

# Fraternity in Politics

## New Scholarship and Publications from Latin America

Rodrigo Mardones Z.  
Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile

*In this article, the author reviews a book series on fraternity, published in Spanish since 2006, that is the result of a new interest among Latin American scholars in the topic of fraternity. Most of the books in the series are edited volumes that include perspectives from several disciplines in the social sciences and the humanities. Latin American scholars have responded to an intellectual challenge brought from Italy to the region by Antonio Baggio's seminal work on this topic. In the last five years, studies on fraternity have expanded throughout Latin America, as they have increasingly captured the attention from scholars and students from several countries. As an introduction to specific questions and findings on the study of fraternity, this article begins with a description of the vital academic collaboration that this research theme has developed, notably through the University Network for the Study of Fraternity (RUEF).*

---

Claritas: Journal of Dialogue and Culture, Vol. 1, No. 2 (October 2012)  
71–80 © 2012

Since 2006 in Latin America, there have been collaborations between scholars and public officials, a series of seminars and conferences, and a book series, all on the topic of “fraternity.” These initiatives have been inspired by the work of the Abba School.<sup>1</sup> The academic work on fraternity has also been nourished by the practical insights coming from initiatives organized by the Political Movement for Unity (PMU).<sup>2</sup> Collaboration between Italian scholars led by Antonio Baggio and Latin American and Caribbean scholars on this topic was first articulated during three academic conferences addressed to politicians connected to the PMU. These events include a March 2002 conference in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, titled “Politics and Economics: The Voices of Fraternity;” a July 2003 conference in O’Higgins, Argentina, titled “The Principle of Fraternity,” organized by the Tony Weber Foundation with attendance of scholars from several Latin American countries; and the June 2005 conference in Rosario, Argentina, titled “Latin American Meeting of Mayors,” which

---

1. Founded in Italy by Chiara Lubich in 1990, the Abba School (*Scuola Abbà*) is an interdisciplinary center of studies of the Focolare’s Movement. The Abba School biannually gathers scholars from around the world for academic discussion and dialogue. Besides individual and collaborative research by its members, the Abba School has three main outlets to reach society at large: the journals, *Nuova Umanità* and *Claritas: Journal of Dialogue and Culture*, and Sophia University Institute located near Florence, Italy.

2. PMU was founded in Naples, Italy in 1996 by Chiara Lubich, who envisioned it as “an international laboratory of common political work, between government officials, scholars, and politicians at various levels, from different party lines, who place fraternity at the basis of their life.” Nowadays, PMU fosters initiatives of cross-party political dialogue in parliaments and local councils, training opportunities for politicians, and citizenship education for youth. PMU has been formally constituted in the following countries: Italy, Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Spain, Switzerland, Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, and South Korea.

gathered around twelve hundred people from several countries of the region, including mayors, city councilors, public officers, scholars, and students.

These conferences created interest in the theme of fraternity among many Latin American scholars. This interest was galvanized by the South American launch of Antonio Baggio's edited book *The Forgotten Principle: Fraternity in Politics and Law*. Baggio's book was first published in Spanish in November 2006, then in Italian in 2007, and finally in Portuguese in 2008.<sup>3</sup> It was the first title in what would become a book series on this topic, published by the Ciudad Nueva publishing house, and was presented in April 2007 in Argentina at an event jointly organized by several universities in the city of Córdoba, and in Chile at a seminar held in Santiago at the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile.<sup>4</sup> *The Forgotten Principle* is a collection of essays written by ten Italian scholars, who provided perspectives from the history of philosophical thought (Baggio and Pezzimenti), democratic theory (Lo Presti and Ropelato), constitutional studies (Pizzolato), international law (Buonomo), human rights (Aquini), theology (Coda and Marianelli), and communication studies (Savagnone).

Baggio's volume not only paved the way for the study of fraternity in political theory and the history of philosophical thought

but also represented a keystone for the study of fraternity in Latin America. Based on the work presented in this book, the first of an ongoing series of academic seminars on fraternity took place in August 2008 at the Universidad Nacional de Córdoba in Argentina. The title was "Fraternity as a Political Category in the Juridical and Social Sciences." While most of those who attended were Argentinean scholars and students, a few came from Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay. This international representation anticipated the expansion of interest in the topic throughout the region.

