



Mahjar Studies in Latin America: Evolution, Theoretical Advances, and Emerging International Relations Perspectives

Estudos Mahjar na América Latina: Evolução, Avanços Teóricos e Perspectivas Emergentes em Relações Internacionais

Estudios Mahjar en América Latina: Evolución, Avances Teóricos y Perspectivas Emergentes en Relaciones Internacionales

DOI: 10.5752/P.1809-6182.2024v21n3p47-62

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ABSTRACT

This essay provides a concise review and statistical analysis of Mahjar studies in Latin America, tracing its evolution from historical and anthropological foundations to its growing engagement with International Relations (IR) in MENA–Latin America interactions. It examines key theoretical contributions (2000–2023) that have shaped this multidisciplinary field, particularly its integration with diaspora studies. The study highlights Latin America's role in global migration scholarship and the significance of IR perspectives in understanding contemporary South-South relations. Finally, the essay offers reflections on key countries and leading scholars contributing to the advancement of this field, providing insights into its future directions and potential for further academic development.

Keywords: *Mahjar, Latin America, MENA, International Relation*

RESUMO

Este ensaio apresenta uma revisão concisa e uma análise estatística dos estudos Mahjar na América Latina, traçando sua evolução desde as bases históricas e antropológicas até seu crescente envolvimento com as Relações Internacionais (RI) nas interações entre MENA e América Latina. Ele examina as principais contribuições teóricas (2000–2023) que moldaram esse campo multidisciplinar, especialmente sua integração com os estudos sobre diáspora. O estudo destaca o papel da América Latina na pesquisa sobre migração global e a importância das perspectivas das RI para compreender as relações Sul-Sul contemporâneas. Por fim, o ensaio oferece reflexões sobre países-chave e acadêmicos influentes que contribuem para o avanço desse campo, fornecendo insights sobre suas direções futuras e seu potencial para maior desenvolvimento acadêmico.

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Palavras-chave: *Mahjar, América Latina, MENA, Relações Internacionais*

RESUMEN

Este ensayo presenta una revisión concisa y un análisis estadístico de los estudios Mahjar en América Latina, trazando su evolución desde sus bases históricas y antropológicas hasta su creciente vinculación con las Relaciones Internacionales (RI) en las interacciones entre MENA y América Latina. Examina las principales contribuciones teóricas (2000–2023) que han moldeado este campo multidisciplinario, especialmente su integración con los estudios sobre diáspora. El estudio destaca el papel de América Latina en la investigación sobre migración global y la importancia de las perspectivas de RI para comprender las relaciones Sur-Sur contemporáneas. Finalmente, el ensayo ofrece reflexiones sobre países clave y académicos influyentes que contribuyen al avance de este campo, proporcionando ideas sobre sus futuras direcciones y su potencial para un mayor desarrollo académico.

Palabras clave: *Mahjar, América Latina, MENA, Relaciones Internacionales*

Introduction

The existing global connectivity from Latin America with many communities of the Bilad-al-Sham that currently constitutes the countries of Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, and Jordan is the result of a long history of emigrations, which began in the mid-19th century. It initiated its migratory processes, constantly searching for new horizons in “Amrika” North and South America. It later shifted towards Africa and Australia and then towards producing nearby oil countries (Arana, 2011; Bartet; Kahht, 2010).

Throughout the 20th century, novel transnational structures and continuous participation in the diverse realities of the Arab countries of origin on the part of the immigrants and their progeny, who turned out a crucible of multiple facts and nonmigratory histories in the diverse receiving societies. On the other hand, the global networks that connect the different communities are linked continuously with new connections based on the confluence of political, economic, and cultural positions and are constantly crossed by social interests maintained with time by institutional, familial

ties, and personal histories. Also, the community’s construction in the specific capitals there shaped neuralgic centers of a vast network of communication, globally connected to the communities developed principally in the countries of the Levantine area and nearby others (Balloffet, 2020; Escher, Anton *et al.*, 2015; Mor, 2016; Pastor, 2017).

Moreover, the initial locations, such as small cities or villages inside the current states of Syria or Palestine, turned into a point of reference shared in the global communities that have affirmed multiple identities in varied continents. These globally dispersed communities can be interpreted as personal, family, or group-based strategies for creating and diversifying new shares and economic capital. This type of community that shares global bonds has been analyzed in varied publications on Arab migration in the case of Latin America, North America instance, Australia, and Western Africa (Escher, 2012).

The wide range of studies on the Levantine Arab migration field might illustrate different dimensions of the same topic: the construction, negotiation, and recreation of the identities of Arab immigrants in the context

of national and transnational groups. Nevertheless, the area called the “Al-Sham” differs for specific historical continuities: the legacy of European colonialism and its abrupt reordering of the region in the states - nationals, the interest in the area of the imperial powers and neo-imperial in energy resources, and a recent history of external political-military powerful interventions. That has become a sophisticated pattern of multiple migrations, including massive displacements inside and outside its borders (Fahrenthold, 2019; Schayegh; Arsan, 2015).

