Iguazu*, 4 December 1988, B1-B2.

⁵¹ Lower prices often meant that the products were cheap imitations. See: "Ciudad Puerto Stroessner: O paraíso das falsificações e da corrupção," *Nosso Tempo*, 20 December 1984.

⁵² "Compristas de todo o Brasil invadem Foz do Iguazu," *Nosso Tempo*, 26 June 1986, 11.

⁵³ Humberto Domínguez Dibb, *La evasión de divisas: Historia del mayor fraude al país* (Asunción: Ediciones HOY, 1986).

⁵⁴ "Corrupção levou o Paraguai à completa ruína financeira: Evasão fraudolenta de divisas, contrabando e caos cambial," *Nosso Tempo*, 12 September 1985, 13.

⁵⁵ "A realidade do turismo iguaçuense," *Revista Painel*, April 1989, 5.

⁵⁶ "Kamal Osman: 'Foz do Iguazu precisa ser transformada em Zona de Livre Comércio'," *A Gazeta do Iguazu*, 20 November 1993, 20-1.

⁵⁷ Rabossi, *Nas ruas de Ciudad del Este*.

⁵⁸ Associação dos Diplomados da Escola Superior de Guerra (ADESG), *A Região de Foz do Iguazu* (Rio de Janeiro: Departamento de Ciclos de Estudos da ADESG, 1988), 42; Sérgio Spada, "O Equilíbrio das Três Fronteiras," *Nosso Tempo*, 28 August 1986, 14;

"Exportadores de Foz do Iguazu rompem o cerco da Cacex," *Nosso Tempo*, 30 June 1989, 2; "ACIFI pede liberação de cota de exportação," *A Gazeta do Iguazu*, 29 June 1990, 3.

⁵⁹ "Pacote de medidas do novo governo gera expectativas na fronteira," *A Gazeta do Iguazu*, 14 March 1990, 16.

⁶⁰ Jackson Lima, "Os árabes da fronteira," *Classe 10* (1996, no. 3), 11-13.

⁶¹ Paulo Viapana, "Atração energética: A hidrelétrica de Itaipu vira um foco turístico e estimula a economia das cidades ao redor do lago," *Veja*, 22 July 1987, 65 - 66.

⁶² “Lela, a cidade irmã no Mediterrâneo,” *A Gazeta do Iguaçu*, 26 August 1990, 8.

⁶³ Werner Baer, *The Brazilian Economy: Growth and Development* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2010), 76, 187.

⁶⁴ “Decreto-Lei Nº 491, de 5 de Março de 1969: Estímulos fiscais à exportação de manufaturados,” Presidência da República. Casa Civil. Subchefia para Assuntos Jurídicos. <http://www.planalto.gov.br/CCIVIL/Decreto-Lei/Del0491.htm#art1> (accessed 27 May 2009).

⁶⁵ Menezes, *La Herencia de Stroessner*, 19, 37.

⁶⁶ “Indicação No. 02/1976.” Câmara Municipal de Foz do Iguaçu. Foz do Iguaçu City Council Archive. No. 4-6. “Decreto No. 2.064.” Prefeito Municipal de Foz do Iguaçu, Clóvis Cunha Vianna. Arquivo of the Câmara Municipal de Foz do Iguaçu.

⁶⁷ This was not the first attempt to name a street in honor of Arabs in Foz do Iguaçu. In 1974, a bill was proposed to rename another street, *Rua República Árabe Unida* (United Arab Republic Street), after the short-lived polity formed by Egypt and Syria. See: “Anteprojeto de Lei No. 28/1974.” Arquivo of the Câmara Municipal de Foz do Iguaçu.

⁶⁸ Jackson Lima, “Os árabes da fronteira,” *Classe 10* (1996, No. 3), 11-13. Advertisement for “Exportadora Tupy,” *Revista Painel* (June 1975), 14-22.

⁶⁹ Nino Palazzo and Adolfo Giménez, “Todo un país vestido de contrabando,” *HOY*, 29 July, 1983, 9.

⁷⁰ “Lela, a cidade irmã no Mediterrâneo,” *A Gazeta do Iguaçu*, 26 August 1990, 8.

⁷¹ Projeto de Lei No. 83/2007, “Altera a denominação da Rua das Missões, para Rua Mustapha Ali Osman,” Projeto de Lei No.76/2010, “Altera a denominação da Praça da Amizade, para Praça *Mustapha Ali Osman*,” Arquivo of the Câmara Municipal de Foz do Iguaçu.

⁷² Paulo Viapana, “Atração energética: A hidrelétrica de Itaipu vira um foco turístico e estimula a economia das cidades ao redor do lago.” *Veja*. 22 July 1987. Pg. 64 – 65.