The second volume of the book series published by Ciudad Nueva emerged from the 2008 seminar and was compiled by Antonio Baggio. The book was published at the beginning of 2009 and was titled *Fraternity in Political Perspective: Requirements, Resources, and Definitions for the Forgotten Principle*.<sup>5</sup> This second volume includes essays from Argentinean, Brazilian, and Italian scholars on themes of Latin American history (Barreneche, Ighina, and Saguir), political philosophy (Baggio and Costa Lima), human rights studies (De Barros), and international relations theory (Ferrara). Some of these essays had been previously presented at the 2008 seminar in Córdoba.

With sponsorship by historian Osvaldo Barreneche, the public Universidad Nacional de la Plata in Argentina created the Free Chair in Society, Politics and Fraternity. Its first event was the second international seminar on fraternity that took place in 2009 in the city of La Plata with the title "The Idea of Fraternity in Political Thought and in the Social Sciences." At the end of this seminar, a group of scholars agreed to form jointly the University

3. Antonio M. Baggio, ed., *El principio olvidado: La fraternidad en la política y el derecho* (Buenos Aires: Ciudad Nueva, 2006); in Italian, Antonio M. Baggio, ed., *Il principio dimenticato: La fraternità nella riflessione politologica contemporanea* (Roma: Città Nuova Editrice, 2007); in Portuguese, Antonio M. Baggio, org., *O princípio esquecido: A fraternidade na reflexão actual das ciencias políticas* (São Paulo: Cidade Nova, 2008).

4. Baggio's presentation in Santiago with comments and discussion with local professors was published in Spanish: Antonio M. Baggio, Cristóbal Orrego, Pablo Salvat y Miguel Vatter, "Seminario: Libertad, igualdad, ¿fraternidad?," *Revista de Ciencia Política* 27 (2007): 133–57.

5. Antonio M. Baggio, ed., *La fraternidad en perspectiva política: Exigencias, recursos, definiciones del principio olvidado* (Buenos Aires: Ciudad Nueva, 2009).

Network for the Study of Fraternity (RUEF, Red Universitaria para el Estudio de la Fraternidad), which was conceived of as an international initiative of academic dialogue aimed at promoting research and collaboration on the topic of fraternity. Since then RUEF has established two venues to coordinate its members' efforts: a permanent website (see <http://www.ruef.net.br>) and an annual international seminar.

Some of the proceedings of the 2009 seminar in La Plata were selected to be included in the third volume of the fraternity book series. This time Barreneche led the editing effort, and the book was published in 2010 with the title *Recent Studies about Fraternity: The Enunciation of Principles and the Consolidation of Disciplines*.<sup>6</sup> This volume includes essays on philosophy (Ramírez), international law (Marcionni), political science (Mardones), education (Tello and Martínez), communication (Fernández), history (Ighina), and cultural studies (Nuin).

In October 2010 the RUEF's international seminar was held in the northern Argentinean city of San Miguel de Tucumán with the title "Fraternity and Conflict: Approaches, Debates and Perspectives." This time the seminar took place in the wider context of a public event called "Multi-Space Fraternity and Society." This was a collaborative effort promoted by the provincial government of Tucumán. It also involved four local universities and international scholar members of RUEF. The multispace forum presented not only the results of academic research on fraternity but also artistic performances, student debates, good practices in public service, and so on. At the end of the seminar, the RUEF membership

---

6. Osvaldo Barreneche, comp., *Estudios recientes sobre fraternidad: De la enunciación como principio a la consolidación como disciplina* (Buenos Aires: Ciudad Nueva, 2010).

decided that in order to expand throughout the region, the next seminar should take place outside of Argentina, in Santiago, Chile. Indeed, in 2010 a new chair of "Fraternity and Democracy" was created at the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile under my own coordination, and it formed a local committee to organize the 2011 seminar.

The editing of the fourth of the fraternity book series was entrusted to Pablo Ramírez, professor of philosophy at the Universidad de Chile. This volume collected some essays presented previously in the seminar in San Miguel de Tucumán. It was titled *Fraternity and Conflict: Focuses, Debates and Perspectives*.<sup>7</sup> To the traditional research on history (Ighina and Mandrile), philosophy (Ramírez), law (Bestani and Costa Lima), this edited volume added perspectives on economics (Groppa), public health (Villalón), politics (Jouannet, and Valenzuela), intercultural studies (Cerviño), and case studies on ethics in higher education (Agusto) and on prison studies (González).

