What Does "Dignity" Mean? Different Meanings in a Jurisprudential Analysis from a Distant Reading

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Abstract

This paper analyses the use of the signifier "dignity" (and others related) in the judgments of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights of the year 2018 in order to detect and show different meanings. To do so, two ways of approaching are used: a distant reading tool (Voyant Tools) that will let characterize the corpus and a database and an app created by a research team that facilitate the graphical visualization and the systematization of literal formulas. The aim is to show how a distant reading and informatics resources may let us to have a quick image of a large number of texts and pages before deciding a deep read. The paper describes: 1) the corpus and the criteria to select documents and the analysis methodology; 2) the description of the corpus according to the distant reading made by Voyant Tools; 3) the uses of the term "dignity" and related 4) frequent formulas that show in context how "dignity" (and related terms) is used. Finally, we discuss the utility of a distant reading for doing research with a large corpus.

Keywords: Dignity; Inter-American Court of Human Rights; Digital Humanities; Legal interpretation; Distant reading

Introduction

This paper analyses the use of the signifier "dignity" (and others related) in the judgments of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights during the year 2018 in order to detect and show different meanings. To do so, two analytic tools are used: the first one is a distant reading tool, called "Voyant Tools", that will let us characterize the corpus, and the second one is an app based on a database created by a research team[1] that facilitates the

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[1] The database was elaborated by a team that systematized the data during two years (2018-2020). The categories implied annotating details about the cases but mainly about how the Inter-American Court of Human Rights used the term "dignity" (and others related). Once the database was finished, an application was developed that allows to combine several criteria and to plot

graphical vision and the systematization of literal formulas used by the Court. This app is named "Utilidad de visualización de la base de datos PICTO-UCA de casos de la CIDH (Version 1.0c)".

The aim of this paper is to show how distant reading and informatics resources may let us have a quick image of a large number of texts and pages before deciding a deeper or closer reading. We will be able to see, through a practical example, how without actually reading (in the sense of a close reading or a traditional reading) a large number of texts we can easily notice that the interpretations of the concept of dignity change in a short period.

The paper has five parts. The first one describes the corpus and the criteria to select documents and the analysis methodology. It includes a description of the two tools that were used to do a distant reading of the corpus. The second one focuses on the description of the corpus according to the distant reading made by Voyant Tools. Here we can find the length of the documents, of the sentences, the amount of unique words, the vocabulary density, among others. The third part analyses how many times the term "dignity" and related (those that have the root "dign*") appear and in relation to which topics. To do so, Voyant Tools and the app and database of the research project were used. The fourth one presents a list of frequent formulas that was retrieved from the database and shows in context how "dignity" (and related terms) is used. The fifth one presents conclusions.

Corpus and Methodology

In 2018, the Inter-American Court issued 29 documents (1 advisory opinion and 28 judgments in contentious cases). The corpus analyzed here is composed only of judgments of contentious cases issued by the Inter-American Court in 2018 and in which substantive issues are addressed. Therefore, interpretative judgments or judgments that establish friendly solutions are excluded. This leads to a corpus of 19 documents which represents 4,87% of the complete corpus of documents of the Inter-American Courts released between 1982 (first document) and 2018 (when the database was created)[2].

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figures (Proyecto de Investigación PICTO UCA 2017-0032, 2021 and Proyecto de Investigación PICTO UCA 2017-0032, 2021b).

[2] The research team is working on the actualization of the database and on a new version of the app.

From this core of 19 contentious cases, only in 8 cases the Court uses the term "dignity" or related terms (the documents are written in Spanish, so the terms are: "dignidad", "digno", "digna", "indigno", "indigna", "dignifica", etc.). This is the final corpus.

Within each sentence, only the arguments established by the Inter-American Court on the merits of the matter are included. Therefore, the sections of the judgments that include comments on the preliminary objections, the facts and the evidence and considerations of the intervenient parts and the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights were deleted from the files to be loaded to Voyant Tools to prevent texts that do not respond to the paper's scope from being included. This way, only the discourse of the Inter-American Court on how to interpret the human rights of the Inter-American system is included.

The resulting corpus is then made up of 8 documents, which represent 2,02% of the entire corpus of documents. These 8 documents have a total of 270,202 words and 12,824 unique words.

Each document has been named in such a way that it begins with the year of the judgment, with the letter "c" that corresponds to the indicator used by the Court to identify contentious cases and the number of the case according to the registry of the Court (for example, 2018-c351).

To show how a distant reading of a large corpus might work, here we present two different strategies. The first one describes the visualization of the corpus from a distant reading created with the Voyant Tools tool and the second one describes the visualization based on the database and the application developed by a research team. The combination of these two elements shows how the corpus can be prepared prior to a close reading in order to detect more precise lines of research.