Concretely, this essay briefly reviews existing literature in Latin America about the present Middle Eastern Migration from a Latin American perspective. Indeed, a review of the field is not novel (Araneda, 2016; Chitwood, 2017; Fuentes, 2016, 2017; Galán, 2019; Klich, 1995; Klich; Lesser, 1998; Rosemberg, 2014; Velcamp, 1997), but statistical analyses of the studies certainly do. In this regard, this concise and statistical approach tries to address the production of knowledge from the primary studies of Middle Eastern Migration, Muslims present in Latin American countries, and, more recently, the denomination of Mahjar Studies and IR between the Americas and MENA region, focusing on its main themes and suggesting some areas for further consideration and research.

To clarify, *Mahjar* derives from the Arabic word *hijra*, meaning migration, and refers to both the physical place of emigration and a movement within modern Arabic literature with distinctive schools and exponents in the Americas (Badawi, 1975, p. 196). The term *Mahjar studies* first appeared to portray the numerous Arab immigrants’ press productions - newspaper, poetry, novels - that settled in the

Americas during the first part of the 20th century and the last decades of Ottoman rule in the Levant and the interconnections between the diasporas and the Arab homelands.

The Mahjar studies study has routinely sat on two bases: the links between history-religion and culture-society, which specialists have framed in the Middle East (Arsan; Karam, 2013; Balloffet, 2015; Bascuñan-Wiley, 2019; Fahrenthold, 2013; Pastor, 2014) Its approach expanded to other disciplines in the last two decades, such as IR studies, Islam in the Americas, and Mahjar literature. However, a situation is essential to address: the academic analysis that makes up the main contributions that various authors have made to Mahjar’s studies still needs to be improved.

This review aims to assist and clarify the studies’ internal development, delivering a guide for readers interested in Mahjar studies from Latin America and its influence on the approaches of Latin American scholars. This selection pretends to be based on some general internal frames based on a selection of the leading academic contributions that the authors have made to the subject, which was discussed in the first part, not only in light of the usefulness they represent but also the deficiencies they reflect.

Furthermore, this exploratory and descriptive review is presumed to provide the reader with the knowledge to approach the sources, allowing them to examine different subtopics that turn out to be of interest and thereby motivating the development of future innovative and cutting-edge research. In sum, the statistical development results of the Mahjar studies will be presented in different graphs, delivering a concise cartography of the current historical development of Latin American research.

Methodology

Mahjar Studies has become one of the most outstanding phenomena in Latin America due to the massive arrival of people from Arab countries. However, it is not a new phenomenon and is much less well-known in Latin American academia. In fact, according to Jacqueline Hurtado's (2012) classification of descriptive and exploratory research, it is inscribed at a perceptual level. The exploratory level has the quality of studying topics in an introductory state, increasing familiarity with the research event (*Mahyar* or Arab diaspora presence in Latin America), and gathering information to establish the state of the art and the new lines of research that arise from this.

To reach the above objective, databases were constructed through search, systematization, and identification tools. The treatment of the information was aimed at characterizing the main approaches and themes developed by the different authors. The product of the matrix analysis was the establishment of four main themes: a) Main approaches in the Middle Eastern Migration studies 1950-2020; b) the birth of Arab Diaspora studies; c) Consolidation of "Studies of Middle Eastern Diaspora" (2000-2013); and c) Expansion of the Mahjar Studies (2013-2023), of which only the last two sections will be discussed.

This work elaborates on a state-of-the-art, essentially documentary research type that contributes to systematic development based (Hurtado, 2012) on the following question: What primary research was produced from 2000 to 2023 regarding the *Mahjar Studies* in Latin America? This type of research allows the identification of authors who have developed the topic, leaving a precedent regarding the-

mes, theories, and methodologies used.

This essay was developed in three stages. The first consisted of mapping digital libraries, specialized databases, and electronic documentation centers. To achieve this, written criteria were established to guide the delimitation of the unit of analysis. In other words, an Excel tool was developed for its collection and systematization based on previously defined criteria. The material was searched using the following databases: Google Scholar, Redalyc, Dialnet, Scielo, ProQuest, Scopus, DOAJ, JSTOR, and Harvard Digital Collection.

From the previous collection, filtering by keywords and reviewing abstracts and keywords that showed the specificity of the topic, 770 papers were obtained that alluded to the subject of the migration of the Arab population to Latin America (1950-2023). In this context, the academic result represents 612 Journal articles, 92 Books, and 50 book chapters. In that milieu, these statistical groups do not expect to be the whole academic production, contrary to being more an image of the main trends. After reading the archive, 349 works were excluded because they were outside the time range for the research [2000-2023], press or opinion articles, pre-print articles, or articles for scientific dissemination purposes.

In other words, the research considered 421 a relevant and substantial document, 375 Journal articles, 36 Books, and 10 book chapters. The fundamental criteria for the selection of the papers were four: to be related to the topic of Arab migrants or refugees in Latin America, to have an investigative character, with an object of study, as well as the research method, and to have addressed the unit of analysis between the years 2000 and 2023. As for the collection instruments used

in this study, they were defined based on primary descriptors, such as characteristics of the documentation, themes, author, methodologic approaches, and discipline from which it originates, and a spatial and temporal delimitation, which is Latin America and the time described above.

The second step was organizing data. The starting point was the work based on the appropriate instruments to fulfill the desired purpose. The state of the art was built by formulating key questions and placing them in the content file (Excel). This instrument was gradually fed once the reading of each text was considered for developing this work (Guevara, 2016).