The original RUEF proposal to promote the study of fraternity had initially been endorsed for the most part by Argentinean scholars. Increasingly, professors from other countries have participated in the international seminars.<sup>8</sup> The seminar held in Santiago, Chile, in October 2011 featured significant representation of Brazilians, who for the first time shared their own solid research and numerous publications with Latin American Spanish-speaking

---

7. Pablo Ramírez Rivas, comp., *Fraternidad y conflicto: Enfoques, debates y perspectivas* (Buenos Aires: Ciudad Nueva, 2011).

8. Santiago's 2011 seminar was attended by 125 registered participants. This number of attendees according to country of origin is as follows: Argentina, 23; Bolivia, 3; Brazil, 32; Chile, 43; Colombia, 6; Cuba, 2; Ecuador, 1; El Salvador, 2; Haiti, 1; Mexico, 2; Peru, 1; Uruguay, 2; Italy, 5; and Spain, 2.

scholars and students. Responding to the large presence of Brazilians in Chile and their previous trajectory in the study of fraternity, the organizers decided to hold the 2012 seminar in Brazil, in the cities of Caruarú and Recife in the state of Pernambuco, in northeast Brazil.

Published during the coordination of this 2012 seminar, the latest book of the series is titled *The Ember under the Ashes: Fraternity in the Thought Concerning Latin American Integration*, written by Domingo Ighina as a single author.<sup>9</sup> Two edited books are forthcoming. One, edited by Lucas Cerviño, will include proceedings of the Santiago seminar. I am editing the second, titled *Fraternity and Education*. At this point it will be helpful to review some of the ideas and arguments that have arisen in the scholarly work on the notion of fraternity over the past six years as they have been presented in the five books already published on the topic in Spanish.

#### Antonio M. Baggio, ed., *The Forgotten Principle* (2006)

Fraternity is an idea that has long been identified with Christian thought, and before that with Aristotle's writings on civic friendship. Indeed, Baggio proposes that in order to appreciate the idea of fraternity, one needs to retrace this journey through the history of philosophical thought. In spite of the fact that fraternity is usually conceived of as an individual attitude—an attitude of care toward others—in his introductory chapter to *The Forgotten Principle*, Baggio links fraternity to the rallying cry of the French revolutionaries “Liberty, Equality, Fraternity,” aiming to conceptualize the latter as a political category. Indeed, there are many forms

by which fraternity among human beings may be fulfilled, but in the end the concept needs to be translated into the political sphere in order for it to have a positive impact on the community at large. In a phenomenological sense, the way human beings experience fraternity in the interpersonal dimension is different from how it is lived within a political community in which face-to-face interaction is absent or limited.

This is not to say that fraternity in its relational or interpersonal dimension is irrelevant. The interpersonal dimension is a necessary but insufficient condition to realize political fraternity. Baggio mentions two conditions that he considers key for fraternity to become a political category. First, it must properly be a criterion for political decisions; and second, it must affect the way the other two political categories (liberty and equality) are conceived. In another chapter of this volume, Baggio provides proof of an early failure in the effort of universalizing the triptych: the French revolutionaries of 1789 deprived the Haitian revolutionaries of 1791 of every one of the three principles.<sup>10</sup> Since then, liberty and equality have been proposed, proved, and tested through political movements and political regimens, and as constitutional principles. Nowadays, it seems that these two categories have been reaching the frontiers of possibilities. Thus, after more than two centuries of the novel French intuition, fraternity can provide a new way for the political triptych to be redefined, enhanced, and realized. In this sense,

10. Antonio M. Baggio, “La idea de “fraternidad” entre dos revoluciones: París 1789–Haití 1791: Pistas de investigación para una comprensión de la fraternidad como categoría política,” in *El principio olvidado: La fraternidad en la política y el derecho*, edited by Antonio M. Baggio, pp. 41–71 (Buenos Aires: Ciudad Nueva, 2006). See also Toussaint Louverture, *Lettres à la France (1794–1798): Idées pour la libération du peuple noir d’Haïti; Introduction et appareil critique d’Antonio Maria Baggio et Ricardo Augustin* (Paris: Nouvelle Cité, 2011).