Voyant Tools is a web-based text reading and analysis environment that facilitates distant reading and interpretive practices for digital humanities students and scholars (Sinclair & Rockwell, 2016). It plots different figures in order to show the processed data and provides information about big or small corpora.

The second tool used here is the result of the research project "PICTO UCA 2017-0032 (2021). Dignidad en la Corte Interamericana de Derechos Humanos. 1982-2018", that was financed by the National Agency for Scientific and Technical Promotion (Argentina) and the Argentinean Catholic University. The team that worked on this research was composed by 16 researchers (university professors, postgraduate students

and students) and aimed to detect if the Inter-American Court of Human Rights used the term "dignidad" (dignity) or other related ones in the same way during its entire history or even in short periods. To do so, it created a list of possible criteria of use of the term inspired on a bibliographical inquiry and, after reading every advisory opinion and judgment of the Court during 1982-2018, categorized the phrases in which "dignidad" is used. With this material, a public database was created[3]. In order to facilitate operating the database, a programmer programed an app that allows exploring information, combining criteria and plotting figures in order to be able to "see" the results and not just read numbers or words. The app was released in 2021 and is called "Utilidad de visualización de la base de datos PICTO-UCA de casos de la CIDH"[4].

The idea of a distant reading[5] implies to break with the sequential usual way of reading, in this case, with the assistance of informatics tools (Moretti, 2013; Ramsay, 2011). For the case of digital humanities, it creates a way of processing smart big data (Schöch, 2013). Distant reading is an interesting way of exploring a big corpus like the Inter-American Court of Human Rights judgments and advisory opinions. This paper, as it was explained before, focuses on one year of judgments (2018) in order to provide an example and a synchronic perspective.

[3] It can be downloaded from https://repositorio.uca.edu.ar/handle/123456789/11519.
[4] It can be downloaded from https://repositorio.uca.edu.ar/handle/123456789/11519. By the ends of 2022 it is expected to be actualized with the judgments and advisory opinions released until 2021.
[5] The concept of distant reading has been under question not for its meaning or accuracy but because its creator, Moretti, was expulsed from de LitLab.

Preliminary Observations from a Distant Reading of the Corpus

The longest text (c351) has 43,616 words and the shortest one (c352), 22.082 words. So, the longest text almost doubles the shortest one. Figure 1 shows the trend on text length. The blue line represents the corpus and as longer a text is, the line goes up, and as long as it shorter is, it goes down. From the first to the last text we can appreciate if they tend to be proportionate, longer or shorter or if there is no tendency (as in this case). The three yellow points represent the largest text (the highest point), the shortest one (the lowest point) and the average one (the one that is not the higher or lower one. It is not in the middle since it is the average from the entire corpus and not between two extremes).

Figure 1. Texts length
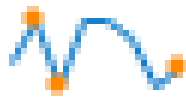
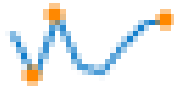Source: Sinclair & Rockwell (2021a).

Although on a first approach we could be tempted to think that the Court changes a lot on how much attention it dedicates to cases even in the same year and with the same composition, we should consider that the extension of the arguments depends quite a lot on how many victims are involved, how many alleged violations there are and how many rights are supposed to have been violated. In order to corroborate or not this hypothesis, a close reading should be used.

Vocabulary density is the result of dividing the number of unique words by the number of total words. The closest the resulting number is to zero, the most variety of words the document has or, in other words, the densest it is. Usually the shortest texts are the more dens since there is a less chance for a word to be repeated. However, the rhetoric resources of the authors should also be analyzed from a close reading perspective (Gutiérrez De la Torre, 2019).

In the case of the corpus we have proposed, the shortest document is also the one with the highest vocabulary density (0,138). The least dense one (0,105) is the longest. In this case the extremes between length and density coincide in an asymmetric way (shortest-densest / longest-less dense), which is just a coincidence (it is not a regular case that can be proved in other corpora), but this asymmetry does not occur in the rest of the documents. Figure 2 shows this circumstance. We can see there the blue line that represents the corpus and three yellow points. The lowest point is the less dense

document, the highest point is the densest document and the one that is not the highest nor the lowest is the average document in density.

Figure 2. Density of Vocabulary

Source: Sinclair & Rockwell. (2021a).

The average number of words per sentence ranges from 32,4 to 46,8. These averages should be considered approximate and a possible margin of error should be taken into account because Voyant Tools considers the full stop as the end of a sentence (Gutiérrez De la Torre, 2019)[6] however in the sentences analysed full stops are used to mark various abbreviations and to indicate divisions in the sections of the American Convention of Human Rights (eg "1.2."). Figure 3 shows a blue line (the corpus) and the three points that represent: 1) which is the document with the longest sentences (the highest one); 2) which is the document with the shortest sentences (the lowest one); and the one with sentences of an average amount of words according to the corpus (the point that is no the highest nor the lowest). We can see that there is no trend on the length of the sentences on the year. We cannot see, for example, that sentences tend to be longer or shorter as long as the year goes by. So, this figure leads to the conclusion that there is no regularity on the way judges write their judgments.