Finally, the third phase was rigorous and in-depth data analysis. Each document was analyzed based on the coding technique used in qualitative research. Thus creating descriptive codes and interpretive codes. This procedure was used within the content cards designed and subsequently organized in Microsoft Excel. Also, the Microsoft Word tool was used to write, in a more appropriate way, relevant information about the material used, which was subsequently consigned to the cards already described (Escudero; Cortez, 2018). Considering all the above, it is essential to highlight the search exercise in the virtual universe, the writing work, and the interpretation of the information collected throughout the research.

Moreover, this brief essay has some limitations that need to be addressed. First, the collection of data and the production of this database focus primarily on the Latin American academy and its relations with other non-Latin American academics. In other words, the academic productions of non-Latin Americans are marked when Latin American academics quote its work as key. Second, the review does

not consider two academic fields, philosophy (political philosophy) and literature, which operate or are engaged in Arab or Muslim authors or works. Third, published theses from bachelor's, Master's, or Ph.D. academics are reviewed in terms of bibliography but not statistically. Fourth, books and articles published in journals without indexation or peer review are not considered. For that reason, personal memories, autobiographies, or family genealogies have the same treatment.

In sum, this essay was divided into three central questions. The initial inquiries are the fundamental procedure and theoretical arguments concerning studying Middle Eastern migrations in Latin American countries. How do we unfold the field from the original method? Besides, was the contemporary theoretical analysis interested in the previous state-of-the-art recommendations in the area? Moreover, what are the new trends in the up-to-date sphere of Mahjar Studies?

Consolidation of “Studies of Middle Eastern Diaspora” (2000-2013).

This period performs consistent work in several languages and outside the Latin American academia (Ex. works of Dr. Luis Mesa Delmonte, Dra. Silvia Montenegro, Dra. Camila Pastor de Maria y Campos, Dr. Paulo G. Pinto, Dr. Oswaldo Truzzi, Dra. Cecilia Baeza, among others) with multidisciplinary method from U.S. academics (Ex. Dr. Paul Amar, Dr. Akram Khater, Dra. Evelyn Alsultany, and Dra. Ella Shohat among others). The essential expressions will be “diaspora” as well as “transnational identities,” especially appropriate for explaining the multiple fields of the Palestinian

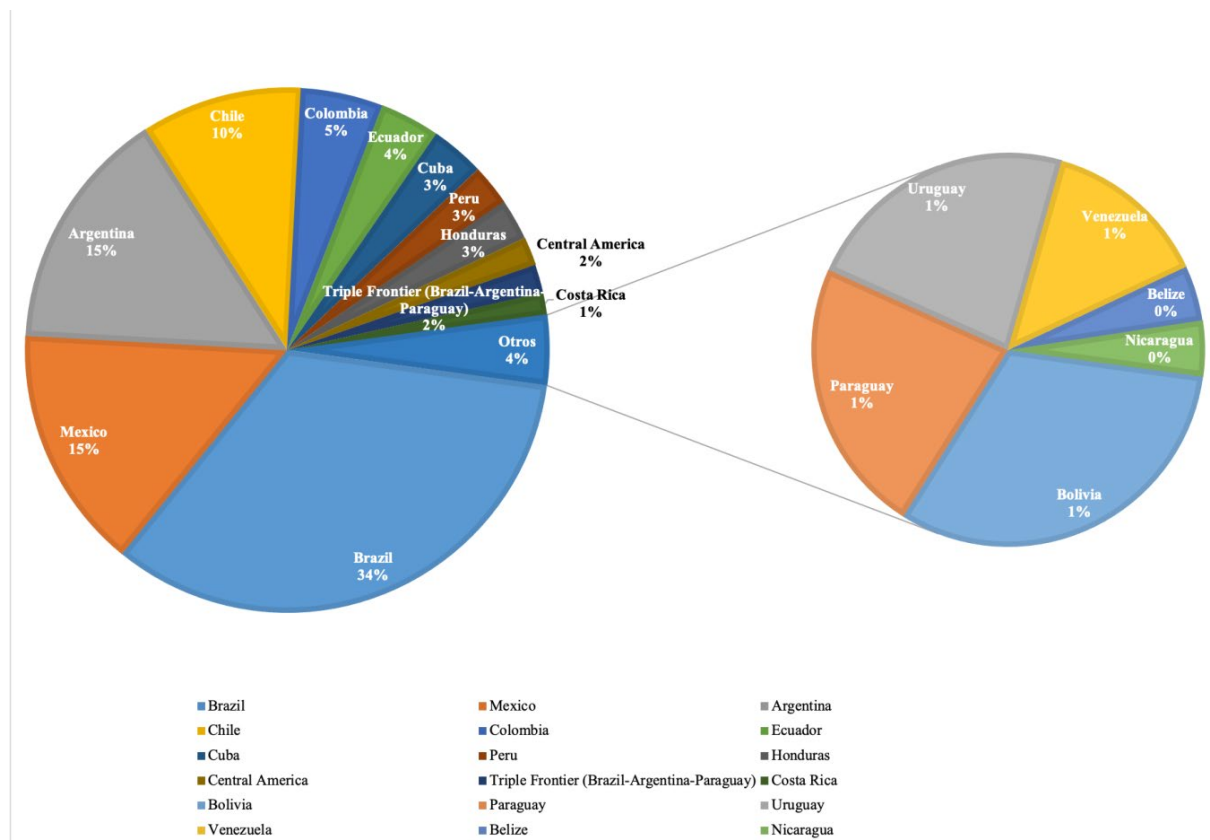
diaspora/identities (Baeza, 2006, 2012, 2014) and the emergence of Islam.