9. Domingo Ighina, *La brasa bajo la ceniza: La fraternidad en el pensamiento de la integración latinoamericana: Un recorrido* (Buenos Aires: Ciudad Nueva, 2012).

in an attempt to revisit fraternity along the line of contemporary democratic theory, in her essay, Daniela Ropelato defines fraternity as relationships of belonging, reciprocity, and responsibility among fellow citizens that require recognition and tolerance of identities while promoting the unity of the polity.<sup>11</sup>

In the last decade, our conception of democracy has evolved from procedural rules for a better representative government to a more substantive conception in which participation, deliberation, and political inclusion are key elements to enhance the quality of democracy. Within this new conception, fraternity as a political category has an important connotation. Besides studies on the quality of democracy, another fertile literature expresses the conception of fraternity as a political category of “governance.” To this literature on governance, power can be virtuously enhanced through collaboration and coordination among governments, firms, and civil society. In this volume, Alberto Lo Presti conceives of power as a relational resource: political power is a connective network of social relationships present in the public sphere aimed at promoting the common good. Therefore, to Lo Presti, the use of power to ensure privileges, serve selfish interests, or promote conflicts is nothing but a pathological situation that degrades and weakens social order.<sup>12</sup>

### Antonio M. Baggio, *Fraternity in Political Perspective* (2009)

In the second book of the series, *Fraternity in Political Perspective*, the bulk of the work focuses on the idea of fraternity in

11. Daniela Ropelato, “Notas sobre participación y fraternidad,” in Baggio, *El principio olvidado*, pp. 182–205.

12. Alberto Lo Presti, “El poder político en busca de nuevos paradigmas,” in Baggio, *El principio olvidado*, pp. 207–26.

Latin American history. Domingo Ighina, for example, shows how fraternity has been present among some intellectuals in the projects of Latin American unity since independence, starting with Venezuelan revolutionary Francisco de Miranda. However, nineteenth-century positivism prevented the realization of this regional project and promoted instead the building of nation-states throughout the region. This meant to deliberately confine fraternity in the nation-state territorial boundaries in order to forge sometimes belligerent national identities.<sup>13</sup> One of the early projects of Latin American integration is exposed in detail by historian Osvaldo Barreneche. Following the idea of the Amphictyonic League of the ancient Greek tribes, *Libertador* Simón Bolívar called for the Congress of Panama in 1826 to promote the confederation of the new Latin American republics.<sup>14</sup> For his part, Julio Saguir exposes similarities and differences in the early state building of the United States of America and Argentina. He shows how contingency and institutional configurations shaped the possibility of a rapid and fundamental process of agreement and collaboration, in the case of the United States, and a difficult, long, and conflicted process, in the case of Argentina.<sup>15</sup>

Even though Latin American republics have held to a trend toward integration since their independence, geopolitical conflict feeds the efforts for nation-state building and limits the

13. Domingo Ighina, “Unidos o dominados: Sobre una lectura de la fraternidad en función latinoamericana,” in Baggio, *La fraternidad en perspectiva política*, pp. 33–43.

14. Osvaldo Barreneche, “La idea de fraternidad en el congreso de Panamá de 1826 y los intentos de integración política de la América latina luego de su independencia,” in Baggio, *La fraternidad en perspectiva política*, pp. 85–113.

15. Julio Saguir, “En búsqueda de la unidad: Obstáculos históricos y desafíos institucionales en la construcción de una comunidad nacional,” in Baggio, *La fraternidad en perspectiva política*, pp. 69–84.

possibilities of the integrationist effort. However, Centeno argues that wars in Latin America have been fewer and less bloody than in Europe and Africa. Following the bellicist perspective, which proposes that states are above all fighters of war, Centeno finds that in Latin America limited wars prevailed instead of total wars such as the French revolution, the Napoleonic wars, the Crimean war, the U.S. civil war, and the two world wars.<sup>16</sup> In my view, even if we give credit to the bellicist theory and recognize the history of limited and not total wars, *ceteris paribus* Latin America should be better endowed to promote a more peaceful coexistence among its neighboring countries.

If fraternity within a national political community is difficult, how can it be possible at all among countries? Globalization and interdependence underlie the existence of common problems and the need for coordinated solutions to these problems. The idea of universal fraternity is often contentious, as exemplified by the debates over the enforcement of global human rights, or immigration policies, or the world map of armed conflicts. Without renouncing universal fraternity as a normative horizon, the fact is that starting with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, several international institutions, protocols, conventions, and public ideas have consecutively addressed worldwide problems appealing to international solidarity and global citizenship. In his essay, Pasquale Ferrara asserts the importance of international fraternity and the need for its formalization. He calls for the development of a pragmatic theory and approach to universal fraternity.<sup>17</sup>

16. Miguel Angel Centeno, *Blood and Debt: War and the Nation-State in Latin America* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002), pp. 15–17.