⁷³ “Jardim Jupira recebe pavimentação através do plano comunitário,” *Revista Painel* (July 1980); “O difícil tráfego na Ponte da Amizade,” *Revista Painel* (April 1980); Wadis Benvenuti, “A força do comércio e do turismo iguaçuense,” *Revista Painel* (July 1981); “Crise e desemprego assolam o Paraguai,” *Nosso Tempo*, 06 July 1983, 7.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ “Crise paraguaia afeta duramente Foz,” *Nosso Tempo*, 6 September 1985.

⁷⁶ Jackson Lima, “Os árabes da fronteira,” *Classe 10* (1996, No. 3), 11-13.

⁷⁷ “O ano foi muito ruim para o comércio,” *A Gazeta do Iguaçu*, 05 January 1992, 4; “Exportadores realizam mais negócios em 1991,” *A Gazeta do Iguaçu*, 12 January 1992, 3.

⁷⁸ Nino Palazzo and Adolfo Giménez, “Todo un país vestido de contrabando,” *HOY*, 29 July 1983, 9; Adolfo Giménez, “El ingreso ilegal desde el Brasil,” *HOY*, 18 November 1983, 8-9.

⁷⁹ “A comunidade Árabe de Foz do Iguaçu,” *Nosso Tempo*, 5 May 1981, 6; “‘Estou com todo e qualquer movimento de libertação,’ entrevista com Mohamed

Barakat,” *Nosso Tempo*, 1 September 1988, 10; “A imigração de árabes,” *A Gazeta do Iguaçu*, 20 June 1992, 21.

⁸⁰ Menezes, *La Herencia de Stroessner*, 64, 69.

⁸¹ According to *Nosso Tempo*, the Brazilian state framed its stance toward Paraguay not as foreign policy but rather as “national security.” “Ato público denuncia ditadura paraguaia,” *Nosso Tempo*, 22 June 1983, 3; “Entidades pedem a renúncia de Stroessner,” *Nosso Tempo*, 25 August 1983, 7; “O Paraguai já não comporta um regime como o de Stroessner,” *Nosso Tempo*, 21 February 1985, 15.

⁸² Associação dos Diplomados da Escola Superior de Guerra (ADESG), *A Região de Foz do Iguaçu*.

⁸³ Menezes, *La Herencia de Stroessner*, 128; Paulo Vizentini, *A política externa do regime militar brasileiro: multilateralização, desenvolvimento e a construção de uma potência média (1964-1985)*, 2nd Edition (Porto Alegre: UFRGS Editora, 2004), 155.

⁸⁴ “Pregação revolucionária em Foz do Iguaçu,” *Nosso Tempo*, 1 July 1981, 8.

⁸⁵ *Nosso Tempo* noted that while Arabs in Brazilian and Paraguayan border towns debated passionately about politics in the Arab world, “they are reluctant to speak” about military-ruled South America. See: “A comunidade Árabe de Foz do Iguaçu,” *Nosso Tempo*, 5 May 1981, 6.

⁸⁶ “Aprenda a Língua Árabe,” “Convite,” *Nosso Tempo*, 15 April 1982, 10; “Protesto dos árabes ao terrorista Beguim,” *Nosso Tempo*, 15 June 1982, 15; “Mais de mil pessoas foram buscar comida,” *Nosso Tempo*, 20 July 1983, 7; “Professor da Líbia em Foz,” *Nosso Tempo*, 15 December 1983, 17; “Côsul geral da Síria em Foz,” *Nosso Tempo*, 19 January 1984, 9; “Comunidade árabe lembra Gamal Abdul Nasser,” *Nosso Tempo*, 2 August 1984, 18; “Comunidade árabe comemora o nascimento de Maomé,” *Nosso Tempo*, 20 December 1984, 1; “Corpo diplomático líbio em Foz do Iguaçu,” *Nosso Tempo*, 12 January 1985.

⁸⁷ “A Líbia de Kadafi: Vista por Mohamad Barakat...” *Nosso Tempo*, 5 May 1983; “Centro Árabe repudia tentativa de invasão,” *Nosso Tempo*, 13 July 1983, 19; “As causas do povo do terceiro mundo...” *Nosso Tempo*, 13 December 1984; “Um duro golpe contra o imperialismo e as forças de dominação,” *Nosso Tempo*, 26 September 1985.