Figure 3. Average of Words by Sentence
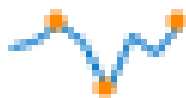
Source: Sinclair & Rockwell (2021a).

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[6] The way in which Voyant tools divides a sentence is based on the class BreakIterator programmed in Java Language. See JDK 8 (n.d.).

In order to observe the raw frequency of words, a list of empty words (called "stop words") to be filtered has been drawn up. Empty words are those words that do not have a specific meaning according to the topics but that have gramatical fuctions (for example, an article or connectors, such as "a", "the", "and", etc.). The resulting cirrus with the 55 most frequent words is as follows (Image 1):

Image 1. Cirrus 1

Source: Sinclair & Rockwell (2021b).

As for the most frequent words, after filtering the empty ones, these are: right (965); rights (808); court (650); victims (624); relatives (493). This is consistent with the work of the Court, that is, analyzing the rights of the victims after an alleged violation committed by the States. Clearly this is reflected in the terms. It is interesting that one of the most frequent words is "court", something that when analyzed in the context of use, shows that the Court uses it to refer to itself. Therefore, we can think of a strong self-referentiality[7] (something that is not usually common in judicial courts that try to maintain an impersonal discourse[8]. This might be because the Court attempts to show that it is coherent with its own past decisions, that the institution has criteria that are maintained during time and that can be applied in future cases. However, one could say that every Court tries to do that, but in this case, the Inter-American Court is the highest supra-national jurisdictional institution into which an individual can claim. This might lead to a pretention of showing a special authority).

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[7] This hypothesis has been studied and confirmed by Ratti (2021).
[8] This characteristic is highlighted by Duarte i Montserrat y Martínez (1995).

The second step after filtering stop words is to filter other words that have to do with the competence and work of the Court. This is done in order to be able to observe other words that do not have to do specifically with the work of the Court but with the topics that the Court deals with. So, the aim is to get a little bit closer to the legal matters and not only with the procedures.

Image 2. Cirrus 2

Once those words are eliminated, the most frequent words are: "familiares" (family) (493); "personas" (persons) (485); "medidas" (measures) (467); "salud" (health) (464); "investigación" (investigation) (421). Image 2 illustrates this list of frequent words.

This, together with the analysis in context and a quick look at the use of these terms in the reader (the section of the screen where to check some statistics), might suggest that in 2018 the Court's agenda in contentious cases focused on human rights violations related to the State's lack of investigations or delays in judicial proceedings or failure to make decisions to put an end to violations[9]. The latter, this is the failure on decisions making to avoid the continuity of violations, in turn, explains the presence of the term "relatives" among the 5 most frequent, since the Court usually analyzes how the delays of State's resolutions affect, in many cases, the relatives of the direct victims. For example, when a person has been murdered or presumptively murdered or is victim of a forced disappearance for political reasons, usually the family has claimed for justice and relatives are witnesses or important actors of trials or of social protests. When the State does nothing to investigate the first crime, usually the relatives become new victims of threatens in order to be quieted down and even sometimes are victims of murder of other

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[9] We have analyzed this hypothesis and confirmed it. On the matter see Lafferriere & Lell (2021).

kind of attacks. In many cases relatives of a victim have to move to another country in order to be safe. That is why, when the Inter-American Court of Human Rights analyses a case of wrong investigation processes, it usually judges the violations to the main victim' relatives' rights. So, in those cases there are usually many kind of victims[10]. If this is analyzed in the context of the 55 most frequent words that appear in the cirrus, it seems to be consistent. If this is contrasted with the secondary topics[11] analyzed by the Court, we can confirm this idea. In the following chart we can see the number of formulas and judgments related to each topic.

Chart 1. Amount of Formulas by Topic and Number of Judgments that Contain the Secondary Topics		
Secondary Topics	Number of Formulas that Contain the Topic	Number of Judgments that Contain the Topic
Right to personal integrity	5	2
Right to freedom	2	1
Right to family protection	1	1
Right to health	8	2
Right to live	10	3
Right to judicial guarantees	1	1
Forced disapeareance	1	1
Discrimination	4	1
Family	4	1
Judicial and procedural garantes	7	3
Physical integrity	2	1
Legitimation	5	1
Liberty to circulate and of residence	2	1
Liberty of conscience and religious freedom	2	1
Personal freedom	4	1
Sexual liberty	2	1
Prohibition of torture	2	1
Judicial protection	2	1
Source: Proyecto de Investigación PICTO UCA 2017-0032 (2021).		