17. Pasquale Ferrara, “La fraternidad en la teoría política internacional: Elementos para una reconstrucción,” in Baggio, *La fraternidad en perspectiva política*, pp. 159–99.

## Oswaldo Barreneche, ed., *Recent Studies about Fraternity* (2010)

The third book of the series, *Recent Studies about Fraternity*, raises the question of whether we should promote or renounce fraternity as a utopian objective. This is the concern of three essays in the 2010 volume. Nuin claims that in Latin America, fraternity has not been a forgotten principle since it has been intermittently present in the discourse of creation of a common Latin American identity that encompasses national identities.<sup>18</sup> To Ighina, fraternity performs a utopic function of utmost importance in the collective project of identities in Latin America. He argues that beyond political discourse, fraternity has been absent as oppression, racism, and domination characterize the political praxis throughout the region.<sup>19</sup> According to Ramírez, due to high expectations regarding the concept of fraternity in an era of skepticism, many people may believe this is an impractical or unreachable goal for society.

Curiously the same objection is not usually made regarding liberty and equality. In any case, Ramírez proposes that instead of *utopia*—the unreachable place—we should conceive fraternity as *eutopia*—the attainable place.<sup>20</sup>

In this line of argument, Ramírez arrives at a preliminary phenomenological definition of fraternity as “a careful reciprocal concern among people who share the same world.” This concern with

18. Susana Nuin Núñez, “Fraternidad patria grande: Del imaginario a la unidad en la diversidad latinoamericana,” in Barreneche, pp. 147–85.

19. Domingo Ighina, “La fraternidad en América Latina como función utópica,” in Barreneche, pp. 131–46.

20. Pablo Ramírez Rivas, “De la utopía a la eutopía: Apuntes críticos para pensar y actuar la fraternidad hoy,” in Barreneche, pp. 63–92.

defining fraternity has not been so far considered a very important endeavor for many scholars working on fraternity. Some claim that, in line with the methodological proposition of French philosopher and sociologist Edgar Morin, understanding is complex and cannot be reached from a purely cognitive dimension. Thus, to understand fraternity properly, we should study it in a trans-disciplinary fashion; we should experience and feel fraternity in its interpersonal and political dimensions; and we should understand its meaning for different cultures and in different moments of history. I believe that Morin takes a valid though very ambitious epistemological approach. But in my view, knowledge is a collective enterprise that requires the contribution of many disciplines and approaches in a complementary way. The definition of fraternity should at least be a concern for analytical philosophers and social scientists working under the positivist paradigm. Later on, the definition could be an effective cognitive contribution from this tradition that is useful for Morin's enterprise of complex thought.

To give an initial response to this concern, my own essay reviews contemporary philosophical definitions of fraternity and similar concepts in the social sciences, such as social cohesion, solidarity, and trust. Under the conceptual approach of Ludwig Wittgenstein's family resemblance, my working definition proposes that fraternity is an attitude of empathy, concord, or generalized trust among fellow citizens. Fraternity cements a political community together. It resides more properly in the moral sphere rather than in the institutional realm. However, it does have consequences for political institutions. Indeed, this attitude of "care" as a moral virtue could improve the democratic regime, the efficacy of public policies, and the efficiency of markets, which subsequently yield higher levels of fraternity. As a matter of degree, not of kind, fraternity

could be enhanced as a consequence of a political decision-making process increasingly accepted and legitimized by citizens, the cumulative presence of constitutionally protected individual rights that promote the political inclusion of citizens, and the existence of public policies that systematically reduce socioeconomic gaps.<sup>21</sup>

If fraternity resides more properly in the moral sphere rather than in the institutional realm, then it cannot be granted by decree. It should be promoted first in people's everyday lives, and one of the most important spaces for fostering this attitude of empathy or care would be the school system. How to promote pro-social behavior and fraternity in a K–12 school is the purpose of Martínez's essay based on her own practical experience as a teacher.<sup>22</sup>