The emergence of Islam in Latin American countries should be understood as the development of the exhibition of study focused on the topic, and not the existence of Muslims in the Americas, then began as almost parallels with the arrival of European colonialism in the Americas. This new framework will comprehensively examine the research field in Brazil, Argentina, and Mexico. Since 2000, many bachelor's and master's theses in anthropology have been pursued in this topic. Brazil-Argentina (Montenegro, 2008; Pinto, 2011) will lead the field in cooperative studies and collaborative publications, especially in these countries' Anthropology of Islam and Syrian and Lebanese

se cultural productions.

The new procedures incorporated postcolonial cores and post-Saidian methodology, and they are interested in communicating a further Anthropological examination that rapidly grows to the rest of the Latin American universities and complements earlier historical and sociological inquiries. These new frameworks will be used first in the influential theses of the Triple-Frontier (Argentina—Brazil—Paraguay), which tries to comprehend the connection of Arabs and Muslim communities not just in a comparative analysis between these three countries but also in the connections with Lebanon, Syria, and Palestine that strengthen these communities (Karam, 2011; Montenegro, 2007; Páez; Luis, 2012).

Chart.-1 Analysis of knowledge production by country [2000-2023]



Data and graph created by the author based on original research

It is feasible to verify the current display of knowledge in this field in Latin American nations (see Chart 1) by reviewing the significant countries in which academic production is focused. Furthermore, it is plausible to argue that critical theoretical and methodological inquiries or new collaborations with non-Latin American partners in this dynamic academic space increase.

For that reason, in this period, Brazil (34%) and Argentina (15%) present a unique place for collaborative production “Triple Frontier” – with more than 2% of all the Mahjar production - and a center for new Anthropological engagement in diasporic/transnational cases, Brazilian academia from 2000 present a consolidated Middle East department, and an extended collaboration with Anthropological scholars of Argentina. Mexico (15%) has a substantial academic community of Mahjar studies, but due to its geographical position, a collaboration between Chilean or Argentinian scholars in Mexico can be more complicated.

In that regard, from the initial reflection on the outcomes of Akram Khater (2001), Silvia Montenegro (2006), John Tofik Karam (2007), and Theresa Alfaro-Velcamp (2007), among others, these academic productions stand out as they crossed further Latin American cartographies and relocated in the sphere of the Mahjar Studies, articulated propositions of how Arab and Muslims identities confronted the troubles of the increase of global capitalism, more liquid and transnational identities, and for some the wish to turn on to the MENA region.

These works, in distinct topics, studied the transnational communities and kinships that helped to reshape the modern identities in Arab/Muslim communities in Latin America,

in the diverse diasporas, and in some instances in the original MENA societies—consolidating the understanding of the immigrational experiences as a Transnational, multidirectional and performative. It is plausible to agree that these studies, among others, symbolized the appearance of critical outlooks and transnational archival methodologies affiliated with the turn to the Mahjar historiography field.

With the arrival of multidirectional emigration and performative identities in Diaspora Studies, studies in this period focused on transnational circuits and social fields, highlighting the flows of persons, ideas, means, and ideologies between them in South-South regions (Castro, 2011; Chagas, 2013; Fahrenthold, 2013; Galindo; Baeza; Brun, 2014; Ghattas, 2012; Hyland, 2011).

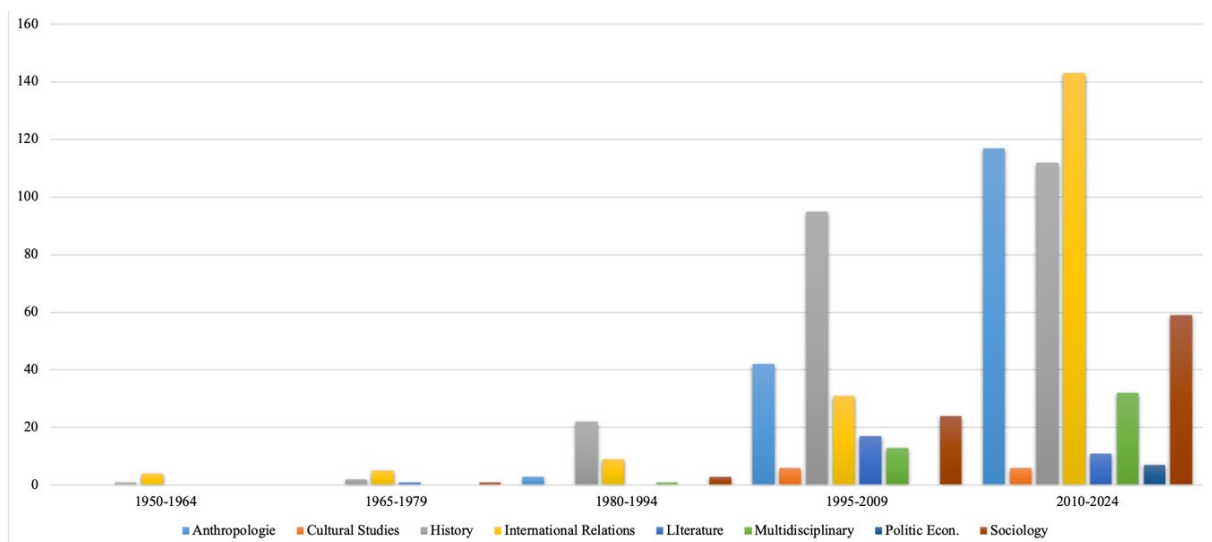
Additionally, after 9/11 and the beginning of the War on Terror policies from the U.S. administration, Latin American anthropologists were concerned with daily social interplay as well as postcolonial and feminist analyses of the theorization of space and boundaries. In this context, this signifies the consolidation of the study of Islam in the Americas, particularly the family - micro-communities - as a fundamental study factor and gendered performatives (Araneda, 2019b; Hamid, 2007; Karam, 2010; Limorté, 2011; Taub, 2008) become evident as crucial to inducting and transferring transnational cultural networks. For example, these wells are the starting point of the reflections on Halal markets in Latin America (Araneda, 2019a; Hamid; Rego, 2018) and the inquiries about consumption between Latin America and the MENA region.