⁸⁸ “‘Livro Verde’ de Kadhafi será distribuído em todo o Paraná,” *Nosso Tempo*, 15 December 1983, 17; “Líbia de Kadhafi derrotou o imperialismo: Data é lembrada pelo Centro Árabe-Brasileiro Cultural,” *Nosso Tempo*, 20 June 1985, 11; “Em 16 anos, Revolução de Kadhafi mudou a face da Líbia,” *Nosso Tempo*, 26 September 1985, 8; “Declaração do Centro Cultural Árabe Brasileiro do Paraná,” *Nosso Tempo*, 12 December 1985, 14; “A Vitória da Líbia sobre o Imperialismo,” *Nosso Tempo*, 16 May 1986, 22; “Comunidade árabe lembra ataque americano à Líbia,” *Nosso Tempo*, 10 April 1987, 5; “Ato de solidariedade à Líbia e repúdio ao imperialismo,” *Nosso Tempo*, 24 April 1987, 2; “10º Aniversário da Revolução Líbia,” *Nosso Tempo*, 4 September 1987, 3; “Comunidade árabe lembra ataques terroristas contra a Líbia,” *Nosso Tempo*, 28 April 1988, 3.

⁸⁹ “Entrevista com o Embaixador do Irã: A República Islâmica do Irã é um exemplo para o mundo,” *Nosso Tempo*, 26 July 1984, 10-12; “Sociedade Beneficente Islâmica de Foz do Iguaçu, Culto Religioso, em nome de Deus, Clemente, o Misericordioso,” *Nosso Tempo*, 9 June 1989, 30; “Eng. Mir Hussein Mussaw da República do Irã,” *A Gazeta do Iguaçu*, 2 June 1990, 7; “Simpósio,” *A Gazeta do Iguaçu*, 2 June 1990, 7; “Alimentos à população carente: A Sociedade Beneficente Islâmica distribuirá hoje...” *A Gazeta do Iguaçu*, 3 June 1990, 9; “Sociedade Islâmica distribui alimentos,” *A Gazeta do Iguaçu*, 6 June 1990, 8; “Delegação Iraniana em Foz,” *Nosso Tempo*, 14 June 1990, 3.

⁹⁰ “Em Nome de Deus, Clemente e Misericordioso: O Dia Internacional de Jurusalém” (sic), *Nosso Tempo*, 14 April 1990, 5.

⁹¹ “Condenado pela espúria Lei de Segurança Nacional,” *Nosso Tempo*, 30 July 1982, 6, 8; “Juvêncio Condenado,” *Nosso Tempo*, 7 October 1982, 2; “Juvêncio: A solidariedade da nação ao preso político do regime,” *Nosso Tempo*, 13 October 1983, 2.

⁹² “Entrevista com o Embaixador do Irã: A República Islâmica do Irã é um exemplo para o mundo,” *Nosso Tempo*, 26 July 1984, 10-12.

⁹³ Aluizio Palmar, “Sete dias na terra dos aiatolás,” *Nosso Tempo*, 25 October 1984, 8-9.

⁹⁴ “Congresso Internacional em solidariedade com a revolução Líbia,” *Nosso Tempo*, 16 August 1984, 12; “Juvêncio vai à Líbia,” *Nosso Tempo*, 23 August 1984, 2; “Brasileiros vão à Líbia festejar aniversário da Revolução de Kadhafi,” *Nosso Tempo*, 30 August 1984, 8; Juvêncio Mazzarollo, “Em grande estilo, a Líbia de Kadhafi celebrou 15º aniversário da revolução: ‘O único país do Oriente Médio que está dando certo,’” *Nosso Tempo*, 4 October 1984, 8; Juvêncio Mazzarollo, “A maior riqueza da Líbia não é o petróleo, mas o socialismo,” *Nosso Tempo*, 11 October 1984, 4; “Uma viagem pelo Oriente em tapete mágico: Arialba Freire...” *Nosso Tempo*, 25 October 1984, 12.

⁹⁵ “Os ventos da liberdade vão sacudir o Paraguai: Uma plêiade de intelectuais e líderes populares latinoamericanos estará em Foz dias 11 e 12,” *Nosso Tempo*, 9 August 1984, 11. “Saudação de Abertura da “Jornada,” *Nosso Tempo*, 23 August 1984, 4; “Sete Países Latinoamericanos estiveram representados na Jornada de Solidariedade Ao Povo Paraguaio,” *Nosso Tempo*, 23 August 1984, 8-9; Juvêncio Mazzarollo, “Jornada de Solidariedade ao povo paraguaio,” *Nosso Tempo*, 18 July 1985, 12.

⁹⁶ “Informe [sobre opositores paraguayos en Foz],” 8 May 1984, “Jornada de Solidariedade ao Povo Paraguaio,” 12 August 1984; “IIª Jornada de Solidariedade ao Povo Paraguaio,” 10-11 August 1985, DI-LA68, DI-LA72, DI-LA74, CDyA.