#### Pablo Ramírez, ed., *Fraternity and Conflict* (2011)

Other spheres for the promotion of fraternity in its relational dimension are included in the edited volume by Ramírez titled *Fraternity and Conflict*. The volume presents Augusto's essay on fraternity in the sphere of a school of engineering. Facing the effects of the 2010 earthquake and tsunami in Chile, engineering students organized in voluntary initiatives to help those in need. But beyond this response, an active debate emerged among faculty about the ethical training of the profession and the social role of the university.<sup>23</sup> In the same relational dimension of fraternity, González provides an interesting case study on fraternity among

21. Rodrigo Mardones Z., "Hacia una precisión conceptual de la fraternidad política," in Barreneche, pp. 33–92.

22. María Guillermina Martínez, "Una propuesta para la promoción de las conductas positivas y fraternas en la escuela especial," in Barreneche, pp. 225–41.

23. Héctor Augusto, "El rol de la Universidad de Chile en la sociedad: Una reflexión desde la carrera de ingeniería a raíz del terremoto de 2010," in Ramírez, pp. 253–69.

inmates of a jail, and the conflict that raised by territorial disputes and relational problems deepened by weak moral conditions and overcrowding.<sup>24</sup>

The book series on fraternity and the papers presented at the international annual seminars of the RUEF have generated an important number of case studies and experiences on fraternity in schools, in work places, in town assemblies, and so on. But how can fraternity lived in an interpersonal sphere be translated to a wider dimension such as a nation or internationally? How and why do people care about other people they do not know? Up to now, many essays in the book series assume that to promote fraternity at the national level, we should create and enhance a culture of fraternity at the grassroots level. If we do that, then for some unexplained reason—or some sort of invisible hand or black box—a fraternal culture would ensure fraternal political institutions.

In a way, my critique is to those formulated against Almond and Verba's classic *The Civic Culture*.<sup>25</sup> In this book the authors propose that for a democratic regime to emerge and consolidate, a democratic culture among citizens is required. A number of important contributions in political science have attacked this culturalist view of democracy. Without rejecting Almond and Verba's thesis, I believe that in the case of the study of fraternity we should develop convincing causal arguments to explain, for example, how educating children in schools about the value of attitudes of care toward their fellow classmates makes them better citizens in the long run, and that this in turn fosters political fraternity.

---

24. Ricardo González Hidalgo, "Fraternidad y conflicto en una cárcel," in Ramírez, pp. 253–69.

25. Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1963).

An important step in the direction of deepening the hermeneutical analysis of the notion of fraternity has been Ramírez's study of the Aristotelian notion of *téleia philia*, or perfect friendship that is usually translated as civic friendship, a possible antecedent of fraternity. Contrary to this notion of civic friendship, *philadelphía* (fraternity) in the classic Greek world is a notion of little political or ethical meaning.<sup>26</sup> Ramírez's essay helps us identify some requirements needed to bind together a political community. But above all, Ramírez considers the individual's decision to live by fraternity based on his or her recognition of the other as an equal to be of great significance. The methodological implication is that more than a structurally determinant context, individuals' decision to live by fraternity means that they take care of the material needs, allow for the political inclusion, and recognize the value of the identity of the other.

In support of this view, Ramírez's edited volume helps us understand the role of conflict in different settings, particularly where it is fostered by rampant inequality. Conflict is inherent to human existence. Differences based on self-interest or redistribution are common sources of conflict. However, the presence of conflict does not erase the possibility of fraternity. Inequality, domination, and political exclusion endanger fraternity if hegemonic groups are reluctant to recognize the economically deprived or the politically excluded. After all, Aristotle did not conceive of civic friendship as an abstract idea but in a concrete and practical way.<sup>27</sup> For

---

26. Pablo Ramírez Rivas, "Amistad, pólis y reconocimiento: La decisión de la fraternidad," in Ramírez, pp. 289–314.

27. Oscar Godoy, "La amistad como principio político," *Estudios Públicos* 49 (1993): 5–35.

fraternity to exist, at least some minimal levels of freedom, equality, and political inclusion should exist in a political community.