Notably, in these ten years, the Latin American academics involved in the Diaspora Studies of Arab/Muslim experiences have made

genuine efforts to address a complete review through a transformation in examining primary and secondary sources, multidisciplinary methodologies, and analytic strategies. Examples of this are the regular use of the Mahjar Literature in the Americas to understand the socio-historical process in the region. These presented a new challenge for the researchers: they had to become familiar with a broader range of national and regional historiographies, archives in multiple locations (E.g., MENA region national archives or newspapers), and access to private or familiar records in several languages.

Equally crucial in countries like Brazil, Chile, and Argentina, some members of the Arab/Muslim communities were able to claim an elite position abroad and engage in a foreign political agenda (Baeza, 2012, 2016; Baeza; Pinto, 2016). These multiple and dynamic complexities have manifested themselves in the brand-new Latin American researchers of the phenomenon of Arab migration to Latin America, who are much more linked to transdisciplinary studies than to historical or sociological methods (Donelli; Gonzalez, 2018).

Chart.- 2 Research production by field of study within the Mahjar studies. [1950-2023/24]



Data and graph created by the author based on original research

More specifically, the two main expanding and spreading disciplines in the Mahjar field are anthropology and IR studies, which are taking the lead of the more established historical methods. Nevertheless, historical approaches are still intact in statistical terms; their appearance is indisputable in most multidisciplinary research and the background of cultural studies, sociology, and the most recent IR field studies. Notably, IR studies are one of the most widespread of the three stages regarding statis-

tical results, followed by Anthropology studies.

In sum, the main features of the Diaspore Studies period were the consolidation of multidisciplinary programs and the use of mixed methodologies in the investigation. Most values analyses attempt to understand particularities inside the Arab/Muslim communities, as well as the employment of critical use of post-colonialism (or de-colonialism in some cases), post-structuralism methodologies, and high-critics of the original postulated of Said inquiries

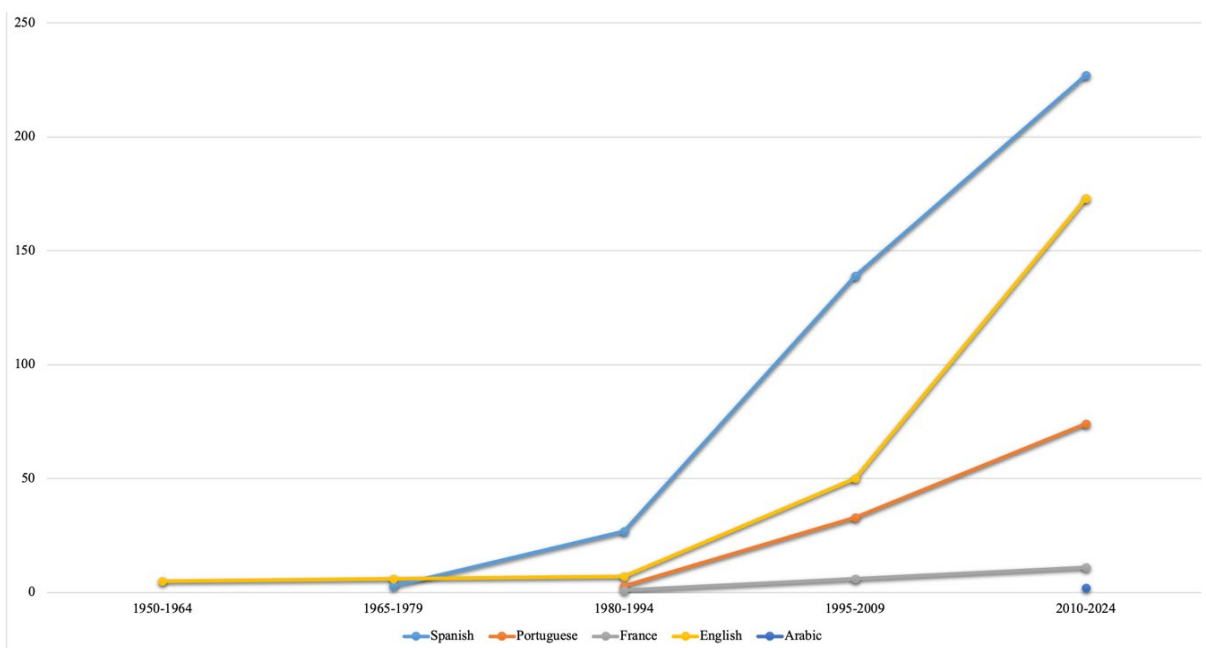
(García, 2018; Hamid, 2012; Marques, 2007; Montenegro, 2004). Furthermore, the pivotal critics of official narratives of Latin American state-building and the role of the Arab/Muslim diaspora, as well as the response of the Latin American state and its Arab/Muslim communities to the Arab Spring/uprising, Finally, the initial process of a more extensive range of IR productions with non-Latin America academic collaborations.