⁹⁷ Aside from shipping routes, there is no bridge between Puerto Iguazú and Ciudad Presidente Stroessner. Located four hours away by car, the Argentine border city of Posadas and the Paraguayan city of Encarnación are connected by the bridge over the Paraná River.

⁹⁸ “Dia internacional de solidariedade ao povo palestino,” *Nosso Tempo*, 4 December 1986, 3, 10, 14; “Liberdade para Lamia e repúdio ao sionismo,” *Nosso Tempo*, 15 May 1987, 1, 19; “O dia da terra,” *Nosso Tempo*, 9 April 1987, 6; “Árabes

vão as ruas em Foz do Iguaçu,” *Nosso Tempo*, 24 November 1988, 5; “A libertação da Palestina é uma questão de tempo,” *Nosso Tempo*, 6 March 1989, 9; “Árabes festejaram Proclamação do Estado Palestino,” *Nosso Tempo*, 15 December 1989, 3; “Árabes protestam contra massacre,” *A Gazeta do Iguaçu*, 23 May 1990, 9; “Árabes protestam contra massacre de palestinos,” *Nosso Tempo*, 25 May 1990, 3; “Dia de solidariedade ao povo palestino,” *A Gazeta do Iguaçu*, 29 November 1990, 11; “Proclamação do Estado Palestino,” *A Gazeta do Iguaçu*, 15 November 1991, 5; “Palestinos: Um dia de solidariedade internacional,” *A Gazeta do Iguaçu*, 30 November 1991, 1, 10; “8 de December: O significado histórico da intifada,” *A Gazeta do Iguaçu*, 8 December 1991.

⁹⁹ “Representividade e tradição na colônia árabe, Mohamed Ibrahim Barakat,” *Nosso Tempo*, 12 August 1988, 15; “‘Estou com todo e qualquer movimento de libertação,’ entrevista com Mohamed Barakat,” *Nosso Tempo*, 1 September 1988, 10; “Comunistas apoiam Barakat para Vereador,” *Nosso Tempo*, 15 September 1988, 10; “Câmara de Cara Nova: Lista completa de votação...” *Nosso Tempo*, 24 November 1988, 1, 3.

¹⁰⁰ “Palestinos: Um dia de solidariedade internacional,” *A Gazeta do Iguaçu*, 30 November 1991, 1, 10; “Árabes estão indignados com Collor de Mello,” *Nosso Tempo*, 11 August 1989, 1, 3; “A questão da Palestina e a sucessão,” *Nosso Tempo*, 20 October 1989, 12.

¹⁰¹ “Palestinos fecham comércio na fronteira em sinal de protesto,” *A Gazeta do Iguaçu*, 20 February 1992, 6.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ “Atentado a la Embajada de Israel: hay 6 muertos,” *Clarín*, 18 March 1992, 3; “Atentado destruyó Embajada de Israel,” *El Territorio*, 18 March 1992, 1-2.

¹⁰⁴ In Argentina, see: “Afirmam que un argentino musulmán detonó el coche bomba en la embajada: La Jihad Islamica se adjudico en Beirut el ataque,” *Clarín*, 19 March 1992, 2-3. “Atribuyen autoría del atentado a Hizllabolha (sic),” *El Territorio*, 22 March 1992, 3. In Paraguay, see: “Unánime repudio en Argentina por atentado terrorista,” *ABC Color*, 19 March 1992, 26-7; “El Yihad Islámico prometió seguir ataque contra Israel,” *ABC Color*, 24 March, 1992, 23. In Brazil, see: “A conexão brasileira,” *Veja*, 1 April 1992, 30-1. In the U.S., see: “Shiite Group Reasserts Link To Argentinian Embassy Attack,” *New York Times*, 24 March 1992, 10; “Argentina’s Shiites Thrust into Spotlight,” *Miami Herald*, 25 March 1992, 12.

¹⁰⁵ “Buscan aquí a simpatizantes de terroristas que volaron la Embajada israelí: Son árabes y viven en Ciudad del Este,” *ABC Color*, 26 March 1992, 1, 11.

¹⁰⁶ “Toques e Retoques: Nota Incômoda,” *A Gazeta do Iguaçu*, 1 April 1992, 2.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Karam, “Anti-Semitism from the Standpoint of its Arab Victims;” Karam, “Crossing the Americas.”

¹⁰⁹ Ho, “Empire through Diasporic Eyes, 210.

¹¹⁰ Arjun Appadurai, “Grassroots Globalization and the Research Imagination.” In Arjun Appadurai, ed. *Globalization* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), 8.