### Domingo Ighina, *The Ember under the Ashes* (2012)

In *The Ember under the Ashes*, the last book in the series, Argentinean historian Domingo Ighina systematizes his work on the history of the idea of Latin American fraternity and integration. Ighina conceives of fraternity as an orienting fiction that has been present in the region since before the independence movements took place. To Ighina, this fiction has allowed the development of the Latin American identity of the people. This symbolic attribute should be reinforced to foster the emancipation of the oppressed throughout the region while at the same time recognizing multiple and rich identities. If in the past this fiction was important in freeing the new republics from colonial powers, today it can promote equality and political inclusion. Ighina argues that the French intellectual tradition should no longer be the source to understand and promote fraternity in the region. Instead it should be the day-to-day fraternal practices of Latin American people. In my reading, according to Ighina, universal fraternity can only be realized once Latin America realizes its own fraternity. As fraternity is an orienting fiction, we could conclude that for this book both regional and universal fraternity remain in the terrain of the unattainable.

What do we do with the oppressors? This question emerges from reading Ighina's book, and it has also been raised in other essays of the book series and the seminars. The answer is not easy in the context of highly unequal societies such as those in Latin America. It is a question that has previously emerged in other books that can be read as relevant to the issue of fraternity, such

as *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, a Latin American classic written by Brazilian scholar and social activist Paulo Freire.<sup>28</sup> In this book the author denounces capitalist education as an exercise of domination that stimulates credulity and conformity among students with the ideological intention of indoctrinating them to accept an unjust order. In Freire's view, pedagogy should not focus on the transfer of information, but on the liberation of the students' consciousness and their humanization. This constitutes a revolutionary act that, according to Freire, would not only liberate the oppressed but also the oppressors. Rebellions are almost always violent, but in Freire's argument, oppression is the act of violence that came first. Following a consequentialist moral reasoning, to Freire the violence of the rebellion of the oppressed would be justified because it is an act that restores the humanity of both oppressed and oppressors.

However, following categorical moral reasoning, violence is morally wrong. In this regard, Scholz's idea of political solidarity is useful as a concept that has a family resemblance with fraternity.<sup>29</sup> Political solidarity is a struggle for liberation from unjust or oppressive social structures. It is a vindication of rights and social justice and is oppositional to a group, party, or system that sustains an oppressive order. However, for Scholz, violence should be out of the mobilization repertoires in this struggle. Nonviolent mobilization provides space for political dialogue and deliberation and for reciprocal persuasion, and it eventually allows members of the oppressing minority to join the just cause of the excluded.

---

28. Paulo Freire, trans. by Myra Bergman Ramos, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 30th Anniversary Edition with Introduction by Donaldo Macedo (New York: Continuum, 2000).

29. Sally J. Scholz, "Political Solidarity, and Violent Resistance," *Journal of Social Philosophy* 38 (2007): 38–52.

Even when violence may appear a legitimate response to injustice or oppression, I am in agreement with Scholz's rejection of violence. Besides the issue of morality regarding the use of violence, a second caveat pertains the oppositional character of fraternity that Ighina, Freire, and Scholz strongly espouse. When fraternity is presented as a political project of a party, a coalition, a social class, an ethnic groups or an alliance of countries, or defined exclusively as opposed to another group, I believe we enter into the domain of negative fraternity. This is not really a type of fraternity, but it is actually its very negation. Indeed this type of antagonistic or dialectic thinking involves the risk of the dissolution of the political community.

This takes us to a final question. Is it possible to conceive of a universal fraternity beyond the sphere of the nation-state? To Aristotle, civic friendship is only possible among fellow citizens who have agreed on a set of constitutional principles and mechanisms to solve differences. Therefore, for a minimum degree of universal fraternity to exist, besides educating people in global citizenship as proposed by Nussbaum,<sup>30</sup> and in line with Ferrara's pragmatic approach,<sup>31</sup> a set of fair and just international principles and rules should be required. If we consider the creation of such international documents as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, I believe we are living in an era in which the starting point for the development of global fraternity has already been reached.

---

30. Martha Nussbaum, "Tagore, Dewey, and the Imminent Demise of Liberal Education," in *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Education*, edited by Harvey Siegel, pp. 52–64 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

31. Ferrara, op cit.

*Rodrigo Mardones Z. is Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Political Science at the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile (UC). He holds degrees from Columbia University and New York University. Within the wider area of comparative politics he specializes in local politics, public policy, and education policy. He has recently published and coauthored on the politics of decentralization (Comparative Political Studies) and Chilean politics (Journal of Democracy). His forthcoming publication is Fraternity and Education (2012).*