Expansion of the Mahjar Studies (2013-2023)

In the current period (2013-2023), the studies of Arab/Muslim communities and their cultural and political productions are on a more explicit path due to the reaction of the specialization of Latin American scholars, many of them with PhD degrees from recognized universities in the USA or Europe, and conducting field research in the MENA region.

The second group of academics actively involved in the consolidation of “Islam-Latino” (Medina, 2014, 2019a) is particularly interested in the conversions of new Muslims in the Latin American region, and the third group of young scholars primarily occupied in Mexico (Cuadro, 2016, 2019; Kuri, 2016; Tawil, 2019)– Brazil (Amorim, 2011; Brun, 2018; Brun, 2016; Funk, 2016; Gonzalez, 2016) and Argentina (Botta, 2010a, 2011; Brun; Alles; Albaret, 2016; Cuadro, 2014; Fabani, 2016) is involved in the IR studies between the MENA region and Latin America, publishing several journal articles and books years after the Arabs Spring/Uprising (Baeza, 2015; Cuadro, 2016; Galindo; Baeza; Brun, 2014; Pérez-Bustillo, 2016). It is essential to highlight that those scholars work in novel multidisciplinary books and journal articles inside and outside Latin American borders. These relate the practices of the preceding periods as pivotal to interlock in its specialization, particularly the IR studies.

Chart.-3 Evolution of the printing language of Mahjar studies [1950-2023/24].



Data and graph created by the author based on original research

At the same time, the contemporary fourth generation of the Arab experience in the Americas had to turn their traditions and cultural expressions towards the family or Arab communities throughout the 20th century. Also, since Latin America is geographically distant from Bilal as-Sham, they only knew their old communities of origin through photography or stories of infrequent travelers, their only source of retaining contact. However, over the past two decades, the identity of Arab-Latino American descendants has been dramatically influenced by their access to transnational contexts of more convenient and faster connectivity, cheaper travel, and widespread use of cable television and the Internet.

These multiple and dynamic complexities have manifested themselves in the new Latin American researchers of the phenomenon of Latin-Arab diaspora, linked to Transnational approaches, and that have put in doubt the mythological or hegemonic stories that, to a greater or lesser extent, had been transmitted by the first investigations related to the area.

In that regard, these new researchers will need to be involved in examining the Latin American Dabke, elites, and political groups interested in influencing Middle Eastern countries' domestic and foreign policies.

Furthermore, the internal changes in the academia concert to Middle Eastern diaspora contribute to unlocking the entrepreneurial potential of the continuous obsession with the exact numbers of Middle Eastern descent in the Americas, unveiling migrant narratives dominated by an orthodox or catholic Christian intelligentsia or great successful men that dominated gender studies against the accounts of all experiences. How do we understand the multiple affinities with the post-Nakba

and diaspora narratives of 1967 or post-Oslo events? Or the experiences of recovery of lost ethnicity thanks to the new connectivity in social networks, among others?

Similarly, new scholars are focusing on exploring refugee history to understand resettlement relations (Beaume, 2019; Calegari, 2018; Schiocchet, 2019; Ubialli, 2018), sexuality, new cartographies of religious systems (Balloffet, 2020; Bennett, 2020; Gomez; Medina, 2019b; Morales, 2018; Pastor, 2017), and all new performative ethnicity expressions, which is a critical frontier in studying Mahjar historiography.

In this period (2013-2023) co-author books will lead the studies, for example, "The Middle East and Brazil; Perspectives on the New Global South" (Farah *et al.*, 2014) "Crescent over another Horizon; Islam in Latin America, The Caribbean, and Latino USA" (Narbona; Pinto; Karam, 2015); "Entre o Velho e a Novo Mundo: a diáspora Palestina Desde o Oriente Médio à América Latina" (Schiocchet, 2015); or "Palestinian, Lebanese and Syrian Communities in the World: Theoretical Frameworks and Empirical Studies" (Escher, Anton *et al.*, 2015) among others. Additionally, it is possible to uncover scholars who are highly involved in a transnational and multidisciplinary approach (Aidi, 2014; Balloffet, 2020; Truzzi; Stern, 2018).