Chart 1 shows the secondary topics considered in cases under analysis. As it can be noticed, topics about freedom, personal integrity, forced disappearances, guarantees, tortures and family protection are the most common (Lafferriere & Lell, 2021). If we think about them altogether we might think that there is an intrinsic relation between

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[10] On this matter, see Lafferriere & Lell (2021).
[11] The Inter-American Court determines certain topics to organize a quick search of the cases. The team that created the database used this list of topics combined with one created by Santiago, Bellocchio, Ferrrari, López, Londoño Lázaro, Ibrzábal, Forero, & Minatta (2018). Main topics explain the reason why a State might have been or not responsible for a human rights violation (for example: "International liability for violating freedom of expression"). Secondary topics are the specific rights involved on a case (for example, "Right to live", "Right to health", "Judicial protection", etc.).

freedom, torture and disappearances of a person, on one hand, and family protection and relatives as victims, on the other.

Raw frequencies can tell us something about the corpus, but the relevance of this information might not be very interesting or precise. Depending on the length of a corpus or a document a word might be over-represented. So, to provide a solution, we should look at the normalized relative frequency. The relative frequency is calculated with this formula: Raw Frequency * 1,000,000 / Total words. The advantage is that it provides a standardized way to compare the frequency of a word compared to the length of a corpus (Gutiérrez De la Torre, 2019).

Among the contentious cases that mention dignity (or related words) in 2018 judged by the Inter-American Human Rights Court the 5 most frequent terms are "familiars" (relatives), "personas" (personas), "medidas" (measures), "health" (salud) and "investigación" (investigation). We can see this in chart 2,

Chart 2. Five Most Frequent Terms

	Terms	Count	Relativity	Tendency	
1	familiares	493	1,825		relatives
2	personas	485	1,795		persons
3	medidas	467	1,728		measures
4	salud	464	1,717		health
5	investigación	421	1,558		investigation

Source: Sinclair & Rockwell (2021d).

A case that might be interesting to address is the one of the word "health" ("salud"), which is present in the cirrus and is the fourth most frequent word. It has a raw frequency of 464 and a relative normalized frequency of 1,717. So, it seems to be quite important or frequent. This is a fairly novel issue since the American Convention on Human Rights does not explicitly have this right and from the consultation of the database (PICTO Research Project UCA 2017- 0032 (2021b)) it emerges that the secondary topic "health" ("salud") appeared in twelve cases in the period 1982-2018, and in two in 2018. For example, the cirrus of c349 is as follows:

Image 3. Cirrus 3

Source: Sinclair & Rockwell (2021g).

Statistical asymmetry gives us an idea of the probability of the distribution of a variable without having to make a graphical representation. It is calculated by observing the deviations of a frequency compared to the average. Those occurring with a negative number (negative asymmetry) mean that the term is present above the average. Those with a positive number (positive asymmetry) are less present than the media. The closer the degree of statistical asymmetry is to zero, the more regular the distribution of that term (that is, it occurs with a very similar distribution in all the documents) (Gutiérrez De la Torre, 2019). Regarding statistical asymmetry, I will focus only on "relatives" ("familiares") and "health" ("salud") to show a contrasting example.

In the case of "relatives" ("familiares"), the most frequent term, it has ubiquity of 0,0, that is, it is very regular throughout the corpus, it is present in every document. On the other hand, "Health" ("salud") has a result of 1,7, so its use is quite asymmetric compared to the media (the farthest from zero the number is, more irregular is the term). It has a frequency below average since it is represented by a positive number (1,7) (on the opposite, those that are represented by numbers lower than zero, this is, negative numbers are mentioned above the media). This means that it is not present in many documents. As I have said before, the database shows that "health" is a topic in two cases[12].

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[12] With those data in mind, the topic of health in the judgments of the Court, and especially in the year 2018, has been studied in Pardo Iosa (2018).

Dignity in the Corpus

In the following, I will focus on describing how the term "dignity" (and other derivatives or related ones) appears in this corpus by using a distant reading approach. To do this, I will use the searches for the text "dign*" (the root of the word).

The set of words related to dignity appears 93 times (raw frequency) and the relative normalized frequency is 172.

Figure 4. Tendency of the Relative Frequency of the Term "Dignidad" (Dignity) and Related in the Corpus

Source: Sinclair & Rockwell (2021d).

In turn, the statistical asymmetry gives a result of 0.9, so it is below the average and its appearance is slightly irregular.

Figure 5. Tendency of the Relative Frequency of the Term "Dignidad" (Dignity) and Related in the Corpus Compared with the Term "Familiares" (Relatives)
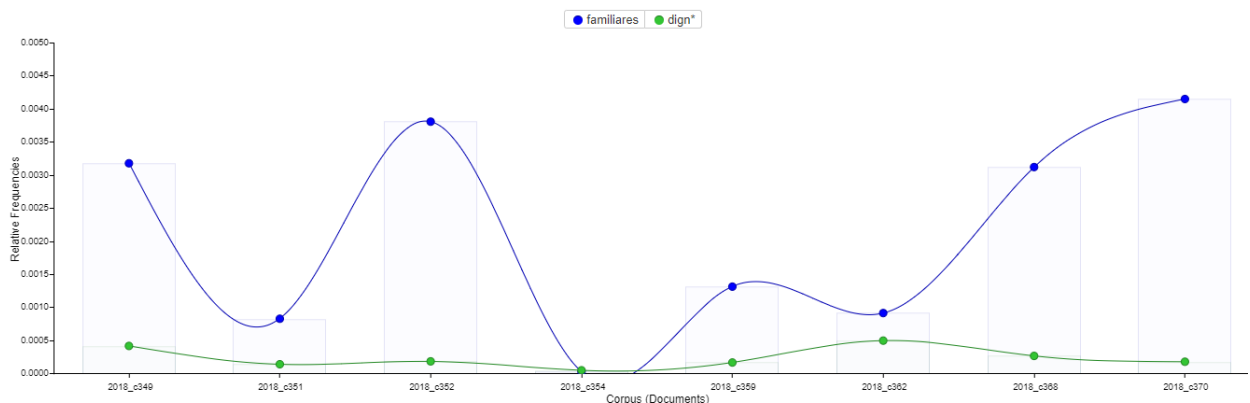
Source: Sinclair & Rockwell (2021e).

Compared to the term that appears the most ("relatives"), we can see that dignity has a significantly lower appearance: raw frequency of 61; relative frequency of 226. "Relatives" has a raw frequency of 493 and a relative frequency of 1825[13]. That is

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[13] If one compares this figure with the ones above, one can notice that the lines seem to be slightly different, more or less marked in each case. The data are the same but the perspective is different

surprising if one considers the argumentative weight that the dignity has in human rights protection systems as a quality of human persons. An example of this can be found in how much and how and in which manner this term appears in international treaties, including the American Convention on Human Rights.

Now, if we analyze the weight of each document within the corpus and the frequency with which dignity appears in them, the first, third and seventh bar in Figure 6 show documents with little weight, but a high degree of appearance of the term "dignity" (and related terms). This might suggest that it is necessary to investigate further with other distant comparative readings of other years, whether the topics were mentioned or if these are "iconic" judgments and that the relationship with dignity is emphasized for not having been made explicit before (for example, in the first bar of Figure 6 that corresponds to the document 2018-C349, the health-dignity relationship). Also a close reading could allow some conclusions to be drawn about the relationship between the key terms.

Figure 6. Weight of the Documents in the Corpus and the Frequency of the Term "Dignidad" (Dignity) and Related


Source: Sinclair & Rockwell. (2021f).

We can point out, on the meanings of dignity that have been categorized, the following[14]:

(the comparison implies a bigger scale to compare a word with a higher relative frequency with another with a noticeable lower relative frequency).

[14] These categories have been elaborated by the research team in order to create the database. The theoretical approach to do so is explained in Lafferriere & Lell (2020) and the applied categories to the judgments of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights for the period 1982-2018 (contentious cases and advisory opinions) can be found in Lafferriere & Lell (2022). These categories are linked to frequent formulas detected by the Proyecto de Investigación PICTO UCA 2017-0032 research team. Frequent formulas are common expressions that the Court uses every time it has to solve a matter on a similar empirical situation (scenarios). Although the literal expression is not always exactly the same (some words may change during time), the main drafting remains. More information about this methodology for this research can be found in Ratti Mendaña (2021 and 2021b).

1) Dignity according the idea of the individual: dignity is invoked as a substantive quality or special value of the human person or as autonomy or formal liberty. We can see that the percentages are relatively approximate, although dignity as autonomy prevails over dignity as a substantive value.