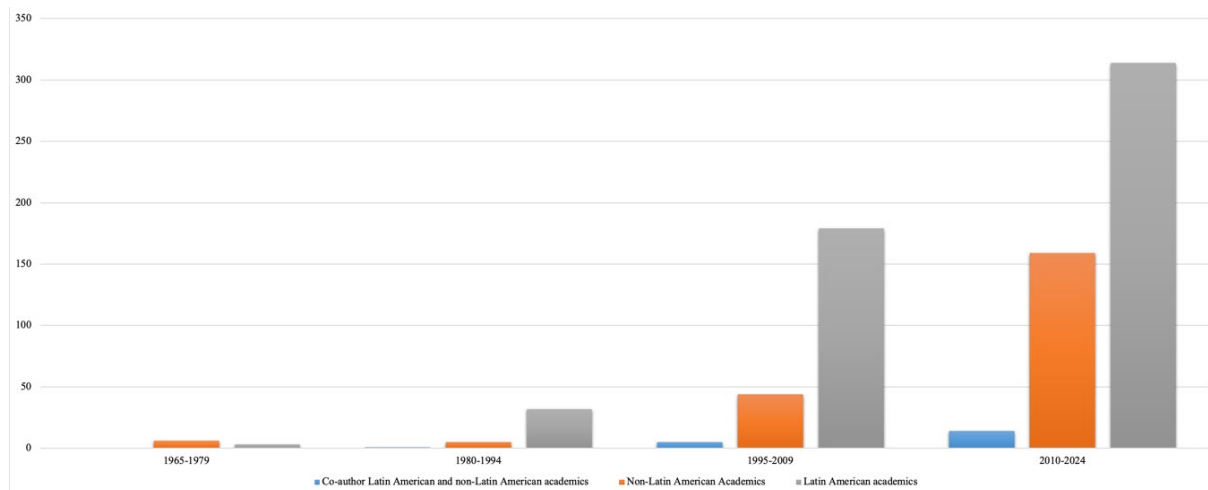
Additionally, one crucial contribution in this period was the creation in 2013 of the Journal Mashriq & Mahjar: Journal of Middle East and North African Migration Studies, published by the Moise A. Khayrallah Center for Lebanese Diaspora Studies at North Carolina State University. This journal is a unique space for engaging in transnational academic production of knowledge and theoretical dis-

cussion. In sum, this new flow of bibliography links with Mahjar cartographies more substantively correlates well-defined Mahjar studies inside the region and connects more meaningfully with other historiographical subfields.

In parallel with the Mahjar Studies' consolidation, it is possible to recognize that from the beginning of this period, scholars from Brazil - Mexico, and Argentina were involved in the IR ties between the MENA region and Latin America. These IR ties included the

diplomatic bonds and opportunities of South-South relations, for example, the works of Cecilia Baeza, Paul Amar, Elodie Brun, Mariela Cuadro, Paulo Botta, Marta Tawil Kuri, Ariel Gonzalez Levaggi, among others. They are bringing the "Global South" perspective on Middle East-Latin American relations to check how this framework of geostrategic positioning has emerged in different configurations of political and economic change (Amar, 2014).

Chart.- 4 Development of knowledge production of academics working in Latin American and non-Latin American universities.



Data and graph created by the author based on original research

Mahjar's studies represent an internal development among scholars interested in cases inside Latin America. Until 2010, most of the scholars working in the field were working in Latin American institutions; currently, almost half of the production regarding Latin American Mahjar is produced by non-Latin American scholars. This situation allows both parties to engage in more collaborative production or cross-border studies.

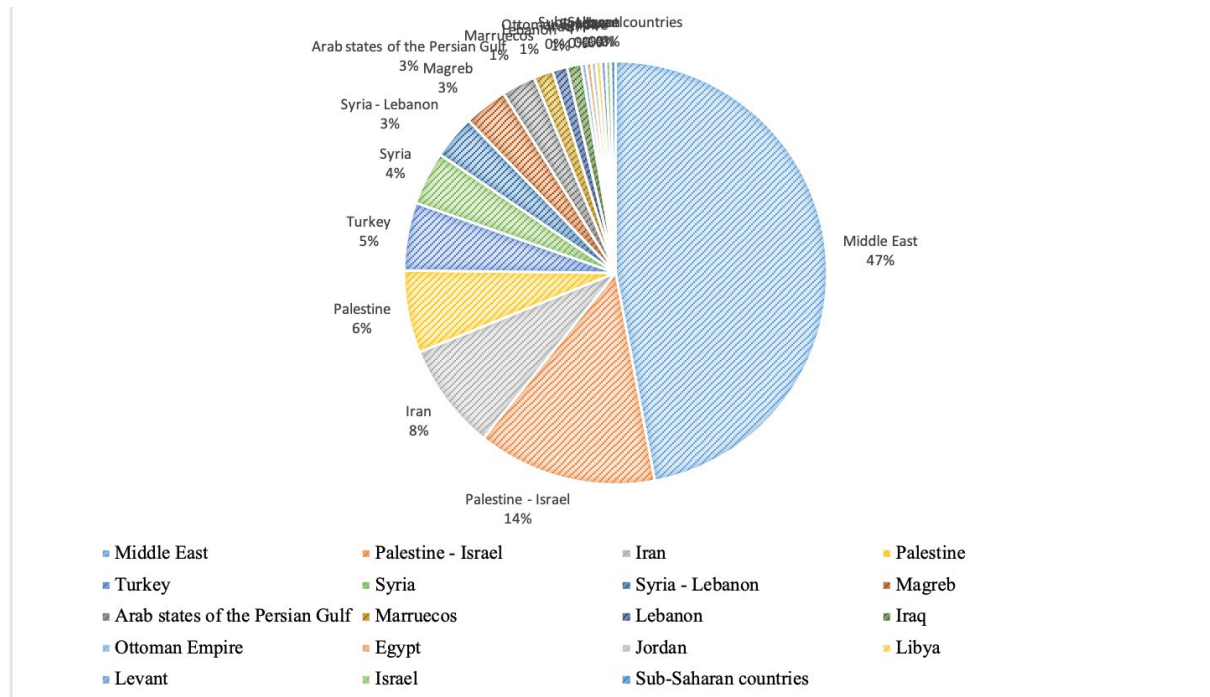
In that regard, the collaborative enterprise investigates the Arab Spring/Uprising from the lens of Latin American countries, demon-