**Figure 7.** Dignity According to the Idea of the Individual

Dignity as formal equality in liberty (autonomy)

45.00%

30.00%

25.00%

Dignity as a substantive value

Cannot be classified
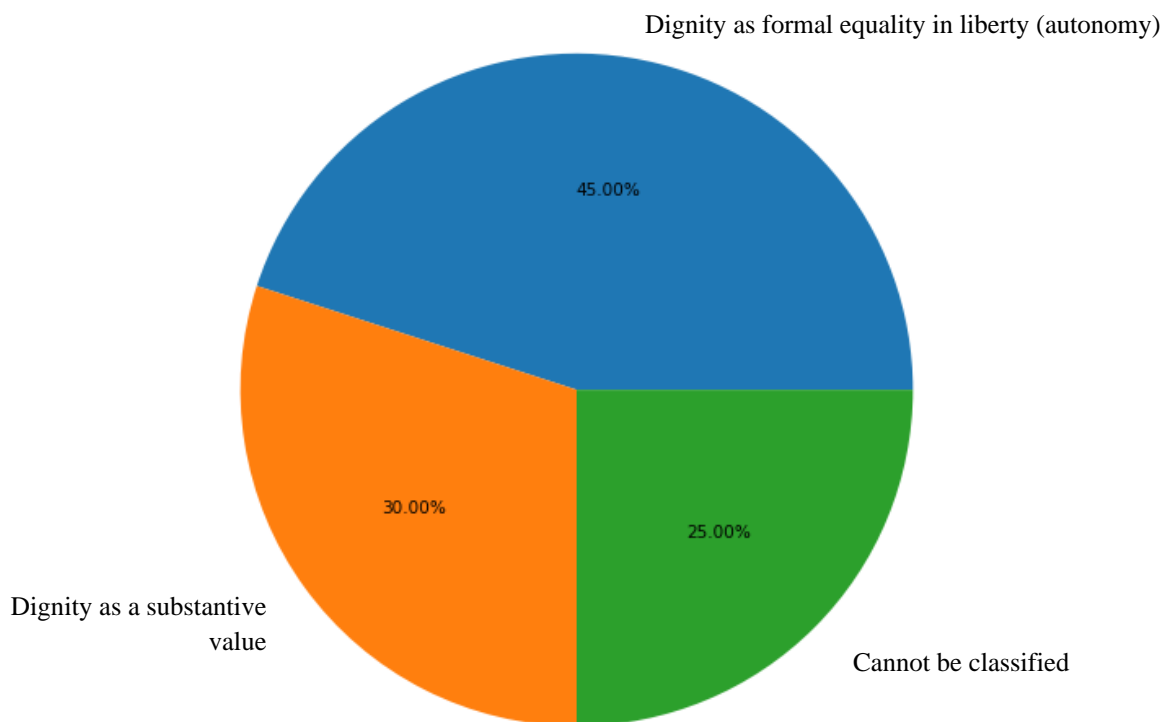
Source: Proyecto de Investigación PICTO UCA 2017-0032 (2021).

2) Dignity as a qualification of a right: Sometimes dignity is used as an adjective of a right in order to remark its relevance or to potentiate it or is used as a principle that grounds rights. In the corpus, dignity as a principle (12 formulas=60%) prevails over dignity as a right (4 formulas=20%) or as a qualification of a right (4 formulas=20 %).

Figure 8. Dignity According to its Role

Right to dignity

Qualification of a right

20.00%

20.00%

60.00%

Dignity as a principle
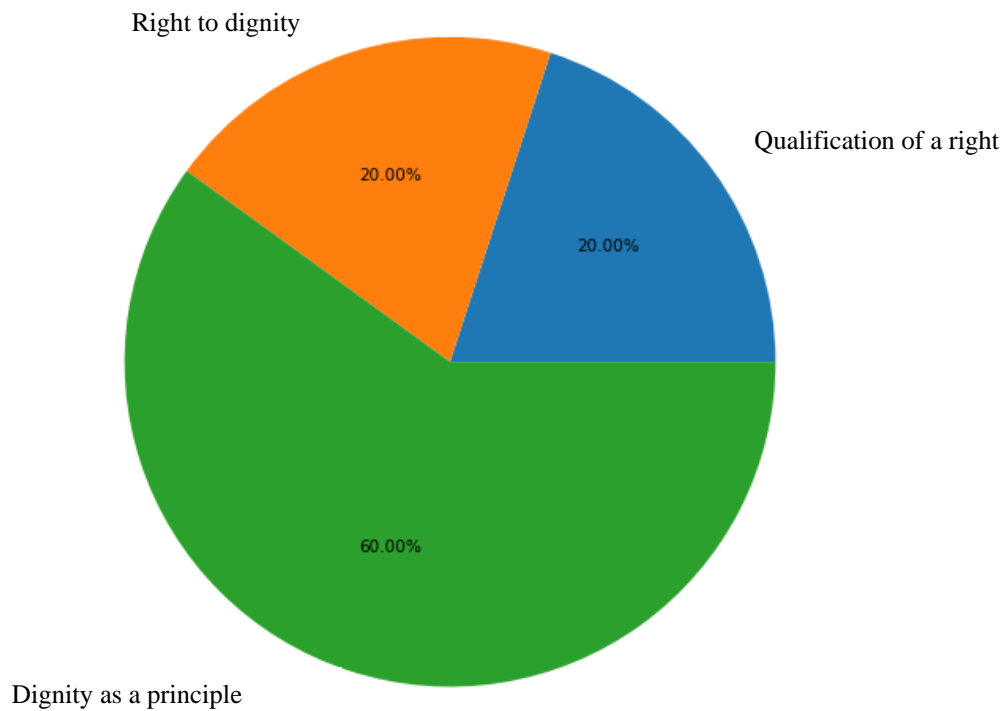
Source: Proyecto de Investigación PICTO UCA 2017-0032 (2021).

3) Dignity as a function of the subject: dignity can be used as an adjective and in that case we check which right it characterizes, or it can be named as a note of human persons. In the corpus, dignity prevails widely as a note of human persons (14 formulas=70%) over the qualification of other elements, in this case the worthy return ("retorno digno") (4 formulas=20%) and a worthy life ("vida digna") (2 formulas=10%).

Figure 9. Dignity According to the Subject
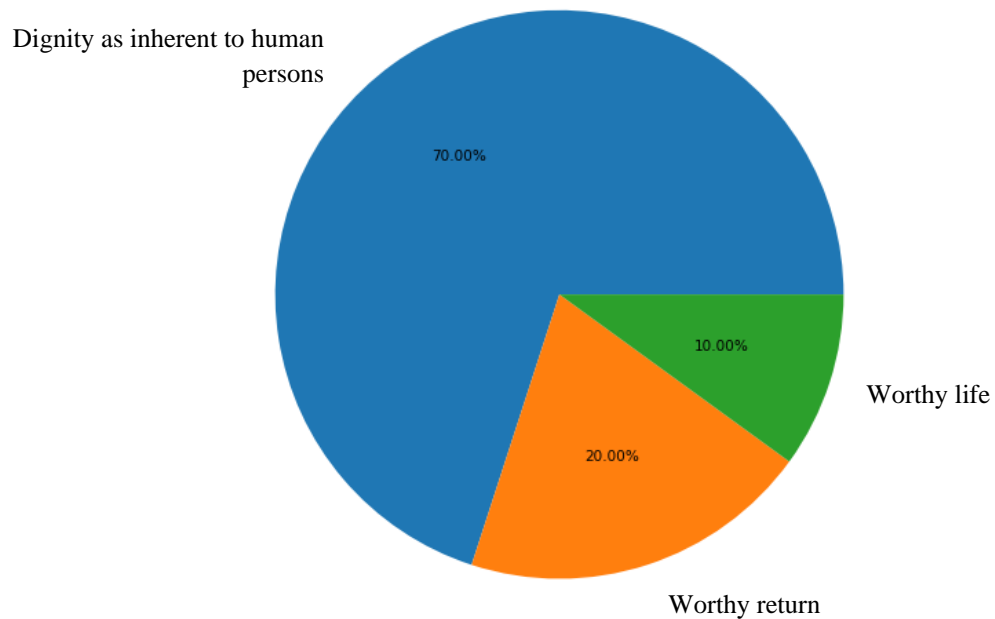
Source: Proyecto de Investigación PICTO UCA 2017-0032 (2021).

Frequent Formulas

The Inter-American Court of Human Rights uses frequent formulas in order to provide arguments when similar facts occur. Those empirical circumstances are named "scenarios". Usually the Court cites itself when applying these formulas (Ratti Mendaña, 2021b). In the corpus there are 16 unique formulas that are repeated 20 times. The list of formulas is retrieved from the database that I have already mentioned (here, I include a translation since the original language is Spanish). The formulas are as follows (the information is organized by a short id of the frequent formula, frequent formula, id of the case or cases in which the formula is invoked):

1. (Informed consent and dignity) "The relationship between obtaining informed consent before performing any medical act, and the autonomy and self-determination of the individual, as part of the respect and guarantee of the dignity of all beings. as well as in their right to liberty" 2018-C349

2. (Dignity and informed consent) "Informed consent ensures the useful effect of the norm that recognizes autonomy as an indissoluble element of the dignity of the person" 2018-C349

3. (Self-determination and dignity) "A central aspect of the recognition of dignity is the possibility of every human being to self-determine and freely choose the options and circumstances that give meaning to his existence, according to his own options and convictions" 2018-C349

4. (Right to dignity) "Right to dignity" 2018-C349

5. (Equality and dignity) "The notion of equality follows directly from the unity of nature of the human race and is inseparable from the essential dignity of the person" 2018-C351

6. (Best interests of the child) "The principle of the best interests of the child is based on the very dignity of the human being, on the characteristics of children, and on the need to promote their development with full use of their potential" 2018-C351