strating the political interconnections and concerns about this new Middle East. They are mainly concerned about the latest strategies of global resistance to the Neo-imperialism pressures, the historical legacy of Left parties in Latino American political history, and the anterior participation within the Non-Aligned Movement, or Cuban and Venezuela political experiences. In works. For example, "Levantamientos en el Mundo árabe. Posicionamientos y lecturas Desde Sudamérica" (Vagni, 2011); "Diversity behind Unity: Latin America's Response to the Arab Spring" (Galindo; Baeza;

Brun, 2014) or “Building Support for the Assad Regime: The Syrian Diaspora in Argentina and Brazil and the Syrian Uprising,” (Baeza; Pinto, 2016) among others. These IR studies’ works

involve a comparative examination of political and economic practices, which have given rise to a scholarship on advancing free-market states, corporatism, and dictatorship.

Chart.- 5 Analysis of knowledge production in the field of International Studies.



Data and graph created by the author based on original research

In sum, combining these diverse methodological and disciplinary approaches to combining accounts and political realities of the Middle East and Latin America has entangled and shaped the contours of the studies and the understandings of these regions in the Global South. Essentially, it is significant that the modifications of the countries that started to interlock the Latin American Scholar, predominant from the first period, were the Palestinian–Israeli affairs (Alba; Silverburg, 2020; Ehrlich, 2019; Garduño García, 2016; Grantham, 2019; Zanella Giurfa, 2018) in the international agenda (14% of the period); the Palestinian situation under the International Law, or the ideological connections and support from some

Latina American nations (6% of the period). The current IR studies condition inaugurated and consolidated other Middle Eastern countries, such as Iran (Figuroa Sepúlveda, 2018; Padilla, 2019; Sorio, 2016), Turkey (Botta, 2010b; Gonzalez Levaggi, 2016; Rodriguez; Tawil, 2015), and the Arabian Gulf, and in a small but novel study, the Maghreb region. In conclusion, though the most notable investigation is presented from a general point of view and indicates the political and economic relations with the Middle East as a whole region, it is clear that certain countries are taking the lead in IR research from Latin American universities.

Conclusion: between changes and challenges

This new repertoire of theoretical and methodological approaches to the state of the field was one of many challenges for Latin American academia. From our point of view, the interest in Postcolonial or Decolonial analytical procedures and the use of postmodernism methods revealed an ethical commitment not only from the research to the subject but also from the academia itself.

In sum, in the last 50 years of continuous work in critical development inside the Arab/Muslim Migrations—Diaspora Studies and Mahyar Studies and related fields, the most prominent works and state-of-the-art end with critics and recommendations for the current and future generations of scholars who will engage in academia.

In that regard, it is unsurprising that most are still valid and resonate in Latin American academia. First, one of the earliest recommendations is the work of the Latin American scholar; it does not just involve distinguishing lines of research, resolving against sensationalist speeches, recognizing and avoiding populist debates, and feeding new reflections because scholars will be called upon to engage with the general public and collaborate with government administration.

Secondly, the scholar must acknowledge an increasingly collaborative scholarship, with numerous private, cultural, religious, and political institutions in their own country, and try to open to its rich cultural heritage. Future research on Mahjar's Studies and its impact on Latin American society and culture must address the intersections of class, race, and gender in the visual arts. Moreover,

it encourages ties with experts in non-profit associations to produce beneficial research support infrastructure. Third, acknowledging the accessibility difficulties and uncovering a way to recognize these constraints while concurrently advancing to challenge them productively. Fourth, the ultimate aim of contributing to the state of knowledge of the matter, it will be necessary to build multidisciplinary hypotheses, which is almost the exclusive way to generate discussions that enrich the debate around this topic.

On the other hand, the university education system is still centered on a generalist standard with no room for specialization, which is the leading cause of the underdevelopment of contemporary Middle East studies in the Latin American region. Such specialization may only occur once sufficient specialists in different fields exist. One aspect stands out: except for the most prominent country previously mentioned, most Latin American countries recently started teaching about Middle Eastern cultures.

Finally, the Middle East fields in Latin America need more than anything else scholars with career prospects; statistically, it is impressive to perceive the quantity of excellent thesis, with one subsequent publication, and then the scholar's departure from the field. Any influential academia requires their academic efforts to a critical field of study that will simultaneously allow us to understand and appreciate a region of the world too often ignored in the study of global Islam and Mahjar Studies while at the same time situating an aspect of the story of the diaspora in the South-South region hitherto marginalized and often overlooked.

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