7. (Children, dignity and vulnerability) "The recognition of girls and boys as subjects of rights who, in the exercise of dignity, are active participants in the destiny of their own existence, and who, taking into account special conditions of vulnerability, must be fully protected by the family, society and the State with a view to achieving the full development of their capacities, autonomously and freely" 2018-C351

8. (Sale of children) "The sale of a girl or a boy in exchange for remuneration or any other compensation clearly affects fundamental legal rights such as their freedom, their personal integrity and their dignity, resulting in one of the most serious attacks against a girl or boy, with respect to whom adults take advantage of their condition of vulnerability" 2018-C351

9. (Judicial process and dignity) "A judicial process does not constitute, by itself, an illegitimate affectation to the honor or dignity of the person" 2018-C352

10. (Search and dignity) "The Mandela Rules 50, 51 and 52 guarantee that the searches and searches carried out within a penal center respect the intrinsic dignity of the human being and the privacy of people. " 2018-C354

11. (Health protection) "The right to health is an essential component of the right to social security, since the protection of health is of fundamental importance to guarantee all people their human dignity when they face circumstances that deprive them of their ability to fully exercise their rights" 2018-C354

12. (Health and dignified life) "Every human being has the right to enjoy the highest possible level of health that allows him to live with dignity, health being understood not only as the absence of illnesses or diseases, but also as a complete state of

well-being physical, mental and social, derived from a lifestyle that allows people to achieve an integral balance". 2018-C354 and 2018-C349

13. (Dignity, autonomy and equality) "Article 11 of the American Convention protects one of the most fundamental values of the human person, understood as a rational being, this is the recognition of his dignity. The first paragraph of said article contains a universal clause for the protection of dignity, whose basis is built both on the principle of the autonomy of the person and on the idea that all individuals should be treated as equals, as ends in themselves according to their intentions, will and own life decisions" 2018-C354 and 2018-C362

14. (Dignity and slavery) "The verification of a situation of slavery represents a substantial restriction of the legal personality of the human being and could also represent violations of the rights to personal integrity, personal freedom and dignity, depending of the specific circumstances of each case. 2018-C359 and 2018-C362

15. (Use of force) "Any use of force that is not strictly necessary due to the detainee's own behavior constitutes an attack on human dignity" 2018-C368

16. (Guarantor State for displaced persons) "The guarantee obligation for the State of origin to protect the rights of displaced persons entails not only the duty to adopt preventive measures but also to provide the necessary conditions to facilitate a voluntary, dignified return and to their place of habitual residence or to their voluntary resettlement in another part of the country" 2018-C370 and 2018-C352

These formulas are associated with the following factual scenarios:

Chart 3: Scenarios	
Scenarios	**Number of Scenarios**
Dignity and Detention	1
Dignity and Equality	1
Dignity of Children	3
Dignity and Slavery	2
Dignity and Health	5
Dignity and forces	1
Dignity/Private Life/Autonomy	4
Judicial Process and Dignity	1
Dign return	2
Total	20
Source: Proyecto de Investigación PICTO UCA 2017-0032 (2021).	

As can be seen, those that are linked to health, an issue that seems to have been relevant in 2018, and autonomy stand out among the scenarios.

Finally, we can see in Chart 4 that in most of the cases dealt with, the Sections of the American Convention of Human Rights that explicitly mention dignity have been invoked and dealt with. However, in two of them this is not the case, which shows a slight independence from the Convention in judicial decisions since dignity is invoked to support rights that are not mentioned in the Convention. For example, as I have pointed out before, there is no explicit right to health in the Convention but the Court ruled in two cases about it in 2018.

Chart 4. Number of related and non-related cases to § 5, 6 and 11 CADH

Year	Related cases to the sections	Non related cases to the sections
2018	6	2
Source: Proyecto de Investigación PICTO UCA 2017-0032 (2021).		

Final Considerations

In this paper I have aimed to approach the corpus of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights judgments issued in 2018 in order to describe what dignity mean from a distant reading perspective. The first conclusion is that dignity is mainly associated with autonomy and has a substantive value. The most frequent topics and scenarios focus on personal integrity, imprisonment and forced disappearances. Those topics are also related to the use of dignity as an adjective of life ("worthy life").

It is interesting to highlight the case of some frequent words such as health and relatives. "Relatives" is a very regular word in the corpus and implies that some alleged violations can impact the victim's family or that in many cases the victim's family carries out the international trial. "Health" is an irregular word which calls the attention and requires a closer reading.

Distant reading is interesting since it is an important method to approach a large corpus in order to detect some coincidences and differences that researchers might not have in mind and that may not be detected on closer readings focused on certain aims (Mercado, 2020). This paper shows that digital humanities provide several tools that should be used as a first step to detect research questions and to improve of approaching to corpora.

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